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GREENENAFTALI_{INC.}

Julie Becker

- 1972 Born Los Angeles, CA
- 1993 BFA, California Institute for the Arts, Valencia
- 1995 MFA, California Institute for the Arts, Valencia
- 1998 Artist in Residence, Stiftung Laurenz-Haus Foundation, Basel, Switzerland

Solo Exhibitions

- 1997 Kunsthalle Zurich, Switzerland

Group Exhibitions

- 1999 *Cinema Cinema - Contemporary Art and the Cinematic Experience*,
Van AbbeMUSEUM, The Netherlands
Free Coke, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York
- 1998 *L.A. Times: Art from Los Angeles in the Re Rebaudengo Sandretto Collection*, Italy
L.A. or Lilliput?, Long Beach Museum of Art, California
- 1997 *Model Terrains*, curated by Madeleine Grynsztejn, Carnegie Museum of Art,
Pittsburgh, PA
- Defamiliar: Julie Becker, Miles Coolidge, Thomas Demand*, Regen Projects,
Los Angeles
- Broken Home*, curated by Meg O'Rourke & Caroline Schneider, Greene Naftali
Gallery, New York
- Gothic*, curated by Christoph Grunenberg, ICA, Boston, Portland Art Museum,
Washington
- New Works: Drawings Today*, curated by Gary Garrells, San Francisco Museum of
Modern Art
- Hot Coffee*, curated by Thomas Lawson, Artists Space, New York
- 1996 *Summer Group Show*, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York
- Universalis. 23. Bienal Internacional Sao Paulo, North American Section*, curated
by Paul Schimmel, Pavilhao Ciccillo Matarazzo & Parque do Ibirapuera,
Sao Paulo, Brazil

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Fernand LÉGER

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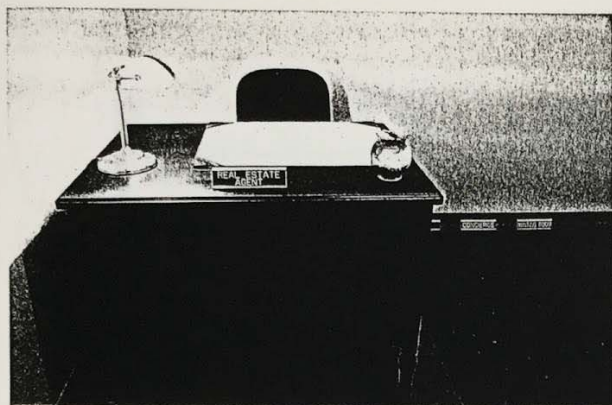
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Julie Becker's Metropolitan Labyrinths

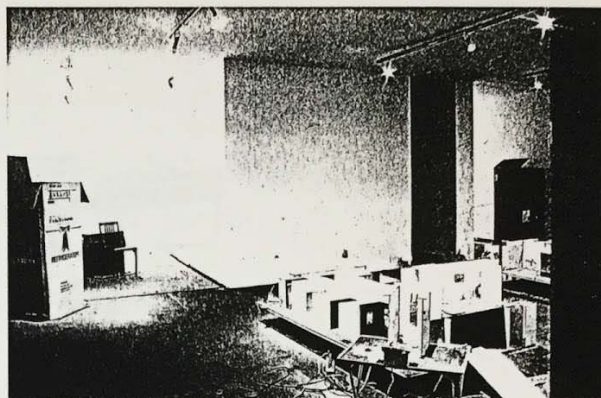
Now let me call back those who introduced me to the city. For although the child, in his solitary games, grows up at closest quarters to the city, he needs and seeks guides to its wider expanses.⁸³ With these evocative words, Walter Benjamin welcomes us to his essay "A Berlin Chronicle" and, even more, to his Berlin, the city of his childhood. This poignant text is Benjamin's effort to lose himself in the city—to perform the "art of straying," opening himself up to the speech of "signboards and street names, passers-by, roofs, kiosks, or bars."⁸⁴ For Benjamin, Berlin is invested with the imagination of childhood. In city portraits like this one he shows that to describe the city as an adult is to mine one's earliest experiences, and that the conjuring of childhood memories can result in an urban map. Benjamin extends his personal reminiscences of Berlin through his investigation of collective memory, explaining that "a childhood speaks to [the flaneur], which is not the past of his own youth, in all its recency, but a childhood lived far earlier, and it matters little whether that childhood be an ancestor's or his own."⁸⁵ Jeffrey Mehlman has discussed the significance of places like Berlin's Tiergarten, covered market, cafés, deserted streets, communist youth assembly halls, and public sculpture as locales for Benjamin's experience and containers of his memory: "It is as though a dream-web, woven out of the delights and misperceptions of childhood, the stuff of what Freud called the 'unconscious,' has come to invest less the subject's body (as in Freud) than the complex topography of a city."⁸⁶ The goal in Benjamin's excavation of Berlin is to reactivate childhood dreams and fantasies in jarring juxtaposition to the present (he calls this a "dialectical interchange"), and thus to effect "a decisive awakening."⁸⁷

No less taken than Benjamin with the nexus between the city and the mythology of childhood, the contemporary artist Julie Becker shifts the location and topos of her urban investigation. Instead of the liveliness of streets, Becker provides the mystery of corridors; instead of the monumentality of public and private structures, she explores the serial repetition of identical rooms; instead of the city or arcade, she presents the hotel. Having transferred the wonder of urban spaces to building interiors, she replaces Benjamin's storefronts with a maze of anonymous rooms, the magic of his winding streets with doors and hallways. Yet Becker's "metropolis" is just as phantasmagoric as Benjamin's Berlin; for both the artist and the writer, it is childhood that offers the key to the city.

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12. Julie Becker. *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, 1993–96. Installation, c. 10 x 30 x 40' (3 x 9.1 x 12.1 m). "Optional entrance, first space." Installation view at the Bienal Internacional São Paulo, 1996. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Promised gift of Carol and Arthur Goldberg in honor of, and kind affection for, Stuart Regen and Shaun Caley



13. Julie Becker. *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, 1993–96. Installation, c. 10 x 30 x 40' (3 x 9.1 x 12.1 m). "Middle section." Installation view at the Bienal Internacional São Paulo, 1996. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Promised gift of Carol and Arthur Goldberg in honor of, and kind affection for, Stuart Regen and Shaun Caley



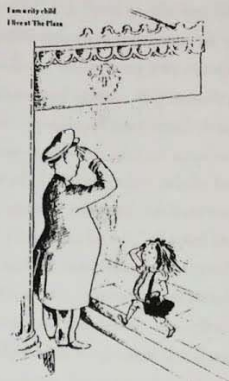
14. Julie Becker. *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, 1993–96. Installation, c. 10 x 30 x 40' (3 x 9.1 x 12.1 m). "Backroom." Installation view at the Bienal Internacional São Paulo, 1996. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Promised gift of Carol and Arthur Goldberg in honor of, and kind affection for, Stuart Regen and Shaun Caley

We see all this in Becker's installation *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest* (1993–96), which reconstructs the gallery in which it is set as three connected rooms.⁸⁸ Decorated with a generic office desk and lamp, the first room functions as a reception area, "a place usually used for waiting, receiving mail or messages, meeting visitors; an interstitial zone" (fig. 12).⁸⁹ Passing through a corridor, the viewer enters the second region, which contains two cardboard models holding miniature pieces of furniture, pictures, and other household objects—structures, in other words, evoking dollhouses and architectural maquettes, but also, the artist notes, train sets and laboratory mazes (fig. 13).⁹⁰ Strategically placed clip-on lights illuminate details of the tiny rooms, and Becker provides traces of "human" activity: the rooms are all in states of disarray, like scenes of a crime. Alongside the models, cardboard refrigerator-boxes lie about the room. Often used by the homeless for shelter, and by children as imaginary castles, these boxes link the installation both to the pathology of city streets and to the urban playground.⁹¹ The third section suggests both an artist's studio and a mad scientist's workshop. This "brain center," as Becker calls it, is filled with the detritus and debris from the invention and construction of the entire installation, and scattered through it are a worktable, an easy chair, a copy machine, slides and viewers, magazines, an iron, and, for endurance, a coffee-maker (fig. 14).⁹²

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Having encountered only traces of human presence thus far, in this last room we also finally meet the work's protagonists—albeit vicariously, in composition-book diaries left for our perusal. Becker's inhabitants are Eloise, the little girl who lives in Manhattan's grand Plaza Hotel in Kay Thompson's well-known 1950s children's book, and Danny Torrance, the little boy in Stanley Kubrick's 1980 film *The Shining* (based on the novel by Stephen King), whose clairvoyant abilities intensify when his father moves the family to the shut-down and spirit-filled Overlook Hotel in the Rockies for the winter.⁹³ In Thompson's book, Eloise takes her readers on a tour of the Plaza, describing her daily routine and the mischief she makes down corridors and in banquet halls with doormen and waiters (fig. 15). All of these locations and characters are refigurations of streets, playgrounds, and classmates. Despite childhood nightmares about monsters in closets, Eloise's environment is a blissful one. Unfortunately, Danny's situation is neither happy nor safe. The corridors of the hotel he lives in may be perfect for riding a tricycle, but the Overlook turns out to be less a playground than a haunted house in which a child's father is doomed to repeat, for eternity, a horrific crime against his family.⁹⁴

"This installation," Becker writes, "creates mazelike situations and multiple ways for the viewer to enter and exit, through which he or she can access and assimilate information, create connections, pick up cues, and construct or find narrative events."⁹⁵ Although built for adult viewers, *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest* is infused with the fantasy life of children. Critics have called the installation a "tormented fun house" and "a Magic Theatre";⁹⁶ by focusing on Becker's allusions to and visualizations of the hotel, however, the viewer might also see the work as an imploded city, a metropolitan labyrinth moved inside.⁹⁷ For the hotel, as a number of authors have argued, is a key element of twentieth-century urban topography, even a metaphor for the contemporary city. James Clifford, for example, has described the history of Paris in the 1920s and '30s as "travel encounters," a series of "New World detours through the Old," of "departures, arrivals, transits," in which the hotel is the primary locale for metropolitan circulation. Like train stations, airport terminals, and hospitals, the hotel is a liminal space where "you pass through, where the encounters are fleeting, arbitrary."⁹⁸ The novelist Joseph Conrad, Clifford points out, described his age (the early twentieth century) as one "in which we are encamped like bewildered travelers in a garish, unrestful hotel."⁹⁹ Perhaps it was this quality of bewilderment that made the hotel so ripe for the Surrealist imagination. Not only were Parisian hotels "homes away from home to the Surrealists," they were also "launch-



15. Kay Thompson. Page from *Eloise*, with drawing by Hilary Knight. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955, p. 8

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16. Brassai, *Le Maréchal Ney* (Marshal Ney), 1932. Black and white photograph, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (27.5 x 19.5 cm). Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris



17. Joseph Cornell, Untitled (called "Auriga" or "Hotel de l'Etoile"), 1954. Painted, glazed wooden box with paper backing for a construction of wood, glass, paint, book illustrations, and clippings, 19 x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (48.3 x 34.3 x 18 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. The Lindy and Edwin Bergman Joseph Cornell Collection, 1982

ing points for strange and wonderful urban voyages, *Nadja*, *Paysan de Paris*—places of collection, juxtaposition, passionate encounter.¹⁰⁰ Brassai's photograph *Le Maréchal Ney* (Marshal Ney, 1932; fig. 16) offers a striking visualization of the Surrealist conception of the hotel: the illuminated letters H-O-T-E-L float in the fog like a lure. The glowing letters, and the dematerialization of the building's structure, suggest the placelessness of the hotel: even when you are there, you are nowhere, or on your way somewhere else. As opposed to the honor and permanence of the monumental statue, the hotel's glowing light pictures the danger and seduction of transience, the mystery of continual deferment.

The hotel's transient quality, and its association with exotic places and glamorous travel, were captured by Joseph Cornell, who, while lacking travel experience himself, fell in love with the evocative names of faraway institutions found in his collection of Baedeker guides: "Hotel de l'Etoile," "Hotel du Nord," "Hotel du Cygne," "Grand Hotel de l'Observatoire." These places represented for him the world travel and physical flight of the ballerinas of whom he was an avid fan. Thus the distinctly melancholic series of hotel box-constructions, with their decrepit walls, cracked windows, constellations, yellowing hotel ads, and empty perches, evoke Cornell's inability ever to possess the dancers whose spirits infuse these places and the impossibility of his reaching these wondrous locales (fig. 17).

In addition to providing a stop on the Surrealist passage through the city, the hotel has frequently appeared in films, most often as a "carnivalized space" that offers its guests the opportunity to break out of the limitations of their everyday lives.¹⁰¹ The epitome of this genre, Edmund Goulding's *Grand Hotel* (1932), with Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford, brings together disparate professions and social classes, and liberates guests to choose new identities, disrupt hierarchies, and play new parts (fig. 18). One character in the film alludes to the circulating momentum on which all activities at the hotel are based: "The Grand Hotel. People come. People go. And nothing ever happens." He is only half right, for things do happen, things that would be impossible under normal conditions, and they are precisely what make the hotel such a fantasy-filled environment.¹⁰²

By the 1960s, the carnival of the Grand Hotel, with the optimism and freedom it implied, had become its opposite. The hotels in Jean-Luc Godard's film *Alphaville* (1965), with their tranquilizers, seductresses, and surveillance, are microcosms of state repression (fig. 19).¹⁰³ And it is by way of *Alphaville*—the other Paris, the one lost in darkness—that we travel from Berlin's Grand Hotel to Los Angeles, Becker's home and reference point, and also the site of an establishment appropriated by Fredric Jameson to explore postmodernity and the city's related shift from center to sprawl. Postmodernism, Jameson argues, implies "a mutation in built space . . . we do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace. . . . The new architecture, therefore, . . . stands as something like an imperative to grow new organs, to expand our sensorium and our body to some new, as yet unimaginable, perhaps ultimately impossible, dimensions."¹⁰⁴ As his paradigm for this hyperspatial architecture depen-

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18. Edmund Goulding. *Grand Hotel*, 1932. Still from black and white film in 35 mm., 115 minutes. The Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive, New York

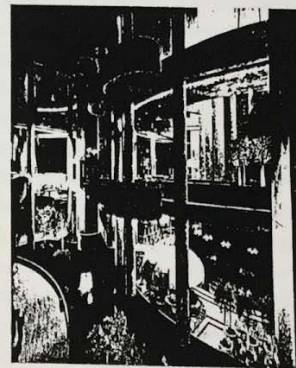


19. Jean-Luc Godard. *Alphaville*, 1965. Still from black and white film in 35 mm., 98 minutes. The Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive, New York

dent on the "lexicon and syntax" of postmodernism, Jameson fixes on John Portman's Bonaventure Hotel, a structure based on pure implosion.¹⁰⁵

"A total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city," the Bonaventure has a reflective glass skin that turns the building's exterior into a giant reflecting mirror. This external shell not only "repels the city outside" but makes it impossible to see the building's structure at all—passersby are left only with distorted images of the hotel's surroundings.¹⁰⁶ The lack of grand entrances constitutes a further rejection not only of the local neighborhood but of the entire surrounding metropolis. The interior, with its greenhouse roof, artificial lake, climbing elevators, and dramatic central atrium decorated with hanging streamers, prevents a clear understanding of spatial relationships; voids seem crowded, and losing one's way is common (fig. 20). In this interior city, "people movers" (elevators and escalators) replace streets, so that the urban wanderings of Benjamin's flâneur are "underscored, symbolized, reified and replaced by a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade we are no longer allowed to conduct on our own."¹⁰⁷ The Bonaventure, like the postmodern condition, Jameson argues, "has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself."¹⁰⁸ Inside the hotel and outside in the unmappable city of Los Angeles, body and structure are equally decentered, space is confused and confusing, perception unclear.

In *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, Becker intensifies the implosion and decentering suggested in Jameson's view of the Bonaventure and in postmodernism more generally. Location and direction continually unwind in her installation, but Becker's implosion is less the violent pull of inward collapse—like a building exploding in on itself—than a centrifugal force propelling exterior to interior, expansive to miniature. The installation choreographs a move from the hotel's life-size walls, rooms, and corridors to the smaller structures of refriger-



20. John Portman & Associates. Los Angeles Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles, Calif., 1977

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21. Stanley Kubrick. *The Shining*, 1980. Still from color film in 35 mm., 146 minutes. The Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive, New York

ator boxes and, finally, to the still smaller miniature models.¹⁰⁰ Like dollhouses, these tiny buildings represent what Susan Stewart calls "the tension between two modes of interiority . . . center within center, within within within," and Becker further directs attention to the interior by her disregard for their exterior decoration.¹⁰¹

Despite the pull of this inward-pointing force, we never reach an absolute center, and as we move through the installation we continue our boundless and labyrinthine wandering. Installed within an unfamiliar, unkempt, and unnavigable area, Becker's models deceive us into thinking we can find location and direction, a smaller mirror to the space we currently inhabit. Yet these rooms, with their shifts of scale, indecipherable architecture, unnatural lighting, and surreal sense of crimes and tragedies, offer no solace or home for the lost and wandering nomad. Becker's models do not provide the "perfectly complete and hermetic world" of the dollhouse,¹⁰² but instead present the kind of interiority found when two facing mirrors enact an infinity of reflections—like the repetition of identical doors, hallways, and public spaces that so terrifies Danny Torrance in *The Shining*'s Overlook Hotel (fig. 21). Given Danny's gift of telepathy (the "shining" of the film's title), this terrifying placelessness seems also to exist within his own mind, which opens out uncontrollably to access faraway realms of time and space. In *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, the nowhere of the hotel joins the unending, ungridded, and octopuslike metropolitan (postmodern) sprawl.

