

## Icarus Today: The Ephemeral Eye

*Christine Buci-Glucksmann*

World sewn together by absence  
 Millions of stitched taboos  
 Cancerous past  
 Barrage of genuflectors and  
 Of the leashed

-Henri Michaux

**I**talo Calvino's *Six Memos for the Next Millenium* (1985), which is in many ways prophetic, conceives of lightness with respect to the new values of the second millennium. Between Perseus, Lucretius, Dante, and the *Thousand and One Nights*, lightness may look like optical images, influxes and networks, and all those messages that Cavalcanti called *spiriti*, spirits.<sup>1</sup> For the last ten years *spiriti* — optical images, numeric images, synthetic images and other networks — have been generalized to such an extent that new cartographies of the world now pass above territories, across the information highways of cyberspace, in a becoming common to globalization and virtualization. Have we not all become Icarian in the enchanted world of virtual map-worlds from which we cannot fall?

In fact, this encounter between the Icarian and the cartographic has already had an artistic antecedent in the search for a virtual aesthetic which would liberate the work from its terrestrial coordinates in the interest of that “vertical littoral” or “vertical shore” about which Paul Virilio writes in his book *L'Insécurité du territoire*. Calder's mobiles, Takis' telemagnetic sculptures, Flavin's neon icons, or the light architecture of Turrell — all made the world levitate through a subtraction of weight which passed for immateriality. But, in fact, it was more a matter of that “lightness of Being” which refers to the aerial being of an entirely aesthetic virtuality. Lightness: suspense; that which floats; that which everywhere reaches visible imperceptibility and carries you to other sensibilities more invisible, more tactile, more musical. Lightness is a permanent aesthetic and cosmological paradigm of the philosophies of immanence, from Lucretius to Nietzsche. Atoms float and fluctuate in the void, between trouble, turbulence and whirlwinds. They drift, wane, like a chaos of clouds. There is but flux, envelopes, black holes and the simulacra that are freed from bodies in order to give birth to a sentient,

whirling and undulating sameness. In brief, it collapses, it re-orders itself, and the *tremetia flutant* is the law of all the infinite worlds. Everywhere the “genius of touch” triumphs over vision.<sup>2</sup>

Void, suspense, infinite worlds: that Lucretian “trinity” has not ceased to traverse the artistic works of the twentieth century. Also, one might distinguish two modalities of the aerial and the light: a transcendence and elevation that directs its celestial activity to the heights as a “surreal ethereality; and an Icarian aeriality that re-examines and accepts a world without height or base, a world cosmically liberated from weight to become the object of artistic experimentation and conceptualization. For it is indeed a matter of “bursting the optic centre” as El Lissitzky sought, and of leaving the horizon for an infinite space, potentially of four, or “n” dimensions. From Malevitch to Takis, Yves Klein or Fontana, an entire *aesthetic of immanence* is constructed, at the price of the most esoteric speculations and most nihilistic criticisms of the values of art, in the exploration of that “aerial materialism” of which Bachelard spoke. In his 1919 text, *Suprematism*, Malevitch, proclaiming that “man’s path lies across space,” wrote: “I have ripped through the blue lampshade of the constraints of colour. I have come out into the white. Follow me, comrade aviators! Swim into the abyss. I have set up the semaphores of suprematism.”<sup>3</sup> The point of view of the aviator, common to Malevitch and Duchamp, defines a perspective that will destroy the “circle of the horizon” to approach a null point, a “zero of forms.” This is the condition for which is realized the energy that discovers (or uncovers) form, that of material. From the “Declaration on the Uncoloured” to the “White Manifesto,” Malevitch continually refused the “blue doubling of the sky” for “its pocket” and a “sailing in a blank and free abyss.” If whiteness is emblematic, as it is for Rauschenberg and Ryman, it is because it “represents the infinite,” a cosmic immateriality which lets the eye plunge its gaze into the limitless. The “White Manifesto” is very explicit about this. The disappearance of the world of things proper to “non-objectivity” is accompanied by a texture through which “the course, pure and light, will repose in an infinity of phenomena endowed with new realities.”<sup>4</sup> The invention of abstraction and of an art of spatial configurations which slide from painting to architecture and which is impassioned by aerial photographs, institutes an aesthetic of immanence which exorcises aesthetics in its traditional sense. For it concerns a navigator-philosopher, a ferrier who, like Spinoza, penetrates the infinite and assigns to its energy a heuristic role of discovering forms and their plasticity. The black square is at once the “sign of economy” and the “fifth dimension” of art, just as white symbolizes the “pure action of the infinite.” For, in science as in art, the idea of the infinite negates all frontiers “because the object of knowledge is infinite and beyond number, and the infinite and the innumerable are equal to zero.”<sup>5</sup>

This symbol of “zero,” as it appears since 1915, opens on to the limitlessness of a new cosmology and to the “nakedness of deserts” (1916 letter to Alexander Benois), and to the “zero of forms.” The white is “that opacity proper to pure transparency,” of which Goethe speaks, and the white-on-white of the paintings of 1918 calls forth an opacity that reveals the transparency of forms and makes them float. In this the white is a projective space which permits the forms to bring themselves, suspended, to the fore. So Malevitch always opposes the substantial luminosity proper to the “white” to another luminosity derived from Plato. In a fundamental philosophical text, *Light and Colour*, Malevitch carries out a veritable reversal of Platonism and its solar emblems. This was already sketched out in the decorations for the 1915 opera *The Victory Over the Sun*. To the entire tradition conceiving the aerial as a transcendent flight to a height which privileges light and the sun as the paradigm of Being or as the revelation of all things in a *Fiat Lux*, Malevitch opposes the suprematist revolution and a pictorial thinking “in which the rays of light have lost their power to illuminate.”<sup>6</sup> The Malevitchian primacy of colour, long reputed to be charming and sophisticated, even feminine, translates itself in the apparition of a “pure surface,” a material construction whose black can be alive, whose white can be sombre and opaque. If there is any epiphany, it is in the Greek sense of *epiphania*, of surface. The forms constitutive of the world, the “suprema,” are not ideas, but forces, “signs of the work of energy,” immanent to the surfaces or the four dimensions in an open space where planets and architectonics fly. From projects with “houses that fly or are about to fly,” to the realization of architectural maquettes which mark the abandonment of the plane for an asymmetrical equilibrium of volume, taken up in the double rupture of modernity and the Revolution, Malevitch dreams “of a wall all the way around a cubed space” and elaborates “future planets for the inhabitants of earth” (1924). In this sense the “white” is none other than the uncoloured world of infinite spatial expansion. And if the painting is an “icon” — as an entire interpretative tradition would have it, playing the icon against the image — it must be added that this remains an icon of the infinite world and not of the divine.

For “every form is a world” and reciprocally, every world is a form. A world torn from that chaos which confronted Malevitch at the moment of his renunciation of objects and the invention of the black square: the impossibility of eating and sleeping; seven nights of insomnia; long crossings to an empty, vertiginous point where nothing is liberated. Cezanne before the motif: “there is nothing but that dawn of our selves above the nothingness,” “an iridescent chaos.” And Klee, facing the grey point as the original chaos, annihilating being [*néant étant*], the critical point between death and becoming. And always and everywhere the same obsession, the flight and the taking flight of

forms. Nevertheless, one can capture the sun. *The Victory Over the Sun* would be the victory of Icarus over his rival, thanks to the black that eclipses everything and precipitates an airplane on the stage of L'Opera.

