DISPLACEMENTS: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE DOMESTIC

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ABSTRACT

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Aslı Çetinkaya

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This thesis investigates and argues for instances in which art and spatial, existential and economic meanings of the domestic can be thought to communicate. In the first part, it introduces and discusses philosophical works which consider and examine implications of the domestic, a historical study of public/private division and certain categorisations of Kantian aesthetics, in order to provide a research context. It focuses on particular works, movements and styles from modern art. The rest of the thesis studies contemporary art works in three groups which are defined according to the disposition of the relationships of art and domestic suggested by those works. This categorization is mainly to propose ways to trace this relationship among the heterogeneity of genres and interests of post-1960s art productions. This thesis attempts to argue that the relationships between art and the domestic is characterised by displacements of the referential frames within which these terms are usually defined and understood.

Key words: Home, domestic, dwelling, interior, avant-garde, uncanny, functionality, design, craft, installation, furniture, other, narration, video, performance.

ÖZ

MODERN ve ÇAĞDAŞ SANATTA EV/EVCİL/EVSEL

Aslı Çetinkaya

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Bu çalışmada sanat ve 'ev'in mekansal, varoluşsal ve ekonomik anlamları arasındaki bağlantılar incelenmektedir. İlk bölümde, 'ev'in çeşitli felsefi yaklaşımlardaki yeri, özel/kamusal ayrımının tarihsel oluşumu üzerine bir çalışma ve Kantçı estetiğin belirli sınıflandırmaları, bir araştırma bağlamı oluşturmak üzere ele alınıp tartışılmaktadır. Belirli Modern sanat işleri, akımları ve üslupları bu bağlamda gözden geçirilmektedir. Çalışmanın geri kalanı, çeşitli çağdaş sanat işlerini, bu işlerin önerdiği sanat-ev ilişkisi özelliklerine göre farklılaşan üç grupta incelemektedir. Böyle bir gruplandırmanın amacı, 1960 sonrası sanatında görülen üretim ve konu çeşitliliği arasında, bu ilişkiyi belirginleştirip izleyebilmektir. Bu çalışma, incelenen işlerdeki sanat ev ilişkilerinde öne çıkan özelliğin, bu iki kavramın çoğunlukla tanımlandığı belirleyici çerçevelerin kaydırılması ve sorgulanması olduğunu öne sürmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

> This is, after all, the world of 'kettle logic';
> and along such murky paths of connection,
> we might reflect that if you hear, rather than
> write, the word 'domestication' – if you
> return to that famous pre-civilized
> primitiveness of an oral culture – what you
> get, none too neatly tidied away into this
> capaciously polysyllabic word, is 'mess' and
> 'stickiness' – an Anglo-Saxon sprawl
> screeching for attention out of the nicely
> abstracted Latinate term. As every housewife
> knows.
>
> Rachel Bowlby [1]

This thesis does not intend to reflect on domesticity in order to provide a clear-cut definition of this notion. It does not aim to study traditional forms of domestic production such as embroidery or lace making. However, it also does not promise that the argument will not touch upon these practices at some point or will not suggest different understandings of the domestic. At first these concepts, art and domesticity, might seem not to offer a relationship which would yield itself to study. Nevertheless, when the notion of domestic is not conceived as a uniform and universal signified, but thought rather as a meaning interlacing the existential, spatial and economic, it becomes possible to comprehend its connections with the artistic. Not simply in itself political, the domestic operates as an unstable political boundary marker since it is employed in social categorisations and formulations. The political trait evoked this way, further entails or provides a politics of art with a province to define itself in relation to.

This thesis plans to investigate the ways by which art and the domestic can be thought to communicate and bring about mutually destabilising instances. Focusing mainly on the works produced after 1960s, but also reviewing some instances of earlier modern art productions in the introductory chapter, it aims to propose the existence of several distinct approaches which provoke senses of domesticity. Having different modes of relationships with various traditions of the domestic and shaped by idiomatic productions of artists, it is

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[1] Bowlby, Rachel 'Domestication', *Deconstruction: A Reader*, ed. Martin McQuillan, (New York: Routledge, 2001) 310.

important not to think of these three groups as exclusively separate categories, since certain common traits also cut through them.

Displacements understood as acts of unsettling, of moving out of the customary or proper place, seem to characterise these instances at different levels and not without evoking the psychoanalytical senses of the term. Displacement of art through the domestic and domesticity through art; displacement of the personal and the psychic by the political, dispersal of artistic productions and spaces of display into domestic ones, and disturbance of the social and political categories of public and private through tactical diversion of everyday practices.

The domestic seems to suggest different and differentiating spatial and functional organisations; a change in intensities that produce a change in the sense of space. However, the recurrent emphasis on spatial conceptualisation of the domestic may be hiding away a certain temporality relating to that space. A home has a recognizable or familiar rhythm; as if time is converted into, apprehended in different modes; through objects, habits (often focused around certain objects) or negligence. The domestic ensures a certain delimited space to be read as home and it is invoked by and invokes senses of belonging. This delimited space does not however close-off domesticity within its boundaries but rather makes it legible, as proposed by Heidegger in *Building Dwelling Thinking*:

> What the word for space, *Raum,* designates is said by its ancient meaning. *Raum, Rum*, means a place that is freed for settlement and lodging. A space is something that has been made room for, something that has been freed, namely, within a boundary, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its essential unfolding*. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary. Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds. [2]

On August 5, 1951 Heidegger was invited to address to the Darmstadt Symposium at a conference on *Man and Space*. The audience was largely of architects and artists. Most of the papers presented dealt with the state of devastation Europe faced after the World War II. Heidegger's lecture, *Building Dwelling Thinking,* deals with the notion of dwelling as a

[2] Heidegger, Martin 'Building Dwelling Thinking', *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 356.

complex existential problem rather than considering it as provision of shelter. He asserts that the 'homelessness' of the contemporary man, is not a problem that can be solved by dealing with the lack of houses.

For Heidegger dwelling is not an activity that man performs next to other activities. The manner in which a human being is in-the-world, is dwelling. He traces the etymology of the German word for 'to build', *bauen,* and derives both 'to dwell' and 'to be' from this common root. 'To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.' (Heidegger, 1993a, 349) Another thread of the argument emerges as Heidegger introduces the contradictory meanings of the same word *bauen;* building in the sense of preserving and nurturing - 'not making anything'- and building as constructing:

> Both modes of building - building as cultivating, Latin *colere, cultura,* and building as the raising up of edifices, *aedificare* - are comprised within genuine building, that is, dwelling. Building as dwelling, that is, as being on the earth, however, remains for man's everyday experience that which is from the outset 'habitual' - we inhabit it, as our language says so beautifully: it is the *Gewohnte*. For this reason it recedes behind the manifold ways in which dwelling is accomplished, the activities of cultivation and construction. These activities later claim the name of *bauen,* building, and with it the matter of building, exclusively for themselves. The proper sense of *bauen,* namely dwelling, falls into oblivion. (Heidegger, 1993a, 349-50)

Being as dwelling, is always already in relation to the people and things of the world, though in average everyday existence dwelling is not experienced as such. For Heidegger, it is the manner in which human beings are, for it is not a state but an ontological characteristic of existence. To dwell means 'to remain, to stay in a place…to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence.' (Heidegger, 1993a, 351) Heidegger asserts that 'letting-dwell' is the distinctive characteristic of building; building in the sense of constructing. 'Spaces open up by the fact that they are let into the dwelling of man.'(Heidegger, 359) Building produces 'locales' as it is 'a founding and joining of spaces'. He presents the example of a farmhouse in the Black Forest to illustrate 'by a dwelling that *has been* how it was able to build.' (Heidegger, 1993a, 360) In his somewhat nostalgic model of 'dwelling' Heidegger seems to emphasize a certain 'stay among things': accordance with environmental conditions, communal, historical and spatial belonging and attachment to objects.

Heidegger mentions an anecdote from Heraclitus in *Letter on Humanism,* while discussing the relationship of ontology with ethics. According to the story, visitors to Heraclitus were disappointed that instead of finding him in a deep philosophical contemplation, they saw him simply warming himself next to a stove at his house. Seeing the frustrated curiosity in their faces, he utters the phrase which Heidegger translates as follows: 'The (familiar) abode for man is the open region for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar one).'[3] His translation is constructed on the Greek word *ethos,* which Heidegger takes to mean 'abode, dwelling place':

> 'even here' at the stove, in that ordinary place where every thing and every condition, each deed and thought is intimate and commonplace, that is, familiar, 'even there' in the sphere of the familiar,…it is the case that 'the gods come to presence. (Heidegger, 1993b, 258)

According to the existential philosophy and 'phenomenology of the other' theorised by Emmanuel Levinas, the idea of dwelling has an important role in overcoming the dominant thinking of Western philosophy, which organizes beings into power systems and derives the meaning of individuals from the concept of totality. Levinas asserts the primacy of ethics to ontology, and defines it as calling into question of the 'spontaneity of the same' by the Other. It is important in conceiving the 'beyond of totality', a 'relationship with a surplus always exterior to the totality' which he identifies as the concept of infinity.[4]

It calls for maintaining a relationship with the exterior to break up totality. For Levinas such situation is possible by 'the gleam of transcendence in the face of the Other'. Subjectivity is 'defended' in order to enable it to recognize the irreducible alterity, the exteriority of the Other. Understanding of being – self, the same- in relation to the transcendental idea of the Other, is the requirement for 'establishing of this primacy of the ethical, that is, of the relationship of man to man.'(Levinas, 1969, 79)

'Infinity is produced in the relationship of the same with the other' and for Levinas, this idea of infinity, of the relationship, presupposes a separation. 'The dwelling itself, assuredly evinces separation, or, better yet, is an indispensable moment of its production…'

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[3] Heidegger, Martin 'Letter on Humanism', *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 258.

[4] Levinas, Emmanuel *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1969) 35.

(Levinas, 1969, 153) The home allows the subject the possibility of egoistic enjoyment, which Levinas defines as 'withdrawal into oneself, an involution'. Levinas argues that separation makes recollection and representation possible; the home provokes subjectivity as welcoming the Other, as hospitality:

> Recollection, in the current sense of the term, designates a suspension of the immediate reactions the world solicits in view of a greater attention to oneself, one's possibilities and the situation….To dwell is not the simple fact of the anonymous reality of a being cast into existence as a stone one casts behind oneself; it is a recollection, a coming to oneself, a retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome. (Levinas, 1969, 156)

Inhabitation and the intimacy of the dwelling which make the separation of the human being possible thus imply a revelation of the Other. From within the economic foundation of a home in which the subject maintains and enjoys itself, a plurality, a just relationship is concretely produced in hospitality extended to the Other. For Levinas, the function of the home does not consist in 'orienting being by the architecture of the building and in discovering a site' but by producing a break from 'the elements', and making labour and property possible. (Levinas, 1969, 156) The experience of enjoyment is an important constituent of existence and Levinas criticizes Heidegger for his negligence of not taking the relation of enjoyment into consideration. '*Dasein* in Heidegger is never hungry. Food can be interpreted as an implement only in a world of exploitation.' (Levinas, 1969, 134) He asserts that Heidegger's conceptualisation of the world as a set of implements forming a system, sets aside 'the disinterested joy of play', suspension or absence of ultimate finality. One lives from 'things', and also enjoys this living from, as 'we live from our labour which ensures our subsistence; but we also live from our labour because it fills (delights or saddens) life'. (Levinas, 1969, 112) The economic foundation of home and self-sustenance within a home are conditions for extending an invitation:

> No human or interhuman relationship can be enacted outside of economy; no face can be approached with empty hands and closed home. Recollection in a home open to the Other – hospitality – is the concrete and initial fact of human recollection and separation (Levinas, 1969, 172)

In Levinas, concretisation of the separation within the home, opens onto the recognition of the Other. Heidegger in his theorisation of the relationship of dwelling to being, also stresses this issue of spatial delimitation where he uses the German word *Raum* for space suggesting the architectural, instead of the terms *spatium* and *extensio* which stand for the rather abstract concept of space as continuum. [5] For Heidegger, ontological significance of the *horismos,* boundary is that from which something unfolds in its essence. Levinas criticises ontology for reducing the other to the same, 'not allowing itself to be alienated by the other.'(Levinas, 1969, 42) For Levinas boundary makes exteriority and alterity possible; it reveals the irreducible strangeness of the Other. This relationship to the Other, where the spontaneity of the self is called into question is ethics.

Levinas's conceptualisation of the subjectivity produced in recognition of the Other, suggests the idea of 'public'. Thomas Keenan, in *Windows: of vulnerability*, argues that a public is not a collection of private individuals gathering for a common aim and a public sphere is not a street or a square, a place where one goes to enact one's subjectivity. Keenan's formulation of the public derives from Levinas's notions of alterity and separation. Here, the public is a realm of encounter with what one is not, an exposure and involvement with others:

> And …this [is] 'prior to' the empirical encounter between constituted subjects; publicity does not befall what is properly private, contaminating or opening up an otherwise sealed interiority. Rather, what we call interiority is itself the mark or the trace of this breach, of a violence that in turn makes it possible the violence or the love we experience as intersubjectivity. We would have no relation to others, no terror and no peace, certainly no politics, without this (de)constitutive interruption. [6]

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[5] Kenneth Frampton discusses the ways to withstand the 'endless processal flux of the Megalopolis'. He refers to Heidegger's emphasis on boundaries: 'Heidegger argues that the phenomenological essence of such a space/place depends upon the *concrete*, clearly defined nature of its boundary…and goes on to state that the condition of "dwelling" and hence ultimately of "being" can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded.'
Frampton, Kenneth 'Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance', *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture,* ed. Hal Foster, (New York: The New Press, 1983) 24.
[6] Keenan, Thomas 'Windows: of vulnerability', *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 124.

Interiority, the 'private' sphere, by breaking the totality, enables the public to be understood as a relation between the self and others. As Keenan puts it, this public 'is not the realm of the subject, but of others, of all that is other to – and in – the subject itself…belongs by rights to others, and no one in particular.'(Keenan, 1993, 133) This suggested definition and the significance of the 'private' sphere in conceptualisation of the public, seem to recall a historically idealised model of a 'public' sphere and its active relationship with the domestic realm.

A Public out of a Private

'The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public.'[7] This somewhat paradoxical definition of public sphere, proposed by Jürgen Habermas, still seems to call attention to a more complex structure inlaid in the dichotomous model of public/private distinction, 'a multiplicity of concurrent meanings', public spheres and private spheres. [8] There is no singular form of division, an applicable comprehensive model. Society is imagined to be and represented as sliced along different lines based on different social-historical points of reference, in order to distinguish and control kinds of acts along with the different physical and social spaces in which they occur. Habermas analyses those social-historical conditions which have given rise to bring up such organizational categorisations as the public and private, related institutions and spaces, and reasons for a subsequent deterioration of such divisions. More precisely, Habermas's analysis is focused on the emergence, functionality and decline of the bourgeois 'public sphere' which betrays the conceptualisation of 'private sphere' or 'intimate sphere' insofar as it is thought to be operative and complementary in this lifespan. According to this analysis, public means a world of discussion and deliberation, a neutral realm of

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[7] Habermas, Jürgen *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991) 27.
[8] Habermas in his preface introduces one of the methodological preliminaries of his study, relating to the social and historical specifications as follows:
'The other peculiarity of our method results from the necessity of having to proceed at once sociologically and historically. We conceive bourgeois public sphere as a category that is typical of an epoch. It cannot be abstracted from the unique developmental history of that "civil society" originating in the European High Middle Ages; nor can it be transferred, ideal-typically generalized, to any number of historical situations that represent formally similar constellations.'(Habermas, 1991, xvii)

legitimisation. Yet the production of this realm is modelled after and through intimate 'private' spheres of nobility and bourgeoisie:

> Even before the control over the public sphere by public authority was contested and finally wrested away by the critical reasoning of private persons on political issues, there evolved under its cover a public sphere in apolitical form – the literary precursor of the public sphere operative in the political domain.(Habermas, 1991, 29)

According to Habermas, the public sphere reached its ideally developed point in the eighteenth century, with its most important feature of public use of reason in rational-critical debate and with the emergence of 'public opinion'. However, the notions and criteria concerning what is 'public' and what is not and those relating to 'publicness' were carried forward from antiquity and Middle Ages. In the Greek city-state the sphere of *oikos* was strictly separated from that of *polis*. The household constituted the locus of wealth and labour power, thus 'status in the *polis* was based upon status as the unlimited master of an *oikos*.'(Habermas, 1991, 3) As Jeff Weintraub writes, for Aristotle, the sphere of *oikos* involves both the family and economic life 'since he could regard the household as the main institution regulating production and distribution.'[9] The household was the appropriate sphere of domination and was structured by relationships of 'natural' inequality:

> The reproduction of life, the labour of the slaves, and the service of the women went on under the aegis of the master's domination; birth and death took place in its shadow; and the realm of necessity and transitoriness remained immersed in the obscurity of the private sphere. (Habermas, 1991, 3)

In opposition to that the public sphere was characterised by ideas of freedom, competition among equals and participation in collective self-determination.

The notions of citizenship and autonomy, and the opposition between the public and private categories on the ancient model did not survive during the feudal societies of the Middle Ages. However, Habermas notes that the notion of 'publicness (or publicity) of representation' emerged in this period as a status attribute which was meant to be displayed before 'people':

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[9] Weintraub, Jeff 'The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction', *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy,* ed. Jeff Weintraub & Krishan Kumar, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 35.

> In itself the status of manorial lord, on whatever level, was neutral in relation to the criteria of 'public' and 'private'; but its incumbent represented it publicly…The concept of representation in this sense has been preserved down to the most recent constitutional doctrine, according to which representation can 'occur only in public…there is no representation that would be a 'private' matter. For representation pretended to make something invisible visible through the public presence of the person of the lord. (Habermas, 1991, 7)

It needs to be noted that, the concept of representation referred to here, as Habermas underlines, has nothing to do with the sense of legal or political representation. It was in the sense of displaying the characteristics of lordship, a 'publicity of representation inseparable from the lord's concrete existence, that, as an "aura"'. (Habermas, 1991, 6) This type of publicity later became concentrated at the prince's court, as the independent provincial nobility lost its importance. 'The culture of humanism became a component of courtly life…Under the influence of the *Cortegiano,* the humanistically cultivated courtier replaced the Christian knight.' (Habermas, 1991, 9) Habermas refers to the 'baroque festivity' which retreated from public places, from the streets into the rooms of the palace, nevertheless did not convert into a form of private entertainment, and in which 'representative publicness not only survived but became more prominent':

> The bourgeois is distinguished from the courtly mentality by the fact that in the bourgeois home even the ballroom is still homey, whereas in the palace even the living quarters are still festive. And actually, beginning with Versailles, the royal bedroom develops into the palace's second centre. (Habermas, 1991, 10)

Bourgeois subjectivity and home were constructed on the notions of disengagement and protectiveness. Even when a space conventionally associated with aristocracy was incorporated within the bourgeois home, it tended to lose its previously existing connotations in terms of publicness. However, aristocratic society was characterised by customs of display and even the intimate spaces of residences were not entirely considered secluded.

After the rise of national and territorial states, and emergence of 'public authority', with its permanent administration and army, the aristocratic society serving the representation of the monarch, could develop its sociability into the 'peculiarly free-floating but clearly demarcated sphere of "good society" in the eighteenth century.'(Habermas, 1991,

11) The former feudal authority was transformed into the 'authority to "police"', and the private subjects – in so far as they did not hold a position within the state organisation – of this organising and controlling power formed the 'public'. Economic expansion was crucial in the evolution of the public sphere within the realm outside of the administrative state. Habermas emphasizes the role of capitalist modes of production, and of the long-distance trade in news and commodities in this evolution. Civil society as the realm of commodity exchange and social labour came into existence, according to Habermas, as the outcome of depersonalised state authority. Activities previously relegated to the framework of the household economy moved out thus producing a further division within the civil society as public and private (intimate) spheres:

> The changed conditions of the times were reflected in the transformation of the economics handed down from antiquity into political economy. Indeed the term "economic" itself, which until the seventeenth century was limited to the sphere of tasks proper to the *oikodespotes*, the *pater familias*, the head of the household, now, in the context of a practice of running a business in accord with principles of profitability, took on its modern meaning. The duties of the household head were narrowed and "economizing" became more closely associated with thriftiness. Modern economics was no longer oriented to the *oikos*; the market had replaced the household, and it became "commercial economics" (Habermas, 1991, 20)

As the mode of economy shifted and left the domestic sphere, it seems the 'void' is filled with a form of sociability and an interest in personal cultivation which is imagined to be realised in 'purely human' relations. The space imagined for this kind of acts was the domestic sphere. Habermas asserts that, prior to an idealised public sphere with its capacity for self-interpretive critical debate, an 'intimate' private sphere was formed which produced a specific subjectivity with a capacity to emancipate itself from the 'dictates of life's necessities'. The bourgeois 'intimate sphere' assumed an economic autonomy, an independence from the economic activity of the market which Habermas identifies as an illusion; an 'illusion of freedom evoked by human intimacy':

> To the autonomy of property owners in the market corresponded a self-presentation of human beings in the family. The latter's intimacy, apparently set free from the constraint of society, was the seal on the truth of a private autonomy exercised in competition. (Habermas, 1991, 46)

The bourgeois individual, being private in economic interactions and in domestic life, assumed two identities; *'bourgeois'* and *'homme':* a specific, but divided subjectivity produced and secured in the intimate sphere and performed towards and legitimised in the public sphere. Habermas's notion of home in production of subjectivity, is reminiscent of that of Levinas who argues that human subjectivity is produced as 'recollection, a work of separation, [which] is concretised as existence in a dwelling, economic existence.'(Levinas, 1969, 154) However, the social legitimisation of the bourgeois subjectivity in the public sphere as posited by Habermas is different from Levinasian experience of the Other, of which is radically irreducible to the order of individual subject; that is language.

These two complementary positions of the individual, *'bourgeois'* and *'homme',* were also reflected through changes in architectural plans of residential buildings. 'Those places and halls that are for everyone are reduced as much as possible', giving way to special rooms for individual family members. Spaces defined as 'living room' and *'salon'*– the space designated as *salon* within the house did not serve the house but 'society'- apparently corresponding to those two roles of the individual also represented the meeting of public and private spheres right within the home. 'The privatised individuals stepped out of the intimacy of their living rooms into the public sphere of the *salon*, but the one was strictly complementary to the other.' (Habermas, 1991, 45)

The 'privateness' was oriented towards an audience and 'purely human' relations with one another was performed through 'letter writing' from which as Habermas asserts, originated the literary genre of 'domestic novel', novels composed of letters. This genre appealed to a wide public of readers and changed the relations between writer, novel and public. They became intimate mutual relationships between privatised individuals who were psychologically interested in what was 'human', in self-knowledge, and in empathy.

The earlier gatherings of 'economically unproductive and politically functionless' (Habermas, 1991, 31) urban aristocracy with the writers, artists and scientists in residences of nobility were the precursors of later *salons*. The Hotel de Rambouillet, established in 1607 by the young Marquise, who found the coarseness and intrigue of French court little to her taste, housed a circle of nobles and intellectuals. It is remarkable to learn that 'Mme de Rambouillet took great trouble to arrange her house for purposes of reception, and devised

suites of small rooms where visitors could move easily, and could find more privacy than in the large reception rooms of the ordinary house.'[10]

The *salon* was the space of hospitable discussion and critical public debate where the bourgeois met with the socially prestigious but politically uninfluential nobles as '"common" human beings.' These institutions preserved a social intercourse which disregarded status, presupposed a public that was ideally inclusive and discussed areas of 'common concern' such as philosophy, literature and art. Cultural productions were accessible as commodities and now to be judged by anyone who had access to them, thus letting a new art public emerge:

> Discussion became the medium through which people appropriated art. The innumerable pamphlets criticising or defending the leading theory of art built on the discussions of the *salons* and reacted back on them – art criticism as conversation. (Habermas, 1991, 40)

These two types of 'private' practices, were operative and merged at a certain point to produce a structured public sphere. '[T]he public that had long since grown out of early institutions like the coffee houses, *salons* and *Tischgesellschaften* [table societies] was now held together through the medium of the press and its professional criticism.' (Habermas, 1991, 51) The political task of the bourgeois sphere, which Habermas defines as 'the regulation of civil society' through critical public debate rather than 'citizenry acting in common', was enacted through the social establishments of this public sphere that was 'from the beginning private and polemical at once.' (Habermas, 1991, 52)

If traced through this theorisation, some values that are thought to comprise the notion of domesticity, such as intimacy, hospitality and separation from the work place, seem to produce and shape the public sphere in eighteenth century Europe. Lauren Berlant refers to this advent of intimacy as a public mode of identification and self-development in the history of public sphere proposed:

> The development of critical publicness depended on the expansion of class-mixed semiformal institutions like the salon and the café, circulating print media, and industrial capitalism; the notion of the democratic public sphere thus made collective intimacy a public and social ideal, one of fundamental political interest.[11]

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[10] <http://14.1911encyclopedia.org/R/RA/RAMBOUILLET.html>
[11] Berlant, Lauren 'Intimacy: A Special Issue', *Critical Inquiry* (no:24, Winter 1998) 283.

