

Milano, 18 aprile 1994

Dear Gillian Wearing,

Angela Vettese and me come back to you with the idea of a show after our meeting at Royal Cafe (!) in London, which Alison Jaques so kindly organized.

Angela Vettese is the curator of a serie of exhibitions that will be held in Viafarini-Milano, with the premise of collecting documentation and inviting some artists interested in site specific/ installation/ special project work to a show in Italy, with the support of The British Council.

The idea of Angela Vettese for next fall is a show with projects of Martin Creed, Gillian Wearing, Padraig Timoney.

We would like to invite you to propose a project to be realized in Milan, organized both in the Viafarini gallery or in the City.

Please let us know if you are interested and in case your idea.

Looking forward to hear from you soon,

Patrizia Brusarosco

Milano, 20 July 1994

Dear Gillian Wearing,

we confirm some details for the exhibition "Fuori Fase".

"Fuori Fase" will begin next fall with the first show.

The artists participating will be Martin Creed, Tania Kovats and Gillian Wearing.

The date for the opening will be the 13th of December, '94.

The space of Viafarini is an industrial rough space, useful for installation. Should your project a site specific work, we will be pleased to find you an accommodation here in Milan for the time required.

We would like to receive a project of your work as soon as possible.

As the three of you live in London, we think that you could meet and communicate each other your ideas.

Alison Sara Jaques, who contributed to the idea since the beginning, is informed of the progression of the project.

Looking forward to hearing from you, sincerely

Patrizia Brusarosco
Angela Vettese

Milano, 18 may 1994

Dear Gillian Wearing,

I received your telephone call in which you confirmed your interest in the project "Fuori Orario" curated by Angela Vettese.
We are happy for your participation.

The project will begin next fall, end november, with the first show.
At this point we are impatient to know your idea, the technical side to realize it, if it is in the gallery or outside, materials ecc.
We are waiting for your project.

Sincerely
Patrizia Brusarosco

Milano, 18 may 1994

Dear Gillian Wearing,

I received your telephone call in which you confirmed your interest in the project "Fuori Orario" curated by Angela Vettese.
We are happy for your participation.

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Sincerely
Patrizia Brusarosco

22.6.94 Parlo al telefono con Angela.
Comunicata data del 13/12 e pertanto (cred e 10/10/94)
Per il suo papetto è un video → dovere indipendente

31 Hayes Court
Camberwell New Road
London
SE5 0TQ

071 701 6198

Dear Patrizia

The piece of work I wish to propose for the forthcoming exhibition "Fuori Fase", is a video of rock fans doing guitar impersonations. I would like the video to be projected on the wall and would therefore need a video projector. Would this be possible?

Also can part of the space be darkened or is there a small room that the video can be played in?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Wearing', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gillian Wearing

INTERIM ART

FAX TRANSMISSION

DATE : 16 November 1994

TO : Patrizia Brusarosco

FROM : Alice Cowling

fax number : 010 39 266 80 44 73


number of pages including this sheet : 3

MESSAGE :

Dear Patrizia Brusarosco,

I am faxing the biography of Gillian Wearing as requested.
If you would like any further information please do not
hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Alice Cowling

(assistant to director)

GILLIAN WEARING

Born 1963 Birmingham, United Kingdom.
Lives and works in London.

Education

1987-90 Goldsmiths College, University of London, B.A. (Hons.) Fine Art.
1985-87 Chelsea School of Art, BTECH Art & Design.

Solo Exhibitions

1994 Interim Art
1993 City Racing

Group Exhibitions

- 1994
 - 3.016.026, Theoretical Events, Naples
 - *Uncertain Identity*, Galerie Analix B & L Polla, Geneva
 - *Fuori Fase*, Via Farini, Milan
 - *Domestic Violence*, curated by Alison Jacques, Gio Marconi's House, Milan
 - *R.A.S.*, curated by Gianni Romano, Galerie Analix B & L. Polla, Geneva
- 1993
 - *Not Self-Portrait*, Karsten Schubert, London
 - *BT Young Contemporaries*, Cornerhouse, Manchester, Orchard Gallery, Derry, The Maplin Art Gallery, Sheffield, City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow
 - *Okay Behaviour*, 303 Gallery, New York
 - *Mandy Loves Declan 100%*, Mark Boote Gallery, New York
 - *2 into 1*, Centre 181 Gallery, London
 - *Vox Pop*, Laure Genillard Gallery, London
- 1992
 - *Instruction*, Marconi Gallery, Milan
 - *British Art Group Show*, Le Musee des Beaux Arts dans Le Havre, France
- 1991
 - *Piece Talks*, Diorama Art Centre, London
 - *Glove 1*, The Glove Building, London
 - *Empty Gestures*, Diorama Art Centre, London