In 1946, about thirty years after Malevitch, Lucio Fontana published in Buenos Aires his *Manifesto blanco*, quickly followed by the *Manifeste spatialiste* of Milan (1948).<sup>7</sup> A very Malevitchian impulse makes a return, inventing an aerial art: "We will open up the skies: artificial forms; rainbows of wonder; luminous sky-writing."<sup>8</sup> With the spatial concepts of the *buchi* and *tagli* in 1952, where crevices and clefts lacerate and scar the canvasses, that cosmic and aerial art will undergo the exorcism of matter in the interest of a surface-support that extends space to infinity by rarefying it. The searching out of the space of the inside moves by way of the outside, and even through an inside/outside which is dynamic and transitory for the overarching gaze: "We have pierced our envelope, our physical crust, and we contemplated ourselves from above, photographing the earth from the flying missiles."<sup>9</sup> Whether it be the luminous forms in space in the *Structures in Neon* (10th Milan Triennale, 1951) or the ovals and the circles of the lacerated "heavens," all suggest a universe as it is so well described by Saverio Sarduy: "If Fontana's canvasses full of spiralling holes and his perforated metal evoke for me the designs of galaxies, it is because the first support of these objects offered up to tension and destruction is the image of the universe."<sup>10</sup> Here is the mythic image of a cosmos in which laceration and destruction recover the energy that produces movement in an Indian *raga*, integrating space and time in a way that is baroque and/or minimal. In the spatial nudity of silence, the wounds inflicted on the canvasses by the blade of a razor allow one to reach a topological space of interiority-exteriority, of surface-support, of matrix-gaze.

In order to attain the infinite and unlimited of a painting or an installation of light, it is perhaps necessary to approach the emptiness of space and not its image or figure. That emptiness is immanent to the plane, fissuring the surface with lacerations and holes, and the void envelopes, from the earliest sculptures like *Victory of the Air* (1934), to the great arabesques of neon and multiple "spatial milieu" treated as plastic material. One could relate these two uses of the void: the void "in" and the void "which surrounds," forms of the void proper to Chinese aesthetics, where the void is dynamic, metaphysical, and aesthetic, "the functional place where all transformations occur," as François Cheng writes.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, there is the void around, the void of origin and root, that of the Tao, the "ultimate root of the world," an infinity of what is "without form" and "without trace." But this primordial ontological void gives birth to a cosmos and to an active "median void," similar to the valley between two mountains or the space between two trees. It is thanks to this median void that the "internal line of



things” (the li), which is at work in the materiality of the holes and lacerations, is able to construct itself. That which separates violently rejoins and engenders a breath, creates a mute rhythm, and brings forth “a nodal point woven of the virtual and the becoming.”<sup>12</sup> Painting thus evokes “the body of the great void,” but it is a void that is cosmic and is not deathlike, a void that thinks and contemplates, where art is taken up into all the resonance of the world.

A cartography of the universe in gestures and signs: this would be one of the possible roots of an aesthetic of immanence, where the virtual is not form but force, even spiritual force. A heterogenous and plural energy that invents this impulse to suspension is found equally in Takis or Yves Klein in their common “here is space” [*ci-gît l'espace*]. Thus, Takis' fascination with the earth's elementary forces and forces of attraction paradoxically leads to work with suspended planetary sculptures, “signals,” “electric flowers,” “telesculptures” of light and vibration and other “idols of the air” defying gravity. He whom Duchamp called “the gay labourer of magnetic fields and indicator of gentle railways” takes up again the Icarian impossibility of a planetary cartography of forces. As in the title of the demonstration in 1960 at Iris Clert, “*L'impossible un homme dans l'espace*” where Sinclair Bells levitates in the emptiness and recites one of his poems called “I am a sculpture.” That the impossible becomes possible, breaths a material and spiritual cosmic energy into all forms to the point that the deliberate a-aesthetic of the work returns to a planetary aesthetic. Objects float in front of the magnetic walls; the symbols and miniature blossoms are animated by a perpetual movement. *Vibrating Tableau* (1963), *Vibrating Telesculpture* (1972), *Spiral Galaxies*, are all suspended in a multi-sensory aesthetic in which it is necessary to “hear with the eyes” in order to attain a spiritual levitation inhabited by a machinic humour.

Icarian art opposes the vision dependant on heaviness and its constraints — horizons, orientations between the above and below, falling — with a “being in trajectory.” The Icarian fall to the bottom gives way to a fall into the heights in a liberated material fluidity where one would re-inhabit the earth on the basis of the infinity of the world. For, the *Spiral Galaxies* of Takis resemble the spiral form of the Andromeda galaxy, just as the different *Cosmogonies* of Klein aspire to a “landscape of the universe.” There again, from the celebrated 1958 exposition on the Void at Iris Clert, to the “Cosmogonies” with canvasses exposed to the elements, we find by way of cosmic monochromes the same cartographic process of exploring the void and zones of invisible sensibilities. Indeed, the double space of the void (in and around) actualizes that plural and multi-sensible topological space that Merleau-Ponty opposed to the Euclidean and representational space. One passes, then, from contours to environments, from geometrical forms to constellations and articulations proper to a world “outlined in a total lumi-

nosity that surrounds us.”<sup>13</sup> Different from classical representation, which opposed subject and object in a reflexive relation, the architectonic of the configurations has as its principle “the fold or hollow of Being” and its outside.<sup>14</sup> All of the terms of that “intra-ontology” — crack, fold, lacuna, dehiscence or separation — are forever only the thought of a non-Hegelian and non-reflective negation. This is an active and dynamic negative, where the visible is folded with the invisible, encompassing the encompassed, conforming to that “vertical Being” in the immanence that leads to the aesthetic world in that which is perceived. “It is the negative that makes possible the *vertical* world, the union of the impossibles, the being in transcendence, and topological space and the time in joints and members, in dis-junction and dis-membering — and the possible as claimant a claimant of existence.”<sup>15</sup> The very Leibnizian vocabulary does not, however, return to a theological transcendence, but to “verticality in immanence” proper to a sensible being which always opens to the possible and the virtual because the world — this world here — surrounds us with a “halo of possibilities.” From here that suspension of things: “To say that things are structures, frameworks, the stars of our life: not before us, laid out as perspective spectacles, but gravitating about us.”<sup>16</sup>

But such a topological space still situates itself at the interior of a phenomenological and ontological project where the intersensoriality of the “flesh” lays the ground for the art, even if Merleau-Ponty introduces an important disconnection in relation to the “*existentiaux*” of the perceptive system and the laws of weight. Further, the notion of a gap, a separation or divergence that forms that space is conceived as “perceptual sense” and signification: “signification is always the divergence,” horizons of sense-sensible interiors in “brute Being,” called “savage” [*sauvage*]. But in the de-ontologized world that is ours one can henceforth see the gap as an operation of transfer and of metamorphosis, following Duchamp, as opposed to the ontological gap of Merleau-Ponty, the latter much closer to modernism. Duchamp’s gap leads to a completely different topology — that of a ‘seeing across,’ of flux, over the super-fine [*infra-mince*] and ‘language games’ — which anticipates the new lightness of the virtual. There are correlates that often pass unnoticed in the technological drunkenness of the simulacra: the new gravities, where the technological eye of the world occults, in its all seeing transparency, a completely other, more ‘geo-political’ gaze. Killing from a distance, ethnic purification and genocide, those such as in Angelopoulos’ quest for the ephemera of a film that is lost and recovered in devastated Sarajevo in *The Gaze of Ulysses*. Indeed a tragic separation does not cease to appear between ‘the great optic’ (Virilio) of cyberspace at the speed of light and the ‘geo-politics’ of the gaze where there is a crystallization of forces into presences and territorial conflicts and wars. As Yves Lacoste has shown in his numerous works, it is without doubt appropriate to distinguish different

standards of spatial analysis and to juxtapose them to the global geo-politics. Does the cartographic eye of the earth already reveal to us a truth that the Icarian eye of a technologically programmed world would conceal from us?