The junk piled up in the work area both denies location and extends the sense of fragmentation found in this installation and induced in our bodies within it. For a child, though, such disorder, the perfect terrain for hide-and-seek, is part of the fun. "I am all over the hotel," Eloise exclaims, "Half the time I am lost."¹⁰³ From the description of her days at the Plaza, it is clear that the other half of the time Eloise spends wreaking havoc: from writing her name in red crayon across a lobby mirror (the image on the cover of my own childhood copy of the book), to running a stick across the doors in a hallway to disturb staff and guests, to harassing switchboard operators. In insinuating Eloise and Danny into her installation, Becker invites us to envision the hotel as a playground. She also turns to another children's activity that enlivens the detritus of the city: the collection. Children salvage castoffs and transform them into their own magical talismans. These trinkets, the critic Roger Callois writes, "are not beautiful but brilliant. . . . Bodies of this sort possess a magnetism which sensibly enhances a somewhat mysterious character of their nature: here is a metal which folds, which crumples. . . . They spirit him away to the world of adventure. . . . They appear as booty lifted from a universe compared to which the real is weak and pale."¹⁰⁴ Benjamin turned this game of collecting into a form of theoretical praxis, and described the child's—and his—particular interest in places where things are "being visibly worked upon. They are irresistibly drawn by the detritus generated by building, gardening, housework, tailoring, or carpentry. . . . In using these things they do not so much imitate the works of adults as bring together, in the artifact produced in play, materials of widely differing kinds in a new, intuitive relationship. Children thus

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produce their own small world of things within the greater one."¹⁴ Becker's installation offers a re-creation of just such a junk-filled construction site.

In a short essay on Becker's *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, Chris Kraus asks, "Where do Danny's and Eloise's inner lives converge?"¹⁵ My answer is, within a hotel. And with its series of repeating and repetitive rooms and mazelike corridors, this hotel is also a city—which brings us, once again, back to Léger. In comparison to Becker's maelstrom of gathered objects and shards of mirror, Léger's ruptured spaces, his fragments of shapes and colors, seem orderly, controlled, and marching-band rhythmic. The city/hotel to which Becker refers is thus no longer Léger's thoroughly modern and mechanized metropolis, nor Nadja's marvelous Paris, that "forest of symbols"; it is the hyperspatial sublime of Los Angeles and of the Bonaventure Hotel, bewildering, fractured, fragmented, reflective, repetitious, endlessly expansive. The fragments and castoffs found in Becker's installation are not simply playthings for children—they are the building blocks of this continually discontinuous and disassembling city.

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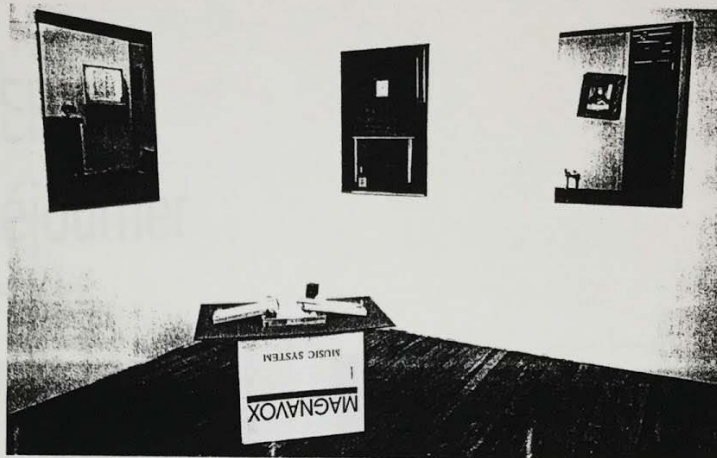
Hot Coffee

Artist's Space, New York

It's impossible to discuss a group show like 'Hot Coffee' without asking a lot of questions – like, 'who does art think it's fooling, anyway?' and, 'which is more crucial, flavour or substance?' Tom Lawson, Dean of the art school at California Institute of the Arts, and the curator of 'Hot Coffee', copped the show's title from a 1937 Edward Weston photograph, of a battered pictographic rest-stop sign somewhere in the California desert. The jaunty poignancy of a giant cup of joe steaming away in the middle of an already sizzling plain makes perfect sense if you've ever lived in Los Angeles, where ambition and good ideas routinely sublimate into an acrid, portentous haze. But away from home, as these artworks are, the situation just looks hopeless.

All six 'Hot Coffee' artists are graduates of California Institute of the Arts. (A necessary disclosure: so am I). CalArts, which itself has run hot and cold as a pedigree-factory, is still known for some constants: one of them being that ideas come first and execution a distant second. This is manifested in 'Hot Coffee' as a brightly decrepit aesthetic, the kind of I'm-doing-the-best-I-can corner-cutting which most 'serious' artists outgrow when they hit the gallery circuit. But the 20- and 30-something in 'Hot Coffee' have nothing to grow out of, since arrested development is something LA tolerates as long as one pulls one's own creative weight.

That burden is loosely defined: Dave Muller, best known for organising the roving exhibition space Three Day Weekend, spent much of his graduate-school career hosting other students' shows in his studio. Now, he makes hand-lettered approximations of announcements for exhibitions by other Los Angeles artists. Formally, these unsolicited gifts look like art – with pink mylar sheeting covering an oversize poster for Pae White and Greg Araki, and thick

Hot Coffee
Installation view

ropes of solder binding a series of giant metal postcards for Mitchell Syrop. Ultimately, viewers must decide whether Muller is cynically biding his time with this seemingly unambitious pursuit, or if he's just a really sweet guy – and happy to finally have an excuse to make art.

One of the few artworks Marina Rosenfeld has produced is *The Lingering Afterglow of Repetitive Longing* (1996), a video loop of a woman (or maybe a long-haired man) playing silent air guitar, seen in silhouette on a patterned orange floor. One critic praised the rakish angle of Rosenfeld's video, projected casually into a gallery corner – even though such nonchalance doesn't mesh with the clinical art-school title. The question of professionalism, then, hinges on whether this disjunction is purposeful or not; though if we decide it is, we must then decide whether to call Rosenfeld's work ironic or pretentious. (Unless, of course, we care to redefine our concept of professionalism.)

Laura Owens' one huge painting exhibits a similar sheepish ambition and a perfectly half-arsed execution: her untitled piece from 1996 depicts the lower half of a glopily impastoed landscape hung low on a wall, the raw-canvas floor below it splotted by shadows of sickly pink and green.

Also recalling (or is it critiquing?) crowd-pleasing Modernism is Kent Young's wall-sized grid of rectangular swatches of cloth – old towels, upholstery vinyl, burlap, canvas – much of it dingy and grimy, some of it frayed, stretched out like animal pelts.

Julie Becker's colour photographs of constructed rooms are more conceptually opaque; the few here start to mess with your mind, devolving into a looking-glass world of neatly arranged but unnameable dolls' house elements. Equally odd is an accidental sculpture entitled *Tourists: London* (1995), comprising a cardboard television crate supporting a metal film-reel can that contains a maddeningly inscrutable diorama of a miniature bureau and a white chalky substance.

Lastly, Andrea Bowers' series of 'Spectacular Appearances' (1996-97) threatens to sink 'Hot Coffee' under the weight of its legibility. Her three large drawings are each mostly empty, except for a small, perfunctory colour sketch of figures plucked from a crowd, dressed in quintessential white-trash American T-shirts and logo hats. Accompanying the drawings are two monitors playing hand-held video footage of an array of proletarian crowd scenes, like parades and baseball games. But the video compilations are mesmerising in a way that melts

away condescension – unlike most art-gallery patrons, these spectators appear to be having fun. Besides, if we didn't call them artists, the under-employed hand-labourers in 'Hot Coffee' would surely be considered white trash, too.

So what does one do with art like this? Art that refuses to take art seriously – not because the artists aren't smart or capable enough, but possibly because they don't believe we deserve the best they can give. Think of their arrogance, and our longing. (And vice-versa.) Most art made in big cities is designed to be seen in enclosed white rooms with clean lines and hermetic logic following suit. But for art to survive outside locked-down institutions and dusty textbooks, it's got to find its way in the world. In Los Angeles, the studio windows stay wide open; the works in 'Hot Coffee' appear incidental because right now, art is incidental.

David A. Greene

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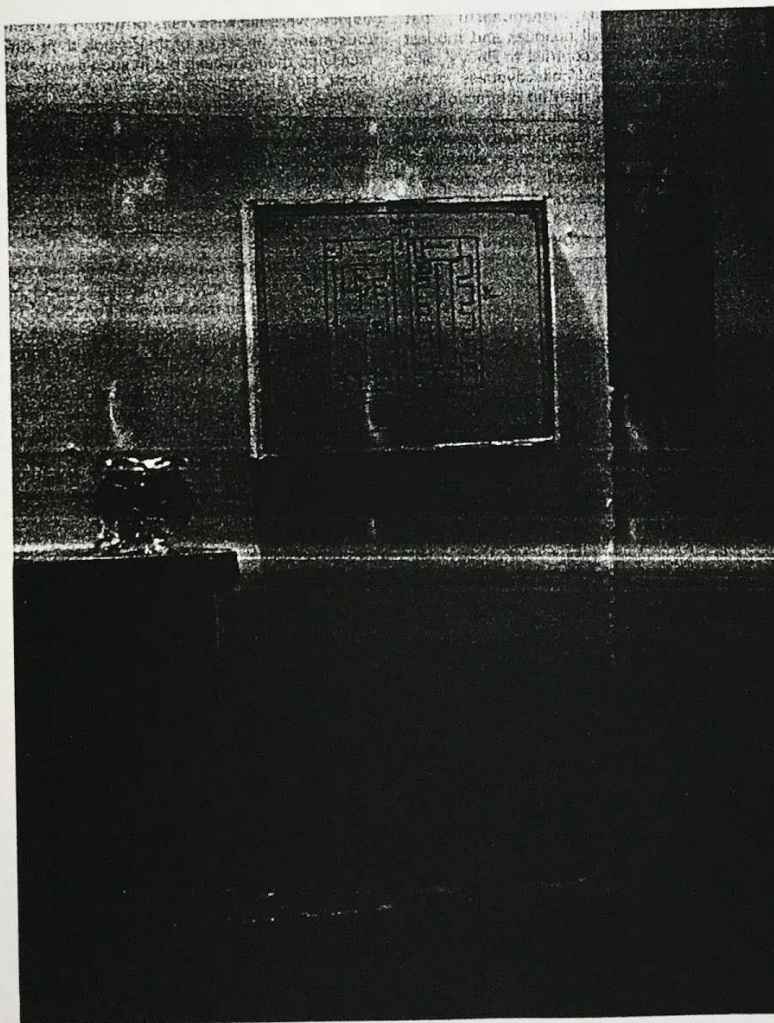
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TERRY R. MYERS

JULIE BECKER

un lieu où séjourner

A Place to Rest



«Optional Entrance». 1996-97. Cibachrome. 100 x 75 cm. Détail de la 1^{re} salle. (Court. Regen Projects, Los Angeles)
Detail of the front room. Cibachrome

■ For a few years now, Julie Becker has given herself a great deal to do, even when much of it is to be put off for the time being. In fact, this is a delay based in a "work ethic" that purposely displays the meaning of her work (and the convictions of its ideologies) as being fully maintained by the methods and materials of its characteristic production, much more than by what it looks like (not to suggest that style isn't an issue on some levels), or by what inferences we may make (not to imply that we have no accountability here). By definition, it seems, her work demands that everything read and imagined that is inserted into it be left literally and metaphorically *suspended* (in place or in time, if not in the air; or even "suspended" like being kicked out of class at school, but we'll get to that later), not only in order that we mentally take in extraordinary amounts of substance worth returning to again and again as we experience her work over time, but also that we learn very quickly that conclusions to be drawn here are few and far between, not to mention ultimately rather distracting.

Idiosyncratic Resolve

After all, what are we to make of a highly organized and rambling piece like *Researched, Residents, a Place to Rest*, from 1996, which conflates the last thirty-or-so years (at least) of art practice and structuralist/post-structuralist thinking (take your pick with the likes of Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* (don't forget, it was a Stephen King novel first); the little girl Eloise who lives in the Plaza Hotel; a real-life clairvoyant named Vito consulted by Becker; and radio station K-Ear 1010, broadcast from the artist's home base in home town of Los Angeles? (By the way, it's meaningful to note here that Becker's practice invigorates the potential of the conceptual and material parameters set up in the installation-based work of recent "post-scatter" artists like Gerber, Jason Rhodes and Rirkrit Tiravanija.)

Debuted publicly by LA's MOCA curator Peter Schimmel in his portion of the aptly haphazardly-titled "Universalis" section of last year's São Paulo Biennial, and soon to reappear

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■ Depuis quelques années déjà, Julie Becker s'est fixé de nombreuses tâches, même si nombre d'entre elles sont remises à plus tard : ce délai est fondé sur une «éthique de travail», et est destiné à souligner que la signification de son œuvre (ainsi que son idéologie) repose entièrement sur les méthodes et matériaux qui caractérisent sa production, bien plus que sur son apparence (encore qu'à certains niveaux, le style ait son importance), sans oublier ce que nous en déduisons (ce qui ne signifie nullement que l'artiste n'en porte pas la responsabilité). Il semble que son œuvre exige que tout élément réel et imaginaire qui la compose reste littéralement et métaphoriquement en suspens (dans le lieu, ou dans le temps, sinon en l'air, voire «suspendu», comme un élève momentanément chassé de l'école – nous y reviendrons), non seulement pour nous permettre d'absorber mentalement une quantité extraordinaire de substance qui mérite d'être revisitée à maintes reprises, mais aussi pour que nous réalisons rapidement que l'on ne peut en tirer que de rares conclusions, d'ailleurs fort déroutantes.

Après tout, que penser d'une œuvre à la fois aussi organisée et aussi anarchique que *Researchers, Residents, a place to rest* (Chercheurs, Résidents, un lieu où séjourner, 1996), qui intègre ces trente (au moins) dernières années de pratique artistique et de pensée structuraliste ou post-structuraliste (faites votre choix), avec des éléments tels que *Shining* de Stanley Kubrick (tiré d'un roman de Stephen King, ne l'oubliez pas), Eloise, une petite fille qui vit au Plaza, une voyante du nom de Voxx (elle existe réellement, et Becker la consulte), et la radio K-Earth 101, qui émet de Los Angeles, la ville de l'artiste ? (Notons au passage que Becker optimise des éléments dérivés des œuvres d'artistes post-scatter comme Ava Gerber, Jason Rhodes ou Rirkrit Tiravanija.)

Une œuvre raffinée

Julie Becker a fait ses débuts sous l'égide de Paul Schimmel, conservateur au MOCA de Los Angeles, dans la section *Universalis* (titre délibéré ou choisi au hasard ?) de la Biennale de São Paulo, et nous la reverrons en mai à la Kunsthalle de Zurich. Son œuvre (qui s'est imposée assez rapidement) est à la fois encombrante et raffinée, précise et pleine de digressions, exaspérante et réconfortante, à la limite du point de non-retour schizophrénique et des modalités de l'affirmation de soi, en particulier face à certains facteurs d'oppression. Une telle détermination m'a empêché de noter le nombre de fois que Julie Becker m'a dit : «We'll get to that» (Nous allons y venir) quand j'ai visité son atelier : j'ai cessé de compter car je me

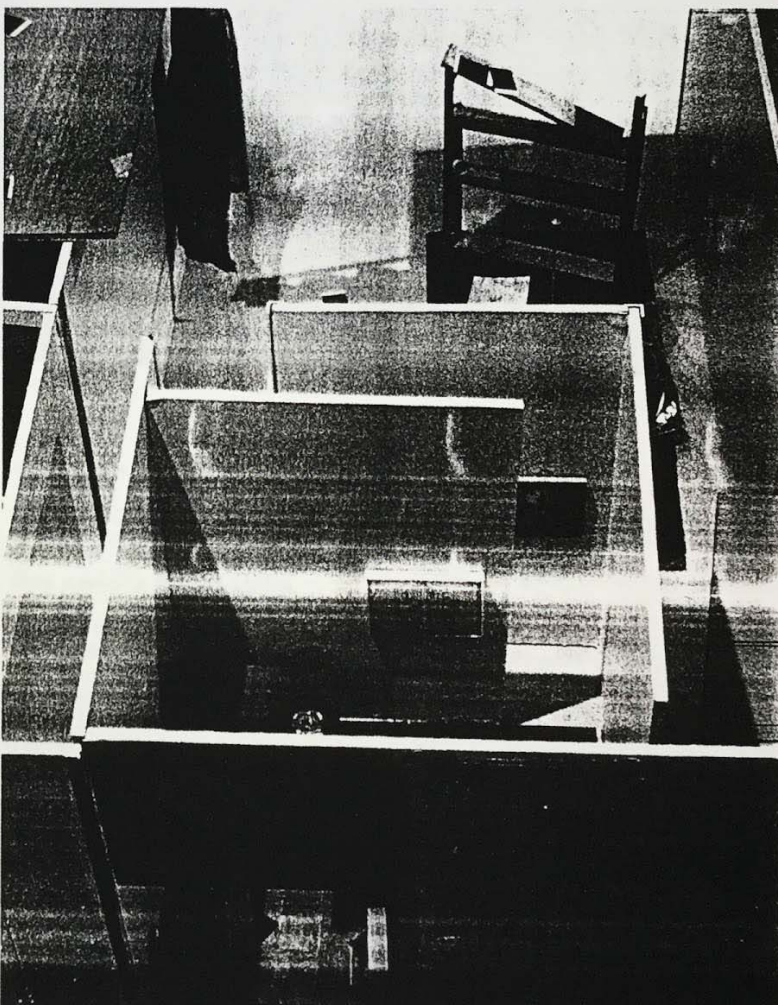
suis vite rendu compte qu'il s'agissait d'une véritable déclaration d'intentions. Julie Becker nous livre, indubitablement, un univers ; de surcroît, elle nous donne quelque chose à faire et des éléments pour réfléchir.