Berlant argues that according to Habermas's positioning of a private sphere in relation to the public, persons were to be prepared for their participation in critical social functions in the intimate spheres of domesticity 'where they would learn to experience their internal lives theatrically, as though oriented toward an audience. This is to say that liberal society was founded on the migration of intimacy expectations between the public and the domestic.' (Berlant, 1998, 284)

The gatherings of private people in salons, clubs and reading societies for a critical debate, where they could perform a proto-Kantian 'public use of reason', that is reason not being subjected to particular ends, were thought of as independent of any economic constraint and objective. These spaces are imagined to provide instances where one is not 'a cog in a machine' or is free from dictates of life's necessities.[12] Habermas argues that 'even in its merely literary form (of self-elucidation of the novel experiences of subjectivity), [rational-critical debate] possessed instead a "political" character in the Greek sense of being emancipated from the constraints of survival requirements.' (Habermas, 1991, 160) Art and art criticism were situated in a realm out of the economy of material exchange, in the intimacy of groups of individuals. Peter Bürger asserts that 'the autonomy of art is a category of bourgeois society'[13] and this idea of emancipation, apartness from the praxis of life, prepares to endow art with its 'institutional status':

> It permits the description of art's detachment from the context of practical life as a historical development – that among the members of those classes which, at least at times, are free from the pressures of the need for survival, a sensuousness could evolve that was not part of any means-ends relationships. (Bürger, 1984, 46)

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[12] Kant illustrates his theory of public and private uses of reason as: 'the use that an appointed teacher makes of his reason before his congregation is merely a *private use*; for a congregation, however large a gathering it may be, is still only a domestic gathering; and…as a priest…he is carrying out another's commission…But by the public use of one's own reason I understand that use which someone makes of it as *a scholar* before the entire public of the *world of readers*.'
Kant, Immanuel 'An Answer to the Question, What is Enlightenment?', *Practical Philosophy, Immanuel Kant,* ed. Mary J. Gregor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 18-9.
[13] Bürger, Peter *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 25.

In the process of this social and historical constitution of art as an autonomous entity, the notions relating to domesticity identified by the divisions of public and private were operative. Philosophical principles concerning the autonomy of works of art and of aesthetic judgement are defined by Kant in *The Critique of Judgement*.

In *Economimesis* Jacques Derrida looks into the Kantian critique of art and the beautiful, in order to unravel the operative mechanisms of politics and political economy at work in this discourse. His project is to demonstrate the link between the concepts of *mimesis* and *oikonomia* in Kantian theory; concepts which would first appear to have nothing to do with one another. Kant's theory of art and the beautiful indeed operates on the opposition of these two concepts to any related interest, where interest is understood to be bound with the existence and the purposefulness of the object.

Derrida introduces Kant's definition of art as a production of freedom; a production free of a material interest, pure productivity by a free being:

> Art properly speaking puts free-will to work and places reason at the root of its acts. There is therefore no art, in a strict sense, except that of a being who is free and *logon ekon* ["has speech"]: the product of bees ["cells of wax regularly constructed"] is not a work of art.[14]

He asserts that this Kantian characterization of art is a reiteration of a humanist theme, a simplifying opposition of a generalized, single 'animal' structure to the human, which already provides an assurance of the concept of art to be constructed. Opposition is stabilized by a projection of a common base, and nature provides the ideal point of reference. Derrida writes that, 'it is there to raise man up, that is always, to erect a man-god, to avoid contamination "from below", and to mark an incontrovertible limit of anthropological domesticity.' (Derrida, 1998, 265-6) For Kant, although one may be pleased to call regularly constructed cells of bees, 'works of art' but this is so only by analogy. The Kantian scheme of valuation operates along an axis of inside/outside, and analogies which exchange the properties on two sides of this axis, work to legitimize the value judgments. Human production is natural and naturally different from that of animals as humans are endowed with reason and speech by nature, and consequently human production can be hierarchized according to its distancing from necessities.

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[14] Derrida, Jacques 'Economimesis', *The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998) 265.

If a need, a necessity or an economic value is understood to determine the production, as in mercenary art, then this mode of productivity might be thought to resemble that of bees: 'lack of freedom, a determined purpose or finality, utility, finitude of the code, fixity of the program without reason and without the play of the imagination.'(Derrida, 1998, 266) Freedom, which is considered to be a distinguishing property of man, realizes itself in 'play' opposed to 'work'. Play that defines 'pure productivity' is the activity of an imagination that is spontaneous and free. Kant draws the distinction between 'free' and 'mercenary' art based on different types of productivity and imagination. Free or liberal art, by staying out of the circle of material exchange, is 'higher than the [mercenary art]…it has more value for not having any economic value.'(Derrida, 1998, 270) It remains in a paradoxical position, as a 'non-exchangeable' form of production, exceeding all material evaluation while yet providing an evaluative basis for productivity:

> And nevertheless this pure productivity of the inexchangeable liberates a sort of immaculate commerce. Being a reflective exchange, universal communicability between free subjects opens up a space for the play of the Fine-Arts. There is in this a sort of pure economy in which the *oikos,* what belongs essentially to the definition of man, is reflected in his pure freedom and his pure productivity. (Derrida, 1998, 271)

This 'space' opened up beyond the realm of material exchange, overlaps with the ideal spaces of art and criticism defined by Habermas. 'Free art' would necessarily aim at a 'public' reception in this sense, whereas mercenary production, which is taken to imply the instrumental would have a domestic, private purpose. Artistic production and its public reception support themselves with illusions/ideologies of freedom, freedom from economic constraints of the market and from the domestic labor of sustenance. The artisanal, mercenary art as Kant categorizes it, in terms of its production is positioned elsewhere than in art – it 'belongs to art only by analogy' – or the domestic – it is the 'private' sphere conceived as separated from the work place and constraints of the market.

In Section 51 of *The Critique of Judgment,* Kant introduces a division of fine arts. 'Formative arts' make up the second group within this division and is further analyzed as 'Plastic arts' and 'Painting'. Both of these types of art 'use figures in space for expression of ideas: the former makes figures discernible to two senses, sight and touch (though, so far as the latter sense is concerned, without regard to beauty), the latter makes them so to the

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former sense alone.'[15] After these introductory criteria, Kant turns quickly to write about a somewhat unexpected practice which he considers being 'just like painting':

> In addition I would place under the head of painting, in the wide sense, the decoration of rooms by means of hangings, ornamental accessories, and all beautiful furniture the sole function of which is *to be looked at*; and in the same way the art of tasteful dressing. For a *parterre* of various flowers, a room with a variety of ornaments (including even the ladies' attire), go to make at a festal gathering a sort of picture which, like pictures in the true sense of the word, (those which are not intended *to teach* history or natural science) has no business beyond appealing to the eye, in order to entertain the imagination in free play with ideas, and to engage actively the aesthetic judgment independently of any definite end. (Kant, 1952, 188)

He further asserts that the complexity and heterogeneity of craft, the 'mechanical side' involved in the production of decoration, do not matter in the judgment of taste, since it is important only how forms present themselves to the eye and imagination. This condition also models Kant's notion of a true picture; illustrations, which are not true pictures given that they cannot be judged by their formal characteristics, their function is not simply 'to be looked' at and they are objects of 'teleological judgement' which is the faculty of 'estimating the real finality (objective) of nature by understanding and reason.'(Kant, 1952, 34) In Section 16, Kant pursues another example from decorative attributes where aesthetic judgement which depends solely on formal finality, applies:

> There are two kinds of beauty: free beauty or beauty which is merely dependent. So designs *á la grecque*, foliage for framework or on wall-papers, &c., have no intrinsic meaning; they represent nothing – no Object under a definite concept – and are free beauties. (Kant, 1952, 72)

Here Kant conceives the decorative, ornamental figuration framed as form, that which lacks meaning, 'purposeful without end.' Beauty according to Kant, '(whether it be of nature or of art) may in general be termed the *expression* of aesthetic ideas.'(Kant, 1952, 183)

Habermas marks a change around the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Western Europe. The dynamic relationship of public and private started to dissolve, first from the division of the public authority (state) and the private realm (civil society). Private

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[15] Kant, Immanuel *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James C. Meredith, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952) 184.

organisations began to assume public power and the state penetrated the private realm. Further, within the social private realm, the intimate sphere of the family lost its economic and social tasks, also its position as intellectual support of subjectivity:

> The shrinking of the private sphere into the areas of a conjugal family largely relieved of function and weakened in authority – the quiet bliss of homeyness – provided only the illusion of a perfectly private personal sphere (Habermas, 1991, 159)

For Habermas, the progressive disengagement of the family and intimate sphere from the processes of social reproduction, maintained the illusions of 'privacy' and this term remained as the sole implication of the domestic realm. Along with the performance of routine tasks of sustenance, the 'institutionally protected domestic domain' began to support 'noncommittal use of leisure time' and mechanisms of consumption. The bourgeois forms of sociability started to relapse into a common tendency of 'abstinence from literary and political debate.'(Habermas, 1991, 163) As exchanges between the two separate realms diminished, polarisation of 'private' and 'public' life became recognizable along the lines of personal and impersonal. Habermas traces this change in the changing plans of houses:

> The closedness of the private home, clearly indicated to the outside by front yard and fence and made possible on the inside by the individualised and manifold structuring of rooms, is no longer the norm today, just as conversely its openness to the social intercourse of a public sphere was endangered by the disappearance of the *salon* and of rooms for the reception of visitors in general. (Habermas, 1991, 157)

He argues that this domain, which was previously devoted to development of public-oriented subjectivity, became subject to 'extrafamilial authorities' and started to dissolve into a sphere of pseudo-privacy. The public's rational-critical debate also dissolved and gave way to the 'fetishism of community involvement as such' and to private activities in a social framework.

In his essay on the idea of 'home' in the twentieth-century, Krishan Kumar refers to Hannah Arendt's diagnosis of the modern social problem that has emerged with the rise of the nation-state and the industrial economy. According to Arendt, the public has been swallowed up by the private, and the social has become the realm 'where private interests

assume public significance.'[16]As Kumar notes, for Arendt the domestic sphere is 'principally' the private sphere and 'to live an entirely private life means above all to be deprived of things essential to a truly human life.' (Kumar, 1997, 213) The domestic sphere is the realm of necessity and 'while it may satisfy the human animal, it cannot satisfy the human being.' Arendt points to the etymology of the word private, its connection to privation. Private life is 'a state of being deprived of something, and even of the highest and most human of man's capacities.' (Kumar, 1997, 213)

However, at its high point of ideal operation or in a state of decline as Habermas posited, it needs to be recognized that the line between private and public cannot be drawn easily or definitively. Public and private are always defined in relation to one another. These are categories which continuously permeate each other; neither is wholly self-contained and stable. Privileging the first term of the dichotomy, public over the private, produces and justifies other divisions, evaluations and exclusions. Arendt's conception of domestic sphere as a condition of deprivation seems to operate in a similar way to the term 'domestication' as examined by Rachel Bowlby. She argues that the term domestication is often used for defining a 'hegemonising' process, proceeding in terms of power, in which the homogeneity of the initial state gets disturbed by the rebellious opposed term, only to be followed by the latter's assimilation. Domestication is often conceived as signaling something 'unproblematically' negative, while considering the idea, practice, theory or person that is brought into its sway as 'a wild and natural identity, a full presence'. The public as lamented by Arendt, is put at risk of falling victim to the private, 'succumbing to forces that deprive it of an original wholeness.' (Bowlby, 2001, 306)

An Unsettled Liaison: Modern Art and the Domestic

Aesthetic modernity is characterised by attitudes which find a common focus in a changed consciousness of time. This time consciousness expresses itself through metaphors of the vanguard and the avant-garde. The avant-garde understands itself as invading unknown territory, exposing itself to the dangers of sudden, shocking

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[16] Kumar, Krishan 'Home: The Promise and Predicament of Private Life at the end of the Twentieth Century', *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy,* ed. Jeff Weintraub & Krishan Kumar, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 212.

encounters, conquering an as yet unoccupied future. The avant-garde must find a direction in a landscape into which no one seems to have yet ventured.[17]

The avant-garde consciousness described by Habermas in *Modernity – An Incomplete Project,* is realised 'spatially ' and socially in the portrayals of modernity by Baudelaire. The domestic, imagined to be the most familiar territory, would stand as the contrasting site to that of *flâneur,* 'man of the world, man of the crowd'.[18] In *The Painter of Modern Life* Baudelaire states an overt dislike for certain contemporary artists, accusing them of being unaware of their time and the world, of being 'domestic': 'Apart from one or two exceptions whom I need not name, it must be admitted that the majority of artists are no more than highly skilled animals, pure artisans, village intellects, cottage brains.'(Baudelaire, 1998, 495) 'Cottage brain' stands as a figure of a person who is deprived of those capacities necessary for participation in a public, rural rather than urban – someone who identifies and contents himself with his rural dwelling place. Baudelaire's understanding of the modern man and modern artist seems to be marked out by a social-spatial direction of interest, rather than a rebellious position towards the conventional practices of art. Here for Baudelaire, the public sphere is foremost the city street. In *The City in Pieces*, Victor Burgin refers to Walter Benjamin's remark on the tendency of the *flâneur* to 'turn the boulevard into an *intérieur.'* According to Benjamin:

> …the street becomes a dwelling for the *flâneur*; he is as much at home among the façades of houses as the citizen is in four walls. To him the shiny, enamelled signs of business are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon.[19]

Baudelaire's writing about the modern artist is not just a defence of certain Impressionist artists, but it also introduces a crucial trait which operates to define modernism and avant-garde movements: the 'ideology of the transgressive'. It is the exaltation of the present and a revolt against any attitude and space which are considered as 'normalising'. In

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[17] Habermas, Jürgen 'Modernity – An Incomplete Project', *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (New York: The New Press, 1983) 5.

[18] Baudelaire, Charles 'The Painter of Modern Life'**,** *Art in Theory,1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas,* ed. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 494.

[19] Burgin, Victor *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996) 144.

this conception of 'modernity', an anxiety towards the domestic seems to prevail. The figure of home came to stand for tradition and dominant bourgeois values, which were there to be defeated with the desire for the new and controversial.

Christopher Reed writes of the 'suppression' of domesticity in modern art and architecture. He asserts that 'domesticity [as] an invention of the modern age' is confronted by 'another conceptual invention of the nineteenth century: the idea of the "avant-garde"'.[20] He notes of a certain resentment in the latter for the notions associated with domesticity. However the relationship of art and domesticity through out the period of modernism is more divergent, requiring different understandings of modern art and avant-garde movements than Reed offers. To accept suppression as the defining characteristic of this relation maintains the understanding of the domestic as a normative category, and blocks any possibility of tracing those traits which would extend beyond this period.

i) Theories of the avant-garde

The term 'avant-garde', which was appropriated by art history and criticism only in the early twentieth-century, does not signify a homogeneous cultural meaning or, as Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock assert, 'not a process inherent in evolution of art in modern times':

> The defining parameters of art recognised as modern were adumbrated in the practices and procedures of art-making in Paris in the 1850s-1870s. Art, it was claimed, should have no aim but itself: art should use its own techniques to bring itself into question. …But the avant-garde means more than this. Avant-garde must also signify…a range of social postures and strategies for artists by which they could differentiate themselves from current social and cultural structures while also intervening in them.[21]

The paradoxical position of the avant-garde implied in this definition entails two axes: artists concerned with the internal issues of the artistic practice and artists getting involved in the social and political issues by questioning the autonomous position of art. Two different understandings of the avant-garde art, theorised by Clement Greenberg and Peter Bürger,

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[20] Reed, Christopher 'Introduction', *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture,* ed. Christopher Reed, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996) 7.
[21] Pollock, Griselda and Orton, Fred *Avant-gardes and Partisans Reviewed,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) 151.

may guide to render these positions which seem to be contradictory. This might also open up ways to frame some of the instances of diverse relationships between modern art and domesticity, in terms of production, reception and display.

In *Whose Theater? Whose Avant-Garde?*, Roland Barthes directs his analysis of the avant-garde on the basis of its negated but inevitable economic relationship with the bourgeoisie: 'as if there were a secret and profound equilibrium between the troops of conformist art and its bold outriders.'[22] For Barthes this relationship unravels the 'phenomenon of complementarism':

> For the artist, most likely, the avant-garde has always been a means of resolving a specific historical contradiction: that of an unmasked bourgeoisie which could no longer proclaim its original universalism except in the form of a violent protest turned against itself: initially by an esthetic violence directed against the Philistines, then with increasing commitment, by an ethical violence, when it became the duty of a *life style* to contest the bourgeois order; but never by a political violence. (Barthes, 1972, 67)

The avant-garde is experienced as a liberation in the subjective level of production, however it gets subjected to a certain economy in the social level as 'the parasite and property of bourgeoisie'. According to Barthes, what threatens the avant-garde is not the bourgeoisie but avant-garde's committed engagement with and representation of political positions. 'It seems that no sooner is the avant-garde won over to the necessity of revolutionary tasks than it renounces itself, agrees to die.' (Barthes, 1972, 68)

An instance relating to this last phrase by Barthes, is discussed by Susan Rubin Suleiman. She argues that the later years of Surrealism was characterised with a certain move away from its earlier enthusiasm in social revolution and with more intense economic and aesthetic collaboration with '*grand bourgeois* public'. She argues about the economically and politically 'domesticated' position of Surrealism, by displacing the social, financial and aesthetic in the figures of 'street' and 'salon':

> I suggest that the parenthetical dismissal of the factory and the disappearance of the street at the end of Breton's essay, [*Limites non-frontiéres du surréalisme*] combined with the publication of the essay in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*…must be read as

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[22] Barthes, Roland 'Whose Theater? Whose Avant-Garde?', *Critical Essays,* trans. Richard Howard, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972) 67.

symptoms of a displacement that had occurred in and of Surrealism itself.…This displacement is what I am calling, in metaphorical shorthand, the gradual, reluctant, perhaps totally unwilling but nevertheless indubitable movement of Surrealism during the 1930s from street to the *salon*. [23]

Nouvelle Revue Française, as Suleiman writes, was an eminent, Parisian bourgeois literary journal ' that was anything but political and anything but revolutionary', and *Minotaure*, a review dominated by Surrealist work, (Suleiman, 1994, 149) was a lavish, apolitical art magazine for a wealthy public. Here the term '*salon*' is used to stand for this 'adventurous' bourgeois public, as the patrons and consumers of modern art in 1930s and also – perhaps consequentially entailing – for that of a large collective art exhibition. Suleiman asserts that 'the public who was most willing to take Surrealism seriously as an artistic practice was precisely the public of the salon, in both senses of the term.'(Suleiman, 1994, 152) However this interest was limited to the movement's status as an artistic 'style' and leaving out its revolutionary program.

Greenberg's theory of the avant-garde is built around a certain recognition of the dependency of art production on bourgeois patronage. For him instead of venturing to challenge the social and political conditions, the avant-garde redefines or advises the function of art within its designated field as an autonomous institution:

No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income. And in the case of the avant-garde, this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold. [24]

Orton and Pollock identify the meaning of avant-garde according to Greenberg as 'a novel *form* of culture produced in bourgeois society in the mid-nineteenth century and novel *force* which advances and keeps culture at a high level.'(Pollock&Orton, 1996, 153) Avant-garde art is that which defends culture from dispersion of kitsch. It is a special 'socio-artistic intellectual *agency'* that makes cultural advance possible:

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[23] Suleiman, R. Susan 'Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930's', *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R.,1990-1994,* ed. Lucien Taylor, (New York: Routledge, 1994) 149.
[24] Greenberg, Clement 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch'(1939) 3.
<http://www.flatblacknova.com/buszek/PoMoSeminar/PoMoReadings/GrnbrgKitsch.pdf>

> Yet it is true that once the avant-garde had succeeded in 'detaching' itself from society, it proceeded to turn around and repudiate revolutionary as well as bourgeois politics. The revolution was left inside society, a part of that welter of ideological struggle which art and poetry find so unpropitious as soon as it begins to involve those "precious" axiomatic beliefs upon which culture thus far has had to rest. (Greenberg, 1939, 2)

Greenberg's idealist aesthetics advances the withdrawal of the avant-garde art to its delegated social position, and also the withdrawal of each discipline into its unique means of practice and unique sphere of sensory experience in order to achieve 'specialisation of itself'. He advises a retreat to a ground uncontaminated by the challenges of politics and economy.

According to Bürger, as posited in *Theory of the Avant-garde,* the predominant characteristic of modernist or aestheticist art is that it is concerned with and calls attention to its own processes of production. It is consciously turned against the stylistic expectations and conventions of bourgeois society. However, following Herbert Marcuse's argument of 'affirmative character of culture', Bürger states that the 'institution of art' with its autonomy, stabilizes the very conditions against which it protests, neutralizes the critique. This might not relate to individual works of art but to their operation within institutional frameworks, socially set apart:

> In bourgeois art, the portrayal of bourgeois self-understanding occurs in a sphere that lies outside the praxis of life. The citizen who, in everyday life has been reduced to a partial function (means-ends activity) can be discovered in art as 'human being'. Here, one can unfold the abundance of one's talents, though with the proviso that this sphere remain strictly separate from the praxis of life.[25]

The European avant-garde movements, for Bürger, can be defined as an attack on this status of art in bourgeois society and the first modern art movements which could be termed as avant-garde in this sense were those of the 1920s. They turned against the 'institution of art' and the mode in which its autonomy was believed to function. As maintained by his theorisation, modernism was an attack on traditional methods of production, whereas avant-garde movements, confronting the dissociation of art from the 'praxis of life', assumed politically defined roles and their productions supported if not voiced these positions.

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[25] Bürger, Peter *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 48.

ii) Surrealism: objects and interiors

One of the movements Bürger associates with his theorisation of the avant-garde is Surrealism. In a society that is organised on the basis of instrumental rationality, which is characterised by a strong division of labour and specialisation of function, Surrealism looks for those phenomena that are expelled from this organisation:

> What the surrealist self is aiming at can best be characterised with the term experience…The more bourgeois society merges to a single context of functioning in the monopolistic phase of its development, the less it allows one to make individual experiences that could be mediated, and in turn could lead to a meaningful praxis. In a society that tendentially eliminates the possibility of experience, the surrealists seek to regain this experience. (Bürger, 1984, xliii)

Experiential possibilities, which would uncover the 'marvellous in the everyday', depended upon an intense openness and attentiveness to diverse encounters. The term 'profane illumination' is used by Walter Benjamin to define this Surrealist experience, which takes the form of revelation. It is the sudden transformation of physical - material experiences into forms of awareness:

> No one before these visionaries and augurs perceived how destitution – not only social but architectonic, the poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects – can suddenly be transformed into revolutionary nihilism…They bring the immense forces of "atmosphere" concealed in these things to the point of explosion.[26]

The mood conveyed in the experience of the outmoded objects and traditional crammed interiors, is not of aversion but of a certain appeal resisting the rationality and progressive ideals of modernism. For Benjamin, the Surrealists have found the revolutionary forces in particular objects and spaces in everyday life. Objects at the flea markets as well as the unfashionable corners of the city were subjects of interest for the Surrealist experience; piercing the memory through random associations among objects, chance encounters and peculiar juxtapositions. Briony Fer asserts, in her essay *Surrealism and Painting*, that Breton

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[26] Benjamin, Walter, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings,* ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1978) 181-2.

draws attention to and praises the strange effect produced by de Chirico's paintings which brought together disparate figurative elements. According to Fer, following this influence ' the mannequin, the interior, the street – came to occupy such a prominent position within Surrealism.'[27]

Freud's text *The 'Uncanny'*, which insofar as it is an account of ETA Hoffmann's story *The Sandman* may be read as an essay in literary criticism, examines the instances that evoke the senses of 'unhomeliness' and investigates the etymology of the words *heimlich* and *unheimlich.* Freud's theory is that the 'uncanny' is the 'class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar.'[28] Samuel Weber paraphrases the linguistic basis that Freud identifies and analyses at length in this essay:

> Freud's point of departure is …that the words 'heimlich' and 'unheimlich' are not simply opposites, but that heimlich itself is the repository of ambivalent meanings, signifying on the one hand, the familiar and the domestic, on the other and simultaneously the concealed and the hidden. [29]

Freud's psychoanalytical conclusion, which is tied to this lexical ambivalence, is built up by way of examples where senses of uncanny are referred to or experienced; through former psychological theories and instances from every day experiences and mainly from literature – such as E.T.A Hoffman's story *The Sand Man.* If the sense of uncanny can be considered as a form of anxiety, based on his earlier psychoanalytical studies, Freud asserts that it must relate to 'something repressed which *recurs.*' (Freud, 1966, 242) This explains how the word *heimlich* turns out to include its opposite *unheimlich*: familiar becoming unfamiliar through repression where 'the prefix "*un*" is the token of repression.'(Freud, 1966, 245)

Hal Foster proposes that the uncanny is the key term for understanding or clarifying the diversity of Surrealist practices. He also notes that, it is the 'experience of the uncanny' which is familiar to the Surrealists, rather than the concept itself. The concept of the uncanny

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[27] Fer, Briony 'Surrealism and Difference', Realism, Abstraction, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 191.

[28] Freud, Sigmund 'The "Uncanny"', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1966) 220.

[29] Weber, Samuel 'The Sideshow, or: Remarks on a Canny Moment', *Deconstruction: A Reader*, ed. Martin McQuillan, (New York: Routledge, 2001) 352.

as theorised Freud is not just contemporaneous with the movement, but also indicative of many of its activities:

> This is the basis of surrealist connections between symbols and symptoms, beauty and hysteria, critical interpretations and paranoid projections. It is also the link that connects the early experiments in automatic writing, dream recitals, and mediumistic sessions to the later involvements in hysteria, fetishism, and paranoia.[30]

It is a concern with the return of the repressed in ways that distract the idea of the unitary self, aesthetic norms and social order. The uncanny involves acts of displacement insofar as what is kept out, excluded and discarded comes to claim a place. The 'atmosphere' Benjamin mentions, which is sought after and experienced by the Surrealists in the destitution of those familiar interiors and objects, suggests this sense of non-fitting.

