



PIERRE HUYGHE, *The Third Memory*, 2000. Videostill. Courtesy Marian Goodman, New York.

# New York Cut Up

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE

Massimiliano Gioni

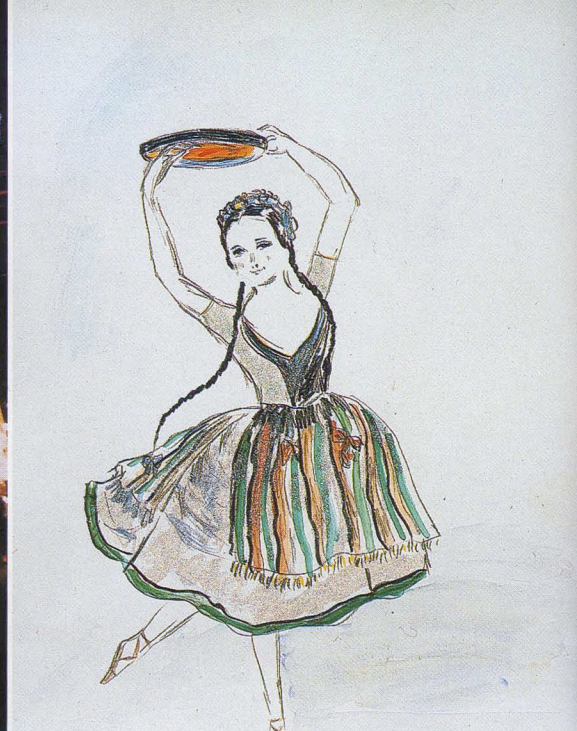
Reality is a nightmare from which we are trying to awake: a dull routine, with no direction. The real has colonized the imaginary, replacing the role of our imagination. You just need to surf the channels of your TV to find the Real World, with its big brothers, temptation islands, and other survivors: interchangeable extras of a dreary spectacle, which reveals the banality of our daily feelings, shaped on low budget scripts. Fiction used to offer an alternative to the real; today it simply replicates our mediocrity. In this scenario it takes sense and sensibility to be deep, and some strength to be tragic. That's precisely what **Pierre Huyghe** man-

ages to do with his show at **Marian Goodman**: an archaeologist of the present, Huyghe digs up fragments of beauty and heroism hidden under the skin of the everyday. But, paradoxically, in order to return to the richness of the real, Huyghe must first lose himself in the celluloid surface of fiction. His split-screen video installation *The Third Memory* is a faithful reconstruction of a famous bank robbery, as described by its protagonist, John Wojtowicz. On August 22, 1972 Wojtowicz entered a branch of the Chase Manhattan Bank in Brooklyn. He needed the money to pay for his lover's sex change operation, and he wasn't there for a loan. He

stepped into the bank holding a gun and making an offer that couldn't be refused. Four hours later the bank was a freak show: cops and cameramen everywhere, broadcasting Wojtowicz's love story across the nation. Long before Jean Baudrillard, John Wojtowicz had entered the realm of televised reality, turning into a simulacrum of himself—an empty image that would be further vampirized by Hollywood cult movie *Dog Day Afternoon*, directed by Sidney Lumet in 1975 and interpreted by a stunning Al Pacino. Wojtowicz cried when he watched the movie in prison. Almost thirty years later Huyghe asked Wojtowicz to tell his version of the story: in a set built to

look like the scene of the crime, a now heavy Wojtowicz instructs extras and actors, points his gun at imaginary cops, or explains the events looking straight at the camera. His voice and movements are mirrored by images and sounds extrapolated from Lumet's movie and original TV footage, which alternate on the two screens. Once in a while it looks like Wojtowicz is smiling at himself, a minute later he appears caught up in his role, as he delivers lines and litanies of insults... Slowly you get the feeling you *really* know Wojtowicz: there is something so romantic in his story that it immediately demands your compassion. Still Huyghe tries not to take a posi-





tion. He simply cuts and pastes archived material and biographical evidence, Hollywood and reality. By the plain means of juxtaposition, he composes a complex psychological portrait, set to the rhythm of a gangster movie. Just like Hitchcock, Huyghe knows that drama is life with the dull bits cut out. In the other video on view at Marian Goodman, *Two Minutes Out of Time*, Huyghe tells the story of yet another character in search of an author. Annlee is a digital creation whose rights were acquired from a Japanese company by Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Dominique Gonzalez Foester and Liam Gillick. In this episode directed by Huyghe, Annlee gradually comes to life, and discovers the spectre of her own death. With both works, Huyghe shows he has reached a sort of passionless style, a certain coldness that still speaks of sadness and loss. The cold winds of tragedy also blow in *Deliberate Living* a well selected group show at **Greene Naftali** curated by Sima Familant, who brought together works by Darren Almond, Cosima von Bonin, Andre Cadere, Hellen van Meene, De Rijke/De Rooij, Felix Gonzalez Torres, Tom Burr and Bas Jan Ader. The show might be too sparse, yet it insinuates a sense of rarefied melancholy, which you seldom experience in the galleries of New York. The late **Bas Jan Ader** and **De Rijke/De Rooij** steal the show, with a slide projection and a film respectively. Quite dissimilar in their subject

