



FADED WALLPAPER

A Video Performance by Tina Keane

The impressive institutional setting of the new Clore Wing at the Tate Gallery was the setting for Tina Keane's new performance 'Faded Wallpaper'. Exploring the 'borders between installation and performance', the piece is a development from an original installation at the Serpentine Gallery. The set was made up of a large centrally projected video image framed by two images of pillars, with four monitors placed on the stage in various positions; the artist sat on a bench to the side of the central image looking directly into it and away from the audience, moving only to perform specific and rarified actions.

Based on a short story by Charlotte Perkins, the piece was 'concerned with visual perception, madness and the search for identity...'. Tackling the well-used artistic theme of alienation without falling into banal clichés is difficult but this performance managed it. Reminiscent of Susan Hiller's use of wallpaper, this ritualised act of self-discovery hinged on the interplay between the unravelling of psychological layers, images and the artist's use of mark, sign and surface. The use of the wallpaper slowly fading into elusive images to be eventually torn to reveal a multitude of surreal images. The central screen revealed within its layering conflicting images, the hands tearing at the wallpaper, a woman bodybuilding and the nightmarish use of Hollywood footage of synchronised swimmers. These images enticed and disturbed at the same time forming a crack in dominant notions of sanity: reality.

The performance aspect of the piece was very minimal but nonetheless guiding the viewer in his/her attention and concentration; by staring at the image, by moving to a video camera and altering the image size, by moving closer to the screen as the event progressed and finally by lying on the stage during the final cathartic build up of images. The sound which included chanting, music and voice from the short story was atmospheric but altogether too relentless and seemed to overcome some of the more subtle visual moments.

It left a sense of psychological unravelling, of conflicting moments weaved together, revealing through isolation how strength and imagination can be gathered to construct an alternative subjective reality.

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