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# E X P O S E

## Y O U R S E L F

However, Jo Hormuth's *Untitled* (1993), trading in the visual economy of minimalism, presents a problem. Like Schafer, the artist deploys art presentation clichés, like the exaggerated repetition of the white cube gallery space in its claustrophobic cell and a "do not touch" sign. The piece makes manifest the returned "gaze" of the represented by surrounding the viewer with head level photographs of eyes. The oppressive brightness of Hormuth's cell furthered my sense of discomfort as the consumer of all these unanswered stares. Unfortunately, the careless execution of the piece undermines its potentially powerful impact. The unevenly trimmed windows overlaying the

reflected, and the viewer sits, crased. Two identical set-ups are symmetrically balanced on either side of a dividing wall, which led me to imagine a passage through the mirror to an infinitely more exciting vision of the other side of the wall. However, the perfect symmetry of these long, shiny tables belies the whimsical promise of the empty mirror.

M.W. Burns's *Sphinx/PORES* (1993) also deals with the idea of symmetry, and the problems brought on by its absence. The piece consists of five loudspeakers, four on one wall, at varying heights and different sizes, and a single large speaker on the facing wall. All three walls are painted gun metal grey, to match the speakers, and the lighting is dim.

erasers, sighing, and chair creaking bounces between the speakers on both walls. This gesture establishes a relay between the speakers. The voice returns from the single speaker, and says, "Conversation is a balance situation, an aesthetic of balance, anesthesia." This final text delivers the kick of ambiguity: how am I positioned within the regime of symmetry?

Burns beautifully works the minimal elements, reinforcing the theme of bodies in space by deploying sound, which, with smell, constitutes the most enveloping sense. Using five speakers throws off the symmetry, but physically restates the five digits sought in the narrative, closing a circle which reopens with each new sound.

The fifth piece is Wendy Jacob's *Untitled* (1993). Here bright lights illuminate the blank, white wall beside the name plaque; only an insistent clicking pulls my attention to the overhead pipes and ductwork where Jacob has installed a white satin bladder which inflates and deflates with a slow regularity.

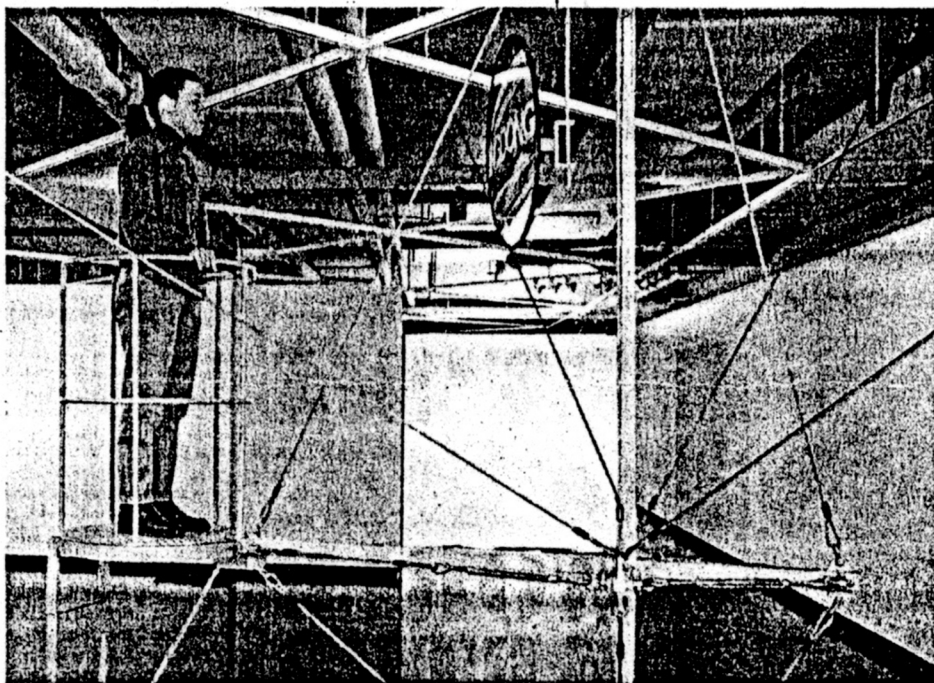
### "Living Room" at Betty Rymer

By Diane Loddell

The body has returned as a central theme in recent art. This renewed interest in the human body rather than representations of the human form is most often manifest through installation, a strategy which by its nature engages the body in space. *Living Room*, the current exhibition at the Betty Rymer Gallery, revisits the body as it interacts with architecture—which it both influences and is influenced by. *Living Room* feels like a series of rooms, each offering a different view of how our bodies modify and adapt to spaces.

David Schafer's *Model for Wild Harmony* (1993) is one of two works that specifically addresses its site, an art gallery. Schafer draws on the conventions of museum signage to introduce a privilege, inviting the viewer not only to touch, but also to climb on the piece. However, this same sign carries a threat, ascend at your own risk.

After reading, I looked toward the ceiling. The heavy metal cables supporting the suspended platform/ladder looked as reassuringly sturdy as any engineered structure. *Model for Wild Harmony*'s centerpiece—a convex mirror reading "ding dong" and reflecting an anamorphically rendered squirrel, seems gratuitous, unless you respond to the playfulness of the entire configuration. This piece has an "everything but the kitchen sink" quality, unlike its spare, minimalist inspired neighbors.



*Model for Wild Harmony, 1993 by David Schafer. Painted Steel, aluminum, cables convex mirror and marker.*

photos and occasional glue dots on the covering glass drew my attention away from the represented eyes to the half-hearted execution.

Laurel Fredrickson's *Shared Views* (1993) also revives a minimalist vocabulary. Fredrickson gracefully manages the feat, combining spare, mass produced tables, chairs and mirrors with a genuine sense of potential physical occupation. A frosted oval obscures the center of the mirrors precisely where the viewers would see their reflection when seated in the provided chair. Meanwhile, one's surroundings are vividly

A man's voice haltingly retells the story, heard "through an acquaintance," of a girl who was afflicted with six toes on one foot. The man tells of a string of operations and escalating maladies brought on by the removal of the offending toe "in the name of symmetry." The installation comments on this cultural obsession by confining the voice to the wall with four speakers, leaving the other silent. I immediately checked and rechecked the sound's source, puzzled by the asymmetrical arrangement of the speakers.

Immediately after the story, a sound environment of

Her strategy implies the hidden mechanisms of the body as well as those of the building. The satin drapes sensuously over the metal, drawing from the building's circulatory system. Her use of the display lights, directing viewer attention to the wall's surface, while allowing us to discover her work, hidden above, underlines the dichotomy between a body's systems and its surface. This compelling and eloquent comment sums up the anthropomorphic potential of site specific artwork.

photo: Michael Tropes