Awards

BT Young Contemporaries 1993-94

Projects

- 1994
 - Rooseum video program, Rooseum, Center for Contemporary Art, Sweden
 - Holly Street Estate Art Project, London

Bibliography

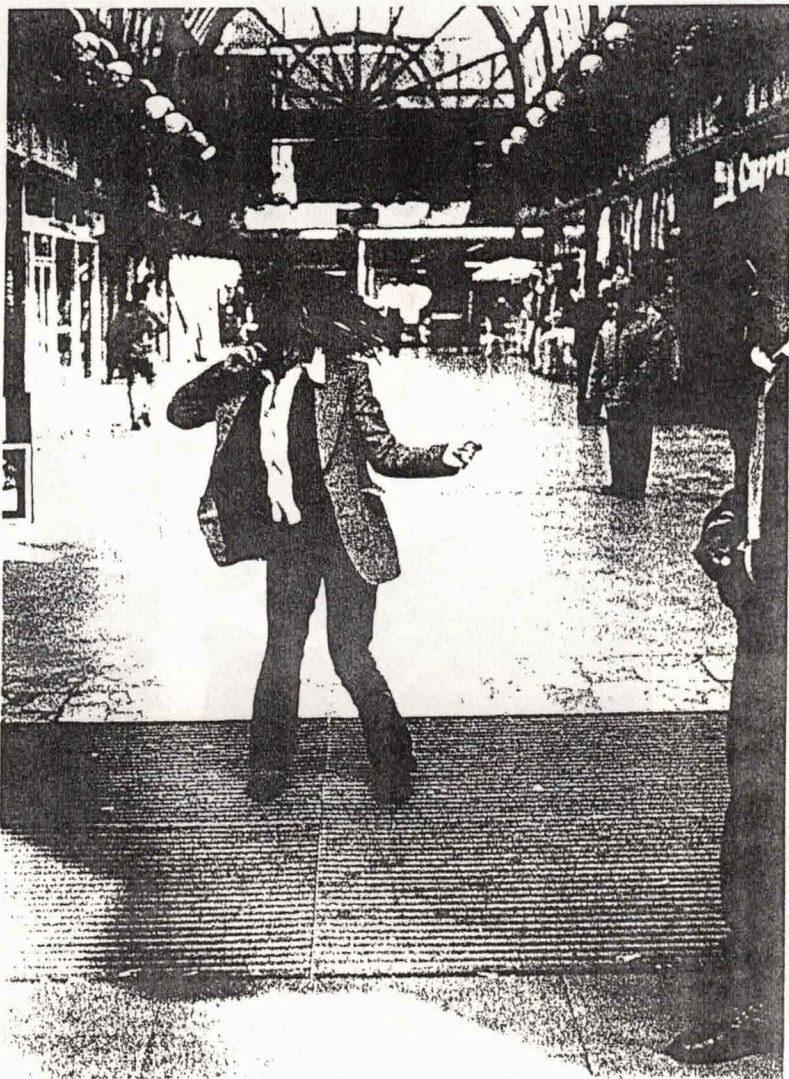
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- 1993
- Feaver, William. Treasures In the Wendy House of the Lost Boys, The Observer, London
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 - Stallabass, Julian. Power to the People, Art Monthly, London
 - Graham-Dixon, Andrew. That Way Madness Lies, The Independent, London
- London
- Flash Art, Italy
 - Milner, Catherine. Positive Exposure for New Talent, The Saturday Times, London
- 1992
- Hype, The Face, London, No. 51, December
 - The Independent on Sunday, London, 27 December
 - Liberation
 - Le Monde, Paris
- 1991
- CV Journal, Paris

through forms of physical, optical or chromatic excess; or through the application of non-high-art materials and motifs; and so forth.

In effect many of the examples of painting included in the exhibition look rather more polite, tidy and restrained, and a lot less Sadean in their degradation and debasement, than the image of them that Corris developed in his text. But the argument about the monochrome and after remains vivid in spite its weaker illustrations; the implication being that this remains a project in a process of unfolding, rather than a finite set of paintings. And to some extent the curator has compensated for the weaker moments in the show in the strategically excessive arrangement of the works.