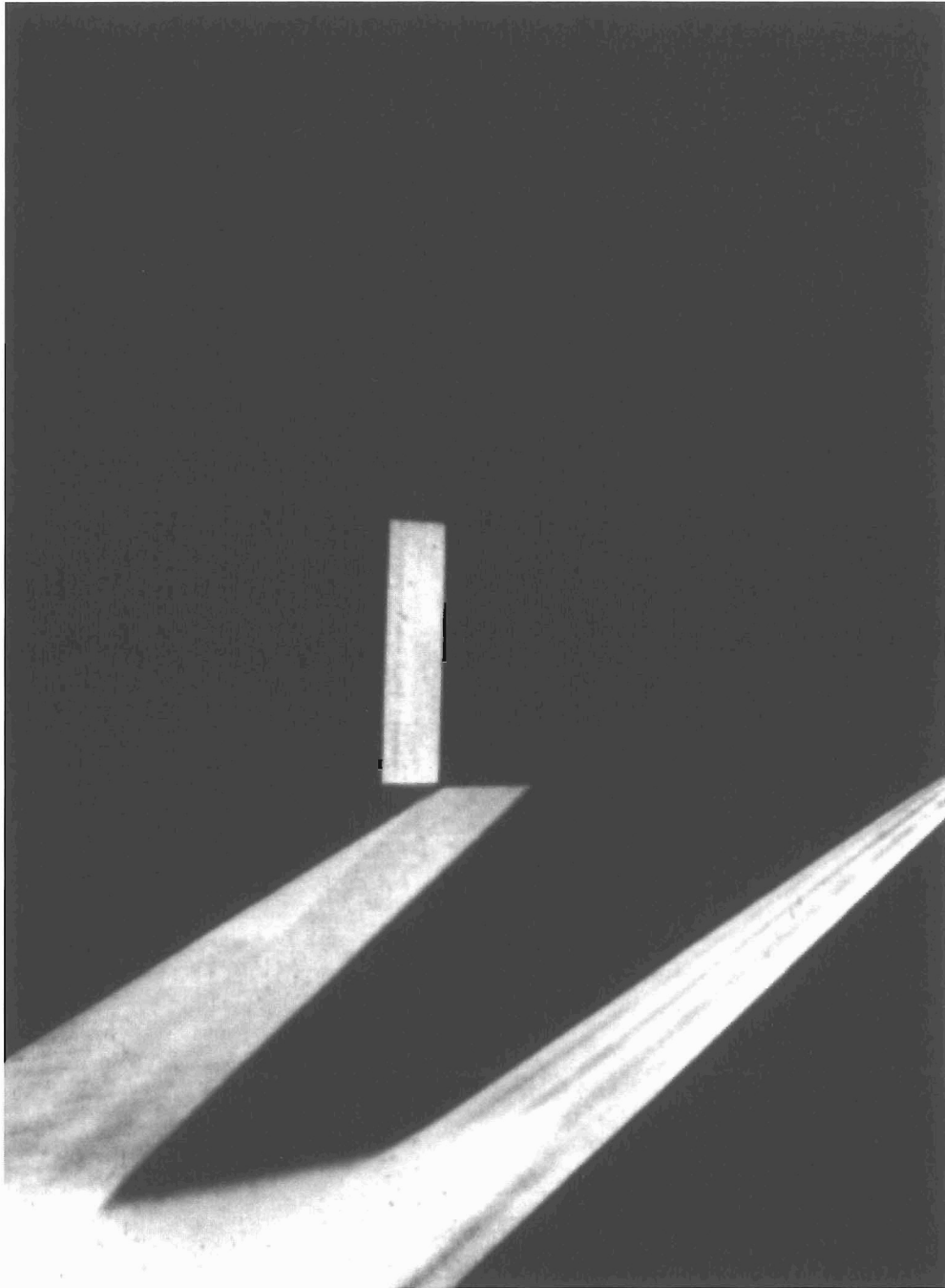
The revolution of virtual technology has brought about the appearance of new cartographies where one can henceforth fly across the earth and the sky, deserts and cities, planets and galaxies. Thus, aerial photos from satellites of tele-detection submitted to an informational analysis permit us to reconstruct maps in three dimensions and to tour the planet without ever moving. From now on one can simulate most natural phenomena — the dynamics of clouds, the waves of the sea splashing upon a beach, the collision of galaxies — and treat the most infinitesimal as the most significant or grand without suspicion of their scale. This permanent passage from the microscopic to the macroscopic defines the modality of the image of synthesis with its millions of ‘dots’ and its character as a mosaic or as wallpaper. Thanks to the simulations of point of view and of object, one can return to the strata of images, one can sculpt them, just as one would drill and explore in the recent exhibit *Le Tunnel sous l’Atlantique* [*The Tunnel Under the Atlantic*] at the Pompidou Centre. Standing before the labyrinthian exploration of images, one is in dialogue with that very distant unknown Other in Montreal. Within Maurice Benayoun’s “event of tele-virtuality” there is an entire “empire of maps” common to France and Canada — parchments, fortifications, ships, portraits, and landscapes — which unravels and weaves that “immense numerical Bayeaux Tapestry” of which Jean-Paul Fargier speaks. One traverses the temporal and iconographic layers that are much like geological and geographic strata — vestiges of time freed from all matter. It is an immense anamorphic and symbolic territory where suddenly I come to rest before a portrait of Napoleon, some ship of discovery, some urban scene, and then set off again in a programmed and aleatory journey. The map is the virtual territory; and it is no less paradoxical to note that the historical modalities of the cartographic eye — paintings, plans, views of a town — are found once again in the conceptual and programmed eye of the virtual.

But is it not again a matter of the voyage of the gaze, or of a simple spatial and “matricial” vision, an “eye in the image” which brings about a culture of the surface without an unconscious? As Florence de Meredieu writes, the new transparency engenders “a culture of a partial, lacunary unconscious, on the surface of the waves,”<sup>17</sup> a culture of a machinic pre-conscious, not a Freudian unconscious.” Thus, the possibilities of a multiplied vision, of an exploration of infinite details proper to a surface mentality which leaves little place for shadows, only lead to a new “blindness of the gaze” proper to periods of technological revolution and the crisis of the aura. Is not, as Jean Baudrillard has suggested, the territory of the virtual merely our own world turned pure



simulacrum, without real referent and without the unconscious, where projection is from now on made without metaphor? The terrestrial habitat is thus “hypostatized in space” and is only the “microprocession of time.”<sup>18</sup> If so, the miniaturization of the Icarian eye is only translated by “effects that are miniaturized, concentrated and immediately available,” a topology of the obscene, of general transparency where one loses the dimensions of the gaze, of distance. Consequently, the fractalized subject disperses and diffracts him/herself into “a multitude of miniature egos.”<sup>19</sup> The minutest detail of Icarus’ leg in Bruegel’s painting becomes a mode of vision whereby the exorbitance of the artificial and serialised detail transforms us, little by little, into a witnessed ready-made, offered up to the fascination and seduction of superficial abysses. In brief, we then have the screen as the microscope of the everyday, and are facing a geography of the world that is more and more of a desert. However, what if the crime is not perfect and this world of simulated-simulacra surrounding us is itself full of faults and hollows, and of quite another obscenity, namely reality? And what if it could still give birth to a *virtual aesthetic* which is not immediately identifiable with a single, all invasive virtual technologic, even if it involves exploring their potential bonds and their virtual and linguistic relations?