Foster suggests a relationship between the concern with the marvellous and the uncanny – the reappearance of repressed material – and the 'outmoded', to explain how the interest in destitution would be transformed into 'revolutionary nihilism' as argued by Benjamin:

> In many of the things cherished by the surrealists (slipper spoon is a convenient example)…the psychic token of a lost object and the social relic of an artisanal mode of labour, converge to overdetermine the object. (Foster, 1995, 164)

Foster takes the word 'mode' to signify 'mode of production' as well as fashion. This would tie the experience of uncanny to the 'Marxian concern with the outmoded and the nonsynchronous, with the persistence of old cultural forms in the uneven development of productive modes and social formations' (Foster, 1995, 129) where the first would provide the second with a subjective dimension.

Foster takes up the collage novels of Ernst and Dali's interest in Art Nouveau architecture, in order to illustrate the connection of the psychic to the historical and architectural. The association of old architecture with the unconscious is partly because Surrealists understood its outmoding to be its repressing. Familiar images, objects and spaces are made strange by historical repression, as '*heimisch* things of the nineteenth century returned as *unheimlich* in the twentieth century.'(Foster, 1995, 127)

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[30] Foster, Hal *Compulsive Beauty*, (Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995) xviii.

Ernst produced his novels by juxtaposing obscure narratives, with images of outmoded interiors – Victorian homes – taken from illustrated nineteenth century novels and other printed materials. (Figure 1) These images are 'reworked so as to suggest traumatic tableaux constitutive of subjectivity (e.g., primal scenes and castration fantasies).'(Foster, 1995, 176) According to Foster, the outmoded domestic interiors of Ernst, while staging the instances relating to repression of sexual desire, refer to a certain period when industrial production penetrates the domestic objects to 'hollow them out…turn them into kitsch'. Foster, 1995, 179)

Dali was focused on an architectural and decorative form, situated between the modern *démodé:* Art Nouveau. He wrote an essay on Art Nouveau architecture which was published in *Minotaure* along with close-ups of Paris Métro details by Brassai. (Figure 2) Dali was interested in the suggestive curvilinear forms of Art Nouveau design and also picked up the conflict within this style, that is between the technical and the subjective. Foster writes that Dali terms this ambivalent position as the 'perversity' of Art Nouveau, and deals with it in order to scandalise 'functionalist doxa [and] modernist Puritanism.' (Foster, 1995, 186) Foster further asserts that this notion of 'repressive modernism' is often reactive but also allows one to position Surrealism as the 'dialectical counterpart' of functionalism:

> Functionalism is about *discipline:* it breaks down the domestic body into functions and assigns them to antiseptic spaces; the result is often a house type with scant allowance for history, sexuality, the unconscious.
> Surrealism is about *desire:* in order to allow it back into architecture it fixes on the outmoded and the ornamental, the very forms tabooed in such functionalism, associated as they become not only with the historical and the fantastic, but with the infantile and the feminine. (Foster, 1995, 190)

The tension between the 'functional' and 'anti-functional' also seems to be a common trait in the ways certain objects are used in avant-garde art productions. Marcel Duchamp, even though did not participate in Surrealist activities – up until an exhibition in 1938 – was much admired by the Surrealists. He has been considered as one of the representatives of a drive which takes 'functional', often domestic objects as occasions for art. Duchamp's ready-mades, dated as early as 1913, did not only disturb ideas of individual creativity and aesthetic judgement, but did so by drawing attention to their spatial positioning and juxtapositions reframing the objects as displaced from use. In her study on

how the 'object' as a category came into contact with and altered sculptural production, Penelope Curtis notes that Duchamp titled his ready-mades with puns derived from this function-anti-function ambivalence:

> Though the hat-stand retains its title "Portechapeau", the "Bottlerack" is more properly known as "Égouttoir", a richer title which makes reference to drains, sewers, and even to taste, and the coat-rack [fixed to the floor] becomes a trap; "Trébuchet"…They suggest a corollary action, and, as a result of our being involved with them, they lead us somewhere else.[31]

Curtis uses 'somewhere else' figuratively to suggest a sense of passage which reveals the incoherence of the domestic spaces and possibility of producing meanings by displacing the proper place and use of objects.

An anecdote about the beginnings of Duchamp's interest in objects and machines is worth mentioning as it illustrates an instance by which the boundaries securing the autonomy of art and dividing the functionless from the functional become unstable. In his interview with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp tells about this incident by which he ended up or started painting a picture of a coffee grinder. In 1911 Duchamp's brother, sculptor Duchamp-Villon, has asked each of a group of artists to paint small pictures to decorate his kitchen. Among the artists were Léger, Metzinger, La Frasnaye, Gleizes and Duchamp himself. His contribution was the *Coffee-grinder*. Duchamp relates his response as follows:

> I did a coffee grinder which I made to explode; the coffee is tumbling down beside it; the gear wheels are above, and the knob is seen simultaneously at several points in its circuit, with an arrow to indicate movement. Without knowing it, I had opened a window onto something else.[32]

He was faced with a possibility of producing a work that is not a work of art. He depicted a common, non-artistic object, suggesting his interest with the machinic, and produced a work to be used for domestic decoration, that is aimed for a non-artistic audience and space. Perhaps this practice as suggested by his figurative use of window as a site between and

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[31] Curtis, Penelope 'The Object: Function, Invitation and Interaction', *Sculpture 1900-1945*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 144-5.
[32] Pierre Cabanne *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp,* (London: De Capo Press, 1979) 31.

across an inside and an outside, brought up the questions concerning the boundaries of artistic production.

The first group exhibition of Surrealist objects was held at the *Galerie Charles Ratton* in 1936 in Paris. Meret Oppenheim's *Object: Fur Breakfast* was also exhibited along with ready-mades (*Bottle Rack* was shown for the first time as well), found and assembled objects, and ethnographic objects on the shelves of glass vitrines.[33] (Figure 3) The display case in which *Object: Fur Breakfast* is placed, is reminiscent of a collection from a pre-taxonomic period, of the 'cabinet of curiosities' where everything is jumbled together. (Figure 4) James Clifford writes that the modern art museum (or private art collection) and the ethnographic museum have different even opposing modes of classification. In the ethnographic museum the object is 'culturally or humanly "interesting"' so that utilitarian artifacts can be displayed along with other objects such as a mask or a statue.[34] However, in art museums the 'place [of a sculpture] in everyday cultural practices (including the market) is irrelevant to its essential meaning.'(Clifford, 1998, 102) Oppenheim's piece in the Surrealist objects exhibition, placed in a museum or department store type glass vitrine, with its apparent but disturbed sense of functionality, suggests a move toward the ethnographic objects as it displaces other contexts, and tempts the domestic and the utilitarian to this site of artistic display.

In the psychoanalytical framework through which Surrealist works are readily given a meaning, the *Fur Breakfast* would correspond to fetishistic sexual desire. Nevertheless, the conflicting conjunction of the object and the material used for its covering evokes a sense of uneasiness. This disturbance suggests an imagined experience of touching this object. The dominant sense of tactility delays any comprehension of the form of the object; touch obscures vision. The work operates on a tension between bodily sensations and standardised form of everyday object.[35] Fer points that the work confronts the idea of functionalism with its confusion of materials and of senses:

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[33] Curtis writes that there were over two hundred items on the show and the display of such a diversified collection of objects in an art gallery was quite problematical. (Curtis, 1999, 162)
[34] Clifford, James 'On Collecting Art and Culture', *The Visual Culture Reader,* ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, (London : Routledge, 1998) 102.
[35] Jack.J.Spector mentions the allusions to corporal sensations in Oppenheim's work: 'thrill and repugnance at the idea of drinking tea not from hard clean porcelain but from a fur-covered cup…' He also writes that 'in a Surrealist exhibition of 1960…hinting at the

[A] mass-produced object, of the kind that had been celebrated as emblematic of the rational, geometric order of modern life…was transformed into something quite different…the familiarity of the form of the cup and saucer is shattered by the unexpected material, the fur of which it appears to be made, and its sexual connotations. The conjunction is deliberately absurd, and there is a refusal to recognize the utility or supposed rationality of the mass-produced object. (Fer, 1993, 174)

It seems that Surrealism's attempt to undermine the instrumental rationality of society and 'organize a new life praxis from a basis in art' in Bürger's terms, would not be as easy as Oppenheim's intervention in a sense of the identity of the cup and the saucer. Benjamin writes of his strong belief in Surrealism's promise since it had the potential to offer a radical concept of freedom at its inception: 'at the time when it broke over its founders as an inspiring dream wave, it seemed the most integral, conclusive, absolute of movements.' (Benjamin, 1978, 178) Nevertheless, at the time of writing *Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,* in 1929, he observes the movement's growing political commitment and involvement in revolutionary action, and defines its state as a 'phase of transformation'. Benjamin identifies the route of transformation to be via 'profane struggle for power and domination' or 'decay as a public demonstration'.(Benjamin, 1978, 178) He is concerned about the compatibility of the idea of the revolution with disorganized, subversive revolt promoted by the movement:

> But are they successful in welding the experience of freedom to the other revolutionary experience of freedom that we have acknowledged because it has been ours, the constructive, dictatorial side of revolution?…[H]ave they bound revolt to revolution? How are we to imagine an existence oriented solely toward Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, in rooms by Le Corbusier and Oud? (Benjamin, 1978, 189)

Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, where Breton met Nadja, would be one of the places to experience 'shattering coincidence', filled by all sorts of people, *flâneurs* of every kind, and it was the neighbourhood of popular uprisings of 1927. In the same year, the Weissenhof *Siedlung,* or housing estate, was built near Stuttgart in Germany, as a materialised manifesto of modern architects, a demonstration of their abilities and ambition in the field of mass

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Christian rite of communion, [Oppenheim] served up a female body as a collection of edible parts on a table.' Spector, J.Jack *Surrealist Art and Writing, 1919-1939: The Gold of Time,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 187.

housing. Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Oud and Le Corbusier were some of the participants. This was taken to be the first public exhibition of what was later called the 'International Style'.[36] (Figure 5)

Actually, this experimental group of model buildings, were part of the exhibition *Die Wohnung* (The Dwelling). The poster of the exhibition somewhat sums up the position of modern design at the moment: to the question 'wie wohnen?' ('how to live?'), an answer is suggested by the large red 'X' crossing the image of a Victorian style interior. (Figure 6) The exhibition aimed to display architects' and designers' ideas of the rational use of modern materials, and their uncompromising search through their building for 'new ways to live.' Benjamin, while emphasising the difference of intellectual levels between France and Germany, and his 'highly exposed position between an anarchistic *fronde* and a revolutionary discipline' points to a further difficulty of the Surrealist movement in the problematic of its communicating with a mass public. (Benjamin, 1978, 177) Benjamin's worry is about the incompatibility of Surrealist revolt with the functionalist design. Considering the pace of the strategic spreading of modern architecture, how would that prolific 'atmosphere' be brought out by Surrealists, in the industrial kitchen, in rooms with bare neutral walls and hard surfaces, with functionally designed austere furniture and plain generic crockery?

iii) Art or Design?

In *The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design*, Nikolaus Pevsner studies modern European movements which undertake the idea of bringing art and design together, initiated by the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century. Pevsner's conclusion is that this was already impossible to attain, since architecture and design while being similarly aesthetically concerned, are bound to fulfil their practical purposes. The paths of artists, craftsmen and architects occasionally met, as in Art Nouveau, but painters and sculptors often acknowledged the irreconcilability of aesthetic and social worlds.[37]

William Morris as the founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, what Pevsner terms the 'English Domestic Revival', stood against the separation of 'great arts' from the 'lesser arts' of craft and design, and believed that the division was related to and further supported

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[36] http://www.weissenhof.de/english/weissenhof.html

the class divisions of modern society. For Morris, while emphasis on individualistic production cut off the artists from any opportunity for co-operative production, industrialism undermined the value of human production. Morris introduced his demand of art, with his admiration of Gothic art and its position in the social structure of Middle Ages, as 'a happiness for the maker and the user.'[38] Art should again be involved in everyday life, practically by means of what a craftsman does for 'the people'.

The *Deutscher Werkbund* founded in 1907 was mainly concerned with 'industrial design', that is the appreciation of the machine contrary to the earlier faith in craft. However as Pevsner quotes from a discussion in 1914, the Werkbund from which Bauhaus and the International Style evolved after the World War I, had more determined aims. ' Architecture and with it the whole area of activity of the Werkbund moves towards standardisation …Only standardisation can…once again introduce a universally valid, self-certain taste.' (Pevsner, 1968, 179) Art Nouveau was thought as an attitude which could 'only be appreciated on purely aesthetic grounds – and its products might well be called unprincipled.' (Pevsner, 1968, 141)

Insistence on handcraft and workshop production, promoting the concepts of modern interior design through production of coherent settings for the home against 'cluttered eclecticism and outmoded taste' of Victorian interiors, were the defining notions and aims of Art Nouveau at the turn of the century. The organic forms often used in Art Nouveau design suggests a certain naturalisation of the productive activity which is not 'artistic' but rather a matter of design and craft. Art Nouveau marks the moment of complicity between a move against machinic production in modern design and theorisation of a natural expressiveness in practices of design. With its formal excesses and emphasized plasticity, Art Nouveau operated in a 'constant clash between function and form.'(Pevsner, 1968, 82) This stress on the sense of plasticity works in favour of the handcraft as the natural productive activity. In the Kantian classification of artistic production as fine and mercenary arts, the latter is characterised by the certain constraints of 'work' whereas the former is a matter of free 'play' of imagination. The expressiveness of design in Art Nouveau seems to challenge this division and disturb the site of the genius, displacing one frame of production to another. On

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[37] Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design,* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1968) 195-6.

[38] Morris, William 'The Lesser Arts', *Art in Theory,1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas,* ed. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 752.

the other hand the stress on plasticity contests Kant's categorisation of 'beautiful furniture' under the heading of 'painting' where he disregards the craft involved in its production and limits the sensory experience to vision.

Benjamin, while recognising the importance of the individualistic and the formal, places the significance of Art Nouveau in its move against technical advance:

> It represents art's last attempt to escape from its ivory tower, which is besieged by technology. *Art nouveau* mobilizes all the reserves of inwardness. They find their expression in mediumistic line-language, in the flower as the symbol of the naked, vegetal nature confronting a technically armed environment. [39]

It is significant that Benjamin terms Art Nouveau as art and links it to earlier art movements in a historicist argument. Expressiveness of the furniture design accounts for this consideration, where art is understood as 'essentially' a matter of expression.

The art critic Julius Meier-Graefe, adopted a role of promoter and entrepreneur of Art Nouveau productions. In 1898, he opened a gallery in Paris, *La Maison Moderne,* to display the furnishings designed and manufactured in his workshops. In a later essay *The Mediums of Art, Past and Present*, he discusses the reasons why he thinks a domestic interior is an inappropriate place for the reception of painting and sculpture. This reasoning indeed works for Meier-Graefe, as a modernist critic, to justify his position as a supporter of domestic designs and productions. Art works become items for the 'mania of hoarding' by the wealthy few, or assimilated in the dwellings which have become the places of recuperation:

> This sense of comfort is certainly not to be satisfied merely by artistic qualities. The very works that make the deepest impression upon us are least adapted to domestic combination, because the sensuous value that might promote satisfaction, is present in them in forms unsuitable to our four walls or our hundred prepossessions…Art under such conditions ceases to be divine; she is no longer the enchantress who brings men to their knees before her, but rather a gentle housewife, who surrounds us with tender attentions. [40]

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[39] Benjamin, Walter 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century', *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings,* ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1978) 154-5.

[40] Meier-Graefe, Julius 'The Mediums of Art, Past and Present', *Art in Theory,1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas,* ed. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 57-8.

Meier-Graefe offers a reconsideration in terms of the production and 'use' of art works. If the conditions for reception have changed then art production should be adjusted to those changes. 'There are things one admires, and others one wishes to possess.'(Meier-Graefe, 1998, 58) This phrase is reminiscent of the argument that Derrida draws from Kantian evaluation of artistic production. Free or liberal art, by staying out of the circle of material exchange, is 'higher than the [mercenary art]…it has more value for not having any economic value.'(Derrida, 1998, 270) This staying beyond the realm of material exchange with a 'non-exchangeable productivity' calls for those ideal spaces for experiencing of works of art. 'Free art' aims a 'public' reception in this sense, whereas artisanal production, which is taken to imply the instrumental would have a domestic, private purpose. Meier-Graefe conceives home as a space of accumulation, and the phrase 'hundred prepossesions' suggests that desire for posession which preoccupies the bourgeois individual.

Modern art and aesthetics have a certain anxiety in relation to the domestic. On accounts of Baudelaire's portrayal of 'modern' position and also of the public/private dichotomy as theorised by Arendt, the domestic is thought as a figure standing for bourgeois values and capable of normalising any critical position. Street is privileged over home, and public over private. In both of these attitudes the domestic is taken as a normative category and it is imagined as stable, homogeneous, secure, 'at once authentic and claustrophobic.' (Bowlby, 2001, 308) However, Reed's persistent argument, recognising and tracking this anxiety, with the conclusion of 'suppression of domesticity by modern art', seems to block any other possibility of considering the unstable and diverse relationships between these terms. The avant-garde theories, which suggest certain motives characterising these relationships, are introduced to guide or help out to trace the emergences of the domestic in modern art. The instances of the domestic, when not thought of as a single secure meaning, but as that which has spatial, existential, and economic significances may be revealed in their relationship to art. These instances are characterised by spatial, aesthetic, social and psychological displacements.

CHAPTER I

A Topical Interest

> And yet the *oikos* in the Greek tradition (*domus* in the Latin tradition), is not, and I insist on this, the place of safety. The *oikos* is above all the place of tragedy. I recall that one of the conditions of the tragic enumerated by Aristotle is precisely the domestic condition: relationships are tragic because they occur in the family;…Tragedy is not possible outside this ecologic or ecotragic framework.
>
> Jean-François Lyotard[1]

This chapter explores works of three artists, which take up domesticity as a 'topic'. The topical interest in works by Louise Bourgeois, Ilya Kabakov and Hale Tenger, enact a certain narrativity, involving regional particularities of domestic practices and spaces, autobiographical accounts and histories. Delimited spaces, organised so as to suggest certain domestic interiors, tempt the viewer to trace marks of memory and play of identities. Guided by the ways of framing and points of access to the works, the viewer not only participates in but becomes part of the works while revealing the performativity of the domestic. Hence, acts of narration resist and displace the narrative's secured, often autobiographical, 'meaning'. These works disturb the unity and purity of the aesthetic experience and suggested hierarchies of senses of perception.

Louise Bourgeois's production in various genres spans from 1940s though interrupted by periods of inactivity. This long diversified career and her interest in different materials and genres has meant that her work has been assessed within a wide range of artistic frameworks. It has been accounted for in the Modernist formalist tradition or associated with expressionism. Her art historical importance is often supported by invoking her early associations with the Surrealists. Bourgeois's work has been identified as an

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[1] Lyotard, Jean-François 'Oikos', *Political Writings*, trans. Bill Readings and Kevin Paul Geiman, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 97.

important move with its shift of focus from form to content, later regarded as opening up issues of identity and sexual difference and celebrated by feminist artists and critics.

On the other hand, the content of Bourgeois's work is described as symptomatic of a dysfunctional family background or dismissed by being characterised as 'simply a confessional kind of autobiography'.[2] Bourgeois first spoke about her early family life around the time of the retrospective organised at the MOMA in 1982. Robert Storr asserts that, this show gave Bourgeois's work a visibility outside the realm of galleries and made her famous. [3]

Rosalind Krauss notes that Bourgeois's sculpture has often been classified as 'abstract' by art historians and critics, according to a modernist formal logic. She argues that, although there was a certain admission of a sense of corporeality which was evoked by her work, with erotic connotations and associations with tribal art, 'nowhere in the literature on this sculpture was there a mention of the part-object….nowhere…was the expectation of an encounter with abstract sculpture made to admit that it is face to face with the reality of organs.'[4] The part-object in its psychoanalytic dimension, is that section of the body standing as the object of an instinct or drive. It relates to the 'imperiousness of the drives, to the rapacity of their demands, to the way the body can, in the grip of fantasy, be riven, cannibalised, shattered.' (Krauss, 1999, 55) Krauss associates the pre-sculptural work, the series of drawings and paintings Bourgeois produced in 1940s, *Femme-Maison*, with Surrealist drawing practices; with *exquisite corpse*, 'a form of collective drawing that produces conglomerate figures' and with art made by schizophrenics which was promoted by and inspired Surrealist production. (Krauss, 1999, 60) This association is mainly due to the primitiveness of the drawings and the collapse of the 'human figure…with objects or architecture' which suggests the experience of 'the self as a set of objects and the need to connect each object to a network of other objects.' (Krauss, 1999, 63)

In 1960s Bourgeois also started to produce her *Lairs*, bulky, conflated spiral shaped pieces. Storr reports that gradually her studio got filled with sculpture of unfixed contours, suggestive of a sense of viscous fluidity, 'shapes that were simultaneously reminiscent

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[2] Schwartzman, Allan 'Focus: Untitled', *Louise Bourgeois*, (London: Phaidon Press, 2003) 100.

[3] Storr, Robert 'A Sketch for a Portrait: Louise Bourgeois', *Louise Bourgeois*, (London: Phaidon Press, 2003) 33.

[4] Krauss, Rosalind *Bachelors*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999) 55.

of…flowing lava and undulating terrain; frozen or congealed matter at its most inanimate; and flesh at its most sensitive and elastic.' (Storr, 2003, 61) Lynne Cooke notes that the prevailing characteristic of the *Lairs* and other sculpture of this period is that which evokes the senses of the organic, corporeal and visceral. (Figure 7) Cooke refers to the fragmented body in infantile sexuality as it is suggested through the part-object in Krauss's argument:

> *[Lairs]* are best experienced proprioceptively, through the fingers as well as the eyes. Engendered by processes of conflating, splitting, multiplying, magnifying and proliferating, such spaces often collapse distinctions between inside and outside, body and environment… Complex and interstitial, such structures offer vivid metaphors for the inbetweenness of infantile experience, in which the body is apprehended as decentered, its limits eroded, its psychic life structured by unconscious fantasies generated by innate corporeal drives and unmediated by language.[5]

Although meanings relating to infantile sexuality as proposed by Krauss seem to be at issue in Bourgeois's works, Cooke's assertion or rather swift conclusion about the *Lairs* as 'metaphors', showing the 'truth' of experience of childhood is difficult to justify. Bourgeois's works disturb the primacy of vision and also destabilise the positions of subject and the object. They suggest bodily experiences which would resist organising and discipline of bodies.

After late 1980s she started to work on the 'cells', partially open or transparent rooms or chambers that house various found objects as well as sculpture and fragments of her earlier work. Some of the 'cells' are framed with wire nets – steel cages – and glass from the windows of industrial lofts, others are enclosed with worn out doors. In the case of the latter, one may peek between the hinged doors to see what is inside or can actually enter the enclosed space from a door left partly open. Bourgeois's cells encourage a play of modes of viewing: with their entryways for the viewer to look into them enact a spectatorship of a certain museum-like display, but also a voyeuristic witnessing, of someone peering round into a peculiarly shaped space. (Figure 8)

Sculptures, often of marble, referring in both material and its working to an established tradition, are placed in space or juxtaposed with other materials. Likewise, found objects are used as material with which an idiosyncratic narrative is being articulated. As

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[5] Cooke, Lynne 'Farewell to the Doll House', *Louise Bourgeois: Memory and Architecture*, (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1999) 69.

Beatriz Colomina writes Bourgeois describes herself as 'a collector of spaces and memories':

> If all of Bourgeois' work is concerned with the physical locations of her memories, these spaces are all domestic and all associated with trauma…Bourgeois' lyrical descriptions of domestic life effortlessly slide into descriptions of traumatic events. The artworks emerge out of this slippage between lyrical narrative and traumatic experience. [6]

Red Rooms (Parent/Child) (1994) is an installation of two adjacent cells, titled and arranged into spaces which correspond to child's room and parent's bedroom. Spooled threads, an exquisitely carved sculpture of child's hands clutched by an adult's is placed on top of a cylindrical plinth, more hands holding things or resting slightly open carved out from a similar material are located in different parts of the room-like space. This space resembles a knitting or a sculpting workshop rather than a room set up for a child. (Figure 9) The parent's room is decorated discreetly, with little furniture and few objects, which enable the enclosure to be imagined as the intimate space of the conjugal family. (Figure 10)

In *The System of Objects*, Jean Baudrillard offers a semiological analysis of world of objects mostly of domestic interiors. Before going further with his theory of sign functions regarding 'modern' interiors, Baudrillard refers to the 'traditional' environments in which a system of symbolic signification is thought to be operative:

> The arrangement of furniture offers a faithful image of the familial and social structures of a period. The typical bourgeois interior is patriarchal; its foundation is the dining-room/bedroom combination…The emphasis is on unifunctionality, immovability, imposing presence and hierarchical labelling…The pieces of furniture confront one another, jostle one another ...They are ranged about an axis which ensures a regular chronology of actions; thanks to this permanent symbolisation, the family is always present to itself...What gives the houses of our childhood such depth and resonance in memory is clearly this complex structure of interiority, and the objects within it serve for us as boundary markers of the symbolic configuration known as home. The caesura between inside and outside, and their formal opposition, which falls under the social sign of property and the psychological sign of the immanence of the family, make this traditional space into a closed transcendence.[7]

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[6] Colomina, Beatriz 'The Architecture of Trauma', *Louise Bourgeois: Memory and Architecture*, (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 1999) 29-30.
[7] Baudrillard, Jean *The System of Objects*, trans.James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996) 15-6.

