IN POSITION.

The silver-tongued voice is well di- gested, gathering into luminous ges- ture. Use me and I'll use you. But buy, sell, save! Want! So it goes, ob- taining symmetry of the dusky and de- sirable.

Now, in another space (bus stop; Toronto) the spectacled voice alters in plea, nalutates its utterances and opens onto another persuasion. Pos- ters Mean Business the source de- clares—spanking across a tube of Crest. The medium (media) calls at- tention to its very power. Promises of commerce displace the promise of passion. A self-reflexive nervousness: advertising space solicits itself. Media strippage; the getting finally falls in Ontario and exquisite posi- tions are spoken. In suggesting its availability we may now consider having something to call—Out. To intervene perhaps; ex/pose and offer a discordial brand of passion.

Some women lead extraordinary lives. For them, Sonja Rykiel has created 7ème Sens.

So. In transgressing, a direction/ voice quavers. Intricately bound questions of cultural geography arise in the form of address, audience positioning, public access, space/his- tory and finally images of power vs. powerful images. Media territory. Into this crowded spectacle enters 'The European Iceberg', 'The largest, most ambitious exhibition ever shown at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Running somewhat concurrently is 'Public Address' (A Space), a series of artworks exhibited within a baffle, glass enclosed sign-space, erected on the exterior brick wall of the building housing the gallery. Both exhibits are set in board in both media/public in radically distinct ways. Be- coming apparent, the differences between a media phenomenon and a deliberately mediated address.

Posed: as an institution the AGO administers mainstream defini- tions of what constitutes Art. These 'museum fictions' perpetuate the no- tion of art (practice) as an autonomous object (static), commodifiably detached, initiated by stick-in-the-mud reality in order that it ascend... unto sublime Realization. Through an octopus-like autonomy, the AGO wields invisible power—a making visible rooted in elitism that (em)-braces the monolithic status quo, successively operating around a principle of exclusion supported by the specialized audience to which it appeals. The appropriation of mar- ginal art into a mainstreamed 'avant garde' (such as the General Idea Pa- villion) demonstrates with audacity this power. Through advertising the AGO fazhions and legitimizes its knowledge of the rules of the aesthetic field. Thus, the language of Art is spoken from a position of authority; the testaced efforts of its extremities allowing the inner lizard to bask in an aura of certainty. Media presence confounds the autocratic cycle: host and parasite of the public.

A Work of Art within a work of Art.

In penetrating. Though well-said and glib, the unwieldy representa- tional apparatus is vulnerable; what of squeaking wheels, displaced gears and zones of friction? In an instant, art defines itself as capable of inter- vention—a working through (against) conditioned ways of looking at art within culturally sanctified 'art space' or, by disrupting the images we encounter in public. Both in- stances, a shift in the place of recep- tion or undermining from within the institution, subvert the traditional value judgements hung upon art.

Impertinent (outside). We may consider two specific strategies of 'public art'. One, where an airspace simulates an advertising space, such as A Space's 'Public Address' or London's 'Docklands Project'. An immediately deviant situation arises when artists appropriate an advertis- ing space, such as New York artists' collaboration with the owners of the electronic billboard in Times Square, Toronto's Public Access Project or Optica Gallery's bus project in Mon- tral. Anxiously disruptive, the work must contend with the history of a specific advertising space. Position- ed between the before and after of commodification, the work finds meaning/ affect therein. The audi- ence is thus expectant, and suspect.

Crucial, when considering these seemingly similar strategies, is that the work is shifted from a contained (predictable) space into the public sphere where an audience arrives by chance; chaotic and in motion.

Dangers, but worth the risk.

Here, at stake are the circum- stances of exhibiting: Who speaks? Who's looking? Powerful images, images given the name of Art mingle—contextualized. A Space's 'Public Address', representing 'marginal art' by virtue of its parallel position (within the gallery system), con- sciously crosses fields by mounting this exhibit. The works speak a double-tongue on a troubled edge, both here and there; perverting the 'innocence' (straight-forwardness) of the media while massaging the political conscience of marginal art by repositioning and redistributing (opening up) its audience. And yet intervention is precisely that which cannot be assumed; in a fatal way, the circumstances of 'Public Ad- dress', that which makes the exhibi- tion possible, do not appear to seep into the exhibited itself.

Generally, the works deal with issues/processes of socialization, but in a manner curiously unspecific to this place/space (i.e. Spadina Avenue, Toronto). Lack of the self- reflexivity that would ground each work as somehow street-wise (site specific), they rest unapplied to the gallery itself; incongruous and already named. The lack of local fra- mework and history is similar to the way in which advertising targets its audience—moves in, dominates and incorporates (delegitimizing local autonomy and difference). The Address is thus, from above, not an unraveling and bitspop from within and around. Who's looking? Who's speaking? The questions collapse into a simple visual address from the community to its members. In this rea- son the circumstances become evident of an art exhibit—non-infor- mation and specialization.

In deciding, simulation of intervention obscures the critical edge dis- turbing powerful images from im- ages as extensions or affirmations of power (images of power). It is a claim to consistency: cordial speech. The public is both singular, many bodied and only accidentally an 'audience'— responsive to the positioning: context of an image/placed. La femme est une ile, Fidji est son parfum.

Speaking The Media — Tongue in Cheek

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