The pure and simple identification of the virtual with the simulacrum as the post-modern regime where the aesthetic disappears in a “transaesthetic” of the spectacle has the effect of suppressing a certain number of necessary distinctions. The virtual is not always a simple substitute for the real, but indeed is a “form of perception of the real.”<sup>20</sup> And if the numerical art is an “art of abstraction” which eliminates the real object in its construction, it nevertheless recovers it through the “dialogic” of a body that interacts with the computer, and thus recovers indirectly the entire history of the “happening” at the heart of the networks.<sup>21</sup> In this, the virtual is opposed less to the real than to the actual. It is indeed “a place of action,” even a “fractal dimension of reality,” as Paul Virilio develops in his discussion with Catherine Ikam.<sup>22</sup> To the dominant virtual image/simulacrum one can oppose a virtual force and a calculated intelligibility that may engender a heterogenesis of forms and their manifestation in art. Perhaps it calls for an even more active gaze, more fractal, a “meta-gaze” which bears the modalities of the exercise of its execution and exhibits its syntax. This is possible not only because the virtual and the real can coexist, as in the case of numerical maps where the simulated countryside is really flown over by a plane, but, above all, because the possible mixing of the “real” and the virtual in art through hybridization, transfer, simulation, incrustation and modelization, introduces us to the new paradigm of visibility which traverses contemporary practices and leads to a de-specification of the arts. Further, this approach of the virtual could be conceived in relation to two transforma-



tions imposed by the cartographic paradigm: the plan(e)-transfer [*plan-transfert*] as heterogenesis, and the deterritorialization as a generalized trajectory, as the loss of the being-there particular to the geographical here and now.

We now know that an image does not have to be chemically registered in order to exist, and the super-imposition of images, their running together, as in cinematography, engenders zones of perception by contact, strata and interferences that call forth mechanisms other than the “strictly optical” of modernism. The suspense, the fact of “floating,” suggests a new point of encounter, which is temporal and often musical, between the most ephemeral and the momentarily durable, the most machinic and the most aerial, the most visible and the most interior — thought itself. Thus in *Weeps for You* (Lyon Biennale, 1995-1996), Bill Viola explores that art of passages between the microscopic and the macroscopic, the cartographic and the Icarian with the aid of a dynamic interactive device and with procedures of aggrandizement that permit any spectator to see themselves on the screen in a drop of water that falls. The anamorphic and erratic image of the self in that which is most fragile, most minuscule — a drop of water — simultaneously resounds with a dull rhythmic sound of splashes. So, the drop of water functions as both an eye-image that returns to anamorphic deformations, and a “microscope of time” that analyses the ephemera of an almost imperceptible event. There, as in other projections by Bill Viola, the screen is none other than the place of thought, the “darkroom” of its echoes and metamorphoses. That “image extended as sound,” which Raymond Bellour has analysed in “La Chambre,” brings together the dark chamber and the mental chamber, such that the “video image” opens the virtuality of a sonic space which is borne by vibration.<sup>23</sup> Such a virtuality rises from a vibratile point of suspension, which one also finds in other works: the videos of Thierry Kuntzel, the suspended chairs of Bruce Nauman, or the inverted piano of Rebecca Horn — not to speak of the haziness, the informal fluidity and ephemeral quality of Gerhard Richter or the woven work of Polke. Indeed this virtual “aesthetic” inhabits many different forms of art and not only those images and apparati are engendered by the new technologies. For, if the machinic can be heavy or aerial, to the point of being invested with the invisible fluxes of the topological infra-fine, is that not because a new lightness constructs itself, a grave, sometimes tragic lightness? In accordance with the Japanese expression *Mono no aware*: simultaneously an insisting presence, an effect of withdrawal, and a dissymmetrical beauty which seizes the impermanence of things. We might translate this as the poignancy of *things*, with all the valences of Old French: to break through, to be born, to actively seize.<sup>24</sup> That movement of a just equilibrium between two disequilibria, that apparition of Walter Benjamin’s “thought-image,” floating and trembling in its temporary precision, perhaps even that fugitive moment where life affirms only life,

already taken up in the mirror of a “no longer” [*ne plus*] or a “not” [*ne pas*]. Nothing but that abstract shock that “scalps your soul and renders it naked” evoked by Emily Dickinson in a poem. The virtual as the scalpel of the soul, or perhaps as the soul . . .

*Mono no aware*: neither the pure plenitude of the surface of the infinite, nor the pure emptiness of a mortified and complicit melancholy but that movement of the virtual that is immanent to the multiple and hybrid gaze, from now on able to travel among images, heterogenous spaces, categories and media. For, the oppositions structuring the ‘world of art’ of modernism — aesthetic/anti-aesthetic, banal/noble, sign/sense, subject/object — are shirked off and the retreat to the past only nourishes itself with sad and disenchanting conformisms in a return to order that is more or less cynical. Between the scepticism of the marketplace for some and the return of the sacred of others, the *mono no aware* outlines one alternate approach to aesthetic complexities analogical but not identical to complexities of contemporary science, which has witnessed the emergence of time, of points of bifurcation, of the fractal and of chaos. An entire physical, chemical and, indeed, biological world is rendered subject to a structural instability. These new instabilities operate through a non-hierarchical mixture of the simple and the complex, which Isabelle Stengers and Ilya Prigogine analyze by beginning with the notion of the “attractor” in their book *Between Time and Eternity*.<sup>25</sup> The notion of the attractor, which has long been a symbol of homogeneity (all systems submitted to a similar attractor resemble one another), nonetheless symbolizes “the qualitative diversity of dissipative systems.” In these systems that are submitted to time and to an “erratic behaviour,” the attractors are called “strange” or “fractal.” In a given region, the points of the same systems subjected to these attractors “belong to divergent trajectories in the course of time.” From this comes the definition of chaotic behaviour and the routes to chaos: “a behaviour is chaotic if trajectories issuing from points of whatever degree of proximity in the space of phases distance themselves from one another over time in an exponential way.”<sup>26</sup> They are therefore submitted to a “temporal horizon,” and it is beginning with this horizon that a difference establishes itself between what we can “see” from here, where we are, and a beyond — the evolution that we no longer describe in terms of the behaviour of particular beings, but only in terms of the erratic behaviour common to all systems characterized by a chaotic attractor,<sup>27</sup> such that in the case of chemical systems, the irreversibility of time is inscribed in matter itself. And one can always aesthetically dream over a scientifically definite example: some flake of real snow constituting a crystal, conserving in its structure the “memory of the path taken since its formation.” The “arrow of time” from the beginning penetrates the macroscopic as the microscopic, disequilibrium as equilibrium and leads to new phenomenon of order where time has a positive and constructing role. The world

of the aleatory, of holes and confusions, giving birth to a new geometry where the image of the universe is crooked and irregular. As James Gleick writes, “it is a geometry of hailstorms, of twists, of entanglements, of interlacings”<sup>28</sup> — which is not without a relation to Smithson’s entropic procedure. Indeed, in the fractal coasts engendered by the computer, the details are aleatory but the dimensions are constant. In contrast to Euclidean forms of measure that proceed with length, size and depth, here the notions of dimension, with their cartographic referents — longitude, latitude and altitude — become fundamental operative concepts. For, dimension is always related to a point of view, and every form possesses a variable scale. Thus, apprehended from a certain point of view, a side can have an infinite length. In this sense, there is indeed an analogy of questioning and even of structure between the Icaro-cartographic and the fractal as a way of seeing the infinite.

