

## **THIERRY KUNTZEL: BETWEEN LIGHT AND SHADOW AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN**

Montreal, October 19, 1993. On view at the Musée d'art contemporain from October 22 to January 2 are works by French artist **THIERRY KUNTZEL**. Organized by the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris, the exhibition regroups visual works, videotapes and video installations, the latter being the most important and most recent. Thoughtful in spirit, KUNTZEL's work manipulates contrasting elements such as hot and cold, black and white, silence and dissonance, light and darkness.

### *Visual works: sculpting light and words*

This part of the exhibition presents works created in the early 1970's - visual works, that is, in which writing plays an important part. A student of philosophy, semiology and linguistics, KUNTZEL began researching into materials and at the same time his words started to take on a certain shape: sentences were carved into marble and words were formed out of neon tubing. In his 1976 piece *Memory*, this word, spelled out in neon tubing, appears 12 times at regular intervals on the wall, each occurrence of which is less bright than the last. In this work, the word "memory" records the mental activity of the spectator while the variations in brightness reflect the loss of memory.

### *Videotapes: changing our way of looking*

A series of videotapes produced between 1979 and 1981 form the second part of this exhibit. Much like the visual works, KUNTZEL incites the participation of the spectator. While he must move alongside the neon tubes in order to grasp the meaning of *Memory*, so he must change his way of looking at these videos. The spectator tends to base the video medium on the model of television but KUNTZEL treats his images like unstable, plastic material emphasizing the imperfections of the medium and exploiting the potential of its defects showing vibrations of the screen, explosions of light, after-images, superimpositions and blurred outlines. These elements produce abstract images to which everyday television has accustomed us but a little.

### *Video installations: between light and darkness*

It was in 1980 that KUNTZEL became particularly interested in video installation. Here, in the third and most important part of the exhibit, the visitor is confronted with large-scale projections and perceives an image whose totality escapes him, as though KUNTZEL wanted to point out the limits of our visual field. Certain installations are, in fact, composed of several screens which force the spectator to move around so he can gain a more complete picture of the work. The emphasis in Thierry KUNTZEL's work is on staging rather than plot. The action is actually quite minimal, gestures slow, rhythm unpredictable, images fleeting and silences frequent.

Yolande Racine, curator responsible for the exhibition states that "Thierry KUNTZEL's work reflects an unrelenting preoccupation with the passage of time - responsible for the gradual fading of memory - and also with light conditions - source of the appearance and disappearance of the image".

A reminder that Thierry KUNTZEL will meet the public Thursday, October 21 at 5 p.m., at the Musée, during which time he will discuss his artistic process. It should also be noted that last year, during the *Eye for Eye : Video Self-Portraits* exhibition which regrouped video productions by fourteen American and European artists, 2 videotapes by Thierry KUNTZEL were shown.

The exhibition is accompanied by an abundantly illustrated 144-page catalogue which contains passages written by Anne-Marie Duguet, Commissary of the exhibit, Raymond Bellour, Jacinto Lageira and Bill Viola. The catalogue is a production of the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris.

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