— Jan Ader investigates the burden of gravity in a sublime Swedish landscape, whereas De Rijke/De Rooij sets an estranged love story against a flowery background - both pieces seem to suffer from some seasonal affected disorder, which binds the characters to rituals of isolation. There is no climax or rapture in these works, but rather a sense of prolonged desolation, stretching like a pale Nordic light on an emotional landscape of solitude. It is this very same light that filtered through the lens of **Jan Dibbets**'s camera, in his early, historical photographs on view at **Barbara Gladstone**. Dibbets takes the lesson of Dutch painting, and sublimates it into an exercise of pure visibility: shot after shot, his camera erases reality, blurring it into a series of color fields and diaphanous structures as rigorous as a Mondrian and as sensual as a Vermeer.

### AMERICAN BEAUTY

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars," someone had scribbled on the sidewalk of 22nd street, probably thinking of three shows that recently opened in Chelsea, lining up **Nan Goldin** (at **Matthew Marks**), **Karen Kilimnik** (at **303**) and **Lisa Yuskavage** (at **Marianne Boesky**). Although coming from different generations and walks of life, these artists all share the same mixture of affected eroticism, debauchery and cult of personality.

Yuskavage and Kilimnik also pos-

sess the gift of irony, which is totally lacking in Goldin's work. In the past, it was precisely this unfiltered transparency that made **Nan Goldin**'s photos so great, as they showed us fear, beauty and glamour in a handful of dust. This time Goldin comes up with an exhibition that verges on self-celebration, turning her unpremeditated sincerity into a genre. Hung salon style, the show seems to trade emotion for déjà vu, with the usual routine of unmade beds, sleepy friends, sexy couples and "what costume shall the poor girl wear..." Unfortunately it feels like flipping through a family album you have seen far too many times: it's hard to be surprised or moved; everything is expected, slick, even manneristic. Despite the 107 photos in the show, you leave with a craving for one true, touching image, while hoping that all tomorrow's parties will be better.

**Karen Kilimnik** instead knows the virtue of levity and handles her world with a sophisticated stupor. Her canvases are all dreamy landscapes, snowy mountains, opera houses, and little ballerinas, painted with the lightness of a powder puff. At times, she concedes a little too much to the aesthetic of cuteness, but this show, with its bizarre soundtrack of evergreens gently creeping through velvet curtains and a giant pile of snowflakes in the corner, is all about theatre, makeup and masks: it can get away with some excess. Kilimnik is living in a music box, and she interprets a bittersweet play, a visual novel of great expectations, unfulfilled

promises, and dreams that money can(t) buy — somewhere in between Lewis Carroll, Dickens, and Truman Capote.

**Lisa Yuskavage** is also working on the complex geometry that ties desire, representation, and femininity. Her characters have become more reflexive and isolated as their surroundings grow more and more opulent. In the past Yuskavage's pin-ups had something of an ectoplasmatic quality, which made them look like the direct projections of a perverse libido. Now they are more detailed, but still caught in cheap psychological dilemmas, like the characters from a TV adaptation of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. Yuskavage's technique is better than ever, and she loves to paint like some old Venetian master. But, when she gives in to virtuosity, it feel as if she were trapped in the same clichés she is trying so hard to corrode.