Could there be these strange attractors in art? Are there are not aesthetic or existential guides of instability, chaoticization implemented through humour or derision, have they not a sliding of the homogeneous towards the heterogenous and the qualitatively diverse? A kind of heterogeneity, re-affirming more than ever the necessity of “points of passage,” of critical thresholds, and of existential and social engagements in and within the irreversibility of time. A topic doubled by a cartography of sign-fluxes and machinic-fluxes, which would eschew technological utopias and reinterpret Duchamp in contemporary terms. Bernard Moninot’s 1985 studio-work stands as an example. By means of a grid [*mise au carreau*], he sets onto his ceiling the stars from a part of a map of the heavens entitled “*la baie sombre*” [the sombre bay]. These transferred stellar points supply orientation in a space, and points of suspension for various refuse objects — a circle, rim or wheel — which reflect themselves in shadows projected on the walls. These spaces of fragile shadows that Duchamp loved take advantage of the “light” passage between two projections; that of a cosmic points-stars and that of suspended shadows [*ombres-suspense*] in a work that makes shadows, clear or panoptic, its stake [*enjeu*]. Consequently, point and shadow are from now on the trace of a cartography that is more virtual than real, bringing together suspension and suspense in a kind of weightlessness of luminosity. One could take as an aesthetic paradigm the “Vision Machines” of Steina and Woody Vasulka who use the “media for the media” in a language that also exhibits the visual and machinic syntax. Transfers and projections of planes, multiplicities of points of view proper to an all-seeing vision, a ludic and fractal universe of fragile images capturing the pure present, aim to create an abstract electronic space encompassing the spectator and the place. Thus, in *All Vision* (Lyon Biennale, 1995-1996) an apparatus of monitors and cameras filming the reflections of a “sphere-world” animated by a rotating movement, engenders a veritable Icaro-carto-

graphic space liberated from the oppositions between the interior and exterior, high and low, top and bottom. One sees oneself in the sphere as in crystal balls and other vanities of the past. But the reflecting sphere is from now on the world-eye of the phantasm of Icarus — an enlarged eye, scaled down by the cameras that submit it to all the possible variations in order to better analyze the vertical space in real time and to make the spectator the subject of vision in the architecture of the ephemeral.

It is precisely in the case of architecture, where weight is an inescapable constraint, that the new “lightnesses” of the unstable are expanding. In an article in the review *Any* devoted to “Lightness,” John Rajchman distinguishes between two forms of lightness.<sup>29</sup> A modernist lightness proper to a glass architecture prioritizes the optical and the geometrical always free of context (i.e., the international style). The other lightness, proper to the micro-electronic age, aims for the “degree zero of gravity,” privileges regional context, proximity, and a space more haptic than optic. Marked by “nodes of resonance” (Bernard Cache), this latter form of lightness returns to the cartographic cities of networks and rhizomes where volumes float.

Exemplary in this regard is Yoyo Ito’s architecture in Japan, which is precisely modelled on the microprocessor in order to give birth to “a space that floats and whirls.” For the role of architecture is precisely to “envelop phenomenon that cannot be seized.”<sup>30</sup> Certainly, the floating gaze and the taste for the “smallest existent” [*shô sei*] comes from an entire Japanese tradition. In the era of the Nô, Zeami advised his actors to move “in seven-tenths” in order to favour the unachieved of movement; and the *Ukiyo-e* of the seventeenth century presents figures in a floating world. The detached view [*regard détaché*], the lacunae of images hollowed out by the abyss, the silent density and the stratification of shadows make up part of the Japanese aesthetic that Tanizaki Junichiro analyzed so well in his *Éloge de l’ombre*. Lights diffuse and vacillate, icy and altered bursts of surfaces, phantom beauty, palpitating mists or golden *tatami* mats, aim to do nothing more than make felt the wear of time and its immateriality. The gaze is never the correlate of a controllable object, but that of an opening and a receptivity. The world is revealed there in its here and now, its fragility and its suspension. In the architecture of Toyo Ito — without rigid facade, in the angled interiors, with the permanent fluidity between the inside and the outside, and the vaults similar to tents floating in a breeze — one recovers the values of the Rilkean opening between suspension and floating. “The envelope” and “nomadism” are at the same time constitutive metaphors claimed as architectural paradigms which resemble the rest of Tokyo (cf. the “Nomad Restaurant”). Tokyo, “the amoebic city” according to Yoshinobu Ashihara, only manifests a “hidden order” when opposed to Paris, the Benjaminian city of form, of stone, of mirrors, of serial perspectives and of structures radiating from the

squares. Viewed from on high, Tokyo is only a chaos full of irregularity and asymmetry, with contours and multiple spaces that are always ambiguous. But it is above all an “artificial city” [*ville factice*], ephemeral city, “a city in a state of weightlessness” (Toyo Ito) where a quarter of the buildings date from less than five years ago and where no one stays at home. It is a “sequential city where things take place to the extent that time passes” and where “its people live as nomads.”<sup>31</sup> For the rest, the space is never but the “space left free between the buildings,” something temporary. The Toyo Ito’s search for a “post-ephemeral architecture” could thus take the form of Pao (a primitive hut of the Mongolians) or of a garden paradise suspended twelve metres above the ground. But, above all, it opposes to the modernist transparency of glass facades a completely different transparency: that of facades glazed with crystal liquids, veritable screens and envelopes that are always changing. The Tower of Winds in Yokohama (1966) is covered with reflecting panels of acrylic and a protecting scabbard of perforated aluminum. At night a veritable kaleidoscope of light surges forth and indicates the “arrow of time,” in as much as the projectors vary in relation to sounds and to the direction and speed of the wind. Thanks to these infinitesimal dots of light glistening at a great height, the form cannot be seized. It floats erratically, a pure luminosity of signs and flux. In a 1993 interview “The Visual Image of the Micro-Electronic Age,” Toyo Ito speaks of an “architecture that would be a garden of micro-processors.” The city transforms itself into “a space of ephemeral effects born of an electronic and invisible flow.” Just as sounds float in space, forms derive gardens of light, and the architecture unlimits itself by reinterpreting the invisibility of flows and minuteness of microchips. The virtual transforms itself into a heuristic and aesthetic paradigm where the most advanced technology is aligned to traditional multi-sensorial referents like huts, clothes, envelopes or suspended gardens.

