

## The time as stage

The video installation by Silvia Rivas at the Centro Cultural Recoleta (Recoleta Cultural Center) is a production of unedited dimensions in the country.

Using the updated resources of video and informatics technology, Silvia Rivas presents a remarkable set of installations, performed during the last two years, at the Cronopios lounge, of the Centro Cultural Recoleta. This is a proposal that could have been exhibited, together with international videographic productions, at the recent International Biennale in Venice.

In a dark room, multiple giant screens, and some monitors, show luminous images in which the movements of the waters of the sea may be perceived, the tumultuous fall of the waterfalls and the repeated rhythm of the rains. Everything is accompanied by the sounds produced by the fall of the bubbling fluid, by the drops or by the slow flow. Notes on time. The time as scenery, is the general title of this set of works in which the artist explores her subjective perceptions of time, or of what is said about it, surely to make the incomprehensible visible.

The exhibition is integrated by five videoinstallations and a video, with a total of twelve projectors. Four monitors complete the set. The video registrations have been taken by the artist, who manipulated them digitally, editing them in DVD (Digital Video Disk) in order to synchronize them by computer. These technical resources allowed for the creation of an environment in which the projections interact among themselves, following a precise timing, creating a spectacle with sequences and rhythms. The sound, directly recorded at the places where the images have been registered, accompanies each video, melting into a noisy murmur in which the pounding of the water predominates.

### Time

As from the beginning of the nineties Silvia Rivas (Buenos Aires, 1957) has used the image of water in her works. She began with photographic registrations of images of the sea, of the wet sand, of the salt and of the slime of some animals, to symbolize life and death. As in some ancient traditions, she assigned to the water the power of being the beginning and the end of everything.

In 1993, in Santiago de Compostela, she exhibited the first versions of this personal and subjective mythology. In 1998, in her one man exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, she has shown works with similar symbolism.

In the last years, the video, with its visual narrative syntax, allowed Rivas to explore the metaphoric potential of the water, now associated with time. Thanks to the slowdown, the acceleration, the inversion of images, the fragmentation of sequences, the modification of points of view with respect to truth, she has created a surrounding spectacle that tends to create new relationships between the work and the viewer.

The spectator that enters the dark room is surrounded by large projections in which the water is the main agent. Nothing is perceived simultaneously, it is necessary to explore the complete space, in search for the projections, stopping to contemplate them (the "exploration" is a fundamental characteristic of the video-installation).

As soon as you have passed the access to the room, a great screen shows the videographic registration of the water that flows constantly, with the same rhythm. Suddenly, the image of the water that bubbles noisily appears on the floor. Soon it disappears and only the quiet pause is left on the wall. The liquid is red, like blood or fire.

The images that are far from realistic, show impossible superpositions of layers of water. The sea is seen like a vertical wall. The red cataract falls violently and rises at the same speed, as if it would be possible to recover time. In the airplane trip, filmed through the window of the plane (a propeller is perceived), the clouds are seen over an impossible landscape. Fiction and reality are added constantly, altering the rational and perspective scheme of perception.

Rivas' work is recorded in the latest development of video-art, paying less attention to the social aspect and more inclined towards free and imaginative creation. Her technological deployment and the emphasis placed in the spectacle are totally new in our environment. We had never seen an individual exhibition of these dimensions. The show has been made possible through the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation scholarship, that the artist had been awarded for the development of the video-installation.

## **Video-art**

In Argentina, the first tests related to what Frank Popper named “ the media in electronic age”, have been performed in the context of the “Instituto Di Tella” towards the end of the sixties. The attention, at that time, was focused on the questioning of television and on the behaviour of the viewer facing the TV screen. In the following decade, the “Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC) – Center for Arts and Communication” sponsored several videographic experiences. During a long time no new tests have been registered, until in the nineties videoart and videoinstallation attracted a new generation that could use the availability of new technological systems. The main intention of the artists is not the experimentation of the possibility of new media, but the resolution of different conceptual ideas. This is the path covered by Silvia Rivas with her proposal.

Jorge López Anaya, La Nación, 2001