Comme Gulliver

Researchers, Residents, a place to rest (Chercheurs, résidents, un lieu où séjourner) est une installation composée de trois sections principales, zones qui nous entraînent rapidement dans des univers parallèles qui n'ont aucune chance de se rencontrer : des lieux qui, simultanément, habitent et n'habitent pas nos corps, l'espace et/ou l'art. La première salle ressemble à s'y

in May at the Kunsthalle, Zurich, Becker's major (and relatively swift) accomplishment is unwieldy and refined, diversionary and focused, irritating and comforting, not to the point of schizophrenic no return, but rather to the brink of (dare I say it?) the conditions and complications of self-determination, particularly in the face of certain oppressions. Such a display of idiosyncratic resolve kept me from continuing to notice the number of times Becker told me "we'll get to that" when I visited her studio—I stopped counting because I quickly learned it was a firm statement of purpose. Becker provides us with a world for sure; moreover, she gives us something to do.

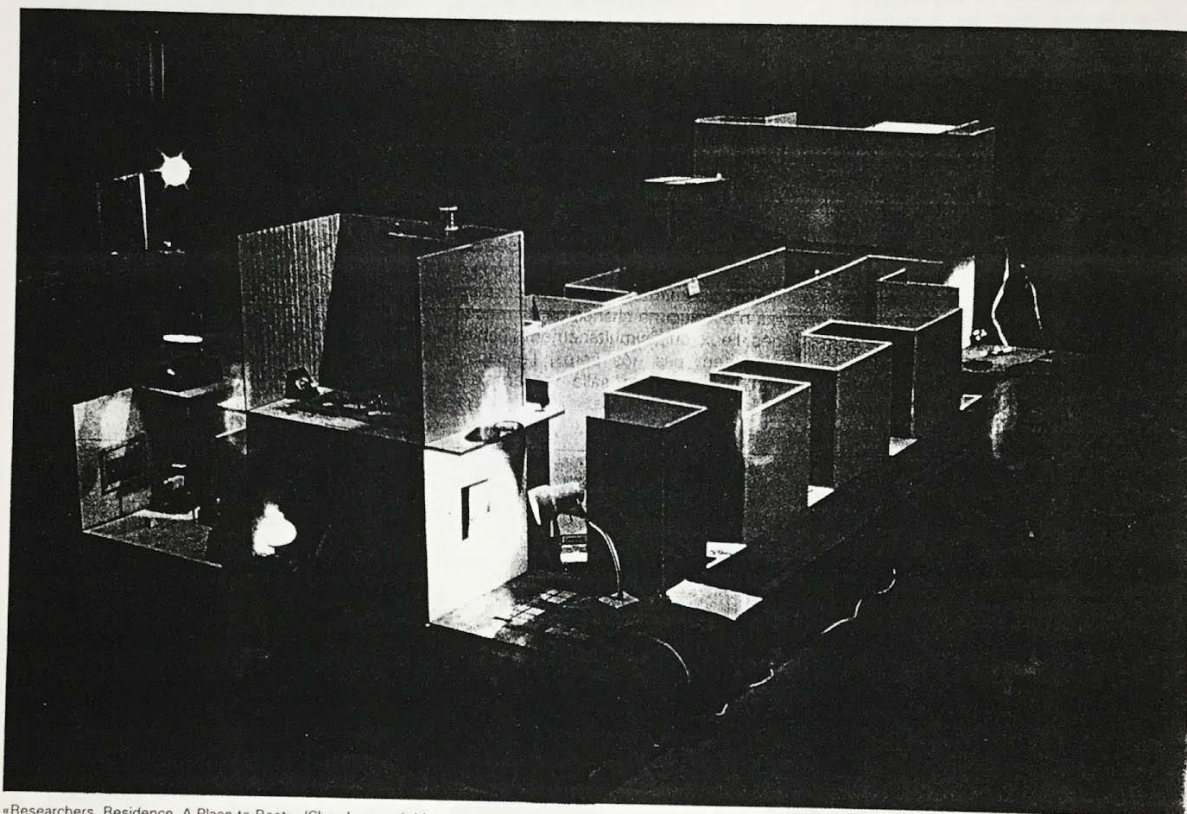
Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest is made up of three primary sections, zones



«Researchers, Residence, A Place to Rest». (Chercheurs, résidents, un lieu où séjourner). 1996. Technique mixte 9 x 12 x 3 m. Installation à la biennale de São Paulo. Détail de la maquette dans la 2^e salle. Mixed media, detail

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«Researchers, Residence, A Place to Rest». (Chercheurs, résidents, un lieu où séjourner). 1996. Technique mixte. 9 x 12 x 3 m. Installation à la biennale de São Paulo. Détail de la maquette. Mixed media installation. Detail of the model

méprendre à un vrai hall de réception, équipé de panneaux en plastique qui pourraient être interchangeables («Agent immobilier», «Conciergerie», «Salle d'attente», «Psychiatre», etc.). Un plan de l'étage, encadré, est accroché au mur. Un étroit couloir nous permet d'accéder à un lieu que nous identifions aisément comme une «galerie». Il contient deux maquettes fort élaborées d'intérieurs, disposées sur des plate-formes légèrement surélevées (chacune repose en fait sur un sommier métallique de lit à deux places), de sorte que nous les dominons, un peu à la manière de Gulliver, comme pour nous permettre (mais ce n'est qu'une première impression) d'affirmer physiquement notre omniscience. Ceci d'autant plus que ces constructions sont réalisées sur le plan de l'étage accroché dans la première salle. Tout change lorsque nous remarquons que la première pièce de la première maquette est une reproduction de la salle d'attente que nous venons de traverser : dorénavant, nous ne savons plus vraiment quelle est notre position par rapport à ces espaces condensés et à leur environnement, nous sommes désorientés. En

d'autres termes (contrairement à ce qui se produit avec l'œuvre de Matthew Barney, par exemple), cela n'a plus rien à voir avec le fait de gagner ou de dominer quelque chose.

Une parfaite méticulosité

Dans ces maquettes, Becker a éparpillé les attributs d'habitants inconnus et non identifiables – sans doute, pensons-nous, les «chercheurs et résidents» du titre. La méticulosité de ces minuscules fabrications n'est pas fortuite ; elle suggère plutôt un scénario «comme dans la vraie vie», possibilité toujours présente dans un contexte tellement structuré, voire écrit comme un «script» (cet aspect de la pratique de Becker rapproche sa démarche de celle d'un cinéaste). Nous voyons de minuscules pages de minuscules journaux et manuscrits ; des meubles miniatures, des tableaux, des posters, avec des références plus qu'occasionnelles à des exemples spécifiques de la culture populaire. La première maquette, par exemple, reproduit la chambre de Danny – Danny Torrance, le fils du tueur psychopathe interprété par Jack

which quickly situate us in what I would suggest are parallel universes which have no possibility of converging: places where we simultaneously do and do not inhabit our bodies, the space, and/or the art. The first room passes for an actual reception area, complete with interchangeable plastic signs («REAL ESTATE AGENT», «CONCIERGE», «WAITING ROOM», «PSYCHIATRIST» etc.). A drawing of a floor plan hangs framed on its wall. Moving through a narrow corridor, we enter what more easily reads as a «gallery» space. In it are two models of fairly elaborate interior spaces, raised slightly on platforms (actually, each of them is resting on a metal twin bed frame) so that we loom somewhat over them, almost Gulliver-like in what first seems to be intended as a physical affirmation of our omniscience, especially given that these constructions are based upon the floor plan hanging in the previous room. Everything changes when we notice that the first room is the first model is a reproduction of that waiting room we just passed through: from then on we enter these concentrated spaces with no clear sense of our position relative either to them or to their surroundings. In other words (unlike, let's say, in the work of Matthew Barney), this has nothing to do with winning.

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Nicholson dans *Shining* –, où des pages du carnet de notes du jeune garçon sont éparpillées sur le sol. Comme tous les matériaux écrits de ces maquettes, elles sont parfaitement lisibles ; l'impact est comparable à celui que nous éprouvons dans le film de Kubrick lorsque nous parvenons à lire les mots désaxés tapés par Nicholson à la machine : « A force de travailler sans s'amuser, Jack n'est pas devenu drôle. »

Travail et loisirs

Le travail et les loisirs – Julie Becker comme Kubrick le montrent clairement – ne sont en aucune façon des catégories immuables, comme en témoigne, dans la deuxième maquette, la chambre d'Eloïse au Plaza Hotel, havre d'une enfant privilégiée dans un cadre unique. (Ce qui ne signifie pas nécessairement que la massive résidence-de-loisirs-prisonnière-des-neiges/hôtel infernal de Danny Torrance n'était pas luxueuse en temps normal, mais nous savons du moins, presque dès le début du film, qu'il n'appartenait pas à cette classe sociale.) La chambre d'Eloïse est incontestablement un refuge, non pas contre des fantômes ou un père meurtrier, mais un refuge permettant de fuir le travail et la responsabilité. Il est important de noter que c'était à l'origine le cas du personnage du livre pour enfants paru dans les années 50. Dans ce nouveau contexte, Julie Becker inverse dramatiquement la situation, puisqu'elle fait écrire à la petite fille (dans son journal) des questions (adressées à elle-même ?) telles que : « Penses-tu que les gens disent des choses complètement stupides pour obtenir ce qu'ils veulent ? »

Les sempiternelles distinctions entre le travail et le jeu sont vigoureusement soulignées par Julie Becker dans cette seconde salle par la présence de quelques cartons d'emballage (de taille réelle) placés dans des niches qui flanquent les deux modèles. Ostensiblement destinés à des personnes réelles (presque comme des témoins invoquant une fois encore l'échelle humaine, tentative anthropomorphique qui me rappelle que Julie Becker considère également comme des observateurs impassibles les lampes de bureau « pas à l'échelle » qui éclairent les maquettes), ces boîtes évoquent l'espace ouvert du jeu de pure imagination (celle des enfants qui s'en servent pour créer leur propre univers fictif dans la cour), et en même temps l'espace oppressif de l'habitat inadéquat, des sans-logis, de l'incapacité à résoudre les vrais problèmes. Il est remarquable que Julie Becker réussisse à maintenir les deux lectures (et de nombreuses lectures intermédiaires) ; cela nous donne aussi une indication des lectures idéologiques, voire politiques, que

nous pouvons tenter d'interroger dans la dernière salle de l'installation.

Dans cette troisième section, nous trouvons ce que Julie Becker décrit comme suit (dans une déclaration inédite) : « Un atelier, un entrepôt, ou une bibliothèque, bourré d'indices abstraits ; témoignage du pénible processus de construction de l'installation : piles de notes de travail (versions abandonnées du projet), profils "scientifiques" de personnalités, plans au sol, plans de façades, de labyrinthes... » le tout indiquant

In these models, Becker has distributed accoutrements of unknown and identifiable inhabitants—the "researchers and residents" one is led to believe. The meticulous nature of her diminutive fabrications is not accidental; instead it suggests a "true-to-life" scene which is always a possibility in such structured, even "scripted" circumstances (this the part of Becker's practice that makes her very much like a filmmaker). Found here are tiny pages from tiny handwritten journals, typed manuscripts; miniature furnishings, posters, paintings, etc.; and more than a few occasional specific popular culture referen-



«Researchers, Residence, A Place to Rest» (Chercheurs, résidents, un lieu où séjourner). 1996 Technique 9 x 12 x 3 m. Détail de la salle du fond. Detail of the back room of the installation at the São Paulo Bienal

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avec honnêteté, encore que d'une façon quelque peu confuse, que l'œuvre repose idéologiquement sur ses fondations concrètes, qu'il s'agisse de la paperasse nécessaire pour réaliser une grande installation destinée à une importante manifestation internationale, de petites maquettes en carton, des grands cartons d'emballage, du carnet de notes de Danny Torrance grandeur nature, ou encore de clips de *Shining* montrés sur un petit téléviseur, sans compter la documentation supplémentaire, par exemple les nombreuses diapositives prises par la grand-mère de Julie Becker au cours de ses voyages (dont beaucoup montrent des personnes destinées, dans ce contexte, à être confondues avec des «résidents»), ou une image vidéo d'un entretien de l'artiste avec la voyante nommée Voxx. (Une photocopieuse est même à la disposition des visiteurs, leur permettant éventuellement d'emporter des copies de certains documents.) Ce n'est pas par accident que le dernier objet ajouté par Julie Becker à son installation est le badge de sécurité (complet avec photo : presque un autoportrait), qui lui permettait de se déplacer dans les bâtiments de l'institution pendant qu'elle y travaillait : elle n'en a plus besoin, puisque son travail est achevé, alors que le nôtre commence dès notre arrivée. ■

Traduit par Frank Straschitz

Terry R. Myers est actuellement critique en résidence à l'Otis College of Art & Design de Los Angeles. Rédacteur au New Art Examiner et à Blocnotes, correspondant de World Art, il collabore également à Arts Magazine, Flash Art, The Journal of Contemporary Art, QW, TRANS.

For example, the first model contains Danny's room—as in Danny Torrance, the son of the psychopathic killer played by Jack Nicholson in *The Shining*—where pages from the boy's notebook lie abandoned on the floor. Like all of the miniature written materials presented here, they are legible: the impact of reading them is not unlike the sensation we have in Kubrick's film when we get a look at Nicholson's deranged handiwork at the typewriter: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Work and leisure—both Kubrick and Becker make clear—are by no means fixed categories: consider the second model which contains Eloise's room in the Plaza Hotel, a place which houses a privileged child in an exclusive milieu. (Not that Danny Torrance's snow-bound residence/playground/hell hotel wasn't upper class when it was open for business, but we know at least early on in the film that *he* didn't come from that particular class.) Eloise's room is fully a refuge, an escape not from ghosts or a murdering father but from responsibility and labor. It is important to note that this was the case in the original 1950s storybook Eloise character: in this new context Becker turned the tables dramatically as soon as she had the girl write in her notebook such loaded questions (to herself?) as "Do you think people say the stupidest things to get what they want?"

Work and Play

The never-ending discriminations made between work and play in society at large are brought home by Becker most forcefully in this second room by the presence of a few (actual-size) cardboard refrigerator boxes, placed in niches which flank the two models.

Ostensibly standing in for real people (almost like witnesses in terms of their invocation, once again, of human scale, an attempt at anthropomorphizing which reminds me that Becker also considers the "out-of-scale" and functioning desk lamps that illuminate the architectural models to be impassive observers as well), these boxes conjure up the open space of pure imaginative play (of children, who use them to create a fantasy in their own backyard), and the oppressed space of inadequate shelter, homelessness, and an inability to solve genuine problems. That Becker can sustain both readings here (and many found in-between) is in my view a real accomplishment, and an indication of what types of ideological, even political readings we might possibly attempt in the final room of the installation.

In this third section, we find what Becker calls (in an unpublished artist's statement) "an obsessive workshop, storage, or resource library crammed with abstract clues; evidence of the frustrating process involved in building the installation: piles of project notes (abandoned versions of the project), 'scientific' personality profiles, drawings of floor plans, building facades and mazes..."—all of which adds up to an honest yet tangled acknowledgment of the work's ideological grounding in its material conditions, whether these are found in the paperwork required to pull off a large installation in a major international exhibition, in small cardboard models of the refrigerator cartons, in Danny Torrance's life-size notebook, or in clips from *The Shining*, itself playing on a small television—not to mention the additional sources of information like numerous slides taken during the travels of Becker's grandmother (many of which depict individuals possibly meant to be misread as "residents" in this context), or a video still from the artist's conversation with the clairvoyant named Voxx. (There is even a Xerox machine provided, just in case we want to make copies of any documents to take with us.) It is no accident that the last thing Becker added to her installation was the security badge (complete with photo; almost like a self-portrait) which facilitated her movement around the institution while she worked: she doesn't need it anymore since her job was done when ours started, the moment we walked in the place. ■

Terry R. Myers is Critic in Residence in the Fine Arts and Graduate Studies Departments at Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles. He is also a contributing editor to New Art Examiner and Blocnotes and an editorial correspondent for World Art.

JULIE BECKER

Né en / Born 1972

Vit et travaille à / Lives and works in Los Angeles

Expositions personnelles / Solo exhibitions

1997 Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Kunsthal, Zurich (31 mai - 3 août)

Expositions de groupe / Group Exhibitions

1996 Biennale de Sao Paulo : Ibirapuera, Sao Paulo

1997 Gothic : ICA, Boston ; Hot Coffee, Artist Space

New York ; N.Y. Drawings Today, San Francisco

Museum of Modern Art, S.F.



«Researchers, Residence, A Place to Rest». (Chercheurs, résidents, un lieu où séjourner). 1996. Technique mixte 9 x 12 x 3 m. Détail : image vidéo de la rencontre avec Voxx, dans la salle du fond. Video still from the meeting with Voxx, located in the backroom

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GREENENAFALI INC.

La-la Band

The Village Voice

February 18, 1997

XLII No.7

At this in-jokey, almost aggressively mild, sneakily compelling little group show of tyro Los Angeles avant-gardists—not exactly “hot” young artists, more aptly “warm” or even “tepid-with-a-certain-something” young artists—start with the scruffiest item, a video projection by Marina Rosenfeld. Set askew on the floor, the projector beams into a darkened corner a small image of the shadow of a woman playing air guitar. The shadow flails with slovenly frenzy in a room with red-flocked yellow wallpaper. The ineffably cheesy vision swiftly generates and then sustains, like a slight headache, an impression of fragile beauty and gritty aesthetic smarts.