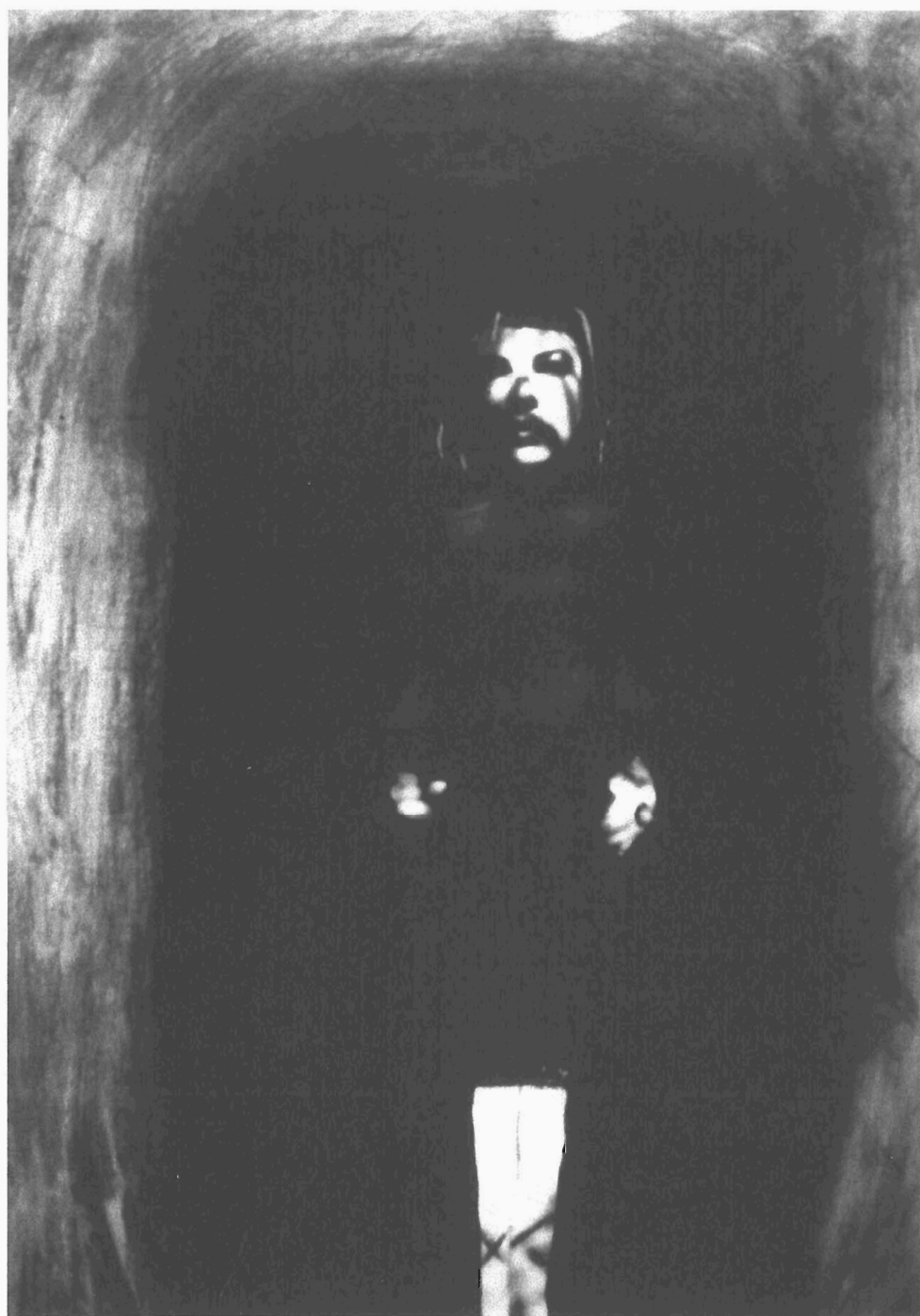
The ephemeral, indeed the “post-ephemeral,” therefore drives an architecture that employs new models of abstraction responding to systems of flows and micro-electronic information. One finds again a development analogous to that of Toyo Ito in Bernard Tschumi’s Glass Video Gallery (Gronigen, 1990). Constructed on an oblique inclined plane in a careful equilibrium, the gallery itself is as transparent as a house of glass. But the vertical and the horizontal supports of modernism have disappeared in the interest of glass structures, such that, there again, everything floats in an immersion of immateriality and landscape. Using C. Rowa’s distinction, one can oppose the literal transparency related to the quality of the material (the glass) with a phenomenal transparency which plays on the illusion and unlimitedness of the apparition in order to create the effects of floating. It is precisely that second transparency, that of multi-sensorial and “extra fast” virtuality, which defines the new contemporary lightness. Also,

it sets one dreaming in a very Nietzschean way of a post-nihilist lightness which takes us to a utopia of a non-Heideggerian “earth of light” [*terre de lumière*], as John Rajchman promises. In any case one indeed takes part in the exploration of an Icarian lightness in a “Pascalian” space dominated by the metaphor of the envelope and of decentring, where the cartographic and nomadic aesthetic ends up inscribing itself in highly advanced technologies. This assumes the paradox of light: it permits vision but fixes it blindly. In the ephemera of time, light floats.

The ephemeral would be neither pure immobilized instant, nor purely recovered time, nor the a-present of a heterogenous time; rather, it would be the *moiré* or waves of time, a sort of flow of imprecision which gives and takes in a Kairos of desire and death. If there is some affinity with photography as analyzed by Barthes — a time of encounter and contingency and of traces — it is closer to the punctum: a flash that floats, a time so singular and tenuous that it passes in the insistence of passing. The vibration of time in its fragility. “Ephemeros” is related to the day (*emera*), to that which only lasts a day, a brief instant, like the insects that only last a few days or sudden fevers that disappear without one knowing why. The ephemeral is that which is carefully suspended between the apparition and its disappearance, a non-time of time, a between-time which inscribes itself somewhere and nowhere. We gave the name ephemerides (*ephemeris*) to books that record the events accomplished on a day across different epochs, or a calendar that one removes a page from each day, or astrological tables that determine, day by day, the place of each planet in the Zodiac. The ephemeral is the cartography of time, of each period, each day, each event. Ephemerides were also those books of Antiquity which recounted, day by day, the events in the life of a character.

Contemporary art is haunted by the “each” — each day, each instant, each particle of time — by the acute consciousness of only one “this” and “here” of the event — because it defines our being in the world, more and more subject to the double regime of the ephemeral. On one side is “the empire of the ephemeral” — a permanent zapping of images, of a museal visual, of artistic modes, a dictation of the “look,” of encroachments by a world of images where the speed destroys all the physical and social referents. But that “ephemeral” of the global empire of information and images in real time, with its immediate pleasure and its loss of experience, doubles itself with another precariousness: that engendered by violence, exclusion, and programmed death. How to live until one’s death, and how to survive, if around one is all sadness and destruction? Elias Canetti’s poignant question in *Crowds and Power* concerning the moment of surviving and the being of survival, henceforth returns in an everyday that is increasingly marked by all the sabbaths of warlike humiliation and the mortifying devaluations





which will have to give rise to the “summersaults of rage” à la Bataille. Therefore, one could be tempted to define our ephemerides, all those extra-fast envelopes, screens and interfaces of the present, used or transposed in art, from the moment when the spatial cartographies of the world become temporal

If the palimpsest works on the side of a past ephemera that reappears, the Freudian magic pad would perhaps offer a paradigm appropriate for thinking the present ephemera. For, it explores the play of contact between presence and absence, a play of floating traces, like psychoanalytic listening. One knows that Freud, in his 1925 text, presents “that little machine” because of his analogies for the unconscious. It has in effect two sheets: one receptive surface always available (a tablet of wax and resin) and another fixed from the top, but free at the bottom, which covers over the first. But that sheet is itself composed of two layers, one of celluloid where one can inscribe, without ink or lead, the traces of incisions, and another, fine and transparent, that one can pull back, thereby returning the wax to its original state. This apparatus, that Jacques Derrida has analyzed as the “scene of writing,” makes its subject appear and disappear, machining a virtuality through contact and transposition which registers an event in its ephemeral character. A model of the unconscious, the magic pad is a machine that registers the passage on several levels, with the result that the plane remains open to different planes of the image, beyond that available to the retinal and the purely optical. The Self or Ego [*Moi*] is thus an embodied Self [*Moi-corps*]; and one understands, just as Didier Anzieu noticed in that topological schema and psychic apparatus, the form of a skin ego [*Moi-peau*].<sup>32</sup> The skin ego is not a pure surface but the projection of a surface on two sheets: one of celluloid which protects, the other of wax on which is inscribed the traces and passings. It is the interface of the world, an originary parchment of intersensoriality which evokes the Aristotelian conception of space as an envelope. Thus any passage can leave a trace, or it can fall into oblivion if some “writing pad” of art does not map it.