For some however, this arrangement of the works itself represents a form of abuse, a derangement of the work. This is where Buren comes in – or goes out, as the case may be. Here is an artist who knows a thing or two about installing his work in and around that of others to the point where it appears always to have got there first, and he didn't get where he is today by allowing other people to do the same to him. While it is pretty much accepted by artists, if reluctantly, that the work of criticism does not so much explain the work of art as continue it in some way, the idea that the curator (or artist as curator, or whatever) might do something similar seems, at least to some, to be pushing it a little far.

The question of why this might be was discussed at the gallery symposium, as was the apparently separate question of what exactly it is that makes the activity of painting now so different from, say, 30 or 40 years ago, when the monochrome first became plausible as painting. But perhaps the two questions are more closely related than they seem. The assumption that things in art are deeply different now from then is commonly held, but it is far less easy to specify where those differences lie. Paintings, after all, are still made of similar things and in similar places. Nevertheless, the demand that things be different doesn't go away – too many jobs depend on it. So much has been invested in the idea that we have to prove it to ourselves in whatever ways that remain open: by hanging work differently, for example. Contextualists will tell you that this counts for rather a lot, and certainly a work of art is altered in some way by being placed in a different relationship with other works of art or bits of architecture. But in other ways it remains the same: if it didn't preserve an independent identity in some very strong sense, how could we ever become aware of it having changed? If Corris' strategic derangement of a variety of paintings from the last 30 years succeeds as an exhibition it is because, paradoxically, his apparent iconoclasm is underwritten by such a recognition of the identity and indepen-



Gillian Wearing
Dancing
Peckham
Video tape

dence of painting.

David Batchelor

Gillian Wearing

Interim Art, London

A girl in a shopping mall dances alone, without music; swaying to private rhythms audible only to her. British shopping precincts are the last redoubt of the lonely and the desperate, and have become the public day-wards of the Care in the Community scheme. Which is why no one stops or pays any attention to Gillian Wearing, doing retro dance

steps in the Peckham Arcade. After all, she might be crazy, and the mall is no longer safe, no longer a place where you can let your kids wander. A camcorder witnessed the event and in Wearing's entertaining, disturbing, voyeuristic show, the image emanates a tawdry, urban calm.

On a row of five monitors five people sing their favourite track, badly, and all at the same time. Christ, it's awful – like that irritating guy who always manages to sit in front of you on the bus, droning along to the mosquito-hum of his Walkman. Christ, it's awful – Bryan Adams, Gloria Gaynor, Bob Marley and Crystal Gayle are all murdered by their anonymous amateur interpreters. *My Favourite Track* (all works 1994) is an incoherent babble of inarticulacy, a celebration of ineptitude.

Like *Dancing in Peckham*, it is touching because it gives a small insight into our commonplace, endearing fantasies: that we possess within us an ability to dance and sing, despite the most telling evidence that we can do neither. (My Bob Dylan impressions are banned, and a fancy that I am a great disco dancer is belied by friends pretending not to know me on the dance floor).

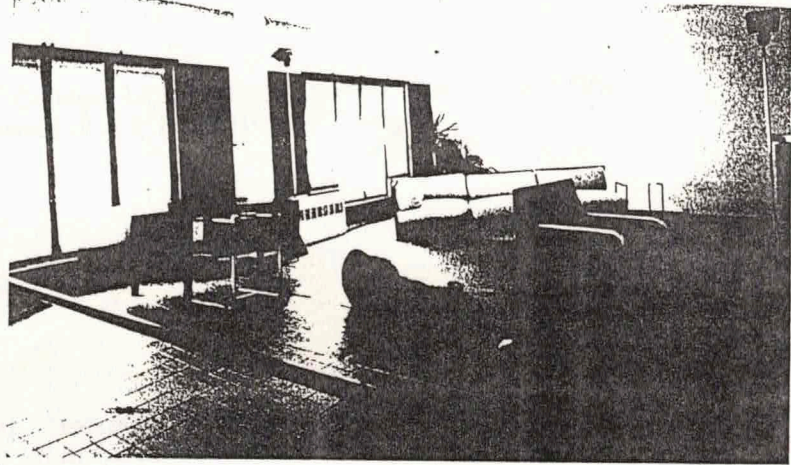
Recently, Wearing placed an ad in *Time Out*. 'Confess all on video. Don't worry you will be in disguise. Intrigued? Call Gillian.' They called, and here they are on screen, these few anonymous men who trouped, briefly, through Wearing's life with their delusions, their incomprehensible pain, their boasts and weirdness. They face the camera in fancy dress masks (chosen from Wearing's collection) and stumble through their guilty secrets. Some are sad, some creepy, some ridiculous: sometimes all these things. A man in a rubber Neil Kinnock mask, who broke into a school and nicked some computer equipment; a guy with a Pinocchio nose who once (only once) betrayed his girlfriend; a very boring transvestite who talked at length of the joys of cross-dressing; a chap who became the willing butt of a trivial sexual humiliation game.

