

contrast to the orange-yellow lozenge-shaped light source. Selectively placed in the corners of the composition are four dark circles, reinforcing the flat picture plane. The circles provide a counterpoint to the meandering, chalky, white lines of an enigmatic drawing, barely visible on the painting's surface. Acting as a visual bridge between *Springer's* diverse elements is an angular chain of crisply rendered, flesh- and red-colored, torpedo-like segments. This chain acts as an ersatz measuring device, mapping the composition as if it were a newly discovered constellation.

Heyman emerges from this exhibition as a member of a new breed of abstract painter. We are initially enveloped by his polished, orgasmic bursts of light; however, our attention is held by the inexplicable dialogue between the quiet, unassuming markers that reveal the artist's humanistic spirit beneath the cool surface of his formalist vocabulary.

~John Brunetti

## THE ECSTASY OF LIMITS

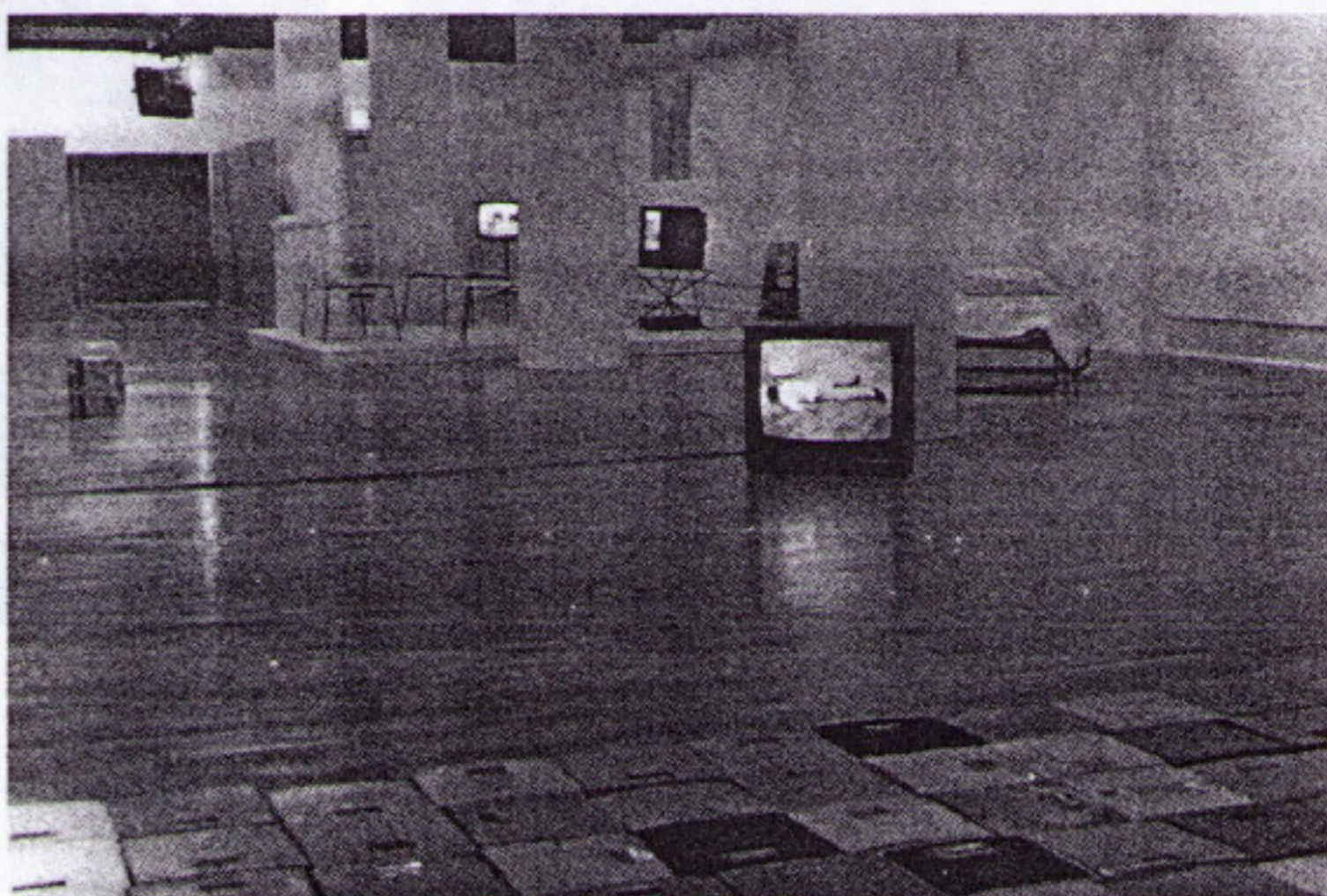
GALLERY 400

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Touted last fall as the hippest show in town, "The Ecstasy of Limits" presented a smart collection of works that echoed a careful selection of sentiments being voiced by the art world's dissipated mid-'90s community, from anti-object elitism and bad-girl politics to classic Conceptualism and Postmodern appropriation. Stepping up to the "sex sells" challenge, show organizer Yvette Brackman took the curatorial high road, opting for an intellectual concept of sexy over the more commonly denominated "T & A." The show juxtaposed notions of desire and control, the combination of which, when measured in the correct proportions, can (according to Brackman's curatorial statement) elicit ecstasy.

The very forum of a curated exhibition set the issue of control off to a fine start, and Brackman's choice of media—primarily installation and video—provided a suitable Orwellian edge. Entering the exhibition space, the viewer was con-



**The Ecstasy of Limits**

Installation view, 1994. Photo courtesy of Gallery 400.

fronted with Annetta Kapon's *Floor Scales*, an installation of 204 beat-up bathroom scales, several rows deep, bisecting the gallery. In order to access the rest of the show, the viewer was forced to reconcile any fears of, say, creating a disruptive racket in a typically silent space, having one's weight revealed in public, or simply breaking one of the installation's components.