I never heard of Rosenfeld before. I'm told that she mounts more or less feminist performances, such as one that I missed at this show's opening: nine women with cheap portable record players doing synchronized scratching of Rod Stewart LPs. Her video projection is titled *The Lingering Afterglow of Repetitive Longing*. I detect a content of girl attitudes toward rock-'n'-roll boy jollies, but something tells me it's only the tip of Rosenfeld's iceberg. The rest is the secret of a dashing self-possession that she shares with her four peers in this show of California Institute of the Arts alumni, ages 24 to 32.

In New York, we haven't been hearing much from the legendary cutting-edge think tank of Cal Arts—or from its present dean, former New York painter and editor of *Real Life* magazine Thomas Lawson, who curated this show. Come to that, we haven't heard a lot from Los Angeles or, for heaven's sake, about young American artists anywhere in coherent groups marked by shared ambitions and special practices. These are strange days culturally, notoriously awash in “information” but without focus: no big ideas, no ruling styles, no novel controversies. Those who hated art-world hype in the 1980s must be happy now. Except (for some persistently obscure reason) in merrie olde England, the late-1990s art world drifts in a cosmic hype vacuum.

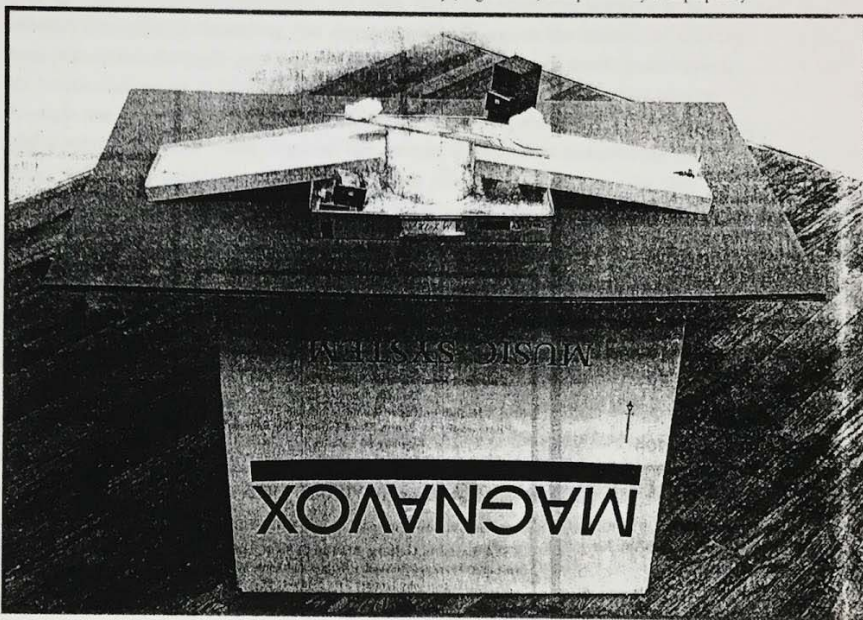
The present art world feels like a typical afternoon in Los Angeles, maybe: endless and aimless, bright, vaguely troubled, not unpleasantly stupefied. Lawson gives this show an ideally atmospheric non-theme by

“Hot Coffee”
Artists Space
38 Greene Street
Through March 15

BY PETER
SCHJELDAHL

gubriously pathetic model rooms she has constructed. And, on a cardboard box, she mounts a doll-sized environment that incorporates a film canister, wooden trays, sugar cubes, clumps of

larly seems very much more powerfully mysterious than whatever they attend. My heart salutes Bowers as a companion soul and possible guide in my own perplexity.



Conceptualist art vernaculars as well-worn as a Valley Girl lilt: Julie Becker's *Tourists: London* (1995)

linking it to a 1937 Edward Weston photograph of a forlorn, battered sign in the Mojave Desert: a giant cup and saucer imprinted HOT COFFEE. Lawson writes of “the struggling, hopeless optimism” caught by the photographer—“a weirdly hypnotic combination of confidence and delusion” that feels pretty widely germane to present culture. These L.A. kids are steeped in that chronic spirit and in Conceptualist art vernaculars as appropriately well-worn as a Valley Girl lilt. Think of the vernaculars as Calonic.

Once associated with sensuous, feel-good formalism, Southern California art style is more-lately famous for Mike Kelley-esque tones of sadsack abjection, a connoisseurship of the lumpy that was dubbed “Just Pathetic” by L.A. critic Ralph Rugoff. Those old and new qualities are joined in one-stop shopping by Kent Young, who arrays tragic fabrics—bits of what look like faded child blankets, exhausted washcloths, a profoundly soiled hospital napkin, and other less specific but likewise poignant swatches—in geometric murals as exquisitely considered in composition and color as the decor of a 1920s Dutch-modernist café.

Julie Becker, the youngest artist here, presents photographs of lu-

confectioner's sugar, a miniature file cabinet, a teeny microscope, and, well, other stuff. I confess to being at sea with Becker, which I surmise is exactly, for the moment, where she wants me.

I'm confused, too, by Laura Owens's big painting, but in ways that feel targeted. Owens tersely limns a fictive interior space in bewildering perspective with laconic passages of drawn line, puddled stain, and juicy impasto, as if to amplify her own and the viewer's self-consciousness to some verge of panic. She seems intent on making paintings that are as uncomfortable to look at as possible. I look forward to figuring out why when, in April, Owens has her New York solo debut at Gavin Brown.

Andrea Bowers is into spectators. On two video monitors, she screens compilations of tapes she made at public events: baseball and basketball games, a crowd scene in Las Vegas before the Tyson-Holyfield fight, and last month's Rose Bowl parade. And she singles out certain faces for scrutiny in tiny colored-pencil drawings on vast, empty grounds. Why do I find so simple an idea so exciting? Maybe because the condition of spectatorship has lately struck me as the overwhelming fact of present cultural life, where the identity of audiences regu-

From what I'm told, Dave Muller is the main figure on the “Hot Coffee” scene, the current young L.A. artist's young L.A. artist. This helps me take on faith the cogency of works that display a high quotient of you-gotta-be-there-arcana. Muller's pieces here are handmade mock-ups, in materials ranging from drawing on folded paper to painting on aluminum, of found and fanciful gallery announcements and exhibition posters. Contemplating it, for me, is like listening to a sprightly, almost certainly delightful conversation in a foreign language. I feel myself standing around smiling dopily at jokes I don't get, half humiliated but loath to tear myself away. These guys are just so cool.

Part of the considerable charm of “Hot Coffee” is the present rarity of its insouciant group dynamic in New York. The Darwinian brutalities of the local scene obviate such gemütlich synergy, treating postgraduate art-kid cohorts rather as a windshield wiper treats rain. If this were a group manifestation of young New Yorkers, it would reek of the competitive, now-or-never, do-or-die aura of our hard town. So the dose of Cal-Artsy cavalier attitude proves refreshing, at least, for its reminder that art is long, and from time to time has even been deemed fun. ♦

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other transformations of furniture, doors, or sinks, are "objects you complete with your body, and they're objects that, in one way or another, transform you. Like the sink, from dirty to clean; the beds, from conscious to unconscious, rational thoughts to dreaming; the doors transform you in the sense...of moving from one space through another."⁷⁸ In Jeanne Silverthorne's work, banal electrical boxes and wires in black rubber grow and spread like carnivorous plants through the gallery space. The ICA, Boston installation starts almost invisibly in white rubber from an "Exit" sign on the second floor before descending three floors to the basement, the visceral mutations parasitically taking over the whole building. As much as the wires evoke associations of dead matter coming alive—in the tradition of Art Nouveau, Gaudí or *Alien*—they are also metaphors for the fragile body, "neurons and ganglia and intestines... taking what's usually behind the walls, the plumbing and the wiring, and disgorging these innards into space."⁷⁹

Los Angeles artist Julie Becker similarly explores architecture, memory, and the idea of the home, however, to produce radically different effects. Her miniature reconstruction of real and fictional spaces in *Postersize Copy Machine* (1996) exudes the same fascination as dollhouses, crossed here with "a crime-scene model, complete with dingy shag carpeting, bad wallpaper and scattered notes written on tiny paper."⁸⁰ Further clues are to be found in photographs of her almost abstract *Interior Corners*, both of the model and of real corners that served as model, leading to frantic speculations that have to remain inherently inconclusive. "This installation...", she states about a related piece, "obsessively creates maze-like situations and multiple entryways for the viewer to enter and exit, through which he/she can access and assimilate information, create connections, pick up cues or clues, and construct or find narrative events."⁸¹ In Abigail Lane's carefully staged crime scene, *The Incident Room* (1993) voyeuristic conventions of the male gaze (as epitomized in Marcel Duchamp's peepshow of *Étant Donnée*, 1946-66) are undermined. The female wax mannequin surfaces from a pile of earth in a fake floor, surrounded by photographic lamps and accompanied by a fabricated newspaper report. Lane is more interested in the construction of complex narratives and intricate detective stories with indirect clues and evidence than in a sensationalist spectacle of murder, rape, or torture (for that her *mise en scène* is too ordered, the corpse's skin too clean, willingly betraying its artificiality). Instead, the "base materialism" of the female body withdraws itself from the objectification through the voyeuristic gaze, denying the spectator power over reality.⁸²

Keith Edmier's installation *Nowhere (Insideout)* of 1995 makes visible the metaphorical function of architectural walls as the skin of a building, the win-

CHRISTOPH GRUNENBERG

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GREENENAFALI INC.

Paul Schimmel. *Fool's Gold*.
Exhibition Catalogue
Universalis - 23. Bienal Internacional Sao Paolo
Fall 1996

When Julie Becker reentered the California Institute of the Arts in 1993, ostensibly to study for an MFA degree, she really had only one thing in mind—to enter a situation that would allow her to pursue her obsession with and research into the subject of residence, a place to rest. The youngest artist in this exhibition and the only one who has had no previous public exposure, Becker is extraordinary in her single-minded focus on creating a structure to support her mélange of public and private fantasies.

The entry/office/receiving area connects with the real world as a point where mail can be dropped off and information can be disseminated. The anteroom/staging-area is a tableau of process consisting of every paper scrap, each concept sketch and documentation of each place in which Becker lived and worked during the intensive period of realizing the installation, and is here for the viewer to interact with as a platform for Becker's roles as real-world artist and as architect of a disturbing fantasy residence.

In the eighties, empirical models of all kinds experienced a resurgence, evident in the art of Chris Burden, Mike Kelley, and Thomas Schutte, among others. Becker has gone further in overturning the previous decade's intellectualized manifestation of the model. She uses the "collectible" dollhouse as a stage for narrative fantasy in an update of the Victorian passion for miniaturized make-believe. Fusing her own psyche with the subjective states of fictional characters, Becker builds environments on the edge between dream and nightmare.

Becker, whose family moved frequently when she was a child, finds kindred spirits in the characters of Danny Torrance (from Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*) and Eloise (from *Eloise* by Kay Thompson and Hillary Knight), the storybook child who lives alone in the Plaza Hotel in New York. The rooms Becker creates for her fictional friends are specific renderings of altered states of mind, tinged with the artist's own psychological uneasiness. They turn the banal dollhouse into a plaything of psychotic intensity, rupturing our comfort and shattering our expectations.

Becker places her miniature homes between two full-scale, walk-in tableaux, one an entrance-room/office and the other an anteroom/staging-area, further unsettling anyone's notions of real and fictive. These tableaux settings serve as bookends to the play worlds of the male and female characters. Made with obvious obsessiveness, these works reveal the artist's direct connection with the fears and follies of Danny and Eloise.

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GREENENAFTALI INC.

Chris Kraus. Catalogue Essay
Exhibition Catalogue
Universalis - 23. Bienal Internacional Sao Paulo
Fall 1996

Julie Becker's *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest* is a tormented fun house, a *Magic Theatre* for the next century. Like all the best art, it preempts philosophical extrapolation because it is totally alive, a switching-yard of discarded tropes, cherished talismans and cultural associations. The laboratory has become a charged field, a world set into motion by a mad scientist (or perhaps, since Becker makes no effort to escape her own identity as a *Serious Young Woman*, a deviant librarian) who has mysteriously disappeared. And yet, unlike the magic-box constructions of the novelist Paul Auster, whose work Becker's might superficially be compared to, *Researchers and Residents* offers mystery stripped of charm and romantic mystification.

The diaries of two children, Danny Torrance and Eloise, are the protagonists of this installation. The absent residents never get to speak. They are spoken for by their empty rooms strewn with Becker's version of dollhouse objects (Sophie Calle meets Barbie in an SRO?) and the hopelessly generalized notations of a resident researcher. But the children, through their diaries, speak to us in their "own" words.

Both children are inventions of American pop culture. Eloise comes to us from the 1950s, the privileged heroine of a storybook set in New York's finest hotel. The original Eloise, a precocious icon of a time when privilege was thought to be transferable, gushes in the storybook about her fondness for hotel room-

service ("They always know it's me!"). But in *Residents* Eloise confides an inner life: "Do you think," Becker writes in Eloise's tidy notebook, "people say the stupidest things to get what they want." And then she catalogs key words to sprinkle through her love-letters:

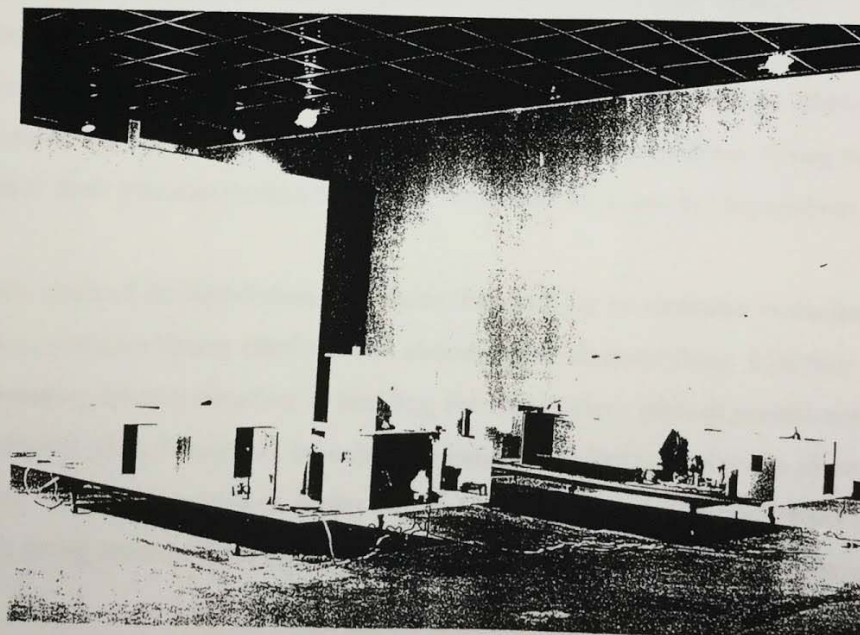
"purity
DESPERATION
CREATURE
Longing
until the end of time
loneliness
Ruins
Temptation
Differences
Sameness
Trusting
Joined as one
Special
Endearing
Lasting..."

Danny Torrance comes to us from Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, the popular film in which Jack Nicholson portrays a block novelist, whose job as winter caretaker of a resort hotel frees him up to become a psychopathic killer. His son Danny, a child of the more-threatened, less-articulate recession 1970s. Danny's notebook, as imagined here by Julie Becker, is an excursion into horror, much scarier than the movie.

"Dear Tony," Danny's diary begins, "today dad went to look for work in some hotel in the hills. What will happen if he gets the job? He never asks me what I think about where I will move to."

Where do Danny and Eloise's inner lives converge? Are they Becker's alter egos? And what about the refrigerator cartons in the gallery? And the seedy workroom where an Oldies radio station drones on like ambient background to a crime scene? "Something is wrong here." The success of *Residents* lies in its cinematicness. There are no alter egos. The artist-as-director is everyone and everything, refracted into shards and reinvented through the story.

Ferocious longing and intelligence.
Chris Kraus



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GREENENAFALI^{INC.}

My most recently completed project, titled *Researchers & Residents (a place to rest)*, reconfigures the gallery space into three distinct places. The first, located at the gallery entrance, is a cramped office/reception area. This space opens into the 2nd area of the installation via a narrow corridor. Initially, the viewer encounters two model-like structures raised slightly off the floor. These structures combine features of an architectural model, miniature train set, and laboratory maze; however, they deny consistent scale relationships. One part of the model reproduces the office space of the gallery entrance; the other parts present the imaginary living and research facilities, of the "researchers and residents" alluded to in the title. No human figure is represented, but traces of human activities abound in the rooms (typed manuscripts and personal journals scattered on the floor, sleeping bags, wooden doors waiting to be hung, the new York times unfolded with certain classified ads highlighted, a poster of Olympic runners half taped to the wall...). Is it an artists colony? the Bradbury building (as seen in Blade Runner) turned youth hostile? a penal colony, a hotel? The question of who inhabits/inhabited the space is intentionally left unclear--perhaps imaginary characters, deviants, squatters, children at play, or even the viewer. The rest of the central space in the gallery is occupied by cardboard refrigerator boxes, that construct temporary places children might use to enact a fantasy, and others might resort to for protection. Along with the model, their presence further suggests a "way out," or a way to "somewhere."