Smithson created “non-sites,” Richard Long and Hamish Fulton imprinted places or photographed their steps. On Kawara sent maps of towns or post cards marked with a seal giving the time and signature: I went [in English in French text - trans.], July 3, 1968, 16 July, 30 July. . . . Yves Klein glazed his models with paint, Penone recorded his breath, Tappes reinscribed footprints and directions in materials of the desert: there has everywhere only been imprints, traces, the ephemeral collected in order to better conserve a gesture, the soul of a voyage, the passage or existential trajectory of an Ego. That vibrato of time henceforth takes on the relays of allegories and cartographic vanities of the past; and it is not limited to the cartographic art that we have examined. Just as there is a “post-ephemeral” architecture, one can also speak of a “post-ephemeral

image,” a “post image” across which a new order of abstraction reinvents itself, an order which knows nothing of the historical dualism of the abstract and the figurative. For, if one can from now on project the image on to any object or medium, it is the support that maintains the image, and images liberated from this ontological origin can pertain to different spaces and spatialities in a permanent play of transformation and metamorphosis between the visible, the informing, and the calculated. They form themselves, un-form themselves, are superimposed, traverse one another and project themselves in an infinite complexity in which the mobile image is treated as immobile and the inverse. Also, the cartographic can no longer be reduced exclusively to the work on the motif or on the model of maps in their instances of descriptive, allegorical or topological vision. One could speak of an expanded cartographic logic, just as Beuys spoke of an “enlarged (or greater) art.” The light is not light by nature but through this lightning, this subtraction of weight, in which every experience reaches its frontiers in the necessary nudity of a suspense, reuniting the aesthetic and the ethical, in order to pose again the very problematic question of a “politics” of the gaze. The site is now only a point of escape [*fuite*], “the site of the stranger” to take up the expression of Pierre Fedida.

Maps are always by nature abstract, ever approximative whatever their degree of scientific or electronic precision. For, these abstractions produce impure analogical images that work by coupling the visible and the readable in a diagrammatic being which composes and decomposes the world, rather as geography uses specific procedures of abstraction, grids, surfaces, plots. Thus, to use a map, to manipulate it, is always to construct a narrative scenario however brief or unlasting. Maps always tell stories that double the projected voyage of an intra-psychic, mental and temporal voyage. The projective space of maps, as site of all the transfers of art, gives rise to geological, tectonic and archaeological powers of the image, its “sites” and “non-sites,” its mental traces and landscapes. Indeed maps incite a stratigraphic gaze split between the aerial logic of the Icarian on one hand and terrestrial energies of the world at their virtual meeting point on the other. Further, today they allow the re-traversing of the obsolete abstract-figurative dualism, avoiding both the modernist nostalgia of the purely optical-abstract and the mimetic and mortifying complacencies of the bodies treated in their first degree. For, abstraction is not the proper of abstract art. There is nothing more abstract than the gothic line, that of skeletal art, even the formalized and distanced treatment of certain images. Thus the banalization, the serialization, the repetition, the blowing up of or the miniaturization of the images can result in an abstraction “of/at the surface” [*en surface*] where all the procedures of “pre-visualization” of codes that Rosalind Krauss analyzed in relation to the photographic are re-invested in numerous artistic

practices. It is necessary to analyze the cartographies of art in which the historical distinction between the abstract and the figurative is scrambled and “deconstructed” in favour of a non-mimetic image or a new type of abstraction integrating cartographic elements such as the architectural projects, plans, diagrams, tags, transposed spaces of the virtual. A “flatbed” abstraction of a rhizomatic or fractal kind, such as one finds in recent American painting (Peter Halles, Jonathan Lasker, David Reed and Lydia Dona) in which spaces disconnect in a heterogenesis of abstract motifs, networks, spirals and fluxes.

For, a map is “like an image” (Origen) in the sense that an image is not an object in the modernist sense but rather a process fuelled by a “dissipative energy” to take up an expression of Gilles Deleuze.<sup>33</sup> Such a dissipative energy breaks with all ontological substrata and causalities of the world, as recognized by Benjamin. The famous “aura” which interrupts the blindness of the view and obliges one to raise one’s eyes is nothing but an energy that dissipates the near in the interest of the distant in a sort of vertigo. It is indeed this distant of the visual that the techniques of reproducibility, always on the side of the same and the close, have already radically modified. In this sense, Warhol’s work is only a huge variation on a Benjaminian theme. Yes, there is but the close and “same” of the surface, and the serial and sequential reproducibility is the post-auratic work of an artist-machine. A huge “ready-made” of screens [*toiles-écrans*] where the banalization of art dear to Danto is “transfigured” by a neutralized style that flatly redoubles the metaphoricity of its object and brings forth a way of seeing the world. A very panoptic gaze, an all-seeing one anyway, as is evident in Warhol’s taste for collections of ephemeral materials and for “time capsules.”

However, in the informational and virtual epoch, the energy of the image can assume different forms related to those new parameters of the light and to a re-multiplied circulation of energies in suspense. Thus Tom Shannon, in *Painted Planet and Parallel Planet* explicitly takes up the motif of the terrestrial globe. But he makes it float in the air at a distance from the horizontal by making use of the invisible forces of magnetic fields. Thanks to the magnets the works are indeed in levitation, in suspense, but the cosmological approach of the visible and the invisible, of what is outside of us and what is inside us, functions as a great mirror of the universe. In the piece *Decentre, Acentre* (1992), shown at the Château de Voiron, a huge suspended aluminum disk, four meters in diameter, cuts across a sphere leaving the upper half floating. Centre and absence of centre, “decentre” define an ambiguous cartography of the universe. As Tom Shannon said to Jerome Sans, “it is a matter of using an image to show that the sun and the earth are one and the same entity.”<sup>34</sup> Indeed *Ray* (1986) was already sculpting the invisible “energetic ray” that links sky and earth, Icarian and cartographic, out of materials that

aim to create a world in which art can explore the scientific understanding of the real without losing sight of the effects of its aesthetic construction, of the virtual as poetic and cosmic “levitation” of forces and elements.

These dissipative energies are also found in Rebecca Horn’s light machines [*machines légères*], in which the circulation of positive and negative energies, their variations of state and their passages, map out the intersections of life and death, feminine and masculine, order and chance. Feathers, pollen, musical instruments, painting machines, inverted weightless pianos, beds in descending spirals, projections of machine made paintings — not to speak of alchemical materials like mercury, or the use of sound as the invisible eye, witness to a disappearance — explore in one movement the new machinic lightness — and the new dangers that inhabit the world at their points of bifurcation and suspense. For this suspense in weightlessness rejoins the “negative spaces” that Bruce Nauman explored in order to situate thought “above and behind” things. To transform the functional chair into a symbolic chair, hanging or suspended such that one will see the chair’s underside and that which takes place between its rungs. Or yet, to suspend a wax head confronted with its shadow and its video image as in *Spinning Head* (1990). The negative spaces reveal the motivation behind his art, and perhaps of art itself: a violence, something insupportable, a “frustration before the human condition.”

Indeed the dissipative energies of the image instill a fragility at the heart of time, while temporalizing the visual through a more or less chance encounter which creates the ephemeral as an affect of art. Thus it produces a split [*écart*], that varies according to the projection spaces used. Also this type of image performs neither as pure simulacra nor as pure mimesis. It is closer to the latin *imago* and the *plássô* of the sophistic than the platonic couple copy/simulacre which always belongs to a truth system. For even if the copy is a good likeness and the simulacre a bad copy, even if the simulacre emancipates itself from any Idea and any referential mimesis, it remains profoundly equivocal in its origin and in its exercise. For, wars simulated and programmed using electronic maps murder nonetheless. Thus, “seeing” is to displace one’s angle of vision and adopt a “geo-political” perspective of the world. If from a certain mediatized and virtualized perspective “the gulf war did not take place,” from a ground view it certainly did — 250,000 dead...