The desired contextual effect of *Floor Scales* seemed to be transformative, directing the viewer to approach the ensuing pieces more viscerally informed, and the inclusion of several different installations offered a labyrinth of competing dictates: Franz West's enigmatic *Untitled* invites the viewer to interact with an amorphous plaster object that has an unspecified therapeutic value, watch a videotape of someone else handling the object, or simply sit and read the daily newspaper. Craig Kilpakjian's *Waiting Room*, a spare area separated from the rest of the show by office-cubicle dividers, features a computer-animated illusion of perspective. The movement from Kapon's psychopolitical perspective through West's contentious new-age philosophy to Kilpakjian's virtually real one-liner was, I found, somewhat overstimulating, but the more contemplative nature of Jane and Louise Wilson's *Routes 1 & 9 North*, featuring a video of the sisters submitting themselves to hypnosis by an

unknown male professional, lulled me back into the show's ethereal web.

Several works question the role of the viewer as arbiter: Tony Tasset's *Location Performance* defiantly dares us to "get it," while Vito Acconci's video *Undertone*, in which the artist, seated at a table, implies that his hands, when out of our sight, are not idle in his lap, seeks to shamefully disclose the viewer as voyeur—an effect more humorously produced by Karen McGarry's *Suck*, a video that catches two hands in the act. Such allusions to sex simultaneously raise the issue of bodily limitations, fiercely indicted by Laurel Fredrickson's *Pinch, Nip, and Tweak*, which presents the fetishistic results of efforts to control our physical selves. Desire was featured most readily with reference to danger, specifically in Kilpakjian's *Bullet Proof Blanket*, an impenetrable bed, and Julie Zando's soapy video *The Bus Stops Here*, about a mistrustful menage à trois.

Both the show's expansive curatorial agenda and the proliferation of thoughtful work speak, yet again, to Gallery 400's championing of the homespun originality that the local institutional art world would do well to consider seriously. Unfortunately, the limits of space, resources, and a sense of exhibitive drama kept "The Ecstasy of Limits" from getting me to succumb.

~Deborah Wilk