The third space of the installation ("backside/flipside") is an obsessive workshop, storage, or resource library filled with an abundance of abstract clues; Evidence of the frustrating process involved in building the installation: piles of project notes (other places/other directions), invented personality profiles/descriptions of anyone (even the viewer), drawings of places without names, journal entries of Eloise (a little girl living alone at the Park Plaza Hotel in New York), and Danny Torrance

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(the boy in "the shining,") tape-recorded conversations, the endless low volume of the 50's radio station K-earth 101, etc..., and alot more peculiar items the viewer can search though, listen to, and/or get lost.

This installation (which I consider to be part of an ongoing process) obsessivly creates maze like situations and multiple-entry ways for the viewer to enter and exit, through which he/she can access and assimilate information, create connections, pick up cues or clues, and construct or find narrative events. The process, of constructing this project (drawing from various narratives in popular culture, as well as other self-invented ones), opens up the possibility of revealing the mechanics of the mind, offering the viewer a "rest stop" or "step away" from the notion of the world-as-whole (perhaps the biggest installation); a chance to unfold, rethink, and understand the process through which we live, breathe, create ourselves, and create the world.

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Julie Becker

Researchers, Residents,

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Julie Becker Geboren 1972 in Los Angeles, lebt in Los Angeles / Born in Los Angeles 1972, lives in Los Angeles
California Institute of the Arts (B.A.; M.F.A. 1995)

Gruppenausstellungen / Group Exhibitions: 1996 Summer Group Show, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York ·
23A Bienal Internacional de São Paulo, North American Section, São Paulo
1997 New Work: Drawings Today, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco · Hot Coffee, Artist
Space, New York · Gothic, ICA Boston · Defamiliar: Julie Becker, Miles Coolidge, Thomas Demand, Regen
Projects, Los Angeles · Broken Home, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York

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a Place to Rest

Kunsthalle Zürich

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15 Detail von Modell # 2

Detail of model # 2

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Detail of model # 2

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Kassettencover für K-earth 101 radio-Aufnahmen

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Bernhard Bürgi in Conversation with Julie Becker

Bernhard Bürgi: Your huge, complex installation, *Researchers, Residents, a Place to Rest*, has emerged out of a prolonged and painstaking process. You worked on it from 1993 to 1996. One possible means of approaching and circumscribing it would be to refer to Ilya Kabakov's term "total installation," in which viewers are clearly free to move around in space and are immersed in an atmosphere that produces a dream-like condition. The basic structure consists of a closed architectural complex divided into three sections, which contain countless elements, levels of reality, references and points of view. There are miniature, minutely crafted interiors as well as life-sized environments. Visitors enter the installation through one such environment, which is like a reception and waiting room. Let's start here and then gradually move on through the narrow passageway. How could one interpret this introductory space? You've given it several designations: "Real Estate Agent," "Waiting Room," "Concierge," and "Psychiatrist." They are all present in the room as possible means of preparation and investigation. Each evoking a different set of associations and imaginings, they are ready to be exchanged. The "Psychiatrist" sign is particularly evocative, suggesting that we will enter not only physical but mental spaces as well.

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Bernhard Bürgi im Gespräch mit Julie Becker

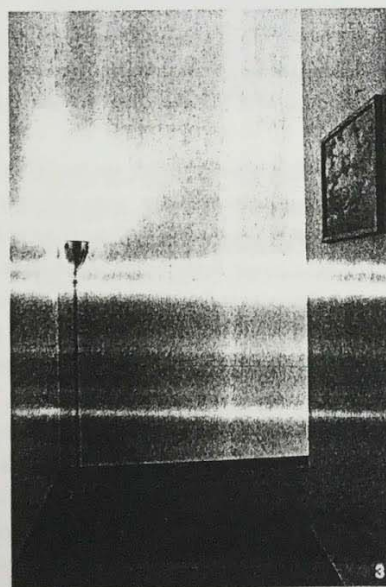
Bernhard Bürgi: Unter dem Titel "Forscher, Bewohner, ein Platz zum Ausruhen" hast du in einem langwierigen Werkprozess von 1993–96 eine gross und komplex angelegte Installation geschaffen. Man könnte sie annäherungsweise mit Ilya Kabakovs Begriff der "totalen Installation" zu umschreiben versuchen, in der sich der Betrachter offensichtlich frei bewegt und zugleich tief in ihre Atmosphäre eintaucht, in einen traumähnlichen Zustand versetzt wird. Ihre Grundstruktur bildet ein in sich geschlossener architektonischer Komplex, der sich in drei Bereiche teilt. Sie beherbergt eine Vielzahl von Elementen, Realitätsebenen, Bezügen und Sichtweisen, weist sowohl Interieurs auf, die als Miniaturen in subtilster Handarbeit entstanden sind, als auch "Environments" in Realgrösse. Durch ein solches Environment betritt der Besucher die Installation, das eine Art Empfangs- und Warteraum bildet. Lass uns hier mit der Betrachtung beginnen und uns dann langsam durch die schmale Korridorpassage weiterbewegen. Welche Bedeutung kommt diesem "Initialraum" zu, dem du Schilder unterschiedlichster Benennung zuordnest, wie "Immobilienmakler", "Warteraum", "Concierge", "Psychiater"? Sie alle sind im Raum als Möglichkeiten der Vorbereitung und Erkundung präsent, stehen – unterschiedliche Assoziationen und Vorstellungen weckend – zum Austausch bereit. Ins-

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Julie Becker: You come into a room and you don't know exactly where you are. At first glance, the room appears to be an office or a waiting room—maybe a home office, or the kind of reception area that you see in an industrial park in the San Fernando Valley. It's a small room, and very bright. Colors are popping out; everything is very still except for three goldfish swimming in a bowl. After a moment you realize that sounds are traveling into this room from somewhere deep inside. You can't quite identify what it is—is it muzak? Is it techno? Is it just the sound of machinery being operated in the back room? After a while you realize that the room isn't ordinary at all. It seems hallucinatory because the things that first seemed ordinary are completely skewed in this configuration.

The shelf that holds the Kleenex box above the side table is just a little bit too high. The candy dish below it doesn't quite belong—it's a crystal tiered jar that you'd see in a grandmother's house. The ochre Naugahyde loveseat is also, on further inspection, a sofa bed. Yet it's obvious this room is not a bedroom. Who sleeps here? When and why? And isn't the typeface on the desk signs just a little too large? "Psychiatrist," "Real Estate Agent," "Waiting Room," "Concierge." It's unlikely that the public is received here, and if these signs declare a purpose, why is there more than one? The walls are empty except for a framed set of plans. On closer inspection there's a legend on the map that says: "You Are Here." Does the map refer to a business

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besondere das Schild "Psychiater" weckt die Neugierde, suggeriert es doch, dass bald nicht nur physische, sondern auch psychische Räume betreten werden.

Julie Becker: Du betrittst einen Raum und weißt nicht genau, wo du dich befindest. Auf den ersten Blick scheint der Raum ein Büro oder Wartezimmer zu sein – ein Arbeitszimmer vielleicht oder die Art Empfangsbereich, die man im Industriegebiet des San Fernando Valley sieht. Der Raum ist klein und sehr hell. Farben springen ins Auge. Nichts bewegt sich ausser drei Goldfischen, die in einem Glas herumschwimmen. Dann merkst du, dass von irgendwoher tief im Innern der Installation Klänge in den Raum fluten. Du kannst sie

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project of the occupant outside? Or is it a map of the installation? You've just arrived here from Documenta X in Kassel and you wonder, who's the "You"?

I think that the goal of installation art should be to create an experience between objects so that viewers are transported outside themselves to recognize a larger more complex world. Dislocation, an uneasy coexistence between reason and intuition, a sense of touch and smell. If you stepped into a painting or a photograph what would you find? All things are possible in an installation. I can see how you brought up Kabakov—I think his work transforms the depressed and dismal state of Russian history into a lyrical universe. He scratches the record of deprivation and remixes it as something poetic and charged. In my work I try to mimic the process of how we think and integrate ourselves into the world so that we can see without dividers. Characters abstracted from real life, locations taken out of books and movies all interact within these walls and invite the viewer to travel with them. I hope my work will move people—from one place to another!

Bernhard Bürgi: This "antechamber" situation gives viewers freedom of movement and offers several possibilities for tuning in. But only a narrow passageway provides access to the main room in the installation. This transition ties in with the uncertainty of not knowing what to

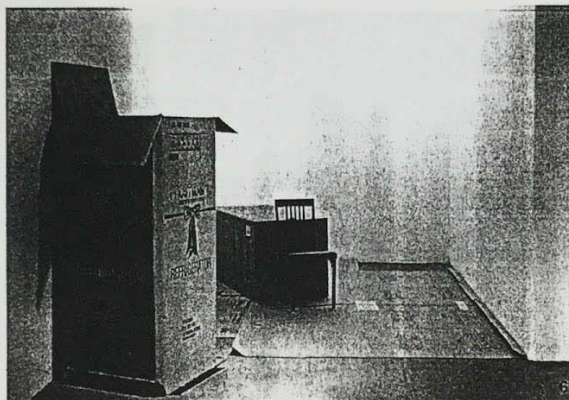
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nicht richtig einordnen – ist es Muzak? ist es Techno? Ist es nur das Geräusch von Geräten, die im hintersten Raum in Betrieb sind? Nach einer Weile merkst du, dass dies ganz und gar kein gewöhnlicher Raum ist. Er wirkt wie eine Halluzination, weil die Dinge, die zuerst ganz normal schienen, in dieser Anordnung völlig schräg sind.

Das Bord mit der Kleenex-Schachtel über dem Beistelltisch hängt gerade ein wenig zu hoch. Die Bonbonschale darunter scheint, wenn man sie sich genauer anschaut, nicht richtig hierher zu gehören – es ist eine Etagere aus Kristallglas, die man in Grossmutter's Wohnzimmer finden könnte. Das ockerfarbene Vinylsofa ist, wie sich bei näherer Betrachtung herausstellt, auch eine Bettcouch. Doch es ist offensichtlich, dass der Raum kein Schlafzimmer ist. Wer schläft also hier? Wann und weshalb? Und ist die Schrift auf den Schildern nicht eine Spur zu gross? "Psychiater", "Immobilienmakler", "Wartezimmer", "Concierge". Es ist unwahrscheinlich, dass hier Publikum empfangen wird, und wenn diese Schilder einen Zweck kundtun, wieso dann mehr als einen? An den Wänden hängt nichts ausser ein paar gerahmten Plänen. Sieht man genauer hin, so entdeckt man darauf eine Legende, die erklärt "Du befindest dich hier." Verweist der Plan auf ein externes Geschäftsprojekt des Raumbenutzers? Oder ist es ein Plan der Installation? Du kommst gerade von der Documenta X in Kassel und fragst dich, wer wohl mit "Du" gemeint ist.

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expect, and also with the irrevocable decision to commit oneself to the world you have created and to spend some time in it—a world that is wide open in itself but closed off from the world outside. The perspective changes when viewers reach the large room. There, two architectural structures are raised, as if floating just above the floor. The one closer to the passageway re-enacts the first space. You might say that the physical immediacy of spatial structures implodes into miniature format so that there is suddenly an overview since we can now look down into the interiors from above. But the “models” are not structured with the rigor of architectural planning; the furnishings and the setup have emerged more intuitively in the process of which the layout has changed several times. You have designed some of these rooms for specific characters who apparently live there since we see the traces of their lives—for Danny Torrance, the young protagonist of Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining*, for Eloise, a



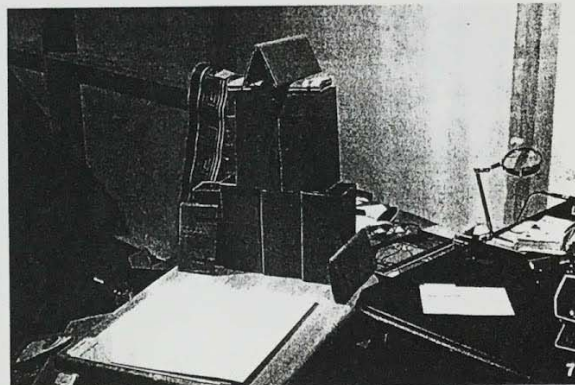
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Ich bin der Meinung, die Installationskunst sollte darauf abzielen, durch Objekte eine Erfahrung zu ermöglichen, die den Betrachter aus sich herausführt und ihn eine grössere, komplexere Welt wahrnehmen lässt. Desorientierung, eine unsichere Koexistenz von Verstand und Intuition, ein Gefühl von Berührung und Geruch. Was würdest du finden, wenn du dich in ein Bild oder eine Fotografie hineinbegeben könntest? In einer Installation ist alles möglich. Ich verstehe, warum du Kabakov erwähnt hast. Sein Werk, so glaube ich, verwandelt den tristen, düsteren Zustand der russischen Geschichte in ein lyrisches Universum. Er scratcht die Platten der Entbehrung und macht daraus einen poetischen, gehaltvollen Remix. In meinem Werk versuche ich die Art zu imitieren, wie wir denken und uns in die Welt integrieren, damit wir ohne Trennvorrichtungen sehen können. Aus dem wirklichen Leben abstrahierte Figuren und Orte aus Büchern und Filmen beeinflussen sich hier gegenseitig und laden den Betrachter ein, mit ihnen auf die Reise zu gehen. Ich hoffe, mein Werk wird die Leute an einen anderen Ort befördern!

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girl who lives alone in the Plaza Hotel in New York, but for real people as well. In spite of the meticulous detail, like pages of Danny's diary strewn on the floor, there is certainly no doll's house feeling to your structures. They are airy conglomerates of spaces that open up before us with an overwhelmingly intense artistic density. I realize, of course, that you leave it up to the viewers to find their own way through your spaces and to pursue their own associations and stories. But I wonder if you can tell me more about the residents and how they relate to the context you have created.

Julie Becker: There is no definite answer to your question. It's true that the Researcher room in the second model just so happens to be located directly across from the Hollywood psychic who calls herself Voxx. Now Voxx is a celebrity psychic to the stars with a popular radio in Los



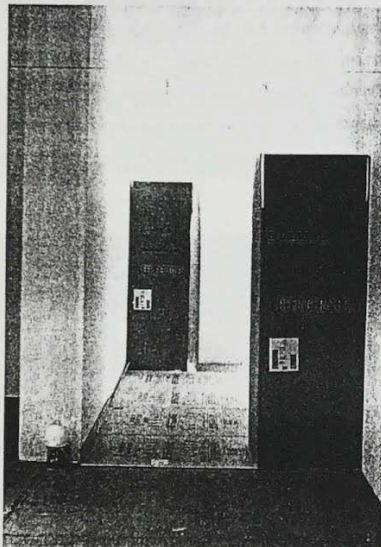
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Bernhard Bürgi: Nach dieser Vorzimmersituation der möglichen Einstimmungen, der dem Betrachter die Freiheit der Bewegung lässt, bleibt nur eine enge Passage, um den zentralen Raum der Installation zu erreichen. Das Weiterschreiten ist mit der Ungewissheit verbunden, was einen im weiteren erwartet, auch mit dem Entscheid, sich unausweichlich mit dieser von dir geschaffenen Welt einzulassen, in ihr zu verweilen, die sich nun – bei aller Offenheit – in sich gekehrt nach aussen abschliesst. Im grössten Raum angelangt, wird in Veränderung der Wahrnehmungsperspektive der Blick des Betrachters auf zwei architektonische Modellkonstellationen gerichtet, die leicht über dem Boden schweben, wobei in der näher beim Durchgang liegenden Formation der Eingangsraum wieder aufscheint. Die physische Direktheit der Raumanlage implodiert sozusagen ins Miniaturformat und so entsteht plötzlich eine Art Übersicht. Denn der Blick neigt sich nun von oben auf Innenräume, die sich jedoch nicht nach der planerischen Konsequenz eines Architekten aneinanderfügen, sondern deren Ausstattung und Zusammenhang sich mehr in intuitiven Prozessen und in zahlreichen Abänderungen der

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Angeles. Could it be that the researcher is in direct opposition to Voxx? Perhaps each of them represents a different means towards finding truth: the intuitive and the rational.

The characters of Danny and Eloise—who we meet in the reception room and discover later through their notebooks—are also extreme opposites in terms of both personality and class. Eloise lives in the fabulous Plaza Hotel in New York City. Danny's staying at the empty Overlook Hotel in Colorado just because his loser father happened to luck out and find a winter caretaker job. Eloise is a precocious and overly dramatic little girl. Danny Torrance is very private. Do they find themselves together—or in confrontation? Each character is represented by two story rooms connected by a long single strand of silver thread—perhaps a telephone wire, perhaps a tightrope.



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Grundanlage ergeben haben. Du hast diese Räume u.a. für bestimmte Charaktere geschaffen, die diese Räume bewohnen, aber nur über ihre Spuren anwesend sind, so für Danny Torrance, den jugendlichen Protagonisten aus Stanley Kubricks Film "The Shining", für Eloise, ein Mädchen, das alleine im Plaza Hotel in New York lebt, aber auch für real existierende Personen. Bei allen minutiösen Details, so etwa Tagebuchseiten von Danny, die sich am Boden zerstreuen, kommt nie das Gefühl der Puppenstube auf, sondern es eröffnen sich vierteilige Raumkonglomerate, die von atmender Weite durchdrungen und durch und durch künstlerisch verdichtet sind. Kannst du mir mehr sagen über die Bewohner und in was für einem Zusammenhang sie zu dem von dir entworfenen Kontext stehen? Natürlich ist mir klar, dass du es vielmehr dem Betrachter überlässt, seine Assoziationen und Geschichten ins Spiel zu bringen und seine eigenen Wege und Zusammenhänge zu finden.

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But you asked me, who are the residents? Well, if you want to, you can read more about them in the researcher's file or read the private notes they've written about themselves. I didn't want to call them resident but I have to call them something. They are the anonymous people who the researcher character in the model is studying. The viewer is free to assume the role the researcher character seems so obsessed with, or to be an addition to the long list of "things to do" posted in the model room that represents the researcher's daily activity.

