

Expo the Times. 1990?

**Jeremy Welsh**

*Forest Fires*, 1983 - 1990  
video monitors, slide projection, firewood

First shown at the B2 Gallery, Wapping, London, in 1983, as part of the *Undercut Landscape* series.

When I first made this work in the early eighties, its concerns were somewhat different. Although the theme of technological society's destructive relationship to the natural world was present, it was only partially visible, as a subtext running through the piece.

In 1990 there is no place for such coyness. The present version of *Forest Fires* is unambivalently concerned with the ever-present threat of ecological disaster. The installation uses two of the media that deliver to us images of the ravaged natural environment - video and photography - and is concerned with the ambiguities of Media's position. While alerting us to the dangers, it is nonetheless inescapably implicated in the processes of destruction.

The work is no longer only concerned with 'The Forest' as a generalised concept, but with those specific forests that are disappearing or have already gone. Forests killed by pollution in Eastern Europe or by human expansion in the Amazon. And these realities juxtaposed with an older view of 'The Forest' as a site of magical, mystical or supernatural experience - an ancient construction of 'The Forest', buried deep in our collective consciousness, but now almost burned away by the searing heat of 'Progress'.

J.W.

*Forest Fires*, 1983  
B2 Gallery, Wapping, London  
photograph: courtesy of the artist.