For Baudrillard, within this 'complex structure of interiority' of the traditional bourgeois home, objects take on a certain density and with their hierarchical and complementary organisation, they are there to signify the moral aspects of the family beyond their functionality. Each room of this interior has 'a strictly defined role corresponding to one or another of the various functions of the family unit, and each ultimately refers to a view which conceives of the individual as a balanced assemblage of distinct faculties.'(Baudrillard, 1996, 15) Turned towards itself, this interiority echoes a certain belief in persistence of bourgeois family, in its status in society, and also is a structuring, if not regulating, of the body as functions distributed in different spaces of the home.

While the *Red Cells (Parent)* plays out this myth of bourgeois interior; with it is orderly setting, echoing those symbolic conventions as identified by Baudrillard, in the child's room, *Red Cells (Child),* objects do not signify a secure categorised belonging. Circularity governs the child's space echoing the spiral-like shape of the enclosure formed by hinged doors, whereas in the parent's space 'a choice between verticality and horizontality [is the] governing principle.'[8]

For Bourgeois 'the spiral is an attempt of controlling the chaos' while keeping track of its unfolding. As Colomina points out:

> the spiral is a means of establishing order, constructing a space that can be entered and yet there is no clear line between inside and outside. The spiral is a space that closes and opens at the same time, a space that gradually reveals itself. (Colomina, 2000, 31)

In *Red Rooms*, inside outside differences are displaced; where the former disperses through the latter, without emptying itself. The spiral-like construction of the cells as well as the colour dominating these spaces, suffusing redness extends this dispersion, adding to the spatial interconnection and fluidity perhaps also resonating with the characteristics of earlier sculptures.

In Merleau-Ponty's last and incomplete work *The Visible and the Invisible,* the notion of 'flesh' is introduced. 'Flesh' is the term describing the phenomenon of perceiving;

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[8] Morgan, Stuart 'Louise Bourgeois' Text for Exhibition Catalogue, *Rites of Passage: Art For the End of the Century*, (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1995) 57.

relationship to the object of perception as a reciprocal tactile contact between the object and the subject. It stands for the intertwining of and exchange – chiasm - between subject and object, which results in an ambiguity and possible reciprocity between them. While dismissing the subject object polarity, Merleau-Ponty retains the positions of the seer and the visible. Luce Irigaray's reading of this text is partly a critique of its 'exorbitant' privileging of vision in the theorisation of look as a variant of touch, and Merleau-Ponty's desire for mastery of touch by collapsing it into the look. Irigaray quotes Merleau-Ponty : 'As vision comes to complete the aesthesiological body…' and asks 'Why completed? Why vision? Does it represent the sense which is the most capable of completing?'[9] This belief in 'completion' of perception, lacking when left to other senses, somewhat parallels the theories of unity of aesthetic experience. Irigaray states that '[Merleau-Ponty's] phenomenology of vision almost mistakes itself for a phenomenology of painting or of the art of painting. On occasions, he speaks…as if one must give oneself over to its weights and measures.' (Irigaray, 1993, 175)

Merleau-Ponty effectively seems to conform to the valuation of painting over and above sculpture, based on the hierarchy of arts, which is further based on the hierarchy of senses. The more valuable is the art, the less it relates to bodily 'proximity' senses. Mixedness of genres is also problematical, since it does not conform to the aesthetic principles promoted by twentieth century modern art, according to which each discipline would withdraw into the sensory sphere of experience unique to it.

For Irigaray, although there exists a relation of the visible and the tangible, they cannot be thought as interchangeable:

> The look cannot take up the tangible. Thus I never see that *in which* I touch or am touched. What is at play in the caress does not see itself. The in-between, the middle, the medium of the caress does not see itself… The visible and the tactile do not obey the same laws or rhythms of the flesh. And if I can no doubt unite their powers, I cannot reduce the one to the other. I cannot situate the visible and the tangible in a chiasmus. Perhaps the visible needs the tangible but this need is not reciprocal….We can agree that there is a situating of the visible in the tangible and of the tangible in the visible. But the two maps are incomplete and do not overlap: *the tangible is, and remains, primary in its opening.* (Irigaray, 1993, 161-2)

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[9] Irigaray, Luce *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (London: The Athlone Press, 1993) 174.

The visible is not addressed exclusively to vision; as modes of sensing touch and vision are not purely discrete but also are not simply the same. *Red Room (Child)* stages this parting of vision and touch. With the spooled threads ready for weaving, meticulously carved sculptures evoke handicraft, an instrumentalism of touch. Also, there seems to be an insistence on the sculpted hands - recurrent sculptural figure which appears in several of Bourgeois's cells – clutched together or ready to grasp. Recurrence of the sculptural objects reframed by their setting in the cells, tends to authorise the possibility of an autobiographical reference.

Bourgeois's family owned a business of repair and resale of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tapestries and decorative textiles. It was run at a residential villa-workshop outside Paris, where the restoration work was carried out by young women, and Bourgeois participated in the routines of this home-*atelier.* (Colomina, 2000, 30) This old mode of production, undoing the modern separation of work place and home, displaces the artisanal into the home, disrupting the set of functions associated with the spaces of conjugal family.

Bourgeois's autobiographical accounts, accumulated in time via numerous interviews and her writings, 'myth of origins she has embroidered' as Storr asserts, are often taken readily as the content and meaning of her works. (Storr, 2003, 33) This approach, which Krauss terms as the 'aesthetics of the proper name', tends to limit signification and stop the meaning within the boundaries of the identity of the author. Michel Foucault defines the role of the author as follows:

> The author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses…The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.[10]

The autobiographical narrative often overrides the possibilities of reading the works, on the other hand it is not possible to totally disregard the relationship of Bourgeois's stories and

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[10] Foucault, Michel 'What is an Author?', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* ed. Donald F. Bouchard. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977) 131.

recollections with her production. Here the author, Bourgeois who could be regarded as the Barthesian guest visiting 'her' text, offers an intertextuality, perhaps suggesting construction of contexts for certain readings, without closing off signification onto 'herself'.

Ilya Kabakov is another artist whose work is considered as closely related with the autobiographical, with play of identities: 'The man who never threw anything away', 'The man who flew into space from his apartment' are some of Kabakov's personages which also make up the titles of his works. He has been dealing with themes from his recollections of his early youth and social conditions relating to the years of Soviet Union's decline. Kabakov often takes up those shared experiences of paradoxical Soviet intimacy:

> Yet *intimnost* was neither a family value nor even the experience of a couple, but was staged against some sort of collective background. This background might have been the official collective or a communal apartment, where most urban dwellers resided and from which they dreamed of escaping, or it might have been an intimate circle of friends that carved out their own alternative communality within the official edifice. In the early 1960s, at the time of Khrushchev's thaw, such gatherings were humorously called 'kitchen salons' and could be seen as the nucleus of civil society under the Soviet regime. In Brezhnev's time the kitchen salons gave way to the apartment exhibits [called Aptart] of unofficial or antiofficial art.[11]

Kabakov was closely associated with the Moscow conceptualists as an 'unofficial' artist by the 1970s. This group of artists were known through a series of Aptart[12] and as Svetlana Boym asserts, created a 'rebuslike language of Soviet memory in which the official ideological symbols coexisted with trivial *objets trouvés,* unoriginal quotes, slogans and domestic trash'. They 'quoted' Russian avant-garde and social realism, dealt with 'amateur crafts, kitsch, and collections of useless objects by ordinary people.'(Boym, 1998, 502)

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[11] Boym, Svetlana 'On Diasporic Intimacy: Ilya Kabakov's Installations and Immigrant Homes', *Critical Inquiry* (no:24, Winter 1998) 503.

[12] In October 1983, 'Nikita Alekseev had begun mounting exhibitions in his apartment. The artists called this development "Aptart", in honor of the "twenty-year-old tradition of showing alternative culture in apartments or artists' studios". Alekseev's apartment was only twenty square meters in size, which meant that the seventeen artists who showed perhaps one hundred works there …squeezed their pictures, texts, photographs, objects and embellishments into corridors and onto ceilings as well as walls. For several months these exhibitions continued…mostly the people who came arrived for the opening festivities – a thousand people one day, in the already uninhabitable space.'
Wallach, Amei *Ilya Kabakov: The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away,* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. Publishers, 1996) 69.

Though sometimes regarded as a Soviet parallel of Pop art, with their interest in the everyday objects, the ordinariness of objects, of domestic trash employed by the Soviet conceptualists, was thought to be subversive not only in terms of artistic conventions but for the social order as well.

By around the same time, Kabakov was attaching objects that might be lying around a communal apartment, on to the flat white, green and blue, enamel on masonite. He later started to accumulate garbage – 'household' waste was thrown away – and built up a collection – garbage in boxes that he presented in his studio – and produced hanging installations with texts attached to each 'piece'. Kabakov defines his installations with garbage as follows:

> These installations incorporate all kinds of scraps of garbage of everyday life: empty boxes, packages, scraps of paper, matchsticks, broken pencils, etc. The scraps are always 'exhibited' along with texts written on small paper labels attached to them. This fragmentary text has a lot in common with the garbage itself – it is anonymous everyday speech, belonging to "each and every person". (Wallach, 1996, 179)

In his garbage work such as *The man who never threw anything away* (1985-88), the domestic becomes a sphere of accumulation, but other than its usual understanding of capitalistic accumulation. (Figure 11) When the objects no longer have any signification whether as objects of use or markers of memories, they are discarded, put away, enabling 'circulation'. However, when no such criteria of classification are conducted, then such accumulation regardless of any value judgements disrupts the mechanisms of circulation and spaces of habitation.

Mary Douglas argues that if the knowledge about hygiene is removed from the notion of dirt, one is left with the definition of dirt as 'matter out of place', keeping in mind that bacterial transmission of disease is a nineteenth-century discovery. Douglas gives the examples of shoes placed on the dining table, food bespattered on clothing, out-door things in-doors to exemplify the idea that everyday behaviour against dirtiness is a reaction against the crossed boundaries and confused categories. Once there is system and separation one cannot avoid mess. 'Dirt' is created by differentiation and it is a by-product of creating order:

In the course of any imposing of order, whether in the mind or in the external world, the attitude to rejected bits and pieces goes through two stages. First they are recognisably out of place, a threat to good order, and so are regarded as objectionable and vigorously brushed away. At this stage they have some identity: they can be seen to be unwanted bits of whatever it was they came from, hair or food or wrappings. This is the stage at which they are dangerous; their half-identity still clings to them and the clarity of the scene in which they obtrude is impaired by their presence. But a long process of pulverizing, dissolving and rotting awaits any physical things that have been recognised as dirt. In the end all identity is gone. The origin of the various bits and pieces is lost and they have entered into the mass of common rubbish…So long as identity is absent, rubbish is not dangerous. It does not even create ambiguous perceptions since it clearly belongs in a defined place.[13]

This inbetweenness of those objects, rejected but not yet cleared away, collected in boxes, displayed, even tagged with texts as if resisting the possibility of losing their identity, is what evokes senses of uneasiness and difficulty of inhabiting.

In 1990s, after moving to the West in 1987, Kabakov started to produce series of labyrinth-like 'total installations'; large scale installations occupying and converting the whole gallery space. Sketches Kabakov produced for his total installations included figures of the spectators, whereas the photographs of those installations miss to show the viewers on site. Viewers do not only participate but become parts of the installation; the viewer 'will become an actor in a play, moving through scenes and animating them.'(Wallach, 1996, 85) Kabakov asserts that for him:

> …the installation was primarily the inserting of the viewer into the 'field of maneuvering' between the objects. And, of course, I fully realise that the 'real' visitor of the installation is not this same viewer constructed by me, through whose eyes I see and evaluate what I have constructed inside. In order to bring these two, closer together, I invented a special type of closed installation in 1988 which I called 'total'. (Wallach, 1996, 178)

Allan Kaprow, when organising the Happenings, thinking of an 'unmediated' experience, had called for a total absorption of the subject in his or her surroundings, and a blurring of art and life in what he called 'total art'. Kabakov's 'total installations' seem to be playing

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[13] Douglas, Mary *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo,* (London: Routledge, 1966) 161.

also with the spatial power mechanisms of the Soviet communist order: a 'totalitarian' enclosing as well as the 'total absorption' of the experience.

His 'total installations' plays out the trespassing of boundaries between the aesthetic – museum/gallery space – and everyday life – constructed 'profane' interiors. In these room-like and corridor-like spaces, an 'encounter' with the other suggests a 'remaking' of the installation. Other spectators are encountered there but as if in terms of a framing which renders them a possible fiction of themselves, as if they become part of such settings. The visitors to the exhibit remake and become the protagonists of narratives by occupying the interiors, perhaps acting 'domestically' within these unsecluded spaces.[14] These installations suggest a play between the occupied but uninhabitable, displacing both as the terms of the domestic. (Figure 12)

Kabakov seems to have an interest even a fascination for the details of Soviet communal life. It is a life informed by the fear of 'betraying oneself while living in extreme physical and spatial proximity to others.'(Wallach, 1996, 71) The communal apartment, *kommunalka,* stands as an important metaphor for Kabakov in his installations:

> *Kommunalka* represents a certain collective image, in which all the illassortedness and multileveledness of our reality is concentrated and vividly revealed. It is my central subject… Too many bodies packed too closely together, the greatest battles were fought over territory, since there was so little – over the table, the grater in the communal kitchen; the weekly turn in the bath; the patch of hallway outside the door of each private room. (Wallach, 1996, 74)

These apartments were often located in old buildings, which were not renovated for years. Kabakov writes in the text of *The Man Who Never*… that despite the regular cleaning, 'there was always a pile of discarded things' which were 'scattered in all the corners, hung on all the walls, stood near the door and lined the entire hallway…No one knew to whom these things belonged or what they were for'[15]

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[14] Boym referring to the largest of Kabakov's installations, *This is How We Live*, shown in Centre Pompidou, remarks that 'visitors… are invited to inhabit the workers' barracks, to relax on the plush sofas, to touch the personal souvenirs. Indeed, wandering through …one might always find a couple of exhausted tourists or immigrants reclining here and there…' (Boym, 1998, 513)

[15] Kabakov, Ilya 'The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away', *Ilya Kabakov*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1998) 98.

'Defamiliarizing home and inhabiting the uninhabitable' are the two main motives characterizing Kabakov's work according to Boym. 'Each installation stages an intimate encounter of the artist with his past…Yet, this kind of intimate encounter…unfolds against the background of Soviet ruins, the last modern utopia.'(Boym, 1998, 504) Homi Bhabha identifies such an instance of displacement, where the domestic not only relates to the personal and intimate but also stands as the site of social and historical significance, with a sense of 'unhomely' in literature. 'The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social and historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world.'[16]

Hale Tenger's work, *The Closet* (1997), involves some of the traits of Kabakov's 'total installations'. [17] This is an installation composed of three separate spaces which are organised to suggest three rooms, which are constructed in one large gallery space by using doors and partitions, thus understood as making up a single setting of a domestic interior. Tenger employs the entire gallery space for the production of a domestic space, superimposing a space categorized as 'private' onto a 'public' one. Objects and furniture placed in the rooms mark the space to be read as a particular kind of interior, but at first it seems very difficult to derive an organisational meaning, which would point to a regional belonging.[18] Perhaps certain objects and their organisation suggest a certain socio-cultural position: such as the neon light tube which is often used as an economical means of lighting, or the dining table placed very close to one of the walls in the entrance hall/room suggesting a spatial scarcity. (Figure 13) From the radio broadcast in the dining room and the schoolbooks on the desk placed in the spacious bed/living room, it is possible to identify the national space that could be associated with this setting. It is the radio news broadcast recorded during 1980 *coup d'état* in Turkey and 'live' coverage of a football match, played in loop. (Figure 14) Sound of radio broadcast, while promising a space beyond this domestic setting, also intensifies the senses of separation and interiority; as Marshall McLuhan

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[16] Bhabha, Homi K. 'The World and The Home', *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. A. McClintock, A. Mufti and E. Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 445.
[17] Turkish title of the work is 'Sandık Odası'.
[18] Hale Tenger conveys that she has 'found' all of the furniture and objects in San Antonio in two months right before the exhibition.

defined the medium, radio is that which 'turn[s] the psyche and society into a single echo-chamber.'[19]

The third room, which is reached after traversing the first two, is a walk-in wardrobe, a closet stuffed with bright coloured clothes, other textiles and a sewing machine. (Figure 15) Although the whole installation suggests producing of a single interior, each room may also evoke different social and cultural domestic situations. Perhaps, it is due to a certain sense of disconnectedness in terms of type of furniture that is used in producing each of these room-like spaces.

Even though this *mise-en-scéne* bears very little detail that could be read in relation to a particular culture and historical era, Lynne Cooke in her exhibition text positions *The Closet* closer to the genres of ethnographic museological presentation 'rather than within that lineage of installation art' epitomized in the works of artists such as Ed Kienholz:

> Hale Tenger's three-room installation at ArtPace, *The Closet*, is best read in relation to these genres of ethnographic display that take the form of period rooms devoted to lost cultures, those of the near as well as the distant past…Entered via a closed domestic door set within an otherwise neutral wall, *The Closet* appears to recreate a certain way of life in the 'distant (near)-present': that is it suggests a reconstruction of a moment and place from another culture, one that is elsewhere but nearby, past but still recent in time. [20]

Cooke seems to refer to an ethnographic genre apparently because of a sense of non-belonging communicated by this domestic setting and a certain difficulty of matching the work with a widespread idea of installation as practiced in 60s; prioritisation of the phenomenal character of installation and a critique of the aesthetic autonomy of the art object which is often thought to have emerged with Minimalist art.

In his essay *Art and Objecthood*, Michael Fried criticises the Minimalist, or as he calls it literalist art for its emphasis on 'objecthood', 'the condition of non-art'.[21] Fried asks

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[19] McLuhan, Marshall *Understanding Media*, (London: Routledge, 1964) 327.
[20] Cooke, Lynne Exhibition Text for *The Closet,* Art Pace, San Antonio, The International Artist in-residence Program,1997.
[21] Fried, Michael *Art and Objecthood: Eessays and Reviews,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 151.
Fried borrows the definition of objecthood as 'the condition of non-art' as theorised by Greenberg in *Recentness of Sculpture:* 'Minimal works are readable as art, as almost anything is today – including a door, a table, or a blank sheet of paper…Yet it would seem

the following question to further examine those aspects of literalist works, which he believes to be operative in negating art: 'What is it about objecthood as projected and hypostatised by the literalists that makes it, if only from the perspective of recent modernist painting, antithetical to art?' (Fried, 1998, 153) How to explain this interest in the literalist object, when on the other hand modernist painting strives to defeat or suspend its own objecthood? Fried answers the question by identifying this interest as a 'plea for a new genre of theatre' and for him theatre is the negation of art. Citing Robert Morris's explanations on Minimalist objects, he argues that these works evoke senses of theatricality as 'the experience of literalist art is of an object in a *situation* – one that, virtually by definition, *includes the beholder.*' (Fried, 1998, 156)

Morris asserts that 'the experience of the work necessarily exists in time' and advocates the experience in which the viewer is aware that 'he himself establish[es] relationships'.[22] Fried thinks that such an awareness of the spectator is further intensified by:

> …what might be called the inclusiveness of his situation, that is by the fact…that everything he observes counts as part of that situation and hence is felt to bear in some way that remains undefined on his experience of the object. (Fried, 1998, 166)

He argues that the literalist works include and further depend on the spectator, they are 'incomplete without him…almost as though the work in question has been waiting for him.' (Fried, 1998, 163-4) The inclusiveness and the duration of the experience are the aspects of

that a kind of art nearer the condition of non-art could not be envisaged or ideated at this moment.' (quoted in Fried, 1998, 152)
In this essay Greenberg rejects any significance attributed to Minimal art and states that related artists propose nothing new as the 'furthest-out' art of the last hundred years always looked at the borderline between the art and non-art. He thinks that one new thing about their practice is 'shrinking of the area in which things can now safely be non-art'. The inert look of these works does not offer any 'interesting' incident and also has 'hardly any aesthetic surprise…only a phenomenal one of the same order as in Novelty Art' - such as Op, Pop, Kinetic, Assemblage - 'which is a one-time surprise. Aesthetic surprise hangs on forever and ideas alone con not achieve it …Minimal Art remains too much a feat of ideation, and not enough anything else. Its idea remains an idea, something deduced instead of felt and discovered.' Greenberg, Clement 'Recentness of Sculpture', *Minimal Art, A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 182-4.
[22] Morris, Robert 'Notes On Sculpture', *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 232-4.

these works which Fried identifies with a sense of 'theatricality'. Sluggish 'occupation' of these works left no room for a Modernist critical position such as Fried's, which advocated abstract, compositionally constructed sculpture that aims at a 'universal' viewer and provokes an 'instantaneous' revelation.

Cooke's account of *The Closet,* to return to that, where she points to a possible relationship of it with the ethnographic museum display rather than a bodily and sensory experience as promoted by 1960s art, suggests an important reconsideration of installation art. Briony Fer offers an alternative thinking about installation works, this 'way of doing things'.[23] Rather than conceiving it as a negation – not painting and not sculpture – and as an initially critical term, which lost its object and became the very spectacular form of contemporary practice, Fer proposes an ongoing connection of installation art with the very convention it is thought to undermine. A certain moment within installation maintains a strong connection with the 'tableau' as a pictorial mode. Fer draws attention to the importance of photography for installation, and asserts that photographic documentation, which turns everything into picture, suggests a model of tableau, a photographic narrative in the reception of installation. She argues that installation operates between two models and this entails a certain dislocation experienced by the viewer:

> …between a heightened sensory awareness of things, space, body – the subject as pure sense-instrument – and, on the other hand, a separation or loss of connection, a kind of wilful elimination from the scene of fantasy in which one is enmeshed. The tableau cuts the continuity of experience. It cuts the liquid of memory.(Fer, 2001, 79)

Brian O'Doherty in his writings on the changing nature of the gallery space, notes that 1960s art had a 'passion to actualize'. Artists, such as Kienholz and Segal, accepted tableau as a genre and actualised 'the illusionistic space within the traditional picture…in the box of the gallery.'[24] They used the gallery space to impersonate other spaces:[25]

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[23] Fer, Briony 'The Somnambulist's Story: Installation and the Tableau', *Oxford Art Journal* (vol. 24, 2001) 75.

[24] O'Doherty, Brian *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 49.

[25] Kienholz produces his first environment piece in 1961 titled *Roxy's,* and terms this form of installation 'tableau'. D'Harnoncourt, Anne, and Hopps, Walter *Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp*, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1987) 50.

> The spectator in a tableau somehow feels he shouldn't be there. Segal's art makes this clearer than anyone else's. His objects wear a history of previous occupancy, whether bus or diner or door. ..Like period rooms, Segal's pieces are closely time-bound while they imitate timelessness. (O'Doherty, 1999, 49)

By way of this actualisation, the two senses of space – actual and actualised imaginary space – disrupt each other. This experience of the spectator oscillates between a bodily, sensory one and a more distant viewing of a displayed tableau. However, tableau, relating to the photographic model of viewing, would never provide a complete account of installation. Senses of temporality and participating in the 'actualisation' of that illusionary space, even co-authoring the work this way, exceed the 'understanding' of work as installation through photographic viewing.

By around same time, while those artists were producing their 'environments', Duchamp was still working on his twenty-year project, *Etant Donnés*:

> The visitor passes through a doorway in the far corner of the gallery and turns to find himself in a small room [that appears to be empty], confronted with a roughly stuccoed wall extending across it from floor to ceiling and from wall to wall. In the centre of the stucco wall is a large arched doorway made of old bricks, framing an old Spanish wooden door. (d'Harnoncourt & Hopps, 1987, 8)

The door has no hinges or any knob and handle to suggest that it can be opened. And still a door would always suggest a space beyond, operating as a threshold that is preparing for a certain adjustment of one's acts. Almost in the middle of the door there, close to eye level there are two holes, which could be noticed by the viewer if she gets very close to the door. Or if she meets the previous viewer peeping through the door; experience of the installation is made possible and further remade by the other spectator, the one who is 'encountered'. This installation, with its prolific significations, has that similar trend of inviting and involving the spectator to its remaking. Thierry de Duve refers to the complicated position of the individual viewer, perhaps not caught up in any photographic record and rarely imagined through descriptions of the work:

> The peepholes in the door of *Etant donnés*, give the instructions that prescribe an individual encounter. Art does not address itself to the masses but to an individual, and the work of art, whatever it is, chooses its viewers one at a time. However, once the spectator falls into this viewing trap, it is another viewer that he sees looking at

him or whom he sees looking. There the viewers are always double, following Lacan, we might say that the individual viewer gets split there. It is to an Other that his gaze is addressed and from an Other that it comes back to him. [26]

Framing of the work, its points of access introduce experiences that exceed the 'work'. The 'viewing traps' set up by Kabakov and Tenger, further involve crucial senses of temporality. Temporality in terms of experiencing the works by 'navigating' through them, further leads to a series of re-openings of senses of temporality in terms of suggested stories – what may have happened, and what has happened.