The resident rooms are located next to the researcher room in the second model in the main room. The refrigerator boxes are across from it, almost "on the edge of town." A refrigerator box, in American cities, can be the last refuge of the homeless. They're also temporary places for children to play in. But in this installation, the refrigerator boxes are also people—they take on human characteristics. Each of the boxes can be seen as a different side of oneself. The box faced into the corner with the chair on top is supposed to be the gloomy or depressed box. It's the box not capable of looking toward the outside for information—there's no way out of its melancholy state. This box is supposed to be having some kind of conversation with the box that you would like to be everyday but are not always. It's the most productive box, the best liked, capable of handling most any situation at most every given time. Perhaps it's the "almost perfect box."

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Julie Becker: Es gibt keine eindeutige Antwort auf deine Frage. Es stimmt, dass der Raum des "Forschers" im zweiten Modell sich zufällig genau gegenüber dem hollywoodschen Medium befindet, das sich Voxx nennt. Voxx ist eine von den Stars geschätzte Berühmtheit, die bei einem populären Radiosender in Los Angeles arbeitet. Steht der Forscher vielleicht in direktem Gegensatz zu Voxx? Vermutlich verkörpert jeder von ihnen eine andere Möglichkeit, der Wahrheit auf die Spur zu kommen; das Intuitive und das Rationale.

Danny und Eloise – denen wir im Eingangsraum begegnen und die wir später durch ihre Notizbücher kennenlernen – sind von der Persönlichkeit und der sozialen Schicht her ebenfalls völlig gegensätzlich. Eloise lebt im feudalen Plaza Hotel in New York City. Danny wohnt im leeren Overlook Hotel in Colorado, weil sein erfolgloser Vater das Schwein hatte, dort einen Aushilfsjob als Hausmeister für den Winter zu finden. Eloise ist ein frühreifes und übertrieben theatralisches kleines Mädchen. Danny Torrance ist sehr verschlossen. Finden sie sich hier zusammen – oder in Konfrontation? Ihre Persönlichkeit wird durch zweistöckige Räume verkörpert, die durch einen langen Silberdraht miteinander verbunden sind – vielleicht ein Telefondraht, vielleicht ein Drahtseil.

Aber du hast mich gefragt, wer die Bewohner sind. Nun, wenn du möchtest, kannst du aus den Akten des Forschers oder ihren privaten Aufzeichnungen mehr über sie erfahren. Ich mag die

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Across the room the "shy but willing to talk" box is conversing with the stubborn box, which thinks it knows everything and obviously feels embittered. It's paradoxical that our "characters," the residents, are anonymous and opaque while the refrigerator boxes are fully alive.

Bernhard Bürgi: I think it is instructive that you show reluctance to linguistically define certain characters who have settled down, at least temporarily, in some of the model rooms, especially since their traits and roles become indirectly tangible only through the interaction of objects, notes, etc. Besides, in the context of the configuration as a whole, they do not carry more weight than—say—the plain, empty cardboard boxes, which suddenly seem to embody human traits and moods through your suggestive placement. One might, of course, be tempted to read a linear narrative into the work and—as in a conventional novel or play—assign a leading role to the residents as a key to understanding. But this direct approach leads to a dead end. It is also canceled out by what happens in the last room, which is in full scale again. A kind of back room, somewhere between a storage space, a study and an archive, it is filled to overflowing with source materials and information, visually demonstrating that everything is in flux and in a state of uncontrollable transformation.

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Bezeichnung "Bewohner" eigentlich gar nicht, aber irgendwie muss ich sie ja benennen. Sie sind anonyme Personen, die von der Figur des Forschers im Modell untersucht werden. Dem Betrachter steht es frei, die Rolle zu übernehmen, von der der Forscher so besessen scheint, oder ein weiterer Punkt auf der im Modellraum hängenden langen Liste der "zu erledigenden Dinge" zu sein, aus der die täglichen Aktivitäten des Forschers ersichtlich sind.

Die Räume der Bewohner liegen neben dem Refugium des Forschers im zweiten Modell, das im zentralen Bereich der Installation steht. Auf der anderen Seite des Raumes, sozusagen "am Stadtrand", befinden sich die Kühlschrank-Verpackungen. Eine Kühlschrank-Verpackung kann in amerikanischen Städten ein letzter Zufluchtsort für Obdachlose sein. Kinder können

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In addition to the residents, you now introduce the "researcher," more as an attitude than as a person, as the observer who turns the model structures into research stations and profiles the personalities of the residents. Thus, the visual elements that emerge out of the structures in space are complemented by a detached, analytical level between sociology and psychoanalysis. But the ordering criteria on this level are in danger of being lost in the whirlwind of accumulated materials. We read in one of the files that the residents see everything as part of a bizarre cosmic whole. I think this comes closer to the crucial aspect of your project, which you hinted at when you said that there's no point in trying to explain everything. All of the fragments, quotations, spatial structures, etc. form a condensed atmosphere in which everything is inter-related but doesn't congeal into permanence.

Is the viewer in an inner world turned inside out? A world full of memories, burgeoning ideas, phantasms, disillusionment, quests for meaning and hope? A region of pulsating energy, breathing in and out, a structure of uncertain duration made out of many bits and partial aspects? A place to rest despite its fragility? Is it as if the installation were a mirror of the mechanics of our minds, of mental processes that find only momentary shelter and keep wondering how everything hangs together? You once spoke of "looking with everything you have."

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sie auch zum Spielen verwenden. Aber in dieser Installation sind die Verpackungen auch Personen – sie nehmen menschliche Züge an. Jede dieser Schachteln verkörpert eine andere Seite von uns. Die Schachtel in der Ecke, auf deren Klappe ein Stuhl steht, ist die "bedrückte oder deprimierte Schachtel". Sie kann nicht nach aussen blicken, um sich zu informieren – es gibt keinen Ausweg aus ihrem melancholischen Zustand. Diese Schachtel führt eine Art Gespräch mit der Schachtel, die man jeden Tag sein möchte, aber nicht immer ist. Sie ist die produktivste, die beliebteste von allen, fähig, praktisch jederzeit mit jeder Situation fertig zu werden. Vielleicht ist sie die "nahezu perfekte Schachtel".

Auf der anderen Seite des Raumes unterhält sich die "schüchterne, doch gesprächsbereite Schachtel" mit der sturen Schachtel, die glaubt, alles zu wissen, und offensichtlich verbittert ist. Es ist eigentlich paradox, dass unsere "Personen", die Bewohner, anonym und rätselhaft bleiben, während die Kühlschranks-Verpackungen total lebendig sind.

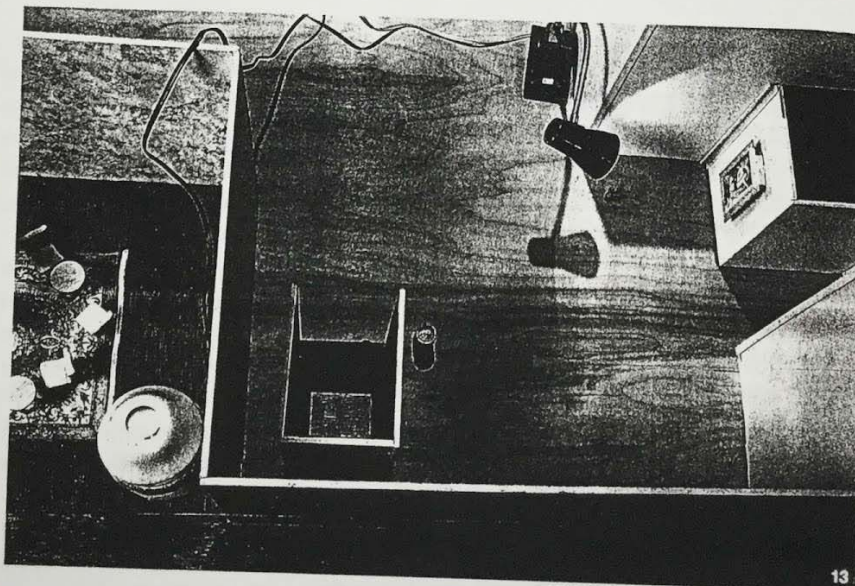
Bernhard Bürgi: Ich finde es aufschlussreich, dass du Scheu bis Widerwillen zeigst, bestimmte Charaktere, die sich zumindest temporär in den Modellräumen niedergelassen haben, sprachlich weitergehend zu benennen, werden doch ihre Eigenart und Rolle erst durch das Ineinandewirken von Objekten, Notizen etc. auf indirekte Weise spürbar gemacht. Sie haben ausser-

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Julie Becker: The cardboard room constructed within the second model allows viewers to experience themselves alternately as participants and observers. It also provides a visual clue to the relationship between the refrigerator boxes and the residents rooms. You could say that this project presents an inner world turned inside out. Though I prefer to see it as a zone of energy — yes, that sounds nice.

I'm not sure, though, about "uncertain duration." The way you phrase things makes it sound sort of depressing. It's also supposed to be fun, you know. Some things in life are really harsh and troubling. And if you can find a way to be less cynical — well, all the better.

Thinking, you know, can be completely suicidal. Sometimes it's better to just zone out. And this is what I'm doing here. *Researchers and Residents* throws the viewer into an unfocused state. It's like getting in your car and driving without any particular destination. This kind of openness can be scary but it's also potentially comforting and challenging. In this project you can route yourself, create your own itinerary. You can follow the plans in the front office. Or you can see it as a network to progress through. You can draw your own conclusions from connections already there. Of course, if we tried looking at the world "all at once" we would most likely go nowhere. I like the possibility of looking at everything in the world, especially at the same time. I call it the incredible disappearing experiment. Who knows what would really



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happen if we could do this? In order to do this project, I did have to try to "look with all of myself" as we discussed in our first meeting at my house. I tried to figure out how space, time and the human beings that live within them all coexist.

Some people think my work is like a homemade CD ROM because of its nonlinearity, with various entering and exiting points. I think this is pretty funny because we would not have invented "being everywhere instantly" if our minds were not there already. We should be talking about how this technology is conceptually so similar to how we think.

When I made this installation I had a storefront studio in Echo Park that I was also living in — a virtually condemned apartment building that was also the setting of a number of drug deals and drive-by shootings. Every area of inquiry I set up within the installation led to other questions. I didn't set out to create a history of the world! But living in this tiny space, I entered a kind of delirium of digression. So yes, I think you're right in saying that the installation folds back upon itself.

Bernhard Bürgi: Let's stay in the back room for a while before ending our conversation. Tell me how and when it came about and what has been accumulated there? I mentioned the files on the residents, but it is also filled with so many other things, for example a kind of musical

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gefällt die Möglichkeit, alles – vor allem alles gleichzeitig – anschauen zu können, was es auf der Welt gibt. Ich nenne es das unglaubliche Experiment des Verschwindens. Wer weiss, was wirklich geschehen würde, wenn dies möglich wäre? Um dieses Projekt angehen zu können, musste ich versuchen zu "schauen mit allem, was ich habe", worüber wir uns ja bei unserem ersten Treffen in meinem Atelier unterhielten. Ich versuchte herauszufinden, wie der Raum, die Zeit und die Menschen, die darin leben, alle miteinander existieren.

Manche Leute finden, mein Werk sei wie eine selbstgebastelte CD-ROM – wegen seiner nicht linearen Struktur, seinen verschiedenen Ein- und Ausgängen. Das finde ich ganz schön komisch, denn wir hätten das "Sofort-überall-sein-können" nicht erfunden, wenn wir im Geist nicht bereits dort wären. Wir sollten darüber sprechen, dass diese Technologie von der Konzeption her sehr ähnlich ist wie unsere Art zu denken.

Als ich diese Installation machte, hatte ich mein Atelier in einem Ladenlokal in Echo Park, in dem ich auch lebte. Es befand sich in einem Abbruchhaus, das mitunter zum Schauplatz von Drogendeals und Schiessereien wurde. Jeder Forschungsbereich, den ich in der Installation einrichtete, löste weitere Fragen aus. Ich hatte nie die Absicht, eine Weltgeschichte zu schaffen! Aber als ich in diesem winzigen Raum lebte, fiel ich in eine Art Delirium des Abschweifens. Ich glaube daher, du hast recht, wenn du sagst, dass die Installation auf sich selber Bezug nimmt.

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undertow. Is it perhaps also a reflection of the complex emergence of the installation as such? And does it afford insight into an area that is ordinarily not made accessible to viewers in the presentation of sculptures or paintings?



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Bernhard Bürgi: Lass uns zum Abschluss noch im Hinterraum verweilen und erzähle mir, wie und warum er entstanden ist und was sich denn da alles angesammelt hat? Ich erwähnte die Akten über die Bewohner, er ist aber beispielsweise auch vom Sog der Musik erfüllt. Widerspiegelt er nicht ebenso den komplexen Entstehungsprozess deines Werkes an und für sich und gewährt Einblick in einen Bereich, der dem Betrachter bei der Präsentation von Skulpturen oder Tafelbildern normalerweise verwehrt bleibt?

Julie Becker: Der hinterste Raum ist das Hirn der ganzen Installation – die Werkstatt, das Lager, die Bibliothek. Er ist nicht abgetrennt. Man findet in diesem Raum unterschiedliche Versionen von Objekten, die anderswo in der Installation ausgestellt sind. Doch hier wird überschüssiges Material nicht weggeworfen, sondern neu zusammengestellt, so dass etwas ganz anderes entsteht. Gespräche mit Voxx auf Videobändern, die zwölf Bewohnerprofile, braune Schlafsäcke, Aufnahmen eines Oldies-Senders in L.A., "Dubnobasswithmyheadman" von der Band Underworld, die Notizbücher von Danny und Eloise, Zigaretten und Kaffee, Fotos in Normalgröße, die anderswo als Verkleinerungen zu sehen sind, Akten, Zeichnungen, Motivations-Sticker, ein unvollendetes Bild einer Hütte im Wald und ein Kopiergerät, mit dem man jegliches Material kopieren kann, das man mitzunehmen wünscht. Aber wie in einer

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Julie Becker: The back room is the brain center for the entire installation — it's the workshop, the storage room, the library. It isn't separate. This room contains different versions of objects exhibited throughout the space. But here the outtakes aren't thrown away. They're put together to become something else. Discussions on video cassette with Voxx, the 12 profiles, brown sleeping bags, recordings of an Oldies radio station in L.A., "dubnobasswithmyheadman" by the band Underworld, the notebooks of Danny and Eloise, cigarettes and coffee. Photographs that are reduced elsewhere are left here in their full scale. There are files, drawings, motivational stickers, an unfinished painting of a cabin in the forest, and a copy machine to copy any materials you might want to take with you. But just as in an art-directed movie set, these things are intentionally arranged. And still there's a lot more. The presentation of this room makes people wonder exactly *what* role the viewer is supposed to take on: are the viewers researching the "topics" raised by the exhibition or are they just trying to figure out what they want from the installation and what I want from them? What exactly do we mean when we describe something as being "behind the scenes"? Where is it? From what place do we normally view a situation?

The back room should feel privileged to *not* be privileged — rather, to be included in the flow that moves through physical and mental spaces. A ghost moving through the walls?

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Filmkulisse sind diese Dinge mit Bedacht arrangiert. Und es gibt noch viel mehr. Die Art, wie sich dieser Raum präsentiert, wirft die Frage auf, *welche* Rolle der Betrachter denn genau übernehmen soll: Untersucht er die "Themen", die die Ausstellung aufs Tapet bringt, oder versucht er einfach herauszufinden, was er von der Installation erwartet und was ich von ihm erwarte? Was meinen wir eigentlich genau, wenn wir sagen, etwas sei "hinter den Kulissen"? Wo ist das? Von wo aus betrachten wir normalerweise eine Situation?

Der hinterste Raum sollte sich privilegiert fühlen, dass er *nicht* privilegiert, sondern vielmehr Teil des Flusses ist, der durch diese geistigen und physischen Räume strömt. Ein Gespenst, das durch die Wände geht?

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Residents' Profiles

3

They have an unusual range and depth of talent. They are strongly humanitarian in outlook, idealistic and because of their preferences for closure and completion, they are generally doers as well as dreamers. This rare combination of vision and practicality often results in their taking a disproportionate amount of responsibility in the various causes to which so many of this type seem to be drawn.

They are deeply concerned about relationships with individuals as well as the state of humanity at large. They are sometimes even mistaken for extroverts because they appear so outgoing and are so genuinely interested in people—a product of the feeling function they most readily show to the world. Despite all appearances, they are, in fact, true introverts who can only be emotionally intimate and fulfilled with a chosen few from among their long-term friends, family, or obvious "soul mates." While instinctively courting the personal and organizational demands continually made upon this type by others, they will at intervals suddenly withdraw into themselves, sometimes shutting out even intimate friends. This apparent paradox is a necessary escape valve for them, providing both time to rebuild their depleted resources and to prevent the emotional overload to which they are so susceptible. They are inherent "givers." As a pattern of behavior, it is perhaps the most confusing aspect of their enigmatic character to outsiders, and hence the most often misunderstood—particularly by those who have little experience with these rare types.

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Due in part to the unique perspective produced by the alternative between detachment and involvement in the lives of the people around them, they may well have the clearest insights of all the types into the motivations of others, for good and for evil. The most important contributing factors to this uncanny gift, however, are the empathic abilities often found, which seem to be especially heightened, possibly by the dominance of the introverted function.