Then the creepy guy who makes obscene phone calls, and insists that some women like it. After his turn was over, he wanted to keep the disguise he'd chosen, and later started phoning the artist, making his calls, doing his little routine.

There's another, a middle-management type, whose sex life is a stopped clock. He's never had a girl and he's even gone to the police and asked to be arrested – because he's obsessed with the memory of watching his brother and sister playing a snogging game in their teens. He's obsessed with being 'abnormal', and can't explain his experience. A hole goes deep, right through him, a chasm covered up with this sibling game. 'I just don't know how to categorise it, I've tried and I've tried...' He too, has started calling Gillian Wearing up, to talk about it all, again and again.

Wearing has her own routines and strategies for getting strangers to talk about themselves, to display and reveal a little of themselves to us. In the past she's handed blank placards to people on the streets and photographed them posing with the slogan of their choice. She's asked businessmen and hoorays and down-and-outs and the blokes down the pub what they regret buying and what they wished they had. Some tell her they've got all they want: they've got big dicks, and how about it, darling?

She gets in close, with her charm and her guile, and people just spill, they show off, they chat her up, and sometimes they come apart. Yet she can be conspiratorial too, and encouraging, as in a recent sequence of photographs of herself in bed with a series of transsexuals. One, who shared her



lipstick, looks like her twin.

The viewer looks and listens as though to a play, a Mike Leigh monologue or an Alan Bennett vignette. But this is real, the product of a one-woman Mass Observation team, done partly in fun (Esther Rantzen territory, or the *Mad Git* half-hour from the BBC Sound Archives), but mostly for reasons no less complex than those that drove her subjects to collude with her. These people exist. Wearing's work could be seen, with its behavioural games playing on our vicarious voyeurism, as a kind of smart exploitation of the unwary: but one must remember that all these people have offered themselves willingly to our gaze, there's nothing covert in Wearing's activities. She's putting herself at risk too. It pays off.

Adrian Searle

Domestic Violence

Giò Marconi Residence, Milan

Home sweet home, the beloved, gilded and disquieting prison. Adam Chodzko's drops of glass filled with an eerie liquid fall from the ceiling. Cubes of band-aids, by Martin Creed, spread over the walls like blemishes – made from an ostensibly sterile material, these are linked with the idea of the wound. And then we see the photographs of embarrassing situations: Jane and Louise Wilson's scene of a crime, and Gillian Wearing's bizarre encounters in a transsexual's bed. A washing machine introduced by Francesco Valtolina emits an infernal racket, better for disturbing the tranquillity of the home than for washing the kids' clothes. Floating in the pool are inedible oranges by Anya Gallaccio, and between two couches stands a glass table where we see her gradual decay

of luxurious red flowers. A magnificent Marilyn poster is violated by Stefano Arienti's eraser, defacing her features and leaving her monstrous. Vittorio Corsini replaces an overhead lamp with a cumbersome revolving structure, while Massimo Bartolini destabilises the bedroom floor. Even the shower is out of bounds, occupied by a television monitor playing a video by Pipilotti Rist.

One of very few Milanese dealers with a museum-sized exhibition space, Giò Marconi renounced his gallery and made his own yuppie home – freshly redecorated with sophisticated designer furniture – available to some 20 Italian and British artists. Even the homes of the upper-middle classes, curator Alison Sarah Jacques seems to say, are not spared the subtle nightmares of the everyday. 'Domestic Violence', the title of the show, posits itself as a metaphor of individual uncertainties and of the Kafkaesque metamorphosis which a tormented subconscious can impose even on sensible, practical, wealthy men. Other useful references can be traced to film: from the macabre in Peter Greenaway to Pedro Almodovar's Anglo-Latin humour, from the demolition of the family myth in Robert Altman to Hitchcock's or Polanski's terrifying thrillers.

Overall, the exhibition presents itself as absolutely 'Western,' focusing on themes and issues not encountered in non-industrialised countries. The point of the show lies here, in the regressive war hidden by the peace of progress, a modern reference to Freud and Einstein's theses on the inevitability of hatred among like peoples. The latest in a long series of exhibitions in non-art spaces, 'Domestic Violence' also tries to unbridle us from the idolatry of museum commissions and gallery commodification. Apart from the specific theme addressed, the exhibition is circumscribed by that circle of events which, during the early 90s, has attempted to challenge the more constraining