Tenger's *The Closet*, and Kabakov's total installations seem to stage differences between narrative and narration. In case of narration, stories involve acts of the spectator, they become and emerge from series of altering interactions with spatio-temporal loci, whereas narrative seems to be told from and within a symbolic and imaginary realm. Perhaps what Fulya Erdemci identifies as an important characteristic of Tenger's large scale installations, 'spatialisation of narrative', is this act of narration. Erdemci asserts that *The Closet* is composed of three interlocking room-like spaces, which are put together in line with 'introduction, development, conclusion scheme of tragedy':

> …while moving from the 'outer' to the 'inner', a different course of action is tracked as well. This move points to a moment when the socio-political critique in Tenger's work extends, acquiring a psychological perspective, from social to the personal. [27]

Passing through *The Closet* one does not fail to notice that these spaces house no signs of a personal history, as if all possible marks of individuality are drained out of previous two rooms and stored or hidden away within the closet. 'Home' is not an exclusively private realm but is severely permeated and regulated by the dominant public codes. The sense of trespassing which grows out of the ambivalent experience of installation as suggested above, distant stillness of the tableau and the spatial experience of the spectator, is complicit with permeating radio broadcast tuned disturbingly high, and disciplinary and patriotic texts of

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[26] DeDuve, Thierry 'Echoes of the Readymade: Critique of Pure Modernism', *The Duchamp Effect: Essays, Interviews, Round Table*, ed. Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996) 112.
[27] Erdemci, Fulya 'Hale Tenger'in Çalışmalarında Mekan ve Anlatı İlişkisi: Sözel ve Metinsel Olanın Ayrıcalığı', *Yapı* (Istanbul: no.240, 2001) 93.
Excerpt is translated by me.

primary school books. Lyotard, drawing from the etymology of the words obedience and Latin *audire,* identifies hearing as the sense of obedience.[28] In the rooms an expectation of a further dictation on how to act seems to prevail except in this packed and lively space of the closet, which renders pure conformity impossible.

Tenger refers to a traumatic period in history of Turkey. *The Closet* suggests the personal, without bringing up spaces and memories relating to a particular individual, but by playing with the expectations of the viewer as she traverses the rooms, by 'deserting' the first two spaces, emptying out any particular trace relating to inhabitants, but packing the small storage room of a closet.

Lyotard uses the word 'secluded' instead of the private, to define a realm of regression, *oikeion,* which bears the imprint of paradoxical relationship of childhood with time:

> We are not prepared, not prepared to speak, not prepared to control the *Umwelt*, and so on. In this sense we are born too soon. But at the same time we are born too late because a lot of meanings or stories have already been narrated about our birth. In this sense we are already the object of a lot of meanings, and we have to conquer these meanings afterward and probably we try all our lives to understand what was expected of us. It is too late, because these expectations are already part of our lives. (Lyotard, 1993, 103-4)

This secluded realm, *oikos*, is of 'that has not become public, that has not become communicational, that has not become systemic, and that can never become any of these things.'(Lyotard, 1993, 105) The stuffed closet in *The Closet*, which somehow does not extend to participate as a space of narration, suggests that 'something' which escapes publicity, resists communication. 'Call it what you will, the "unconscious" or whatever. One can only describe this something as contradiction, tension, repression, deferral, displacement and in general distortion.' (Lyotard, 1993, 105)

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[28] Lyotard, Jean-François, 'Obedience', *The Inhuman: Reflections On Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby**,** (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) 167.

CHAPTER II

Objects in Play of Appearance and Disappearance

> Looked at from the viewpoint of art, furniture is analogous to sculpture. Just as furniture fits into a room, and takes up floor-space inside a house, sculpture fits into and takes up space in an art exhibition area. Take this 'thing': it isn't as big as a room, so it's only furniture; it isn't as big as architecture, so it's only sculpture.
>
> Vito Acconci [1]

A photograph by Henri-Cartier Bresson from 1951: Duchamp sitting in his apartment in Neuilly-sur Seine. (Figure 16) Probably the place functions as his studio as well. However, the photo is of a moment in domestic comfort, hospitality and jesting: one of his ready-mades, the *Bicycle Wheel,* a bicycle wheel mounted on a stool, is placed close to his chair and Duchamp is wearing a lampshade or material folded like a lampshade on his head. If he is not spinning the wheel with his left hand, it looks as if he is mimicking its turning by a gesture of his right hand. The point where the *Bicycle Wheel* (probably the third version of 1951 after lost original of 1913) is positioned, is as if demonstrating his comment on the readymades: 'something one doesn't even look at, or something one looks at while turning one's head…this angle will express the necessary and sufficient corner of the eye.' (De Duve, 1996, 114) The *Bicycle Wheel* encountered as such in a domestic space blurs the category to which this object is thought to belong – the readymade as the work of art or a gadget for entertaining – suggesting that aesthetic autonomy is itself a function dependent upon the meanings of space.

Thierry de Duve argues that Duchamp in his works with objects, assigned the title of readymades, dealt with the most elementary convention of all modernist artistic practice, that 'works of art are shown in order to be judged as such.'(De Duve, 1996, 96) According to de Duve, Duchamp has taken this convention as subject matter, and has submitted it to a radical

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[1] Acconci, Vito 'Television, Furniture and Sculpture: The Room with the American View', *Vito Acconci*, (London: Phaidon Press, 2002) 117.

test. For de Duve the readymade is the operation which reduces the work of art to its enunciative function, to the statement 'This is art'. He theorises on enunciative function, drawing from Foucault's postulate of a discursive unit, *énoncé* (statement), which is distinguished from the sign, the sentence and the proposition:

> It is this pure function of existence of the statements, recognized by the simple fact of having been uttered, that [Foucault] calls enunciative function. It operates in the discursive field… The same reduction to which Foucault submitted signs, propositions, or discursive acts in general, also allows one to attach images or objects to those conditions as long as we transpose them into the enunciative paradigm, i.e., as long as we translate them into a statement that is always ostensive and thus always of the type 'here is …' or 'this is…'…A urinal that does nothing but show itself is translated by the ostensive statement, 'Here's a urinal'. Since it shows itself further so as to test the convention according to which works of art are shown in order to be judged as such, and since it has successfully passed the test, it is also translated by the statement, "This urinal is a work of art" (de Duve, 1996, 97-8)

De Duve produces a new structure, a new statement as in this last phrase, in which two separate discourses are sewn together. 'Here's a urinal' is a citation; in terms of object being displaced from its context of functionality, and this displacement entails a reduction to an ostensive statement. This statement, as an act of presenting that is imagined to be enacted by an object, is grafted onto the performative utterance of works of art that is, being displayed to be judged as such.

Pointing to this elementary artistic convention, de Duve seems to suggest a process of legitimisation by the public, what has been thought according to the term 'countersignature' by Derrida. Signature is 'nothing other than the event of the work itself', the work itself is the attestation of a signature.[2] However, for Derrida this attestation is only possible on the basis of a countersignature, which is a process of legitimisation and relies on society, conventions and institutions:

> It all starts with the countersignature, with the receiver, with what we call the receiver. The origin of the work ultimately resides with the addressee, who doesn't yet exist, but that is where the signature starts…Signature is already produced by the future perfect of the countersignature, which will come to sign that signature. (Derrida, 1994, 18-9)

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[2] Derrida, Jacques 'Interview: The Spatial Arts', *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*, ed. Peter Brunette and David Wills, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 18.

For Derrida this temporality of the signature, which gives the work over to others, to society and institution, politicises the work. 'And with that we move from the private to the public. A work is only public; there is no private work.' (Derrida, 1994, 19)

According to de Duve's thesis, any work that would meet the required enunciative conditions, which are effected by the act of grafting as suggested above, could be considered as a work of art. Those conditions which are defined within the artistic or aesthetic domain, to be met by the work within that enunciative paradigm are fourfold and that:

> given (1) an object, (2) an author, (3) a public, and (4) an institutional place ready to record this object, to attribute an author to it, and to communicate it to the public, the entity this formation calls work of art is possible, *a priori*. (de Duve, 1996, 102)

De Duve's temporality concerning the work of art to be recognised as such is different than that suggested by Derrida. His theorisation of the work of art as 'statement' seems to block any experience, which would unfold with different meanings of space and even disturb this securely defined categorisation. De Duve's binding turns the work of art into a (metaphysical) closure. His thesis, drawing upon those conditions/constituents, which he terms *a priori*, in fact cannot be justified prior to the experiences it implies. The constituent concepts are acquired based on an experience, Duchamp's readymades in this case. This is subsequently called 'conditions' to claim an a priori justificatory status for that particular thesis. Here, by *a priori* De Duve seems to mean prior to any aesthetic judgement concerning the object itself. This indicates that the perceptual factors are subordinated to institutional conditions. Functional and spatial connotations and possibilities suggested by the object seem to be disregarded.

According to de Duve, extending his argument regarding Duchamp's practice revealing the enunciative function as the elementary convention of works of art, Conceptual artists attacked precisely these four conditions. The project of the latter was to negate the work of art through those basic constituents: 'as material object…as being the *opus* of an author…as visual phenomenon offered to the viewer…and as institutionalized value.'(de Duve, 1996, 119) Although, the answer to Duchamp's question '*Can one make works which are not works of "art"?*' seems to be 'no' insofar as the conditions are met, Conceptual artists' were also interested in the same question. However their undertaking was in a reverse direction.

Conceptual art proposed those ideas which were concerned with what Lucy Lippard called the 'dematerialization of the art object' or as she amended it later, with 'a process of dematerialization, deemphasis on material aspects (uniqueness, permanence, decorative attractiveness).'[3] This attack on the status of the art object further entailed the reconsideration of its forms of distribution, constructions of authorship and conditions of reception as well. Conceptual artists were concerned with a demystifying of artistic practice, often substituting text and photographs for other perceptible objects. Aiming to avoid the *commercialisation* of the work of art and resist the progressive approach of modernism, with the 'desire to disappear as art object, whether into idea, design or everyday life', was characteristic of those diverse practices. Lippard points to the production methods of Minimalist sculpture in opening the way to the later conceptual works:

> During the 1960s the anti-intellectual, emotional intuitive processes of art-making characteristic of the last two decades have begun to give way to an ultra-conceptual art that emphasizes the thinking process almost exclusively. As more and more work is designed in the studio, but executed elsewhere by professional craftsmen, as the object becomes merely the end product, a number of artists are losing interest in the physical evolution of the work of art. The studio is again becoming a study. Such a trend appears to be provoking a profound dematerialization of art, especially of art as object, and if it continues to prevail, it may result in the object's becoming wholly obsolete. (Lippard, 1973, 42-3)

However, Lippard later on admits in the postface of her book that this ambitious project she defined as such back in 1968, failed to evade the status of object and its commercialisation. She asserts in disappointment that 'three years later major conceptualists [were] selling work for substantial sums here and in Europe; they [were] represented by (and still more unexpected – showing in) the world's most prestigious galleries.' (Lippard, 1973, 263) This outcome may be read as the paradox of that moment, that the very discourse and institution which enabled Lippard's and the conceptualists' desire for dematerialisation and disappearance would stop it from being accomplished. Duchamp's question could be rewritten for the case of the Conceptualists as '*Could a work of art disappear as a work of art?*'

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[3] Lippard, Lucy R. *Six Years: The Dematerialisation Of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 5.

Brian O'Doherty writes about the aesthetic, sociological and economic context within which works of art are experienced. He analyses those conditions which have produced and supported the myth of neutrality of the gallery or museum space. For O'Doherty, within this space, object based production, involving sculpture, painting, photographs or texts, is always subject to an economic tension:

> The classic modernist gallery is the limbo between studio and living room, where the conventions of both meet on a carefully neutralized ground. There the artist's respect for what he has invented is perfectly superimposed on the bourgeois desire for possession. For a gallery is, in the end, a place to sell things – which is O.K. The arcane social customs surrounding this divert attention from the business of assigning material value to that which has none. Here the hostile artist is a commercial *sine qua non*. (O'Doherty, 1999, 76)

Could the economic be at issue in ways, which are not captured by Lippard's lament or O'Doherty's cynical assent, when artistic and domestic realms are thought together? Other than commercialisation of works of art, how would commodities – as mass-produced and circulated objects – stand in relationships of institutions of art, production of works of art and the domestic sphere?

In the section *Pop: an Art of Consumption?* of his book *The Consumer Society,* Baudrillard sees Pop art in complicity with a society dominated by the logic of signs and consumption. Though for Baudrillard art as such is no longer subversive and works of art are integrated into the political economy of the commodity-sign, Pop art's success lies in its position which 'does not contradict the world of objects, but explores its system, to make itself part of that system.'[4] Thus, pop artists bring together the object of painting and the painting as object. 'Pop is the first art to explore its own status as "signed" and "consumed" art object.' (Baudrillard, 1998, 117)

However, Baudrillard asserts that this reconciliation with the logic of signs, is accompanied by a risk of falling into 'an ideology of Nature, of "Waking-Up".'[5] In the assent to

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[4] Baudrillard, Jean *The Consumer Society,* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998) 116.
[5] Baudrillard refers to John Cage's writing, as 'the musician who inspired Rauschenberg and Johns: 'art should be an affirmation of life…simply a waking up to the very life we are living which is so excellent, once one gets one's mind, one's desires out of the way and lets it act of its own accord.' He also quotes Johns as 'a flag was just a flag, a number was simply a number'

the revealed order, the universe of images and manufactured objects showing through ultimately as a *nature,* Baudrillard points to symptoms of fetishisms - of commodities, of the 'everyday' - which these artists may be entrapped in:

> Pop lays claim to be the art of the banal (it is on these grounds that it calls itself 'pop(ular)' art), but what is the banal but a metaphysical category, a modern version of the category of the sublime? The object is banal only its use, in the moment of its use (the 'working' radio in Wesselmann's installations). The object ceases to be banal as soon as it signifies. Now, we have seen that the 'truth' of the contemporary object is no longer to be used for something, but to signify, no longer to be manipulated as an instrument, but as a sign. (Baudrillard, 1996, 118)

For Baudrillard, in consumer society, modes of production has become dependent upon and manipulated by the expansion of consumption. Consumption is not a material practice; 'to become an object of consumption, an object must first become a sign.'(Baudrillard, 1996, 200) He asserts that object is not consumed in its materiality, but in its difference where consumption means 'an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs.' This system of signs cannot become intelligible if each sign is related to each object. When the object is framed, detached from its material, functional relationship it starts to suggest meanings on a different level, in a network of floating signifiers.

Baudrillard quotes Warhol's assertion that 'The canvas is an absolutely everyday object, like this chair or that poster…Reality needs no intermediary, all you have to do is isolate it from the environment and put it on canvas.'(Baudrillard, 1998, 118) Baudrillard states his associated argument as follows:

> Now, this is the whole question: the everydayness of this chair…is precisely its context and, specifically, the mass-produced context of all similar or almost similar chairs. By isolating the chair on the canvas, I remove all the everydayness from it and, at the same time, deprive the canvas of its character of everyday object. This is a familiar dead-end: art can neither be absorbed into everyday life (the canvas = the chair), nor can it grasp the everyday as such (the chair isolated on the canvas = the real chair). Immanence and transcendence are equally impossible.' (Baudrillard, 1998, 118-9)

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and notes Wesselmann's remark of the 'super-realism' of an ordinary kitchen. (Baudrillard, 1998, 117)

This is somewhat reminiscent of Arthur Danto's remark on traditional art theories, which cannot explain the difference between Warhol's *Brillo Box* and the product found in the grocery store. This ambiguity for Danto marks a moment when historical understanding of art was nullified. Baudrillard seems to be concerned with a similar ambiguity and propose a possible understanding of this difference through an analysis of the sign functions of objects. His argument on Pop art productions, is drawn from his theory of consumer society and object-sign relationships.

Two recent projects/works might be reviewed as instances which somehow tend to negotiate the conventional gallery systems, shortcircuit that 'limbo' of exchange and question the relationship of artistic production with design and industrial production. They suggest possibilities of disappearing through use, through 'banal' objects in terms of Baudrillard's conception. These two approaches are involved in production of objects/sculpture bordering on the commodity, the utilitarian and handicraft.

Nine sculptors, Angela Bulloch, Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Parmidar Kaur, David Mach, Richard Wentworth and Alison Wilding were asked to take part in a project called *At Home with Art* in 1999. Each artist visited a household and following the meetings with family members, considering their habits, needs and particularities of the domestic space, went out to produce a 'work', functional or non-functional objects. These objects were also planned to be mass-produced and offered for sale, at affordable prices, at *Homebase*, a department store specialising in household products. An exhibition of 'drawings, prototypes, photographs and the final objects themselves' was organised at the Tate Gallery.

Colin Painter, curator of the project, describes its aim as 'an experiment in participation in domestic life, as distinct from an invitation to comment upon it.'[6] Painter further asserts that artists were particularly asked not to operate as 'designers' but to bring their own ways of production, preoccupations and techniques of their existing practices to the domestic realm; make things 'which were recognizably theirs'. There seems to be an ambivalence in Painter's position, which could perhaps be defined as a disavowal; 'the purpose was to make a mass-produced object for sale to the general public' he asserts, but on the other hand traits of artistic individuality is desired and defended against design. Design is believed to be bounded by economic and functional constraints in all phases of planned production, unlike artistic

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[6] Painter, Colin *At Home with Art*, (London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 1999) 7.

conception that derive from unrestrained creativity of the artist. In fact these constraints are thought to dissolve the signature, replacing authorship with anonymity.

One of the contributing sculptors is Richard Deacon whose object is perhaps the closest to the genre of sculpture, in its distance from any apparent functionality. He takes on the notion of 'souvenir' as a domestic object which blurs the boundary of practical use and stable place. Reminiscent of the repeating forms of his existing art practice, he produced aluminium cast objects suggesting fluid form of a splashed matter. (Figure 17) While it seems still possible for this metal object to be put in domestic use, perhaps as a trivet or coaster, its suggestion of formal looseness is quite significant. Although Deacon states that 'the expressive mark does not interest [him]', and he often uses industrial material in his work, a concern for naturalisation of expression, reverberating with the Kantian notion of artist, the 'genius' who does not imitate the product of nature, but reproduces natural productivity: 'the artist does not imitate things in nature, or if you will, in *natura naturata*, but the acts of *natura naturans*, the operations of the *physis*.' (Derrida, 1998, 272)

Richard Wentworth is another sculptor participating in the *At Home with Art* project. In his earlier works, Wentworth had already been making installations using industrial objects, particularly mass-produced items intended for domestic use, plates, desks, portable chairs, books, steel cable etc. (Figure 18) Concerning his work for this project he asks:

> What is it that I think at home that I don't think in the studio? What is that I think in the studio that I don't think at home? …I don't believe I'm hugely changed as the doors open and shut…Nevertheless the piles of plates in my studio are not a washing up job. (quoted in Painter, 1999, 56)

Wentworth's project involved designing plates with his fingerprints recorded on them as a sort of decorative pattern around an arc of the inner edge of the perimeter of the plate. (Figure 19) Fingerprints are considered as a flaw in the production of industrial ceramics, and the ones with such fingerprints are normally discarded. In this case, soft clay moulds were produced so that Wentworth could experiment with fingerprints before forming the master mould. The mark of the artist's hand, regarded as the pledge of uniqueness of the work of art, is 'reproduced' and 'mass-produced' along with the 'banal' objects to be used, perhaps to get broken and thrown away. Imperfect out of production, these plates also suggest a messy housekeeping with stain like handprints left on the white ceramic plates. Wentworth's work seems to share that quiet

sense of humour which is also at work in Pop. Though Baudrillard, unconvinced about the humour ascribed to the latter, asks 'whether this "cool" smile is the smile of humour or that of commercial complicity.'(Baudrillard, 1998, 121)

Sculptor Joe Scanlan produces *Nesting Bookcases*; a portable system of stackable wood shelving; painted in a variety of colours they are able to perform various functions. These cases are designed so the largest shelf is on the bottom, with slightly smaller shelves on top. The shelves, portable in their collapsed state, are held together by rough cloth strap that is attached to the wooden planks at the top and then threaded through a hole in the centre of each shelf and pulled tight, keeping the case in position. This system allows for easy assembling and storage. Scanlan also sells these hand-crafted, mass-produced-looking shelves from his studio *Store A,* in New York. As well as the bookcases, Scanlan presents numerous photographs of the cases in homes of collectors, nested or braced, being used as functional shelving. (Figure 20) His work hovers between art and furniture, the gallery and the home; the shelves are as mobile in their operation as in their design. Object, being on sale at *Store A* and with its look of mass-produced household goods, is disguised as commodity. They exist in a tension between display – being displayed at the galleries as art objects or represented in photographs – and invisibility – regressing to a certain invisibility as means of displaying other objects.

Michael Newman asserts that in *Nesting Bookcases,* Scanlan as a 'post-Conceptualist', plays precisely upon those conditions of disappearing and also acknowledges the impossibility of its completion.[7] The very attempt to make the object disappear itself becomes a condition for the appearance of the work of art. Photographs of the shelves as being used for domestic display and storage suspend their invisibility as furniture, locating them back within the centrality of framing gaze.

Duchamp's citation as described and analysed by de Duve was the reduction of object to an ostensive statement, displacing it from its functional context. Scanlan while enacting a similar shift through the gallery displays of bookcases, also seems to narrate stories of disappearance which would implicate going beyond the statement 'Here is a bookshelf'. Newman compares these two acts:

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7 Newman, Michael 'After Conceptual Art: Joe Scanlan's Nesting Bookcases, Duchamp, Design and the Impossibility of Disappearing', *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Michael Newman and Jon Bird, (London: Reaktion Books, 1999) 206.

Duchamp's move is repeated by Scanlan, but as an inversion: not to select a generic object that would appear as art that was not 'work of art', but to make a work of art that would appear as – or more precisely disappear into – a generic object. Just as Duchamp's play required the insertion of quotation marks, so Scanlan's requires their abolition. (Newman, 1999, 212)

Scanlan operates upon boundaries of aesthetic autonomy, in terms of methods of production, authorship, spaces of display and the ambivalent status of object as work of art. He could have bought similar shelves from *IKEA* or a furniture catalogue, and introduced them into this play of appearance-disappearance. However, as a sculptor he designs and crafts wood shelving; two practices which are commonly considered as relating to 'mercenary arts', as antithetical to the artistic. Genericness suggested by the shelves implies an erasure of 'signature' of the author, and 'Do It Yourself' look of them lets one imagine that the shelving is put up by a member of the household. The space of display, in fact turns out to be the space of functionalities, 'displaying' and holding other objects, when the piece is placed in a home.

While the formal characteristics of the bookcases, their modular structure evoke the seriality (permutation) of minimal sculpture, Scanlan's production recalls Donald Judd's furniture design and manufacturing as well. (Figure 21) Judd started to design furniture in 1971. In that year he bought an old fort near the small town of Marfa, Texas and by gradually acquiring and transforming local property, he constructed a vast space for permanent installations of his own work and that of Carl Andre, John Chamberlain, Dan Flavin, and others. Judd allocated part of the area for furniture design and production.

Although his furniture noticeably suggested minimalist sculptural forms and the same sort of materials were used in both modes of production, Judd emphasised that he did not want people to think of his furniture as works of art. However, as he has implicitly acknowledged the possibility of such a judgement in this statement and as the furniture he has designed are shown along with his other works, the boundary between the two does not seem to be that firm. Kant places 'decoration of rooms by means of hangings, ornamental accessories, and all beautiful furniture' under the heading of 'Painting' rather than 'Plastic arts' in his categorization of fine arts. Though the latter involves two senses 'sight and touch', Kant decides to relate furniture to painting. Detaching it from any material functionality, he ascribes to it the sole function of '*to be looked at*', invoking thereby a gaze which centralises the gazing subject through the object,

effacing issues of the space between and across subject and object as well as the status of the objects in other contexts.

Judd termed Minimalist sculpture 'specific objects' or 'three-dimensional works', which are 'neither painting nor sculpture'. These definitions are phrases which not only emphasise how similar these objects were to other kinds of non-art objects, but also still suggest an ongoing relationship to the sculptural:

> Obviously, anything in three dimensions can be any shape, regular or irregular, and can have any relation to the wall, floor, ceiling, room, rooms or exterior or none at all. Any material can be used, as is or painted.[8]

These objects, while eliminating the 'surface incident', almost enacted a disappearance into the space of encounter and the phenomenological experience emphasized the corporeality of the viewing subject. They explored 'placement' as a form of mediation between the 'literal' object and architectural space. Krauss discusses the experience of such sculpture by referring to Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception,* and asserts that 'the distance and viewpoint are not added to the object, but inhere in object's meaning', no objects are given neutrally, to be modified, as it were, 'by the distance from which we see them or the angle of view we are forced to take.'[9]

Michael Benedikt, writing about the Minimalist sculpture exhibition *Ten Sculptors* (1966), at the Dwan Gallery, noted his particular interest on the boundaries of the work and the gallery. As the compositional aspects of the object is evaded, architectural relationships and placement of objects engaged viewer's attention, even at a mode suggestive of a decorational concern: 'when showing only things reductive and mainly black and white, it seems to me that no gray-brown textured rug should have been left around, as at the Dwan'. [10]

Though such perceptual possibilities were left open to be experienced by the viewer, there is still a certain limitation of spectatorship foreseen by the artists. The capacity to be suggestive is reserved to certain traits of the object. Robert Morris states that 'the space of the

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[8] Judd, Donald 'Specific Objects', *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 813.
[9] Krauss, Rosalind 'Richard Serra, a Translation', *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985) 262.
[10] Benedikt, Michael 'Minimalist Sculpture', *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 74.

room becomes of such importance does not mean that an environmental situation is being established. The total space is hopefully altered in certain desired ways by the presence of the object.' (Morris, 1995, 234)

Acconci's quite literal account quoted at the beginning of the chapter, his deliberate 'uninformed' approach, might be pointing at this desire for limiting the frames of meaning and experience of works of art. When introduced within the economic and practical realm of home, where certain acts define the meanings of space and objects, works tend to disappear in use and dissolve their identity as works of art. However, this idea of disappearance also might make up the condition of its non-disappearing. Aesthetic autonomy is not only a function of authorship and institutions legitimising that, but also dependent upon the meanings of space. The domestic sphere also provokes those instances where design and artistic production become indistinct, and reveal particular sensitivities and preoccupations of artists regarding the 'visibility' of works as works of art.