If the image in art always presupposes a minimal suspension of the world, one that can make it slide from the visible towards a virtual-thought, that suspension might be immanent to the world, doubling the suspense. For the *imago*, that which Ulysses finds in his descent into Hades, is a quasi-spectral oblique image which can be neither reduced to a reflection nor to a simulacra. Rather, it is a body of a fictional shadow,



which does not invoke a strong ontological causality. For it hollows out a gap between words and things, and like Barbara Cassin's sophistic Helen, it is fundamentally double — both mirage and phantom.

It is musical and contrapuntal, like a burst or “flash of a chance encounter.” Also it involves a convergence of divergent series — the machinic and the light, the icarian and the earthly, the chaotic and the order, the feminine and the masculine, life and death — in a subitum which suddenly touches the substance of the inexistent. Here the real burns the image and the event is seized in its aleatory, in its dead time, its imperceptible variations and its zones of corporeal indiscernibility. This oblique image gives rise to “two chambers of reflection” as Lezanne Lima identified so well in *Les Vases Orphiques*. In fact it is dissipative because it is projective. The virtual is nothing other than that imperceptible sliding between the two, the construction of a place of passage, crossing, transfer and metamorphosis. To emigrate everywhere in the image as Paul Celan would have it in language. For it does not concern seeing the image but seeing across the image into its spaces of virtual projection and its multi-sensorial envelopments/developments. Also, this sliding of a pure optic towards a haptic-optic or a sonic-optic proper to the “post-ephemeral image” of which Toyo Ito has spoken, brings into question the “ocularcentrism” of the occidental tradition in which the visual and its machines have dominated since the seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> The de-hierarchization and de-specification of the senses proper to the cartographic multiplicities and the inevitable proliferation of media and envelopes (skin, clothes, tissues, homes and technological interfaces) makes of the thought-image as of the oblique-image, new technologies of the made-image [*faire-image*] which often oscillates in an impure zone between figuration and abstraction, representation and image, in order to create a fractalizing “dimension.” As if the ephemeral of the cartographic vanities and allegories of the past gave way to that which motivated them: an ephemeral eye apt at virtualizing the world in order to better find it again. “Painting of Idea” as Duchamp would have said.

“*Mono no aware*” — the ephemeral and suspended, the pregnancy and poignancy of things, their dissipative energy — such would be the cartographic voyage of an art that does not renounce the affect of art and which has found, in the cartographies of the world, the truth of that vertical eye of which Bruegel's Icarus dreamt in his fall. Perhaps a wounded beauty which takes the side of disorder and chaos, and abandons melancholy for the humour of a world sometimes too big, sometimes too small — that of a cartographic eye in art.

Translated by Lang Baker, with Ger Zelinski, Susan Lord and Sarah Robayo Sheridan

## Notes

This essay appears as Chapter 6, “Icare aujourd’hui: l’oeil éphémère,” in Christine Buci-Glucksmann’s *L’oeil cartographique de l’art* (Paris: Éditions Gallilée, 1996), 145-171. The editors wish to thank Christine Buci-Glucksmann and Éditions Gallilée for their permission to translate and publish this text.

[A note on the translation. We have provided in parentheses in the text the original French for those terms which English cannot accurately approximate. Buci-Glucksmann’s poetic style has been retained as much as possible. Whenever possible, citations are provided from previously published translations. In the note, these references are given first. All other citations are translated for this publication.—Trans.]

1. Italo Calvino, *Leçons américaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 33. [Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Harvard University Press, 1988).]
2. Michel Serres, *La naissance de la physique* (Paris: Minit, 1977), 53.
3. Malevich, “Suprematism,” *Catalogue of the 10th state exhibition*, Moscow, 1919; Reprinted in Larissa A. Zhadova, *Malevitch: Suprematism and Revolution in Russian Art 1910-1930*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 283; translated from the Russian by Alexander Lieven. [Malevitch, *Écrits* (Paris: G. Leovici, 1986), 227.]
4. Malevitch, *Écrits* (Paris: G. Leovici, 1986), 218.
5. *ibid.*, 245.
6. Malevitch, *La Lumière et la couleur* (Lausanne: l’Age d’homme), 1981.
7. Guido Ballo. *Lucio Fontana*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 185. [*Lucio Fontana* (Paris: Centre George Pompidou, 1987), 283.]
8. *ibid.*, “First Spatial Art Manifesto,” 198. [*ibid.*, 283.]
9. *ibid.*, 198. [*ibid.*, “spatialistes II”, 283.]
10. Severo Sarduy, “Six lacerations de la couleur,” *Lucio Fontana* (Paris: Centre George Pompidou, 1987), 14.
11. François Cheng, *Vide et Plein* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1994), 33.
12. *ibid.* See also my article “Le vide en peinture” in *A. Tàpies* (Paris: Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume), 1994.
13. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*; trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968) [Le Visible et l’invisible (Paris: Gallimard, 1964)]. [Lingis notes the difficulty in translating Merleau-Ponty’s use of the word *écart* and provides a number of possible translations, including divergence, spread, diviation, separation (see p. 216). In translating Buci-Glucksmann’s use of *écart*, we rely to some degree on these variants, as well as “gap,” “split” and “hollow.”—Trans.]
14. *ibid.*, 227. [281.]
15. *ibid.*, 228 [281.]
16. *ibid.*, 220 [273.]
17. Florence de Mèredieu, “Le crustacé et la prothèse,” *Paysages virtuels* (Paris: Dis Voir, 1988), 15.
18. Jean Baudrillard, *L’Autre par lui-même* (Paris, Gallilée, 1987), 15, 29 and 39. [*The Ecstasy of Communication* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1988).] On the idea of the image where there is nothing to see, see *La Transparence du Mal* (Paris, Galilée, 1990), 25. [*The Transparency of Evil* (New York: Verso, 1993.)]



19. Jean Baudrillard, *L'Autre par lui-même*, 36.
20. Jean-Louis Weissberg, "Le compact réel/virtuel", 16, 17.
21. Edmond Couchot, "Le même et l'autre," *Les Techimages in Revue d'aesthétique* 25 (Paris, 1994), 46.
22. Paul Virilio and Catherine Ikam, "Le virtual est un lieu d'action," *Art Press* (1993), 185.
23. Raymond Bellour, "La Chambre," *Traffic*, 9 (Paris: Hiver, 1994).
24. I developed this analysis in *A. Tâpies*.
25. Isabelle Stengers and Ilya Prigogine, *Entre le temps et l'éternité*, 73-77.
26. *ibid.*, 77.
27. *ibid.*, 77.
28. James Gleick, *La Théorie du Chaos* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 127-28, and the entire chapter entitled "Une géométrie de la nature."
29. John Rajchman, "Lightness, A Concept in Architecture," *Any* 5 (1994): 6 *passim*.
30. Sophie Roulet and Sophie Soulié, "Toyo Ito, L'Architecture de l'éphémère," (Paris: Le Monitor, 1991), 9.
31. Toyo Ito, "Vers un architecture post-éphémère," interview with Sophie Roulet et Sophie Soulié, 92. I take from this article the terms of the description of Tokyo.
32. Didier Anzieu, *Le Moi-Peau*, 85. [*The Skin Ego*, trans. Chris Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).]
33. Gilles Deleuze, "L'épuisé dans Samuel Beckett," *Quad* (Paris: Minuit, 1992), 77.
34. Thomas Shannon, "Une Vision Global," interview with Jérôme Sans, *Art Press* (June 1993). See also the catalogue of the exhibition in Sète, *Feux Terrestres* and the preface by Anne Tronche.
35. On the analysis of this "oculocentrism" see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). I take the term from this book which reconstructs the history of vision in French thought.