

Press release:

Walking in the City

Curated by:

Melissa Brookhart Beyer and Jill Dawsey

January 4 - February 1, 2003

Public opening reception:

Saturday, January 4, 5-7 pm



Valie Export

Yayoi Kusama

Adrian Piper

David Wojnarowicz

Simon Leung

Kim Sooja

Valerie Tevere

Alex Villar

In the late 1970s, cultural theorist Michel de Certeau wrote the essay, "Walking in the City," which begins with the author standing at the top of the World Trade Center looking out over Manhattan. From this vantage point, the city is offered up as a whole, graspable image, in contrast with the messy, meandering city that one moves through down below. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, artists have engaged these contrasting views of the city, negotiating the simultaneously coherent and chaotic urban terrain via the immediate and kinetic media of performance, photography, and video.

In the contemporary moment, there has been a resurgence of interest in understanding human and artistic agency within the mediated, contradictory spaces of the city. The exhibition *Walking in the City* examines the work of eight contemporary artists. Simon Leung, Kim Sooja, Valerie Tevere and Alex Villar highlight their engagement with strategies developed by artists throughout the past forty years, including Valie Export, Yayoi Kusama, Adrian Piper and David Wojnarowicz. The latter group of artists explore their concerns with resisting and negotiating regulated space in order to position themselves within a public, urban environment.



The works in the exhibition constitute acts of spatial appropriation. Not all of the artists engage in literal walking; some squat, some stand still, one awkwardly, attempts to scale buildings. *Walking in the City* is thus an ordinary but transformative way of using space, for which we might substitute any number of other spatial practices.



The curators of the exhibition are both PhD candidates in Art History at Stanford University, California. Jill Dawsey, a critical studies fellow in the Whitney Independent Study program in 2000-2001, currently resides in San Francisco and is working on her dissertation concerning "street works" by women artists of the late 1960s and 70s. Melissa Brookhart Beyer is finishing her dissertation on audience dynamics in contemporary performance. She recently curated "Space Vehicles" in Houston and lives in New York City.

A **curators' talk** will take place in the gallery on **Wednesday, January 8, 2003 at 6:30 pm.**

Walking in the City was selected from the 2002 Unsolicited Proposal Program at apexart. To find out more information about this program, please see the "unsolicited proposal" option on the apexart website.

This exhibition is supported in part by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

A color brochure containing an essay by the curators will be available free of charge. Please contact apexart for further information. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11-6.

Images: (top) Valie Export, *Körperkonfigurationen*, 1972-74, photograph; (middle) Yayoi Kusama, *Walking Piece*, New York, 1996, photograph; (bottom) Alex Villar, *Upward Mobility*, 2002, video

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