### GERMAN REINASSANCE

**Jörg Immendorf** is mostly known for his paintings of the Eighties, an explosion of nonsense and violent brushstrokes that made him famous during the wild years of neoexpressionism. This time, Immendorf comes to New York with two shows, at **Michael Werner** and at **Anton Kern**, presenting both his new paintings and his seminal works from the late 60s and early 70s. In his new canvases Immendorf has attained the literal, oneiric, and at times obvious quality of a surrealist, somehow reminiscent





of Max Ernst's mysterious universe. But it's Immendorf's early work (on view at Anton Kern) which really deserves a closer look. Mostly produced at the Dusseldorf academy in the late Sixties, this body of work is tied by a dysfunctional relationship to the tradition of German contemporary art, and particularly to the patronizing figure of Beuys, for some time a teacher and mentor of Immendorf's. Like a rebellious student, Immendorf makes Beuys look like a boring old preacher: gone is any sense of political integrity and coherence — Immendorf's universe dissolves into a proliferation of materials and images, ranging from naive paintings to blackboards, photos, t-shirts, boxes and wooden flowers. In Immendorf's tortuous logic, one can retrace the origin of some of today's most interesting German artists, such as John Bock, Jonathan Meese and Christian Jankowski: with Immendorf this younger generation shares an immediate understanding of the vitality of chaos as inscribed in our everyday life. Something similar happens at **Leo Koenig**, where 40-something Frankfurt resident **Marko Lehanka** erected a monument to the peasant, which cuts right through the ceiling of the gallery: a sort of a shaky, Do-It-Yourself memorial.

Even **Wolfgang Tillmans** is enjoying the spontaneous combustions of chance. In his new show at **Andrea Rosen**, he plays around with light, color and paper, leaving cameras and nega-

tives behind, and producing abstract images that function like an emotional seismograph, like the title *Blushes* seems to suggest. Nevertheless, when exhibited next to his portraits and snapshots installed in the usual scattered manner, these new prints run the risk of disappearing, like some awkward, unfinished exercise. Just for once Tillmans should have resisted the appeal of dissemination, concentrating on one thing at a time.

Be ready for some more German art to take over New York, as **Barbara Gladstone** and **Clarissa Dalrymple** prepare a summer group show which will bring together some of the most interesting and upcoming Teutonic talents. Maybe the acronym YGA will replace the over used label of Young British Art.

## VENICE UBER ALLES

In New York the word Biennial is usually associated with the Whitney Museum, which just announced that the 2002 edition will be curated by Lawrence Rinder. But as the summer draws near, art goers should start working on their trip to **Venice**. While still waiting for the names of the artists included in **Harald Szeemann's** much awaited show "The Plateau of Mankind," warm up with the list of the **national pavilions**: *Australia*: Lyndal Jones; *Belgium*: Luc Tuymans; *Canada*: George Bures Miller, Janet Cardiff; *Denmark*: Henning Christiansen, Ursula Reuter Christiansen; *Federal Republic of*

*Yugoslavia*: Milita Pavicevic; *France*: Pierre Huyghe; *Germany*: Gregor Schneider; *Great Britain*: Mark Wallinger; *Hungary*: Tamas Komoroczky, Antal Lakner; *Israel*: Uri Katzenstein; *Holland*: Liza May Post, *Scandinavian Pavilion*: *Finland*: Tommi Grönlund, Petteri Nisunen; *Norway*: Anders Tomren; *Sweden*: Mikael Elggren, Carl Mikael von Hauswolff; *Poland*: Leon Tarasewicz; *Switzerland*: Urs Lüthi; *USA*: Robert Gober.

## PEOPLE

**Hiroshi Sugimoto** to show his uncanny series of wax portraits at the Guggenheim Museum; **Jeffrey Deitch** to open a new space in Brooklyn; Parkett editions on view at the MOMA & Cut up video artist **TJ Wilcox** leaving Gavin Brown's Enterprise to work with Metro Pictures. Apparently **Metro Pictures** is trying to bring in some new energies, as they are now working also with Swiss born **Olaf Breuning**, whose vampires and fashion victims should be on view later this year. New Yorkers are likely to have other strange encounters in the next few months. **Takashi Murakami**, who is enjoying a very favourable moment and will soon exhibit at **Marianne Boesky**, will present a major intervention in Grand Central Station, sponsored by **Creative Time**, inaugurating on March 13. Thai artist **Navin Rawanchaikul**, whose nomadic peregrinations up and down the histories of Thai art

have gained him a prize in the past edition of the Basel Art Fair, will colonize New York Yellow cabs in a project sponsored by **Public Art Fund** and by **P.S. 1**. Cabs will be turned into mini-galleries on the move, transforming your daily traffic jam into a portable aesthetic experience. The dangerous liaisons that tie aesthetics, taste, beauty and mass entertainment in a culture of perennial displacement are the themes that the **Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago** promises to address in an upcoming major exhibition. Rumour has it, in fact, that Manilow Senior Curator **Francesco Bonami** is working on **Wish You Were Here!**, a reflection on the complex implications of tourism, between colonization, exoticism, pre-packed escape routes and the demon of tautology.

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