

Here and Now

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Catalogue:

Conversations in Alice Ville

Individual exhibition by Alicia Herrero

Contemporary Art Museum – Misiones University

Posadas (Argentina), 2006

Alicia Herrero, in recent years, has been developing works with two recurring focal points: the everyday and the conversational. These are constantly taking on successive formulations, whilst at the same time deepening in their conceptual dimension. The production of Herrero can be located in that which Hal Foster terms the 'ethnographic shift' in contemporary art. Here, the artist assumes the role of investigator and the art that of an intensive field study. The proposal is to map and interpret a terrain - the society and culture in which the artist finds himself immersed - as if it were a terra incognita. A deconstructive attitude is adopted, permitting the peeling away of the layers naturally accumulated through the dynamics of social interchange.

In this case it concerns, amongst other things, the system of art itself: the networks of affinity between artists; the relations – more and more promiscuous and direct - between culture and the market, and the trends in consumption that derive from these; the means by which a cultural institution is organized in time and space, and the place it occupies in society.

Alice Ville is not an 'interior world' of the artist; it is not a reintroduction of the idea of authorship through an imposed and projected special subjectivity that has to be accepted to justify the fragile autonomy of art. It concerns a work in progress whose materials arise from the context itself, a microcosm whose meaning is potential, deitic, and must be negotiated with those who participate in the experience: museum staff, viewing public and the like.

The interaction with the community is produced through the means of communication, employed by the artist not to transmit a 'message', but rather a hint. Through this, it is possible to modulate and modify the ways in which the museum public relate to the work and to a determined cultural program ('contemporary art'), proposing a visible

dialogue that dissolves the boundaries between producer and consumer; between reality and representation.

If current art practice presents itself - in many of its manifestations - as an exercise aimed at dismantling that which could remain of the 'aura' of artistic object, inevitably this returns to a recycling of its 'sanctity'. This 'sanctity' is questioned thanks to the continuous efforts of the industry of culture, where there is no regard for the initial critical intentions at the time of production.

It is the basic economy of this reconstitution which is evidenced and once again put into question by the work of Herrero. Healthy ambiguities are promoted in elevating to the category of museum object components of everyday life, elements of use and meaning as varied as those who employ them. Or in redefining the playful attitude of the institutional spaces, in which the *mise en scène* of the artist makes resonant the political implications of considering practice as discourse and discourse as practice.