This empathy can serve as a classic example of the two-edged nature of certain talents, as it can be strong enough to cause discomfort or pain in negative or stressful situations. More explicit inner conflicts are also not uncommon. It is possible to speculate that the cause for some of these may lie in the specific combinations of

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preferences which define their complexities. For instance, there can sometimes be a "tug of war" between their vision and idealism and the practicality that urges compromise for the sake of achieving the highest priority goals. While perhaps enhancing self-awareness, these qualities may make it difficult for them to articulate their deepest and most convoluted feelings.

Usually self-expression comes more easily to them on paper, they possess a strong personal charisma, they are generally well suited for "inspirational" professions such as religious leadership or psychology. But overall, they can be exceptionally difficult to pigeonhole by their careers. Perhaps the best example of this occurs in the technical fields; they perceive themselves at a disadvantage when dealing with the mystique and formality of "hard logic." In academic terms this may cause a tendency to gravitate towards the liberal arts rather than science. Intuition is the dominant function for them. It governs this type's ability to understand abstract theory and implement it creatively.

In their own way, they are system builders. Their systems are "blurrier," harder to measure in strict numerical terms, and easier to take for granted—yet it is these same underlying reasons which make the resulting contributions to society so vital and profound.

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They are "idea" persons. They see everything as part of a bizarre cosmic whole. They want to help and be liked and admired by other people on both an individual and humanitarian level. They are interested in new ideas on principle, but ultimately discard most of them for one reason or another. Social/personal relationships: their abundance of zany charm can ingratiate the more stodgy types in spite of their unconventionality. They are outgoing, fun, and genuinely liked people. They are warm, affectionate and disconcertingly spontaneous. However, their attention span in relationships can be short. They are easily intrigued and distracted by new friends and acquaintances, forgetting about the older ones for long stretches at a time. They may need to feel they are the center of attention all the time in order to be reassured that everyone thinks they are wonderful and fascinating people. They have strong, if unconventional, convictions on various issues related to their

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overall view of life. They usually try to use their social skills and contacts to persuade people gently of the rightness of these views; this sometimes results in their neglecting nearest and dearest while flitting around trying to save the world.

Work environment: They are pleasant, easy going, and usually fun to work with. They come up with great ideas and are a major asset in brainstorming sessions. Following through, however, tends to be a problem and they tend to get bored quickly, especially if a newer more interesting project comes along. They also tend to be procrastinators, both about meeting hard deadlines and tasks they have been assigned. They are most useful when working in a group with people who take up the slack.

They hate bureaucracy both in principle and in practice. They will always make a point of launching a new crusade against some aspect... They have a propensity for role playing and acting. They like to tell funny stories, especially about their friends. "Close enough" is satisfactory to them--this may unnerve more precise thinking types.

Friends energize them and they have difficulty being alone. They sometimes can be blind sided by this secondary feeling function. Hasty decisions based on deeply felt values may boil over with unpredictable results. They would rather not know the truth if they suspect it is not what they want to hear.

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They are fundamentally performers. They do not present an impression of constant activity. On the contrary, they lie dormant, saving their time and energy until a project or an adventure worthy of their interest comes along: then they launch themselves into it. The apparently frenzied state that inevitably ensues is actually much more controlled than it appears--they always seem to know what they are doing when it comes to physical or mechanical obstacles--but the whole chain of events presents a confusing and paradoxical picture to an outsider.

They are equally difficult to understand in their need for personal space, which in turn has an impact on their relationships with others. They need to be able to "spread out" both physically and psychologically--which generally implies encroaching to some degree

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on others, especially if they decide that something of someone else's is going to become their next project. These territorial considerations are usually critical in relationships with them. Communication also tends to be a key issue since they generally express themselves—nonverbally. When they do actually verbalize, they are masters of one liners. Often they show flashes of humor in the most tense situations; this can result in being seen as thick skinned or tasteless.

They also have trouble with rote and abstract learning, which tends not to be a good measure of their actual intelligence. They tend, sometimes with good reason, to be highly skeptical of its practical value, and often gravitate towards classes in industrial arts. They believe part-time vocational technical programs can be useful.

Working as paramedics can fulfill their need to live on the edge; they are at their best in a crisis, where their focus is to tackle the emergency at hand in the most effective way. Sometimes they like "high risk" fun. Motorcycling, drug binges, etc. While aware of the dangers involved, they are still in touch with the physical world. They know how to get away with much smaller safety margins than others.

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GREENENAFALI INC.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 1997

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ART

ART VIEW/Roberta Smith

The Horror: Updating the Heart of Darkness

THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM APPROACHES, and not surprisingly, many observers detect a certain morbidity, something that might be called Gothic, in the cultural ether. Putting aside real-life events like the Heaven's Gate tragedy, there's Goth rock, Goth lit and Goth girls and guys in Goth fashions. There are horror and sci-fi films with ever more anxious-making special effects and intimations of apocalypse, variously natural and self-inflicted. In academic circles, theories concerning the grotesque, the uncanny and carnival are in vogue, perhaps partly as a backlash against the stricter, more politically correct, identity-oriented theory that dominated the early 90's. Now there's an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston intent on ferreting out the Gothic in contemporary art.

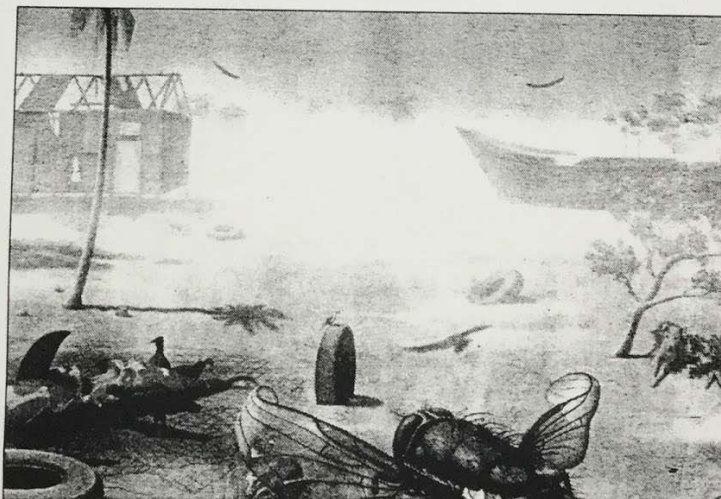
"Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late-20th-Century Art," through July 6, is not the first of its kind. After all, recent art's emphasis on the body, spurred by grim realities like AIDS, pollution and the increase of violence (from domestic to global), has had all kinds of macabre esthetic results. Curators have responded in kind with exhibitions titled "Helter-Skelter" (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1992) and "Post-Human" (Lausanne, 1992).

The I.C.A. show, organized by the institute's Christoph Grunenberg with Marcella Beccaria, is in many ways simply a reshuffling of several known quantities and talents, among them Robert Gober, Cindy Sherman, Mike Kelley and Tony Oursler. But if it's not so new, its mixture of 22 artists feels more energetic and pertinent than the bland Whitney Biennial, although both shows are overly involved with the latest buzzword — narrative — and oddly indifferent to abstraction.

Mr. Grunenberg's effort may simply be the first to label these developments with such a loaded, high-profile word, one that is steeped in historical and literary associations, pop-culture accessibility and spine-tingling drama. Since it began to be appreciated in the early 19th century, the original Gothic style, at its height in 13th-century France, has often flourished in times of stress and change. Whether revived by English artists and designers in the mid-19th century or vamped, as it has been by rock stars and rock poster artists in more re-



Jekyll and Hyde "Monster," 1995, by Douglas Gordon—Turning a normal guy into a grotesque.



There was Goth rock and then Goth lit. And now, in a Boston show, Goth art — or call it neo-Gothic — supplies that old, uneasy fin-de-siècle feeling.

perrealistic mannequins whose genitals are startlingly rearranged, fused or doubled. Unfortunately the Chapmans are not represented by any of these disturbingly beautiful works, which will probably never be exhibited in a public space in this country, but by "Nazissuss by the Pool," a life-size sculpture of a small black boy in Hitler Youth garb, who sits beside a pile of entrails and gazes into a pool of red liquid obviously intended to be blood. He sees not his reflection, but just beneath the surface a set of white male genitalia, perhaps intended to mock his powerlessness. But any deeper meaning remains elusive; the piece mostly reads as an obscure, slightly obscene political cartoon in three dimensions.

Similarly heavy-handed are Abigail Lane's "Incident Room," with its blond female mannequin partly buried in dirt, and James Elaine's "Swan Lake," a steel chandelier from which hang enormous vials of anti-freeze and the freeze-dried rib cages of two calves.

Works like these make understatement even more delightful than usual, as in Jim Hodges's glittery silver-chain spider web, and Mr. Elaine's "Reflecting Pool," an array of pleasantly murmuring alarm clocks set in little niches cut in an expanse of dark wood. (What's Gothic about this mechanical evocation of nature is a little beyond me.)

Also welcome amid work that tends a bit too much toward the Victorian is a certain modern directness. Julie Becker conjures up a lowercase brand of Gothic, with a sculpture of anonymous doll-house-like rooms whose very ordinariness makes them seem sinister, like crime scenes. Douglas Gordon's "Monster" is a Jekyll-and-Hyde pair of large color photographs, one of the artist as a normal guy, the other with his face contorted, thanks to cellophane tape, into a grotesque, piglike visage.

Standing out among the lesser-known participants for a similar directness is Sheila Pepe, a Boston artist, with a series of wall pieces appropriately titled "Doppelgänger." She fashions small, abstract yet gnomelike sculptures out of plaster, wire, yarn and wood and then draws on the wall around them fantastic creatures suggested by their cast shadows. Another newcomer, Wolfgang Amadeus Hansbauer, from Düsseldorf, Germany, bars no holds with a mural-size painting of battling human hybrids called "Friendly Fire." Its saving grace is its fluid and direct three-color, comic-book style.

Some artists become Gothic by association. Jeanne Silverthorne's installation of meandering rubber conduits punctuated by rubber fuse boxes and electrical outlets gains greatly in creepiness in this context. Titled "This Day in the Studio," it travels the full height of the

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P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center
22-25 Jackson Ave at 46th Ave
Long Island City, New York 11101
t: 718.784.2084 f: 718.482.9454
e: mail@ps1.org

PS1

Date: March 11 99
To: Julie Becker
From: Larissa Harris
Re: Generation Z
Total pages: 3
Fax: 011 41 61 274 1711

FAXED

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PS1

March 11, 1999

Julie Becker
tel: 01141 61 274 0184
fax: 011 41 61 274 1711

Dear Julie Becker,

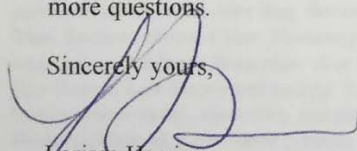
Greetings again from P.S.1. Sima from GreeneNaftali mentioned that you needed further info on *Generation Z*. Following you will find a press release for the shows opening April 18, 1999, which includes *Generation Z*. This hasn't been sent out to the public yet but obviously you should have it.

I will have Klaus Biesenbach call you as soon as he can; he'll try tonight (Thursday) and Friday morning (our time). His ideas for placing your work are to have *Suburban Legend* accompanied by some of the Corner pieces, all in one gallery; but you should speak with him to get more detail.

In terms of coming to NY for the show: because of the tiny budget we're working with, we have to put the artists whose presence is essential for installation first on the list. Therefore, whether we can get you here will be partly determined by which works you and Klaus decide to include. There may be money for you to come to the opening; it's not completely clear at this point. We'll certainly try to find a way.

Again, thanks for your response; please feel free to call 718 784 2084 if you have any more questions.

Sincerely yours,



Larissa Harris
Programs Associate

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ps1.moma.org

PS.1

SPRING RELEASE

**P.S.1 OPENS SPRING SEASON WITH *GENERATION Z*, *STAR SEARCH*,
DENISE GREEN: RESONATING, AND A PROJECT BY *LOW FLAME***

GALA PUBLIC OPENING – SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 12 - 6 PM

Long Island City, NY (March 11, 1999) — This spring P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center launches two travelling exhibitions: *Generation Z* and *Denise Green: Resonating*, together with *Star Search*, a multi-media talent show, and installation and performance by *Low Flame*. Also open April 18 is the expanded exhibition *100 Drawings*.

Curated by **Alanna Heiss**, **Klaus Biesenbach**, and **Barbara Vanderlinden**, *Generation Z* explores the changing attitudes of international emerging artists. *Generation Z* profiles a group of young artists whose work transforms industrialization, globalization, information overload, and explosion of communication technologies through their artistic practice. *Generation Z* introduces New York audiences to **Tommi Grönlund & Petteri Nisunen** (Helsinki and Barcelona), **Moshekwana Langa** (Bakemburg, Amsterdam), **Jonathan Meese** (Berlin), **Boris Ondreicka** (Bratislava), **Franz Pomassl** (Vienna), and **Marko Peljhan** (Ljubljana); and features New York artists **Anna Gaskell** and **Fatimah Tuggar**, and San Antonio artist **Chris Sauter**, among a diverse group of approximately twenty-five artists. *Generation Z* will occupy P.S.1's first floor and duplex gallery with installation, sound, video, performance and sculpture. *Generation Z* is on view at P.S.1 from April 18 through June 6, 1999, later travelling to Brussels.

Debuting at P.S.1, *Denise Green: Resonating* spans twenty-five years of the Australian artist's career, including works from her early "New Image" period, a decade of black and white painting, and recent explorations of pattern and form. Born in Melbourne, Australia, Green first received wide acclaim in 1968 when her monochrome canvases were featured in the *New Image Painting* exhibition at the Whitney Museum. Green has continued to explore a simplified, but rich vocabulary of forms, while drawing simultaneously on Aboriginal and Modern Western methods of art-making. *Resonating* consists of 18 paintings and 52 of works on paper, and is on view at P.S.1 April 18 through June 6, 1999. Following its presentation at P.S.1, the exhibition will travel to the Arizona State University Art Museum and then to the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in Connecticut.

Organized by **Tara Delong** of **Bedroom Productions**, *Star Search* is a three-part, multi-media talent show featuring some of New York's best and brightest performance groups and individuals with unusual assets. *Star Search* includes **Scoli Acosta**; **Alex Bag**; **Bernadette Corporation**; **John Kelsey**, **Antek Walczak**, **Bernadette Van-Huy**; **Tom Borgese**; **Shivas Clem**; **Harmony Korine**; **M.I.M.E.**; **Hiroshi Sunairi** presents *It is a well-known fact. It is what it is*; and **Claude Wampler**. *Star Search* takes place in P.S.1's cafe April 18, April 25, and May 2. Following *Star Search*, **Low Flame** will occupy P.S.1's cafe with a tactile, immersive environment evoking a construction site, that combines music, silent film, and photo booths. A collaborative project by **Anna Gabriel**, **Adria Petty**, and **Howard Statland**, *Low Flame* presents music and performance in the cafe beginning May 9 and continuing through May 30. Please contact P.S.1 for all show times.

On P.S.1's first and third floors, *100 Drawings* will spill into the corridors, expanding *Primarily Structural: Minimalist and Post-Minimalist Works on Paper* with contemporary drawings by young artists.

Continuing in the main galleries of P.S.1's second and third floors, **Ronald Bladen: Selected Works** includes large-scale sculpture, models, drawings, and paintings by one of the lesser-known fathers of Minimalism. Among many provocative works, this exhibition features four enormous sculptures -- "Three Elements" (1965), "Curve" (1969), "The Cathedral Evening" (1969), and "Rockers" (1968) -- that reflect Bladen's fascination with dramatic presence and abstract form. **Ronald Bladen: Selected Works** is on view at P.S.1 through May 30.

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P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center

Background: P.S.1 was founded in 1971 by Alanna Heiss as The Institute of Art and Urban Resources Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to the transformation of abandoned and underutilized buildings in New York City into exhibition, performance, and studio spaces for artists. The Center now operates two internationally acclaimed spaces for contemporary art: P.S.1 in Long Island City and The Clocktower Gallery in Tribeca, both of which contain museum-quality galleries and extensive studio facilities for the National and International Studio Program.

P.S.1 is one of the largest and oldest arts organization in the United States solely devoted to contemporary art. Recognized as a defining force of the alternative space movement, P.S.1 stands out from major arts institutions in its cutting edge approach to exhibitions and direct involvement of artists within a scholarly framework. P.S.1 acts as an intermediary between the artist and its audience. Functioning as a living and active meeting place for the general public, P.S.1 is a catalyst for ideas, discourses and new trends in contemporary art. With its educational programs, P.S.1 assists the public in understanding art and provides the tools to appreciate contemporary art and its practices.

Funding: P.S.1 receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs towards operating costs. Programs of P.S.1 are supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The Office of the President of the Borough of Queens, The Council of New York City, the P.S.1 Board of Directors, the New York State Council of the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding is provided by foundations, corporate and individual contributions, and membership and admission donations.

Directions: P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center is located just across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan, at the intersection of Jackson and 46th Avenues, in Long Island City. It is easily accessible by bus and subway. Traveling by subway, visitors should take either E or F to 23 Street-Ely Avenue; the 7 to 45 Road-Courthouse Square; or the G to Court Square or 21 Street-Van Alst. They may also take the Q67 bus to Jackson and 46th Avenues or the B61 to Jackson Avenue.

Hours and Admission P.S.1 is open from Noon to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. Admission is a \$5.00 suggested donation; \$2.00 for students and senior citizens; members free.

For more information, please contact:
Chloe Stromberg, Press Officer
T: (718) 784-2084/F: (718) 482-9454/mail@ps1.org

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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 01

GREENE NAFTALI INC.