CHAPTER III

Considering Strategies, Appealing to Tactics

> Everydayness is *difference in repetition*.
>
> Jean Baudrillard [1]

The term 'tactic' has a particular significance in Michel de Certeau's inquiry into the ways by which potential micro-level resistances are revealed in everyday practices against broad structures of cultural domination. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau argues that everyday life in consumer cultures is the site of countless tactics of resistance to these structures and effects. In each of the practices such as talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc., de Certeau finds the potential for production of resistant instances that exceed and evade the order that official cultures, including the culture of consumption tend to impose. His emphasis is on resistance and subversion in everyday practices, and on the productiveness of practices of consumption. Many of these practices for de Certeau are tactical in character.

De Certeau introduces a distinction between 'tactics' and 'strategies'. A strategy is the 'calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an "environment".' [2] It assumes a 'proper', a place to relate to an exterior distinct from it, 'competitors, adversaries, "clienteles," "targets," or "objects" of research.' (de Certeau, 1984, xx) A strategy involves 'an effort to delimit one's own place' as opposed to an exterior that is thought to be of the Other. It is this strategic model on which economic, political and scientific rationality is built. On the other hand, for de Certeau a tactic is an indeterminate mode of dealing with situations, a calculated action which cannot count on a proper, on 'a spatial or institutional localisation':

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[1] Baudrillard, 1998, 118.
[2] De Certeau, Michel *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) xix.

The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance…The "proper" is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities…Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities". (de Certeau, 1984, xix)

A tactic is an intended action determined by the 'absence of a proper locus'. For de Certeau this nowhere provides for a tactical mobility and it must make use of the openings 'in the surveillance of the proprietary powers.' (de Certeau, 1984, 37)

'People have to make do with what they have' is the motto of de Certeau's work which is suggested with its French title of his book, *Arts de faire*: arts of making, arts of doing. Meaghan Morris defines the project of this work as 'not a theory of popular culture but "a science of singularity": a science of the relationship that links "everyday pursuits to particular circumstances".'[3] A tactic brings together diverse elements in order to 'produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place and to strike the hearer.' (de Certeau, 1984, 38) Tactical ways of operating, such as clever tricks, maneuvers and minute discoveries, which are 'poetic as well as warlike', mark those instances of resistance and highlight the capacity of politics, the use of that maneuvering to alter conditions, residing in the obscure realm of the everyday.

'The everyday: what is most difficult to discover' is the opening sentence of Maurice Blanchot's essay *Everyday Speech*.[4] How does the everyday become so difficult to grasp if it is what one is 'first of all and most often'? As de Certeau marks a certain mode of acting for everyday life, Blanchot compares the everyday to the 'fleeting presence' of the suspect that does not allow for recognition, rather than the guilty which 'relates to the Law to the extent that he does everything he must in order to be judged.'(Blanchot, 1993, 238) For Blanchot, apart from its other aspects, the everyday has this essential trait of not allowing itself to be grasped:

The everyday escapes. Why does it escape? Because it is without a subject. When I live the everyday, it is any man, anyone at all who does so; and this anyone, properly speaking, is neither me nor, properly, the other… At the same time, the everyday

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[3] Morris, Meaghan 'Banality in Cultural Studies', *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 27.
[4] Blanchot, Maurice 'Everyday Speech', *The Infinite Conversation,* trans. Susan Hanson, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993) 238.

does not belong to the objective realm. To live it as what might be lived through a series of separate technical acts (represented by the vacuum cleaner, the washing machine, the refrigerator, the radio, the car) is to substitute a number of compartmentalised actions for this indefinite presence, this connected movement by which we are *continually*, though in the mode of discontinuity, in relation with the *indeterminate* set of human possibilities. (Blanchot, 1993, 244)

For de Certeau the two logics of action, the one tactical and the other strategic, arise from two facets of practising language: rhetoric as 'ways of speaking' and scientific discourse respectively. As in the appropriation of language by the speaker, 'a way of using imposed systems, a practice of order constructed by others redistributes its space; it creates at least a certain play in that order, a space for maneuvers'. (de Certeau, 1984, 18) Tacticians have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations, through displacements of acts and practices. Perhaps as indicated by de Certeau in his definition of strategies and tactics in terms of spatial distinctiveness and indistinctiveness, according to Blanchot subjectivity dissolves into the anonymity of the everyday, still 'hold[ing] the principle of its own critique':

> The everyday is platitude (what lags and falls behind, the residual life with which we fill our trash cans and cemeteries: scrap and refuse); but this banality is also what is most important if it brings us back to existence in its very spontaneity and as it is lived – at the moment when, lived, it escapes every speculative formulation, perhaps all coherence and regularity. (Blanchot, 1993, 239)

The phrase 'as it is lived' may first seem as an unnecessary remark, however it posits an important condition for possibilities to unfold. The everyday risks losing its potential residing in its ungraspable characteristics, when overtaken by the television. It becomes no longer what is lived, but rather what can be seen, 'spectacle and description, without any active relation whatsoever.'(Blanchot, 1993, 240) For Blanchot, depoliticization is tied to the passivity imposed by this mode of relationship which is governed by the ultimate 'empty but fascinated look':

> Here offering itself wholly to our view, produced-reproduced, we are allowed to believe that [the event] is taking place only so we might be its superior witness. Substituted for practice is the pseudo-acquaintance of an irresponsible gaze; substituted for the movement of the concept – a task and a work – is the diversion of a superficial, uncaring, and satisfied contemplation. Well protected within the four

walls of his familial existence, man allows the world to come to him without peril, certain of being in no way changed by what he sees and hears. (Blanchot, 1993, 240)

Stephen Heath ascribes an importance to the intellectual interest in everyday life, since it focuses on the understanding of a material sphere, which is usually left aside. Heath underlines the significance of the mode of rethinking the political with respect to everyday, exemplified initially by the interest and critique of the Situationists in the early 1960s and also later of feminism. [5] The latter moved to cut across the long-standing oppressions of women and exclusions of the spaces and practices which are associated with women, by its attention to daily life. However, according to Heath, another track still with a certain interest in the everyday, moves in the reverse direction.

He writes of the culturalization of everyday life by and as television and of displacement of socio-political representation with television's economic representation of itself through the commodification of the public. Television accounts for daily life: 'Prime activity, taking-up my time, and prime mode of its being, taking over reality in a constant domestic recycling in which the terms of my world are made and approved.' (Heath, 1990, 275) For the individual, television gives a serial consciousness, that is 'viewers are not me but all the others, and this is the same for everybody.'(Heath, 1990, 276) The seriality of the viewing public, the levelling of identities to the standard, 'other people of public', is evoked by the calculated intimacy of televisual discourse and through a sense of omnipresence propagated by its technological capability. Mary Ann Doane argues that television's most significant technological ability is to be there: 'both on the scene and in your living room':

> As with television news, it is a direct address/appeal to the viewer…with an even greater emphasis upon the presence and immediacy of the act of communication, with constant recourse to shifters which draw attention to the shared space and time of reporter and viewer: terms such as "today", "here", "you", "we", "I". [6]

Similarly for Heath, television exists first and foremost as availability, as saying everything to everyone. It requires the 'certification of our being there'. It aims to produce a certain

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[5] Heath, Stephen 'Representing Television', *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 275.

[6] Doane, Marry Ann 'Information, Crisis, Catastrophe', *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 232.

sense of intimacy, not only between the 'anchor' and the individual 'viewer' but also among all imagined subjects of reception:

> Before all else we are treated to a permanent serial of the public for the public in a circle of proximation: …for any stretch of viewing, the ritual will be being gone through for everyone, anyone, me and the others and whoever it is in television's proximity, which we all are: near, next, before, after, round and round. This proximity, grounded in the huge production of everyday speech…(Heath, 1990, 276)

A work by Vito Acconci *Theme Song* seems to appropriate and exploit these aspects of televisual discourse; a mode of address characterised by the intimacy derived from the presumptions relating to the seriality of viewing public, availability of the TV at home and availability of public for TV. In this 1973 videotape, Acconci lies cosily on the living room floor; the camera filming him from the floor in front of an armchair. His head nearly fills the monitor and the rest of his body is barely perceivable so foreshortened is it in the shot. (Figure 22) He is talking to an imaginary viewer, directly addressing and inviting her/him to come join him:

> "I need somebody. I just need a body next to me. Come in here, I'll wrap around you. You need it as much as I do, we both need it…My body's here, your body could be here." And so on, for the 33 minutes of the tape, as he accompanies his monologue with songs of the Doors, Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and others, noisily flipping the tapes in and out.[7]

Although often accused of macho even misogynist tone of his performances and performance-based video works, in *Theme Song* Acconci seems to perform and parody clichés of masculine identity with these overused phrases, the slightly dull appeal of his seductions and the selection of popular rock hits of the period.

Acconci started as a performance artist in the moment of Conceptual art, at a time when there was significant overlap between categories of art production. His early works from this period, often included in the Conceptual art anthologies, were invaded by the announcements and descriptions concerning the performance 'projects'. The descriptive documents, notes and several photographs are the pieces which remained from the acts. This

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[7] Kotz, Liz 'Video: Process and Duration', *Acting Out: The Body in Video, Then and Now*, exhibition catalogue (London, Henry Moore Gallery, Royal College of Art, 1994) 17.

material while constituting part of the work, also suggests that the work can be remade at any time. Some of Acconci's work from this period are described as follows:

Following Piece (1969) Activity, 23 days; varying times each day. Various locations, New York. I follow a different person every day; I keep following until that person enters a private place (home, office etc) where I can't get in.

Step Piece (1970) An eighteen-inch stool is set up in my apartment and used as a step. Each morning, during the designated months, I step up and down the stool at the rate of thirty steps a minute. Each morning, the activity lasts as long as I can perform it without stopping…Announcements are sent to the public, who can see the activity performed, in my apartment, any time during the performance months.

Room Situation (Proximity) (1970) Everyday, during the exhibition, I will be present at the exhibition area, from opening time to closing time, going randomly from room to room. Subjects will be chosen who are standing in relative privacy at one of the exhibits; I will stand beside the person, or behind him, so that he might shift his posture, attempt to move away, etc. (I will stand beside him until he moves away.)[8]

Artists using their own bodies as their primary medium or instrument is often considered as the most significant artistic move of the 1970s.[9] Acconci in his performance-based conceptual works was already dealing with orienting himself in relation to repetitive tasks and investigating the interaction of bodies within and across socially determined boundaries. Playing with the limits of proximity attended to in social relations, Acconci crosses and invites the viewers to cross the spatial and relational boundaries of privacy. He also deals with the conventional spaces of art production and display.

The body as the body of the particular person, the artist, positions the works as personal and private. Despite the diversity of Acconci's early activities, there seems to be a common thread, which also characterised his video works and extended to his later works dealing with architectural structures: a shift between public and private realms so as to disallow any clear distinction between them.

His later performance works deal with explicit assertions of masculinity. Acconci exposed his body in violent acts and some involved the viewers either in direct engagement with the situation he enacts or by a direct call to the viewers in an intensely intimate, also

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[8] Acconci describes his works in *Vito Acconci*, (London: Phaidon Press, 2002) 36, 38, 233.
[9] Licht, Ira 'Bodyworks', *The Artist's Body*, ed. Tracey Warr (London: Phaidon Press, 2000) 251.

dangerous and as if threatening mode. He stated that 'the performer's space is incomplete, it needs the viewer as part of the performance area…' (Kotz, 1994, 17) Most of these performances were filmed, making up the traces that remain to document the body in performance.

Acconci's move to video in early 1970s, might be thought of as a shift to an easier and economical means of documentation and also as a negotiation with this new medium. However, it also provided a possibility of televisual mode of address which would be complicit with his interest in the boundaries which are operational in an ordering of experience. For Acconci, video opens up new possibilities for intimate one-to-one encounters with its technical and practical standing as a 'home companion'. Douglas Davis asserts that 'unlike the other arts though, it [video] approaches the pace and predictability of life, and is seen in a perceptual system grounded in the home and the self.' (Douglas Davis quoted in Kotz, 1993, 13)

This notion of video as 'home companion' seems to have two levels in relation to Acconci's works. The first dimension is regarding the reception of the video work: the monitor, that is a TV screen, with its usual position at home evokes a sense of spatial traversal and a certain consciousness of a viewing public produced with the intimacy of televisual availability:

> the conventional location for a television-set is in the home; when it is come upon elsewhere, whether inside a gallery/museum or outside, in a store-window or a supermarket, the viewer is stopped in his/her tracks: the situation is like that of a visitor from another planet happening upon a TV set – only in this case it is the 'other planet' (the home, the living-room) that comes upon the viewer, out of the privacy of his/her home and in public. The viewer, seeing the TV set, is brought back home – and here, abstractly, 'home' reads the way it could never be allowed to read when surrounded by the customs of living-room furniture: 'home' means 'resting place', 'the final resting place', land of the numb/still/dead. (Acconci, 2002, 118)

Acconci refers to video-installations, where a TV set comes to dominate and the rest of the installation functions as a display device. He argues that video-installation returns the TV set into the domain of furniture. His account in the last sentence, regarding the return to the land of the numb/still/dead, perhaps suggests a certain revelation about the mesmerizing and the numbing compulsion of television.

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The second significance relates to the production of the videotape and the deliberate amateur style employed. The targeted consumer layer of the commercial promotion and marketing of this new equipment of filming was the household:

> Art-video might be placed as a sub-category of home-made video. Or it might be placed on a sliding scale somewhere between home-made video on the one side and regular-broadcast television on the other side. (Acconci, 2002, 119)

In *Video Art: Old Wine, New Bottle (1974)* Allan Kaprow argues that although the hardware used in works of video art is a certain novelty, the conceptual framework and aesthetic attitudes relating to it is 'only marginally experimental.'[10] He asserts that few performances involving video, such as those of Acconci and Joan Jonas, are interesting as theatre pieces and 'most of them are just more or less adequate recordings of the performances …that could have been done just as well or better as film. Videotape is simply cheaper and faster.' (Kaprow, 1993, 149) For Kaprow this use of 'television as an art medium' lacks any 'fresh experience'. He states that 'environmental (tapeless) video' which enables interaction makes up the most interesting branch of this new technological import :

> The closed-circuit, environmental videographers in contrast are trying to make use of what in the medium is *not* like film or other art. The most experimental feature of their work, it seems to me, is its emphasis upon situational processes rather than some act canned as a product for later review. [11] (Kaprow, 1993, 149-50)

Kaprow, while trying to come to terms with this new medium, experiences difficulties of distributing the existing video-TV practices along with aesthetic and cultural models, and a politics of television. Although he is in favour of the broadcast video works, he still finds it 'a lavish form of kitsch'. The technological aspect of the work is so pretentious that critical judgement often gets seduced by the fancy hardware. 'We succumb to the glow of the cathode-ray tube while our minds go dead.' (Kaprow, 1993, 153)

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[10] Kaprow, Allan 'Video Art: Old Wine, New Bottle', *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, (London: University of California Press, 1993) 148.
[11] With Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik, Douglas Davis produced the first live global satellite broadcast of video performance art in 1977, for Documenta 6. In 1970s, satellite and cable performance/video pieces were exercises in the use of interactive technology as a medium. <http://www.eai.org/eai/artist.jsp?artistID=271>

In *Some Notes on My Use of Video*, Acconci draws attention to the physical experience of the viewer in the production of meanings, following the use of scale and placement of works in Minimalist art. However, different from the restricted formalism of Minimalist works, the physical distance of encounter with the video works, takes on a communicational significance in video art adding to the content of the videotape:

> Face-to-face contact: person onscreen faces person in front of screen…Video = close-up, sound. Video-viewer sits close to the screen – the distance Edward Hall calls "personal distance", where three-dimensionality is emphasized. But the image on video is flat, grainy – video, then, serves to decrease distance, to approach Hall's "intimate distance", where vision is blurred and distorted.[12] (Acconci, 2002, 100)

Acconci's next account in his notes refers to the second component of his video equation. 'Since sharp focus is lost, there is a dependence on sound. But it might be difficult to talk *about* something.' The 'intimate distance' that video imposes, for Acconci makes the utterance into something which does not give information, 'the point is simply to remind'.

In the *Theme Song,* Acconci's utterance which addresses the viewers in a direct, intimate and insistent mode encourages one to mistake the impersonal shifter 'you' for a personal call, disturbing that serial consciousness produced by that particular televisual discourse. The position of the camera facing the sofa – a point where a TV set would be placed – and the extreme closeness of his face to the camera even evoke a sense of displacement in the positions of the viewer and the viewed. Thomas Keenan writes about the directional ambiguity of the figure of the 'window' often used in debates around television:

> In which direction does this window 'face'? Looking out onto the world, presenting a view of the distant (tele-vision)? Or does it intrude into the home, all the homes, transforming the space, transporting the 'world' into the homes of the world – opening them up and facilitating the arrival of the image and the other? (Keenan, 1993, 130)

A sense of closure, what Krauss defines as the 'self-encapsulation' is a significant aspect of video works, arising from the requirements of the technique. According to Krauss, the capability of recording and transmitting at the same time differentiates video from other visual art productions:

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[12] Anthropologist Edward T. Hall's theory of 'proxemics' developed in 1960s, studies the use and meanings of space and distance in social relations within different cultural contexts.

The body is therefore as it were centred between two machines that are the opening and closing of a parenthesis. The first of these is the camera; the second is the monitor; which re-projects the performer's image with the immediacy of the mirror.[13]

Senses of closedness, as well as traversibility of the borders of the closure are evoked by Acconci's movements and repetitive spatial references: here/there, on, below, around. De Certeau asserts that regions and borders are appropriated by the displacements of acting subjects in which 'the opacity of the body in movement, gesticulating, walking, taking its pleasure, is what indefinitely organizes a *here* in relation to an *abroad*, a "familiarity" in relation to a "foreignness".'(de Certeau, 1984, 130) The frontiers created by contacts and 'narrative operations'[14] turn them into crossings: 'What the map cuts up, the story cuts across. In Greek, narration is called "diegesis": it establishes an itinerary (it "guides") and it passes through (it "transgresses").' (de Certeau, 1984, 129)

Levinas has a similar assertion that 'speech cuts across vision.' (Levinas, 1969, 73) The Other is welcomed in the separation evinced or produced in the dwelling. Language exceeds the private self, extends and welcomes the Other:

Language…offers things which are mine to the Other. To speak is to make the world common, to create commonplaces….The world in discourse is no longer what it is in separation, in the being at home with oneself where everything is given to me; it is what I give…Speaking, rather than "letting be," solicits the Other.(Levinas, 1969, 76)

Knowledge and vision appropriates the 'seen' to itself, however language presupposes a distance and separation. It presupposes a plurality, institutes a relation that is 'irreducible to the subject-object relation: the *revelation* of the other.' (Levinas, 1969, 73)

The invitation is offered out from that domestic setting, from the 'proper' of the artist, to the indeterminate realm of the other. Acconci appropriates a certain discourse and a technique, both of which operate within ordered systems. Enacting in the domain that is

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[13] Krauss, Rosalind 'Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism', *The Artist's Body*, ed. Tracey Warr (London: Phaidon Press, 2000) 277.

[14] De Certeau refers to the distinction of 'enlightened' discourse from 'common' discourse. In section *A Common Place: Ordinary Language,* he asserts that:

The approach to culture begins when the ordinary man *becomes* the narrator, when it is he who defines the (common) place of discourse and the (anonymous) space of its development. (de Certeau, 1984, 5)

strategically organised and which is capitalised by the public/private categorisation, Acconci reveals the tactical possibilities by addressing and inviting the other.

In a series of thirteen performances between 1973 and 1976, Mierle Laderman Ukeles carried out 'maintenance' activities in various public spaces. *Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Inside/Outside (1973)* took place at Wadsworth Athenaeum. Ukeles 'scrubbed and mopped' the floor of the museum for four hours and washed and cleaned the exterior plaza and steps for another four hours. (Figures 23,24) Other 'maintenance art performances' in the same museum were the cleaning of a protective display case (which Ukeles called 'dust painting') and taking the museum guards' keys and locking and unlocking galleries and offices. Ukeles published her *Maintenance Art Manifesto* in 1969:

> Two Basic Systems: Development and Maintenance.
> The sourball of every revolution: after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?
> Development: pure individual creation; the new change; progress, advance excitement, flight or fleeing.
> Maintenance: keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight.
> Show your work – show it again.
> Keep the contemporaryartmuseum [sic] groovy
> Keep the home fires burning
> Development systems are partial feedback systems with major room for change.
> Maintenance systems are direct feedback systems with little room for change. […] [15]

This manifesto is included in an anthology of writings on institutional critique. Ukeles performances correspond to a time when works 'conceptualising the gallery space' began to take on an explicit critical position. As Christian Kravagna writes, in around 1968 a significant change took place. The polemical position of artists with gallery systems in terms of their artistic practices (happenings and performances) in 1960s started be confronted by eminently political perspective of projects which dealt with institutional mechanisms

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[15] Ukeles, Mierle Laderman 'Maintenance Art Manifesto (1969)', *The Museum as an Arena*: *Artists on Institutional Critique*, ed. Christian Kravagna, (Köln: Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002) 24.

directly.[16] The latter aimed to draw attention to the systems of exclusions and the idealist foundations of art institutions. The manifestoes of Art Workers' Coalition (*Statement of Demands*) and Guerrilla Art Action Group were examples of this position, which protested the political and economic background of the seemingly neutral status of art institutions.

The analysis of the conditions of 'white cube' included challenging of the gallery/museum architecture and space as well. Lawrence Weiner's *Lathing from a Wall* (1968) or Christo's *Wrapping Outside and Inside of MCA Chicago* (1969) might be considered as exemplifying interventions or 'gestures' of this position. Miwon Kwon after asserting her suspicion of the self-righteous tone in much of the discourse on institutional critique, asks:

> So what of an artist who, instead of aggressively countering the imposition of the repressive whiteness (by dirtying it up), opts to clean it? Instead of exposing the behind-the-scenes "truth" about the museum, decides to wash, scrub, and polish its public face – to maintain the fantasy of its pristine perfection?[17]

Ukeles while mocking the supposedly unchanging and uncontaminated museum space, where the effects of change are monitored, disguised and hidden, also attempts to present the unrepresentable. In a telling response to Ukeles's act, the Wadsworth Athenaeum kept no records of the Maintenance Art Performances. The two categories of labour defined in her manifesto, development and maintenance, might correspond to pairs of production/individuality and re-production/anonymity respectively. From these pairs of activity/authorship positions, only the first one can be presented to be judged and legitimised by a public:

> Ukeles's performances articulate the tension between public and private realms of experience. Yet by renaming domestic labour (read private, read natural) 'maintenance', she elaborates upon the structural conditions of the relations between

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[16] Kravagna, Christian 'Introduction', *The Museum as an Arena*: *Artists on Institutional Critique*, ed. Christian Kravagna, (Köln: Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002) 8.

[17] Kwon, Miwon 'In Appreciation of Invisible Work: Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the Maintenance of the "White Cube"', *Documents,* (no.10, Fall 1997) 15-6.

public and private spheres. It is the hidden nature of this labour that permits the myth that the public sphere can function as a site devoid of interest.[18]

Maintenance, the form of labour, which involves routine tasks mostly associated with women, is neither exclusively public nor private in itself; however when it is exposed, it disallows the proper functioning of whatever it maintains. Kwon asserts that 'it is the kind of work that renders itself invisible, and is rendered invisible, in order to make other things ("real" work?) possible.' (Kwon, 1997, 17) This condition of invisibility also suggests that only 'when the maintenance is well accomplished it goes unseen.' (Molesworth, 1999, 120)

Elizabeth Diller argues that by the first decade of the twentieth century, methods of scientific management, Taylorism, was brought into the home and applied to domestic maintenance tasks.[19] Scientific management interpreted the body of this housewife as a dynamic force with unlimited capacity for work and as in industrial production, sought to standardise and rationalise the motions of the bodies, in order to enhance the efficiency of labour power. 'The term *housewife*, which had been in use since the thirteenth century in Europe, required reconceptualizing both "wife" and "house" in relation to the servantless, middle-class American household of the 1920s.' (Diller, 2000, 386)

The drive for efficiency and application of time and power saving techniques from industrial productivity, to the maintenance work of homes, ironically produced an increased workload for the housewife: the expectations and standards of cleanliness were pushed up to obsessive levels. It soon became a moral issue, and 'the fetishization of hygiene blurred the problem of cleanliness with beauty, chastity, piety and modernity':

> As efficiency targeted domestic space as much as the domestic body, the design of the interior succumbed to this paranoid hygiene. The dust and germ-breeding intricacies of the nineteenth-century interior collapsed into pure surface – white, smooth, flat, non-porous, and seamless – under the continuous disciplinary watch of the housewife. (Diller, 2000, 387)

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[18] Molesworth, Helen 'Cleaning Up in the 1970s: The Work of Judy Chicago, Mary Kelly and Mierle Laderman Ukeles', *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Michael Newman and Jon Bird, (London: Reaktion Books, 1999) 117.
[19] Diller, Elizabeth 'Bad Press', *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction,* ed. J. Rendell, B. Penner and I. Borden, (London: Routledge, 2000) 386.

Diller quotes scientific analysis and procedures on various housework published in 1950s and 1960s: counting number of movements necessary for cooking a particular meal in different preparation methods, measuring oxygen consumption per minute in different positions of body during certain domestic tasks and a detailed procedure for ironing a man's shirt:

> When worn, the residue of the orthogonal logic of efficiency is registered on the surface of the body. The parallel creases and crisp, square corners of a clean, pressed shirt have become sought after emblems of refinement. The by-product of efficiency has become a new object of its desire.
> But what if the task of ironing were to free itself from the aesthetics of efficiency altogether? Perhaps the effects of ironing could more aptly represent the postindustrial body by trading the image of the *functional* for that of the *dysfunctional.* (Diller, 2000, 389)

Diller goes on to give the instructions for a dissident ironing and provides the images of practiced 'bad press'. The strategic model of scientific management is countered with tactics produced out of its ordering system and totalising discourse. This is reminiscent of what de Certeau defines as *la perruque* – the worker's own work disguised as the work of his employer:

> The worker actually diverts time from the factory for work that is …not directed toward profit…Far from being a regression toward a mode of production organized around artisans or individuals, *la perruque* reintroduces "popular" techniques of other times and other places into the industrial space (that is, into the present order). (de Certeau, 1984, 25-6)

Acts of displacement, which relate to the logic of tactics, in Diller's dissident ironing and *la perruque*, also seems to be at work in Ukeles maintenance works. She takes the cleaning job out of its allocated spaces and time, out of the private in these terms, and exposes it to the public in the systematic spaces of art institution. Ukeles renders the museum's normal procedures and purpose dysfunctional: 'Can you imagine trying to look at art in a space where these performances were taking place?'[20]

Acconci and Ukeles, while operating within strategic domains, act tactically since their works considered here are temporary interventions and they operate in the realm of the

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[20] Molesworth, Helen 'Work Stoppages: Mierle Laderman Ukeles' Theory of Labor Value', *Documents,* (no.10, Fall 1997) 19.

other in a mode of insinuation. Acconci enacts a performance where he links up a 'home-made video' with the TV as 'home-companion'. Using a certain televisual mode of address, he manipulates the distance of the viewer from the work and plays with senses of intimacy. The viewer is kept at a state of uncertainty about his/her relation and position with respect to the work. Ukeles's activity displaces the 'work' which is socially considered as unrepresentable to the space of artistic representation. Her work counts on the existence of the viewing public in the museum in order to achieve its point in disturbing the categories of public and private. The works of these two artists are completed only in their relatedness to the other.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to investigate the instances where art and domestic are thought to communicate in a destabilizing mode. These instances stand as events, which happen in excess of the referential frame within which they might be understood/defined, disrupting or displacing that frame.

In works of two existentialist philosophers, Heidegger and Levinas, to exist means to dwell and the condition of 'dwelling' and hence ultimately of 'being' is a clearly bounded domain. In Heidegger's ontological approach, the boundary is that from which something unfolds in its essence and dwelling entails through building as constructing and nurturing, a sense of belonging. For Levinas dwelling as concretisation of separation of the self, is that which opens up to the other. Only the self that recollects separated in the economic and self-sustaining basis of the home, can recognise the irreducible alterity of the other. For Levinas the dwelling is the locus of an ethical relationship to the other. The separatedness of the dwelling is that which makes intersubjectivity possible by interrupting the totality.

The public/private division capitalizes on the domestic realm. Although the borders of this division cannot be drawn defintively and the terms making up the sides of the division are always defined in relation to one another, this social categorization is frequently employed to delegitimate some interests and positions and to valorize others. It is a historical division that aims to organize and regulate experience and labour. Domestication is taken as an unproblematically negative term, where the domestic is conceived as the sphere that universally signifies those values which are either degraded or praised. It is straightforwardly taken as the realm of conformity and stability. This representation often functions to construct and maintain the identity of the privileged term public, in the binary opposition.

However, the domestic sphere figures importantly in Habermas's account of production of public sphere. The development of critical publicness depended on the emergence of institutions such as the salons, table societies and of circulating print media.

Each of these channels was formed out of the merged characteristics of bourgeois and aristocratic intimate spheres. The private sphere of aristocracy, and its 'representative publicity', its promotion of intellectual production and debate in the early Salons in residences met with the particular bourgeois subjectivity with two complementary roles *bourgeois* and *homme.* These roles were based on the private ownership and an illusion of independency from the constraints of the market encouraged by the intimacy of the family. The idea of the autonomous cultural sphere (art and art critical) according to Habermas's historical account, evolved out of this institutional formations and idea of an emancipated subjectivity. Kant's aesthetic theory was also based on such a presupposition of liberated productivity, that art as the ultimate human production is the most valuable for having neither use nor exchange value.

Modernism defined itself against an other and in the case of the avant-gardes this was the domestic sphere. Probably, this other first emerged when it was exiled from the terrain it helped to form. Associated with the dominant bourgeois values, home is thought to stand as a figure of normalizing power against which the avant-garde has to fight, and the position of modernism came to be historically described and dominated by such a referential frame. However, there are instances where senses of the domestic are suggested which are not characterized by outright antagonism, but in ways that destabilize aesthetic and social categorizations. Surrealism with its interest in domestic interiors and objects in its search for the subversive, and Art Nouveau with its displacement of the site of the expressive, and rendering of the distinction between art and crafts illegible were two such events.

The rest of the thesis offered three groups of study which are defined according to the disposition of the relationships of art and domestic suggested by the works. This categorization is mainly to propose ways to trace this relationship among the heterogeneity of genres and interests of post-1960s art productions. The domestic, not thought of as a single secure meaning, but as that which has spatial, existential, and economic significances may be revealed in their relationship to art.

The section on the relationships which might be considered as topical interests, focused on the works of Bourgeois, Kabakov and Tenger. The works of these artists enact 'little narratives' in Lyotard's terms, those which resist incorporation into totalizing stories, histories and cultural projects. They contest the desire for putting an end to narration and an

ambition for revealing the 'meaning' of narratives, by the very means they employ for displacing the viewer's position as the distant subject of perception, and encouraging him or her to become parts of the work. These works undermine the unity and purity of aesthetic experience and work upon the parting of senses of vision and touch. They displace the personal and the psychic by the political and defamiliarise home, revealing the instances of domestic as occupied but uninhabitable.

The second group of works was brought together as they play upon the disappearance and appearance of objects as works of art when located, experienced or used in domestic spaces. Inverting Duchamp's strategy of de-contextualising objects of common use and framing as works of art, these works/projects investigate the ways in which designed, handcrafted or mass-produced objects are experienced and given meaning in these spaces. They examine the modes of production and reception which encourage the dissolution of signature, and what others prevent it happening as such.

The two works considered in the final chapter, involve performances which employ everyday acts and practices to intervene in the realm of the other. Acconci's work appropriates a certain televisual discourse and plays with the senses of intimacy. Ukeles' work presents the unrepresentable of maintenance labour in the museum space. They both tactically act in the domains that are strategically organised and disturb the public/private categorisation of spaces and labour.