10 March 1999

Klaus Biesenbach
P.S. 1 Contemporary Art
Long Island City, New York
fax 718 482 9454

Dear Klaus,

Carol thought it would be best for you to contact Julie Becker directly about participating in the exhibition, *Generation Z*, and discuss with her the different options of what work she would like to show. (We do have 3 of the Comer photographs here at the gallery as one option.) Her numbers in Basel are:

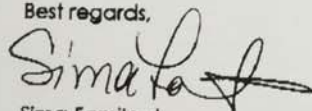
41 61 274 0184 phone
41 61 274 1711 fax

Carol wanted you to have Joachim Koester's number to contact him as well.
His phone number is:

718 389 3343 phone / fax

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Best regards,


Sima Familant

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Julie Becker
Poltergeist 1998
lambda c-print
46 x 50" ; edition of 5 + 2 AP



Julie Becker
Interior Corner #5 1993
c-print; edition of 3
35 x 27 1/2"



Julie Becker
Interior Corner #7 1993
c-print; edition of 3
30 x 40"



Julie Becker
Interior Corner #6 1993
c-print; edition of 3
35 x 27 1/2"



Julie Becker
Interior Corner #8 1993
c-print
30 x 40"



Julie Becker
Interior Corner #3 1993
c-print
35 x 27 1/2" ; edition of 3



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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

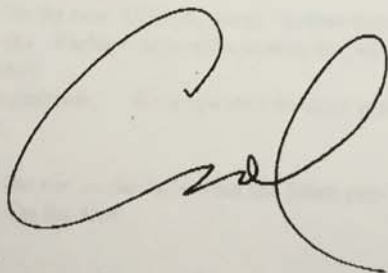
PAGE 01

GREENE NAFTALI INC.

LARISSA .

Box: 718 482 - 9454

Here is the handout for
Suburban Legend which
consists of a video projection,
w/ soundtrack, seating arrangements
& wall text & handout.



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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 02

"Suburban Legend"

My brother and his stoner friends tried to convince me that the Pink Floyd album, *Dark Side of the Moon*, through some "karmic occurrence" is an alternative sound track for American's most beloved family film, *The Wizard of Oz*. This rumor has achieved a cult like status since the early seventies and continues to challenge the youth of today who spend endless hours trying to map the two. The rumor has it that this synching begins with the third roar of the MGM lion.

A well known song in the *Wizard of Oz* is "Somewhere over the Rainbow". Notice that the album cover *Dark Side of the Moon* has a big rainbow on it.

I have highlighted the following "coincidences" which I encourage you to experience. Feel free to fast forward or reverse at your leisure to the cues given of ten of the more obvious ones. I have also provided a take home guide for those who would like to have the experience in its full complexity.

Notes to take into consideration while viewing

Sometimes the combination alludes to information that might be less obvious on the surface. One in particular occurs when the sound "ch-ching" of the song "Money" is heard as Dorothy steps out into Munchkin Land. The fact that *The Wizard of Oz* was (one of) the first full length color movie(s) released and the most expensive one made in the United States at that time might perhaps be considered.

The first hour is far more interesting. So I suggest that if you happen upon this video towards the end of it, you should rewind it.

After watching the movie for about an hour I started to notice that all these "coincidences" were fading out and I dramatically lost my attention. At that point I started to question the repeat function on my CD player because after the CD starts to repeat over and over it seems to sync up less and less. This I attribute to my own stereo system. I was told by some "expert" that supposedly some systems take more and some take less time to repeat.

Also the time codes are not exactly in sync with the video player I borrowed for this exhibition. A copy of this text is available at the front desk. Please ask.

Short version

1) 3:13 Song: On the run Dorothy sings "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" while gazing at something in the sky. Perhaps across the screen and stereo speakers? Helicopters and airplanes seem to fly overhead.

2) 4:18 Breathe continues "Rare towards an early grave." Is sung moments before Dorothy falls off the fence.

3) 4:20 Song: On the run as she falls from the fence into the pigpen this song changes in perfect timing to her fall: On the Run.

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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 03

*Note: the overall feeling in On the Run fits the mood of the scene and emotion of the other characters in the scene as they are concerned with Dorothy's well being.

4) 4:15 Song: Breathe " Balanced on the biggest wave ... At this point Dorothy is attempting to balance herself as she walks across an old wooden fence.

5) 14:52 "...Hear the softly spoken magic spell...". As Dorothy is leaving the "magic" wagon of Professor Marvel.

6) 15:38 Song: The Great Gig in the Sky: "... And I am not frightened of dying..." a voice in the song says as the tornado in the movie heads towards a house

7) 17:23 After Dorothy gets hit on the head with the window, the female vocalist calms down as Dorothy begins to fade off into dreamland.

* The song playing during the entire tornado scene and especially while the house is up in the air via the tornado is " The Great Gig in the Sky "

8) 21:38 Song: Money "... I think I need a lear jet..." as Glynda the good witch appears in her unique method of transportation the flying bubble.

9) 25:00 "...and in the end...". As Glynda points to Dorothy's feet while the feet of the wicked witch of the west curl up and disappear under the house in a slithering movement.

10) 33:35 Song: Us and Them, "...Get out of the way, it's a busy day, I've got things on my mind..." as Dorothy passes through the Munchkins and leaves Munchin land.

11) 42:40/second CD repeat. Song: Speak to Me. Dorothy listens for a heartbeat (or lack of one) in the Tin Man's chest as the heartbeat goes on to the end of the album.

*Note: when the CD starts back with the heartbeat, coincidently the Tin Man happens to be singing "If I only had a heart" in the actual Wiz soundtrack..

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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

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Long version

12) 03:13 Right after the words " look around ." Dorothy looks around.

13) 00:23 "...Smiles you give and tears you'll cry...") Two men above (Cowardly Lion and Tin Man) are smiling and the man below (Scarecrow) is crying.

14) 00:26 "...All you touch..." Dorothy touches the man (Cowardly Lion) holding a bucket on his arm.

note* "All you touch " and all you see is all you like will ever be" could be construed as being attributed to Dorothy who's life will only really be all she touches and all she sees in her Kansas home because "Oz" only exists in her head.

15) 03:15 "...When at last the work is done..." the man (Scarecrow) hits his finger with the hammer (to the beat of the drum) and is "suddenly" done with his work..

16) ??:?? Auntie Em shows up and starts talking exactly as the woman's voice begins talking during ("on the run"?)

note* I wonder what kind of cookies are those on the plate? "I've got a clan of ginger-bread man. Here a man, there a man, lots of ginger bread. man. Take a couple of your wish. There on the dish..."

18) 8:15 to 8:32 The chimes in "Time" go off precisely at the appearance of Mrs. Gulch (Wicked Witch) on the bicycle and the chimes stop when she gets off the bike. At the first bass chord of "Time" the scene changes to inside Auntie Em's house.

19) 8:47 Dorothy and the rest of the cast appear to move and react to the rhythm and mood with the music how groovy.

20) (Time Code) " You fritter and waste the hours in an off hand way..." seems to describe the kind of "piddley life" that the old maid/witch. Mrs. Gulch has if getting rid of the poor little puppy Toto is what makes her day.

21) 10:50 "... Waiting for someone or something to show you the way ...". Toto pops up in the window - perhaps to show Dorothy the way?

22) "...You are young and life is long..." a reference to Dorothy's youth?

23) 11:17 "... No one told you when to run..." Dorothy is running away from home but no one told her to.

24) 11:24 Guitar solo in "Time" begins as scene changes.

25) 11:40 During the guitar solo of "Time" the words "Past. Present and Future" are seen on the sign of Professor Marvel.

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GREENE, NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 05

26) (1 code??) "And you run and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking, racing around to come up behind you again!"
Look above the door mantle as Dorothy enters Professor Marvel's wagon. What do we see but a skull... a reminder of time

27) 13:09 "...But you're older" referring to Professor Marvel's old age?

28) 13:13 "...or halt a page of scribbled lines..." perhaps referring to a photo that Professor Marvel sneaks out of Dorothy's basket?

29) 13:37 "...Hanging on in quiet desperation..." as Dorothy quietly and desperately listens to the words of Professor Marvel

30) 14:08 "...home, home again..." as Professor Marvel tells Dorothy that she needs to go back home because her aunt is sick, worried and so forth.

31) 14:52 "...Hear the softly spoken magic spell..." as Dorothy is leaving the "magic" wagon of Professor Marvel. *Oh la la*

32) 15:02 Song changes to "The Great Gig in the Sky" at the precise moment that Dorothy reaches down and grabs her bag.

33) Strangely, the calm music seems to compliment the torrent of wind going on.

33) 15:38 (A voice in the background whispers) "...And I am not frightened of dying..." in the background as the tornado heads towards the house.

34) 16:00 The drums kick in as a tree is uprooted by the winds of the tornado.
note* Right after the tree is uprooted, the singer begins her operatic wailing voice. It keeps pace with the mood and intensity of this tornado scene. Several rhythm syncs occur during the piece.

35) 17:23 After Dorothy gets hit on the head (concussion?) with the window, the singer calms down and Dorothy begins dreaming.
note* The song playing during the entire tornado scene and especially while the house is up in the air via the tornado is "The Great Gig in the Sky".

COLOR TRANSITION

36) 19:44 The "ch-ching" of "Money" is heard as Dorothy steps out into colourful Munchkin Land.
What does Dorothy step onto? The yellow brick road (gold bars). The song "Money" begins in the colourful Munchkin Land. A better future (supposedly) for Dorothy and the possibility of progress?

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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

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37) 21:11 "Money, you get back." as the Munchkins get back into the flowers before being seen by Dorothy.

38) 21:38 "I think I need a lean ret..." as Glynda appears from the bubble. Maybe she'd prefer a jet over the flying bubble. hum.

39) The beginning of of the song "Us and Them" sounds like or suggests funeral parlour music. Coincidentally, the Munchkin Coroner happens to exhibit the Wicked Witch of the east the Certificate of Death

Note: A little before the Munchkin Coroner comes up some officials come out of one of the buildings and are talking back and forth about the newly arrived Dorothy. In the background of the song "Us and Them" you can hear a man say "... I was really drunk at the time..." and then you can hear a woman say "...he was cruisin' for a brusin'..." which could be a reference to the drunken and carousing little people who played the Munchkins. According to rumors and apparently by Judy Garland herself the little actors got really drunk and were constantly trying to hit on her. Maybe the "Cruisin' for a brusin'" could be Dorothy's thoughts? Those little fuckers!

Note*: This might sound a bit far fetched. But nevertheless it is something I noticed. Check info if you don't believe me.
www.geocities.com/hollywoodhills/9151-oztrivia.html (legends myths and the movie).

40) During "Us and Them" the female dancers from the Lullabye League seem to twirl to the words "Us...Us...Us..." and then the male Munchkins of the Lollypop Guild offer a Lollypop to Dorothy, then point to her and say (as the singer sings) "you...you...you".

41) 28:00 to 28:47 Later on the Munchkins appear to be singing "Us and them...and after all we're not ordinary men. Me and you...God only knows it's not what we would choose to do."

Note*: several more examples of coordination with soundtrack and the Munchkins appear in this scene.

42) 29:35 "Black and Blue...blah blah blah" the Witch of the West realizes her sister is hurt, possibly dead and smashed-up underneath Dorothy's shack. (Now her sister wants those tap shoes and revenge) Black and blue and a bright and bloody future according to the ugly green witch!

43) A bit past 29:35 "...and who knows which is Witch...and who is who." Overlaps in the scene during which the other wicked witch is discovered under the house. Which is witch... (again more coincidences - more confusion).

Note: Glenda the Good Witch and the Wicked Witch of the West watch the legs of her sister (the evil Witch of the East) slither under Dorothy's house. At that moment the witches and Dorothy are confused about who the magical ruby slippers belong to.

44) The words "up, up" are sung as the Wicked Witch is on top of the platform, and "down, down" is sung as she walks down the walkway.

45) "Haven't you heard it's a battle of words..." as Glynda is whispering in Dorothy's ear and then returns to her battle of words with the Wicked Witch.

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GREENE, NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 07

46) "...and in the end..." as Glynda points to Dorothy's feet while the Wicked Witch of the West disappears.

47) 32:28 "Down, down, down, and out out, out..." as Glynda the Good Witch leaves in her flying bubble.

48) 33:35 "...Get out of the way. It's a busy day. I've got things on my mind..." as Dorothy passes through the Munchkins and leaves Munchkin land.

49) 37:36 At this point the song ends and a new one begins as the scene changes to Dorothy skipping, frolicking or whatever on the Yellow Road by herself.

50) 37:59 "...Got to keep the loonies on the path..." Dorothy and Scarecrow obviously become the "loonies" on the Yellow Brick Road.

51) 39:16 "...There's someone in my head but it's not me..." The apple trees have someone in their heads who make them move around and look alive.

52) 42:40 Dorothy listens for a heartbeat (or lack of one) in the Tin Man's chest as the heartbeat goes on to the end of the album.

Note: when the CD starts back with the heartbeat, the Tin Man is singing "if I only had a heart".

CD REPEATS

54) 44:31-45:15? *note At this point the Tin Man makes his first big step with the drum beat. Tin Man appears to be swaying back and forth to the song that has a "swaylike tone".

55) 46:15 "...long you live and and high you fly..." as the Wicked Witch stands on top of the house with her flying broom.

56) 46:34 "...Run, rabbit, run..." as the witch throws a fireball at one of the guys.

57) 48:10 At this point the music changes to an eerie sound and the three become scared as they enter the scary forest.

58) 49:10 Soon after the Cowardly Lion jumps out from behind a tree and attempts to scare them by roaring viciously at the three. The music at this point sounds like it's mimicking the roar in an instrumental form.

59) 57:03 "...Home, home again..." As the Tin Man is once at home in his frozen, rusted state just as he was when Dorothy first found him.

60) 57:31 "far away across the field..." as the Fearless Foursome run across the field towards Emerald City.

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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 08

61) 57:45 "To hear the softly spoken magic spell..." as Glynda casts a spell to awaken them from their deadly slumber in the poppy field.

62) 1:12:26 "black and blue..." The Wizard is seen in the midst of black smoke and a bluish light. (I can't remember exactly, I was delirious at the time).

63) 1:13:32 "...up, up, up and down, down, down...", the confusion about the signs pointing. One pointing up and one down, in the direction of the witches dreary castle. It ends at "haven't you heard it's a battle of words"

"Listen son, said the man with the gun..." The scarecrow is carrying a weapon.

64) 1:15:23 "...down, down, down and out, out out..." the flying monkeys swoop down to capture Dorothy and then fly out of the woods with her in their claws.

65) 1:15:58 "...With, with, with... without, without, without..." Now Dorothy is captured by the flying monkeys. Tin Man, Lion, and Scarecrow are without her. Who'll deny she's what the fighting's all about

"...You raise the blade... you make the shade..." as the blade of the lance is raised by Scarecrow, Lion and Tin Man after they have changed into the uniforms of the three unlucky witch's guardsmen.

67) 1:24:33 "...All that you have and all you mistrust..." during which the face of the Wicked Witch is seen. Certainly a mistrustful face - if ever there was one - in Dorothy's sheltered life in Kansas.

68) 1:24:57 "...and everyone you fight..." as Tinman drops the chandelier on the guardsmen.

THIRD CD REPEAT

69) 1:26:52 As heart beat starts up again for the third time, the witch at this point is in the midst of dying due to some sort of liquid (water?) that someone throws on her.

70) 1:32:05 (voice says again) "live for today, gone tomorrow..." as the Wizard hands Tin Man his clockwork heart, and then a strange noise that sounds like rusted metal is heard. A prophetic utterance of Tin Man's ultimate demise?

note* During this scene the Cowardly Lion receives his badge of courage. Sounds as if helicopters and war planes are flying above are heard.

71) 1:36:21 The chimes chime in "Time" as the people of the Emerald City cheer. Glynda the Good Witch appears for the last time when the first words of the song "Time" are sung.

72) 1:39:39 "...home, home again..." after Dorothy has awakened back in her home in Kansas. "...the time has come... the song is over..." as Dorothy wakes up from her psychodelic dream.

73) 1:40:36 "...Calls the faithful to their knees..." as Auntie Em comes to Dorothy with water and is on bent knee

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GREENE NAFTALI GALLE

PAGE 09

74) 1:41:28 "...and I am not frightened of dying." right after THE END fades away.

~THE END~

Julie Becker, 1999

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22-25 Jackson Ave at 46th Ave
Long Island City, New York 11101
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e: mail@ps1.org



Facsimile

PS1

Date: March 10
To: Julie Becker
From: Larissa Harris
Re: Generation Z exhibition / invitation
Total pages: 7
Fax: 011 41 61 274 1711

Following:

release + press coverage of Generation
Z + curator of Generation Z

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P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center

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PS1

March 10, 1999

To: Julie Becker

tel: 01141 61 274 0184
fax: 011 41 61 274 1711

Dear Julie Becker,

Greetings from P.S.1. I am writing to invite you to participate in the exhibition *Generation Z*, opening at P.S.1 on April 18, 1999. Please find following press material on the show as it stands at the moment.

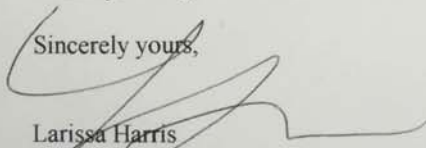
In order to get your contact information we spoke with Carol Greene, who suggested that we call or fax you at this number. She also suggested that your work *Suburban Legend* might be perfect for this exhibition.

Klaus Biesenbach was also interested in the Corner photographs, which could possibly be shown in the same gallery as *Suburban Legend*. Would you be interested in showing these as well?

We are anxious to hear from you as soon as possible. Please call 718 784 2084 or fax 718 482 9454 as soon as you can.

Thank you very much and we look forward very much to working with you.

Sincerely yours,


Larissa Harris
Programs Associate