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APPENDIX

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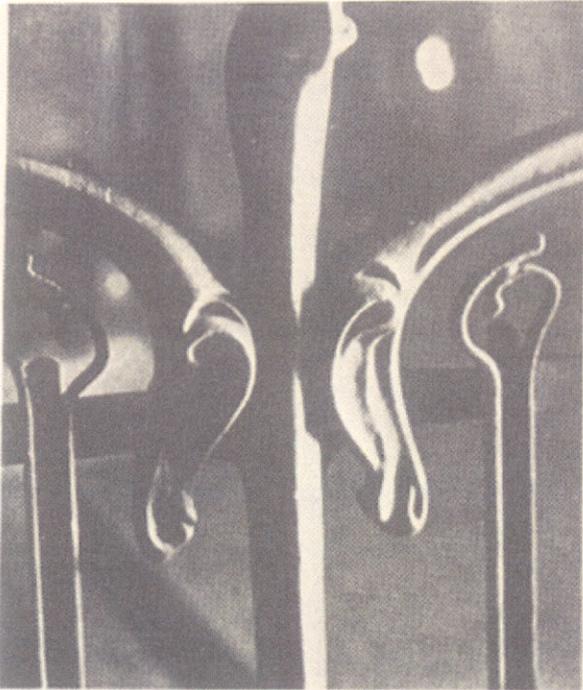
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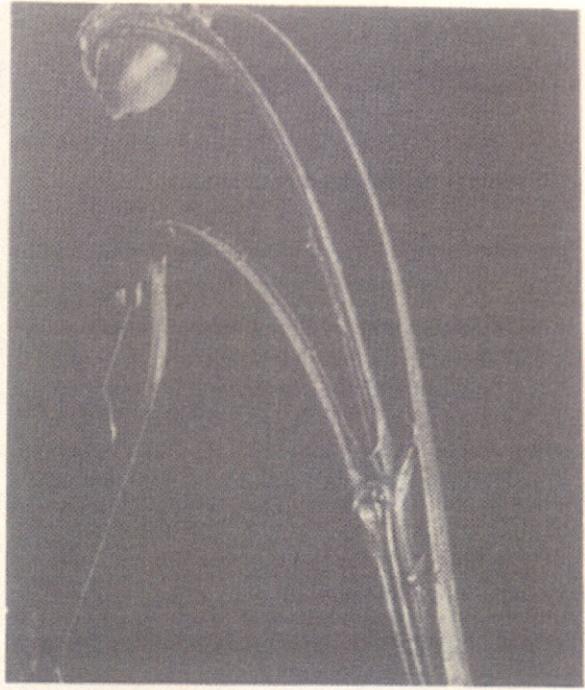
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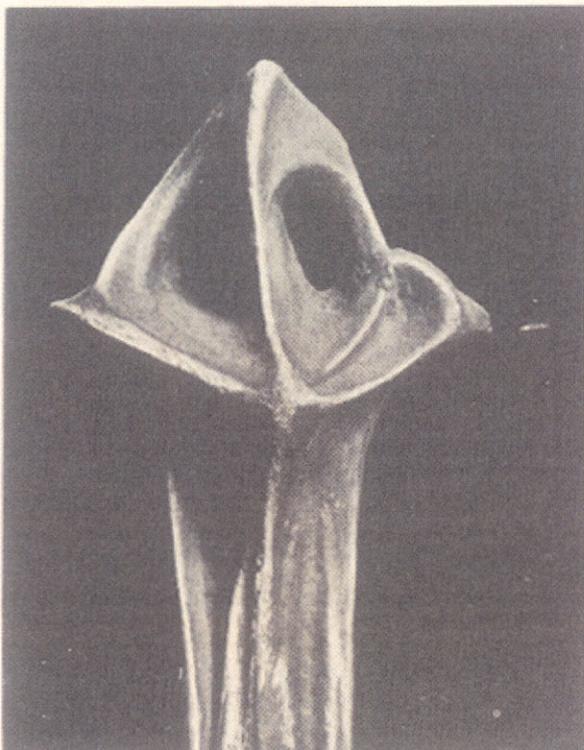
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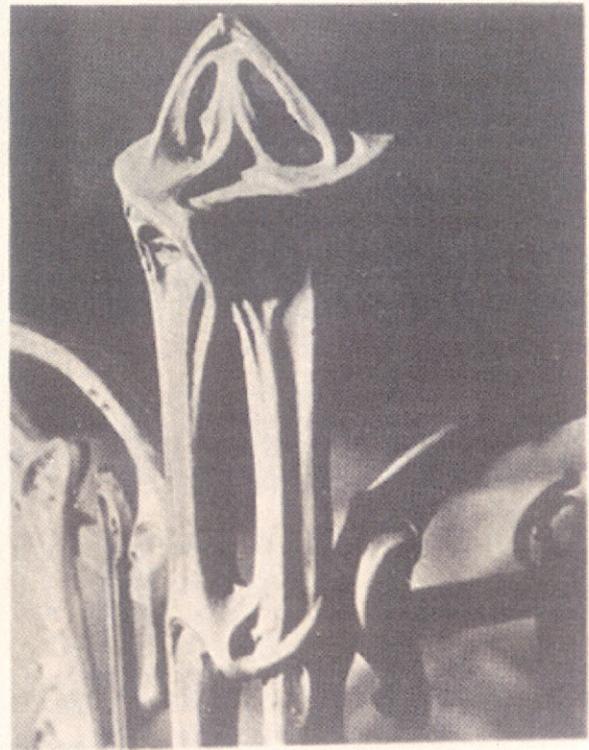
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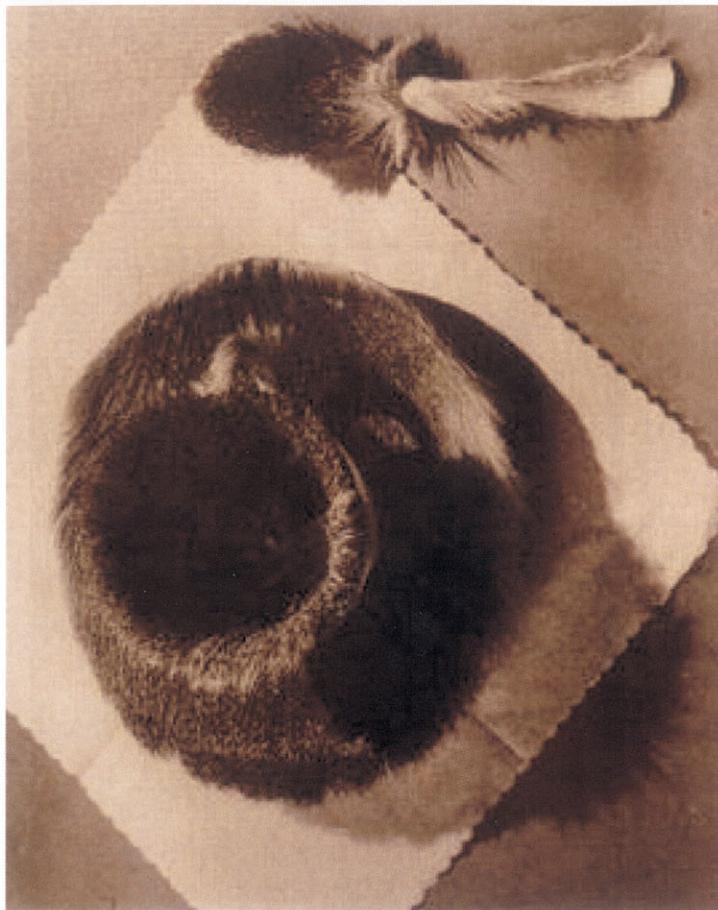
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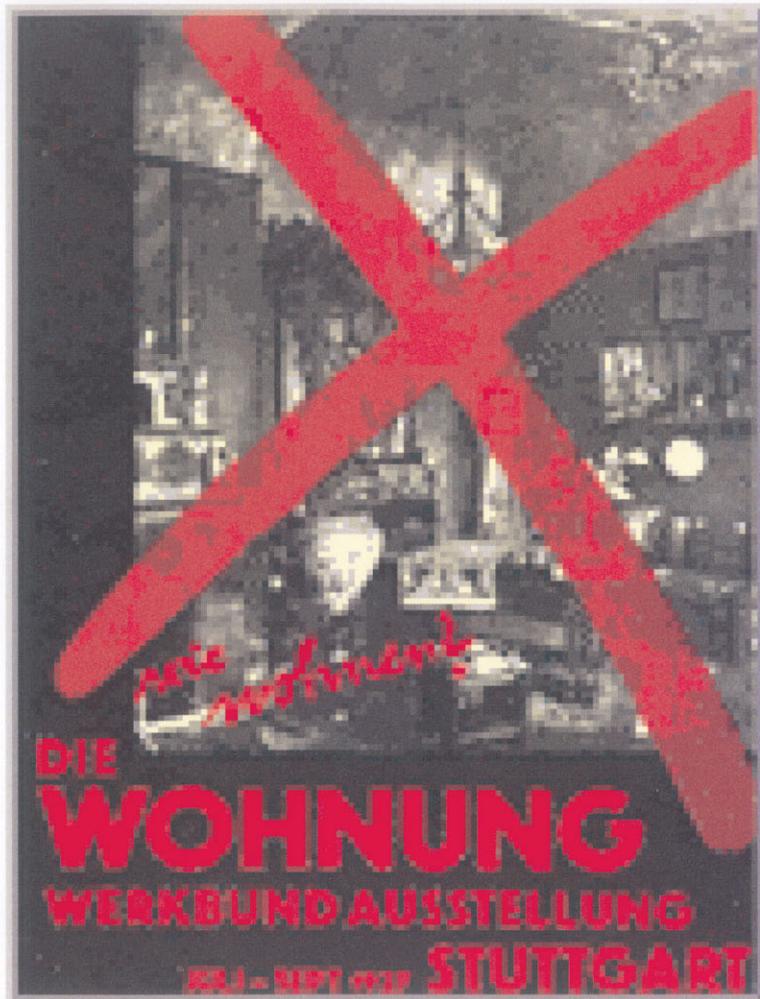
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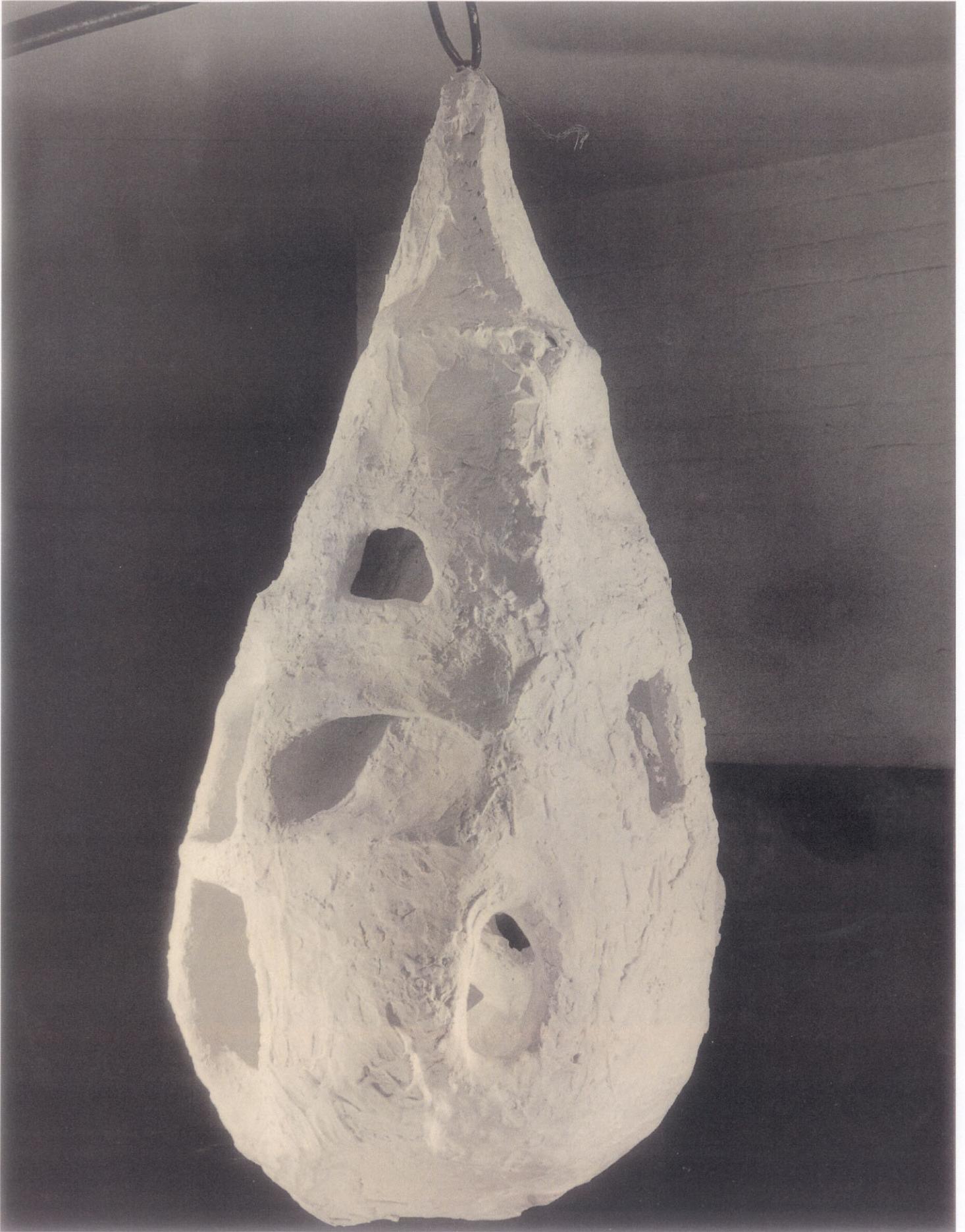
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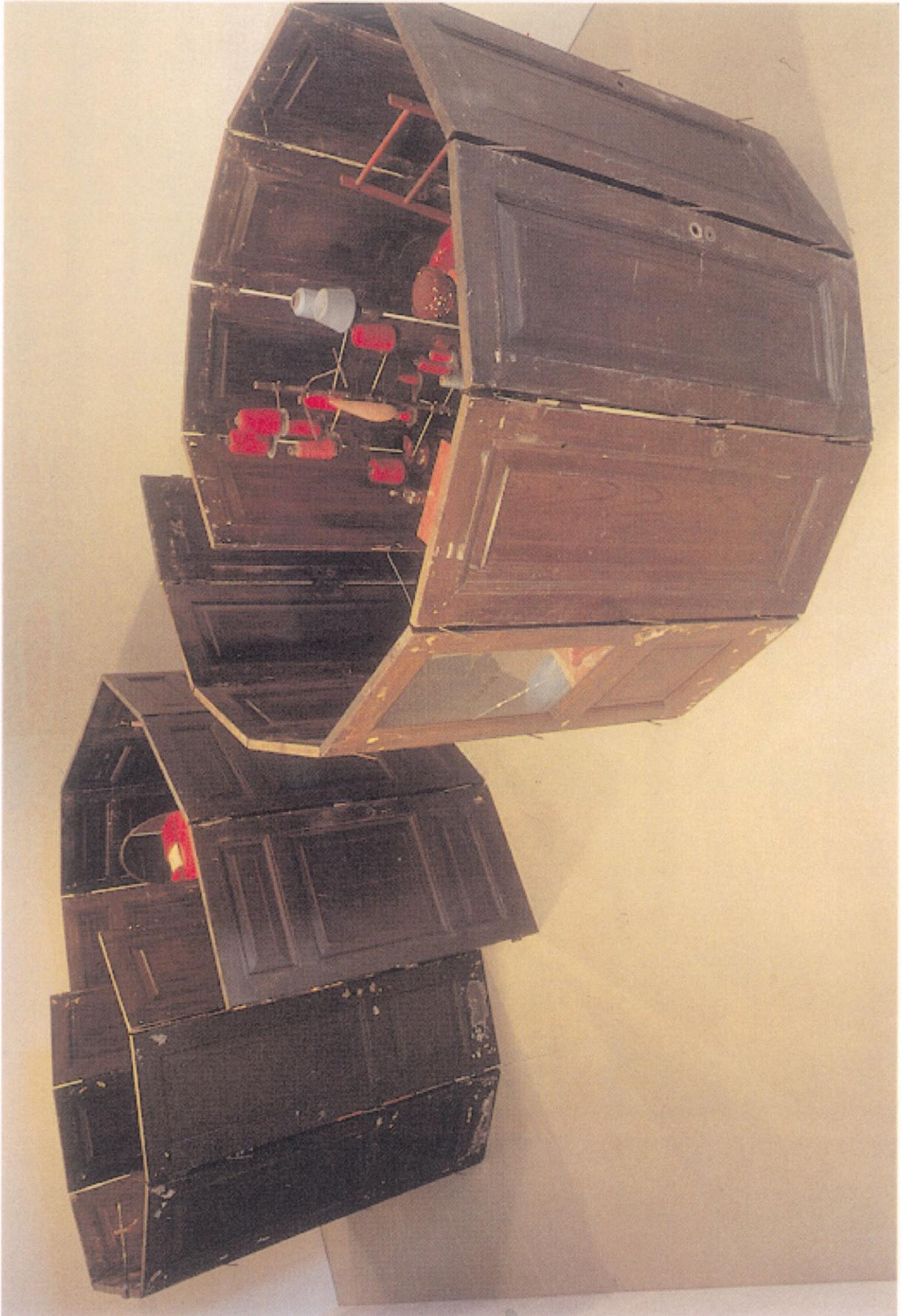
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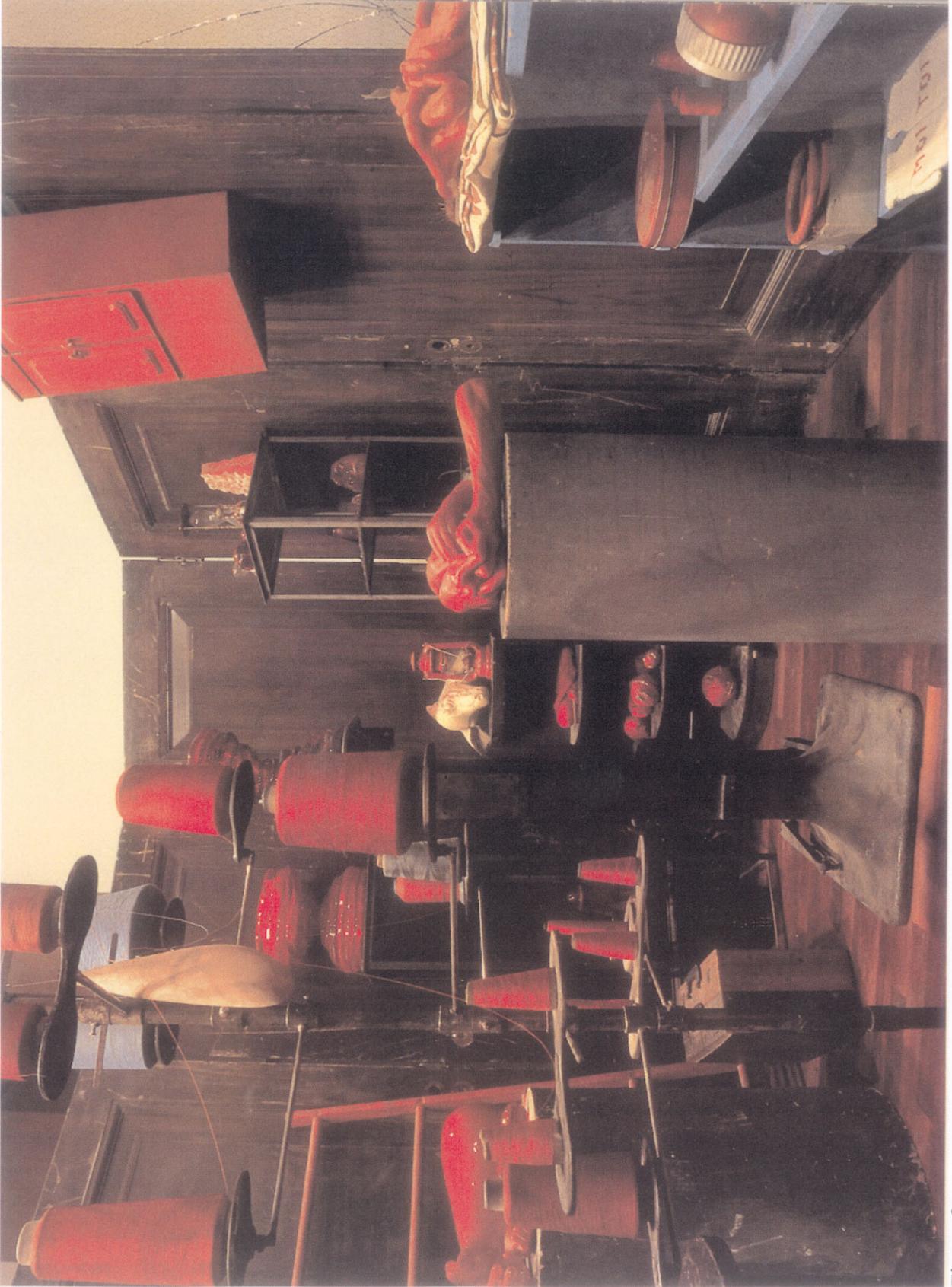
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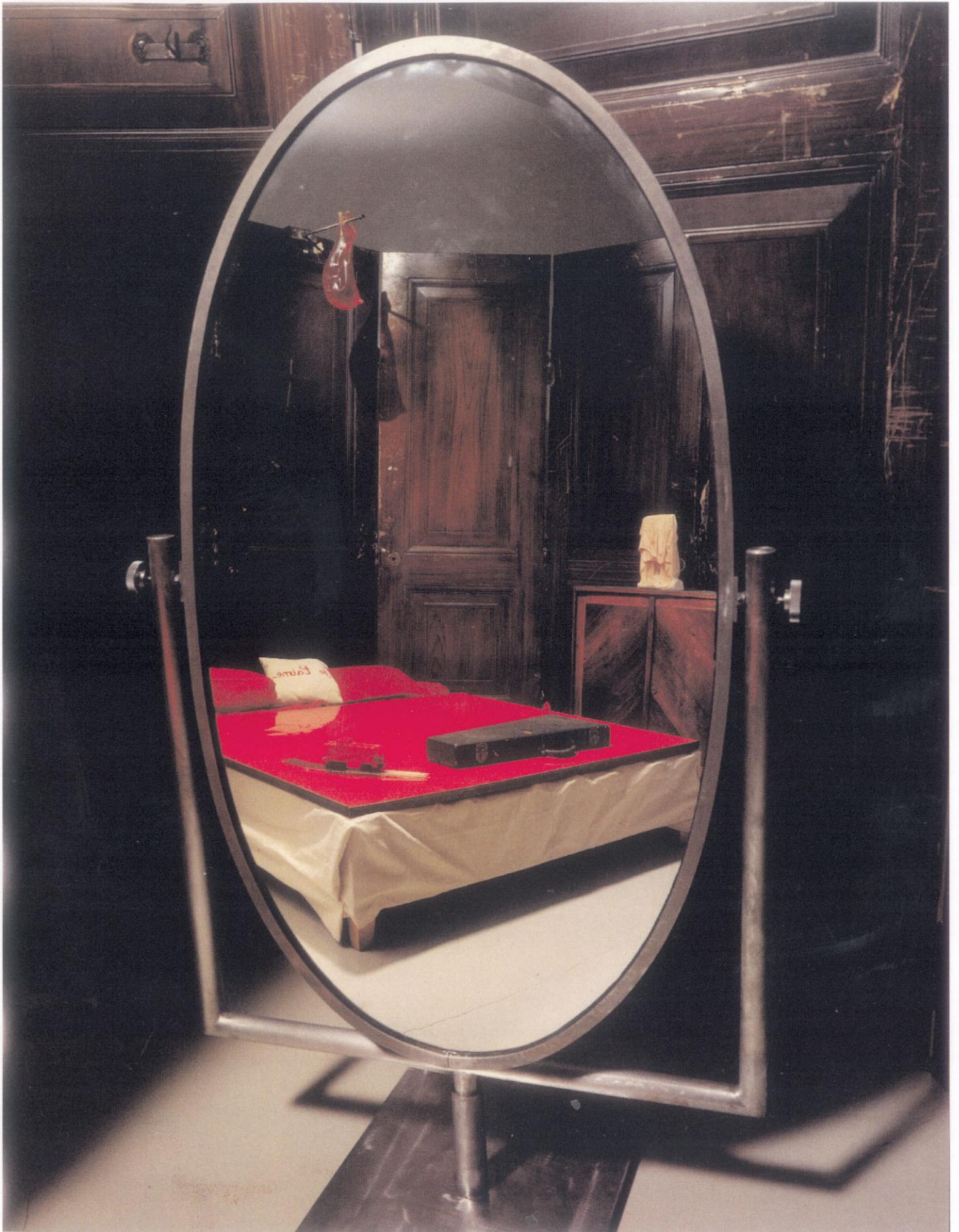
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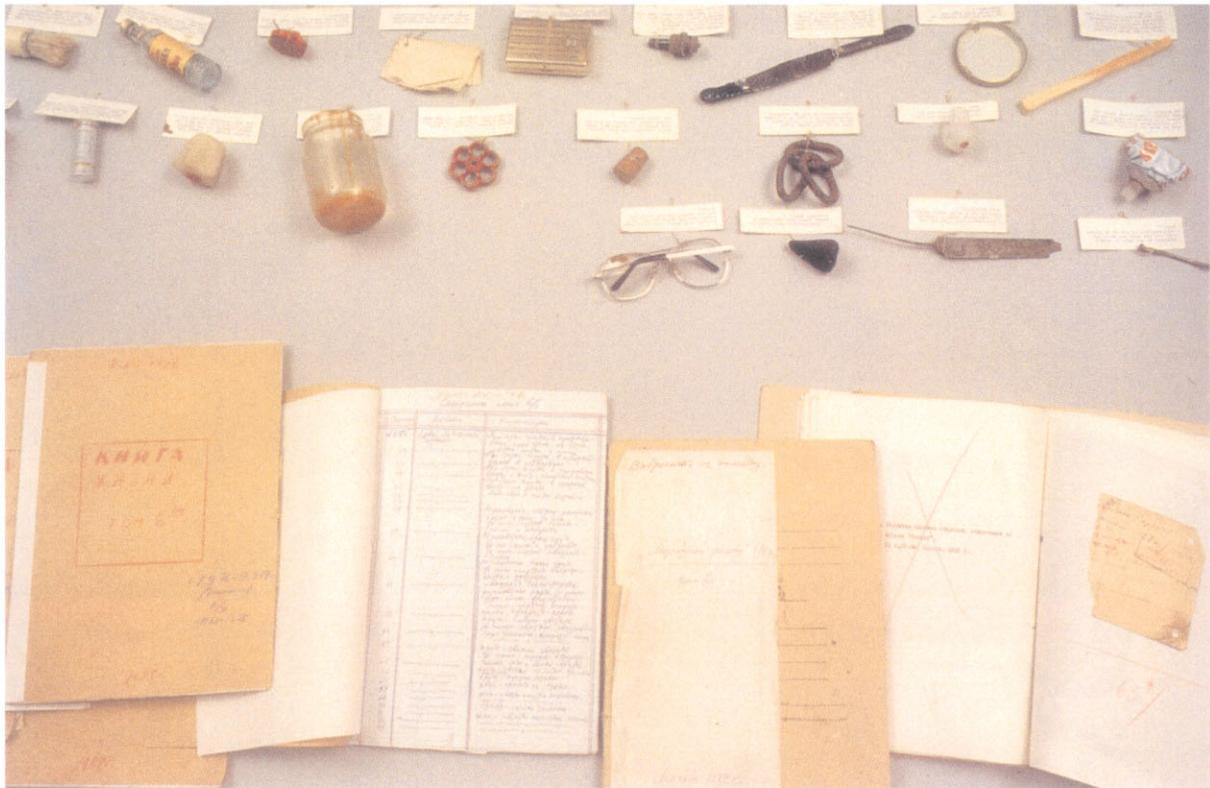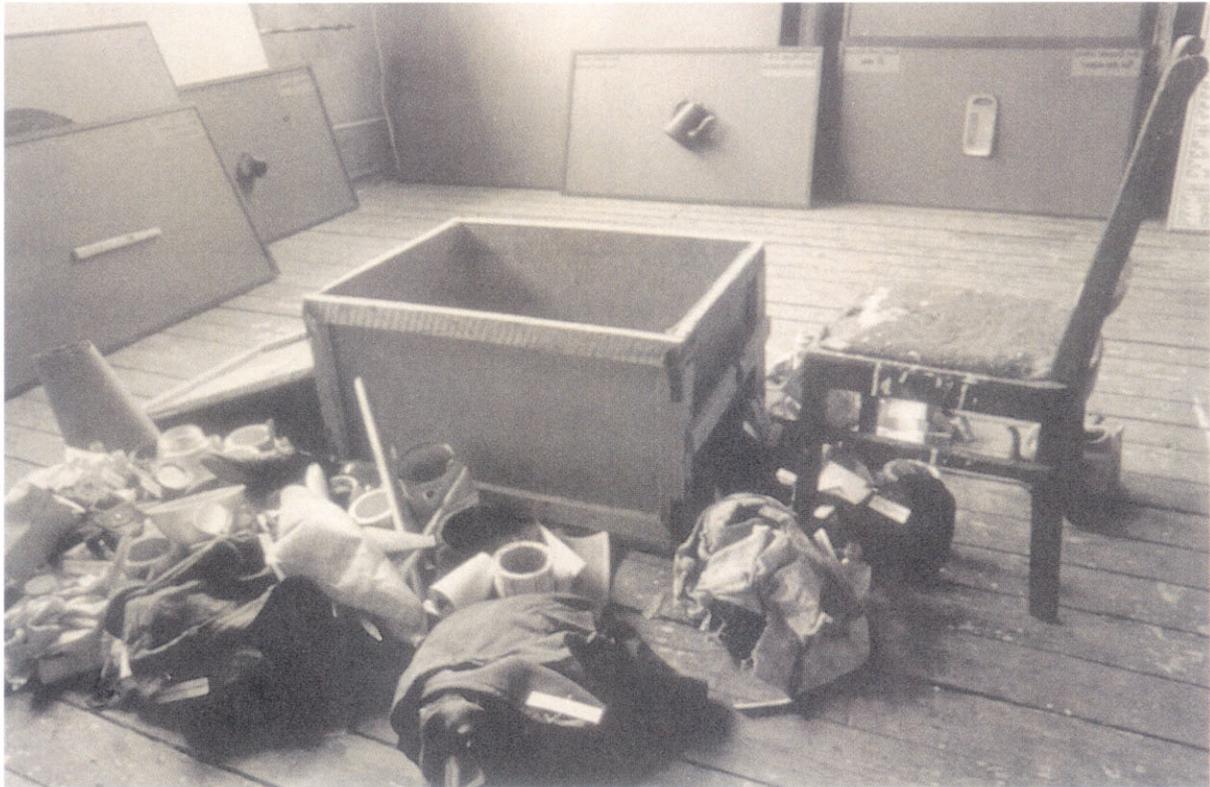
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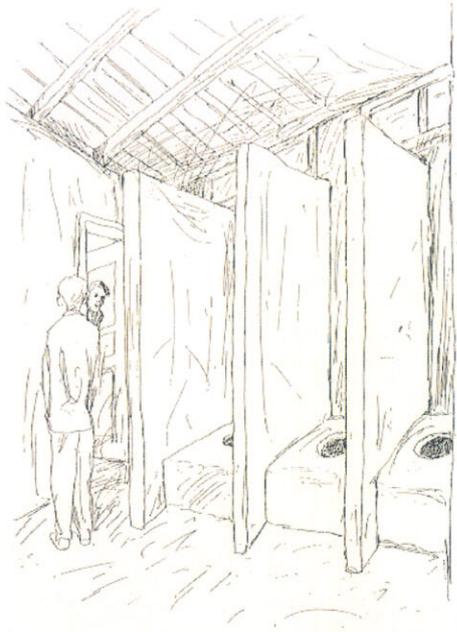
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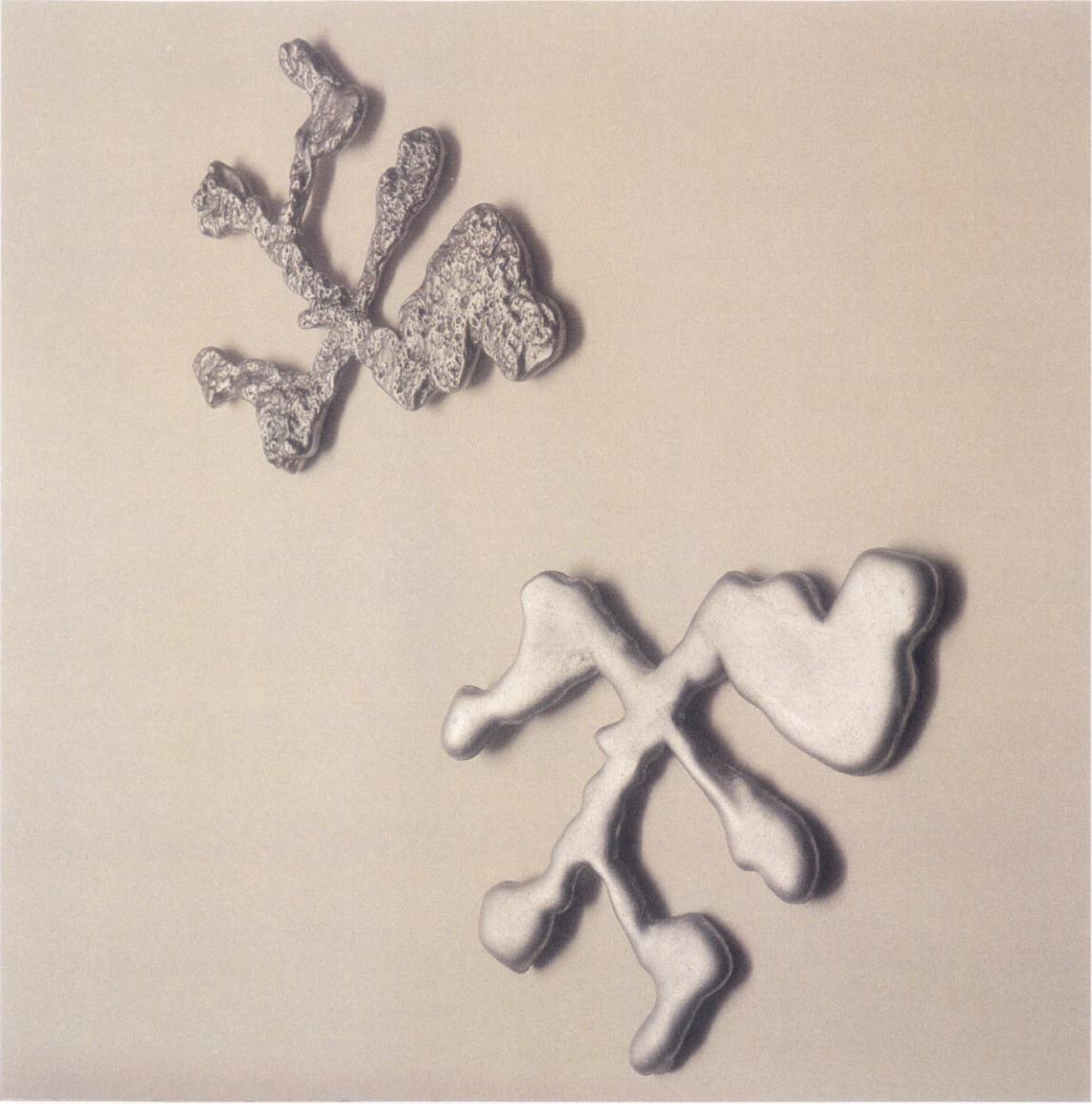
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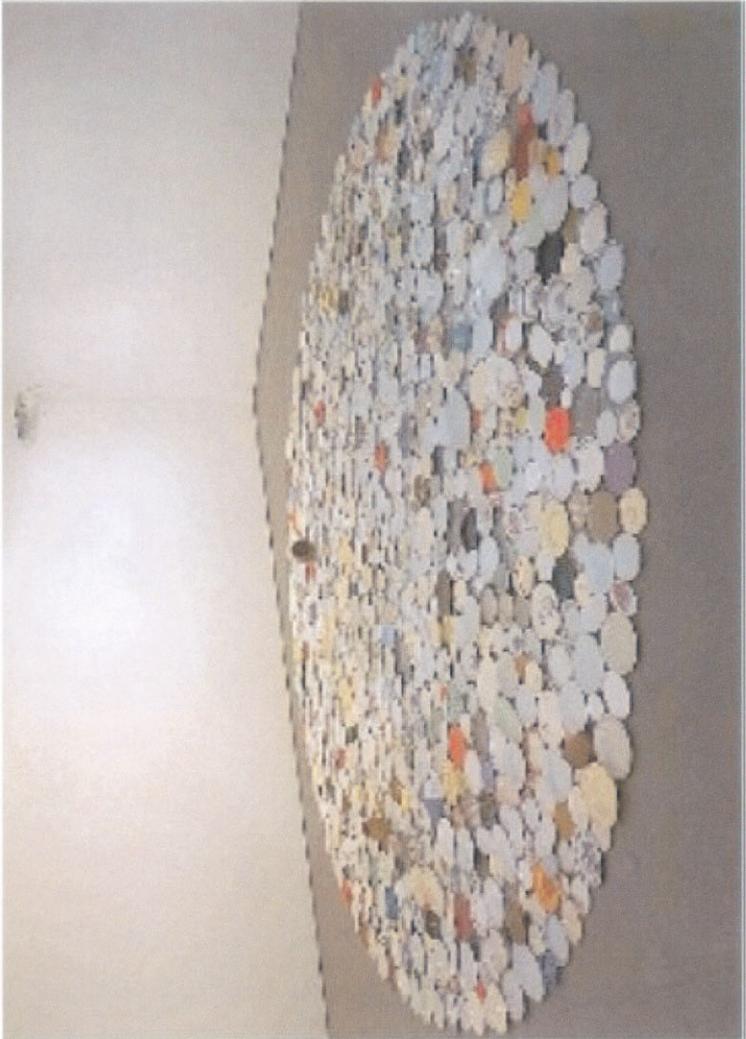
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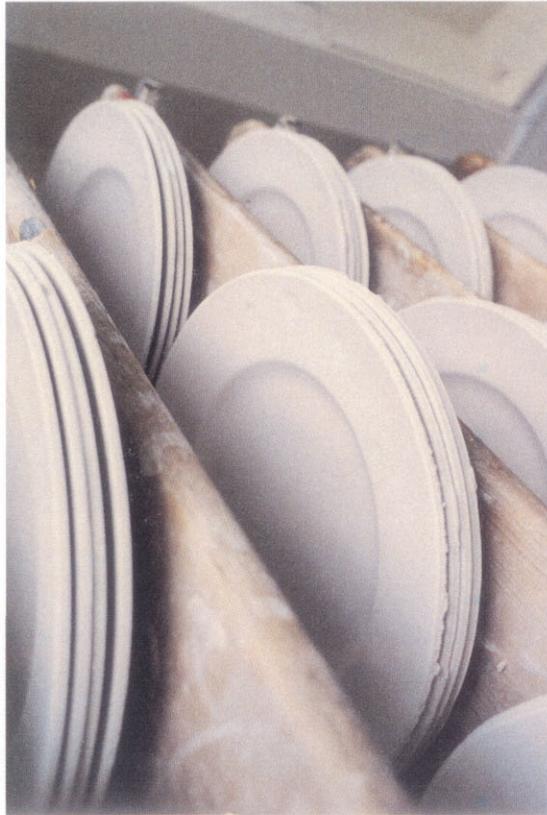
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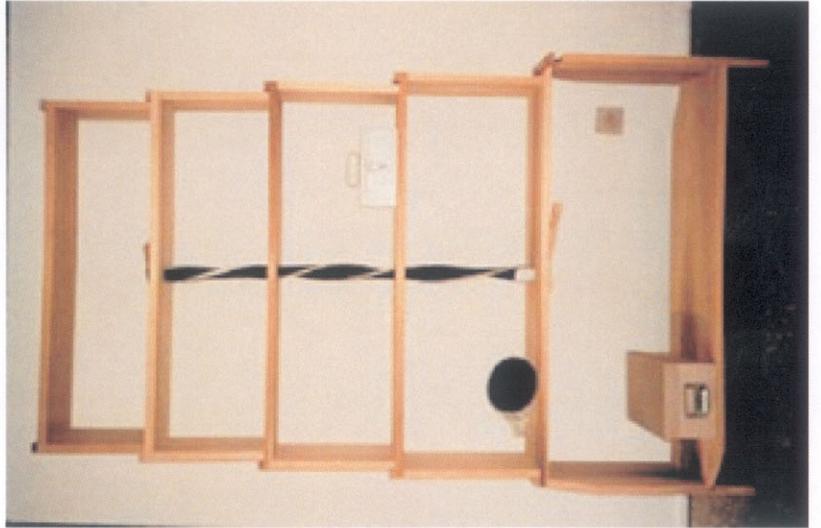
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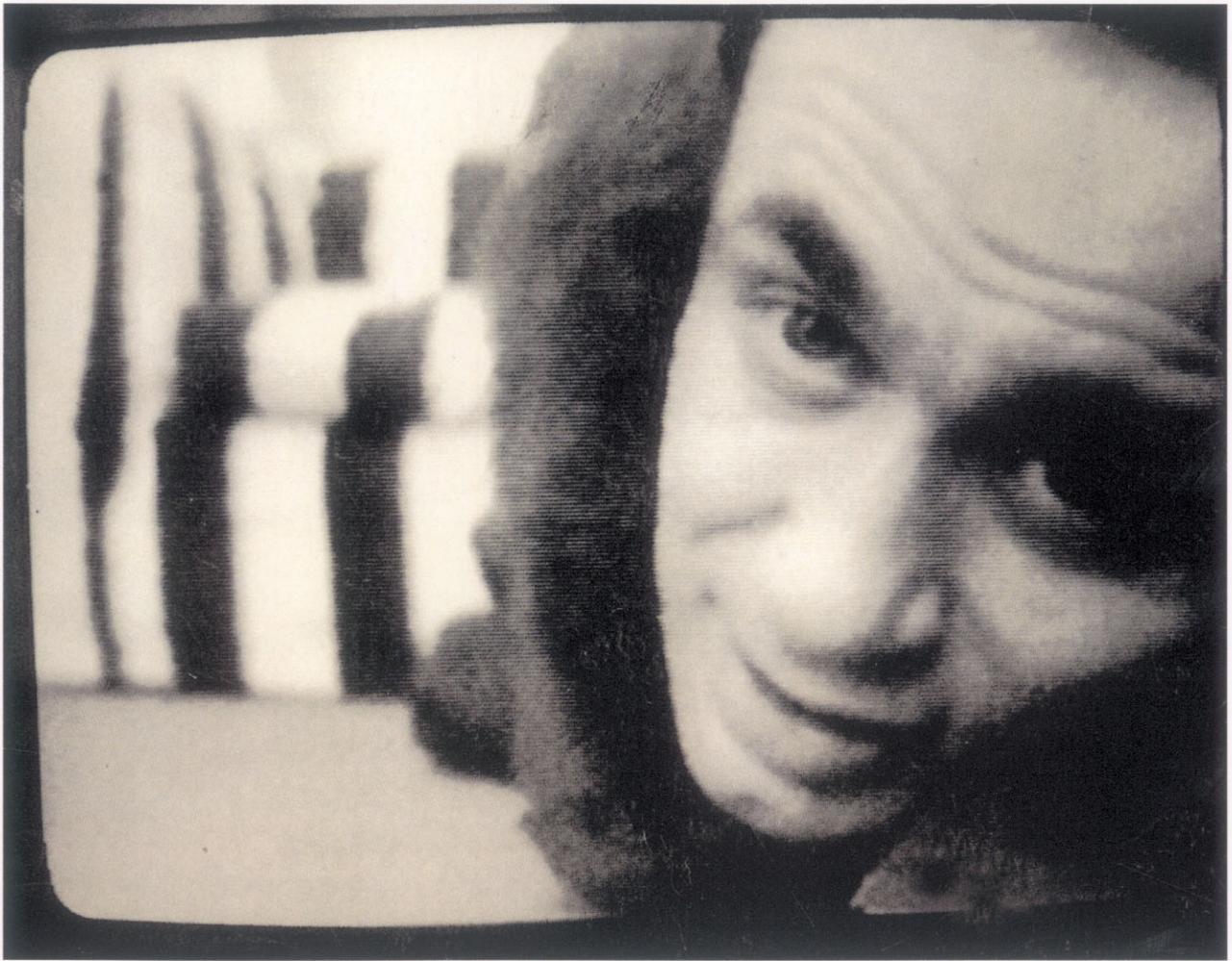
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