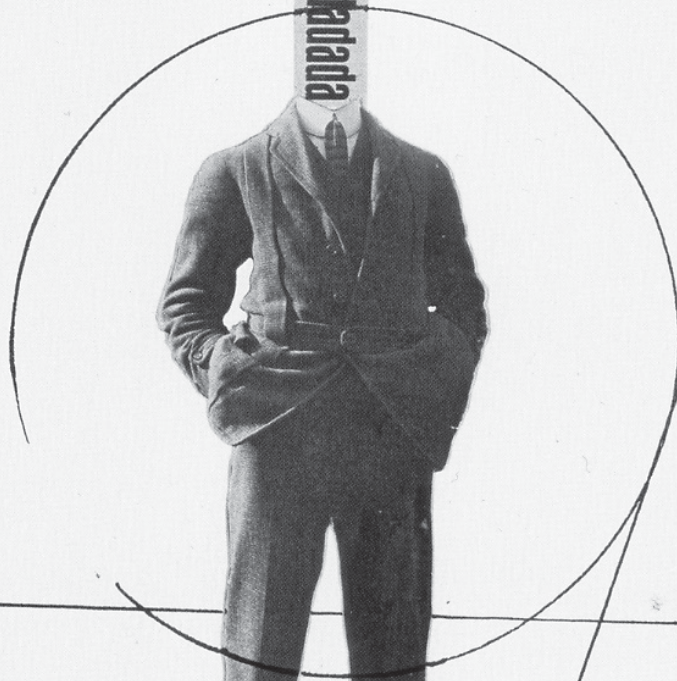


Art in America

JUNE/JULY 2006



Dada

John Heartfield

Duchamp Does Dada

Société Anonyme

Eva Hesse

Thomas Hirschhorn

\$5.00 USA
\$7.00 CAN £3.50 UK

a fascinating blend of architecture, cultures, histories and urban identities. In Beirut, the New York video alternated with another of Shanghai, again taken from a car. Fabião has since similarly recorded several other far-flung urban centers, and she is planning on realizing versions of "Transitio" in 10 cities throughout the world.

Transitio_NYC, the second installment, featured an interesting twist. For 12 nights in October 2005, a large, 40-minute video loop of two Chinese cities, Nanning (in Guangxi) and Shanghai, was projected onto the side of a building on Canal Street in New York's Chinatown. The art crowd was there and was duly enthralled, but it was also fascinating to note the surprised reaction of neighborhood residents, looking up to see the homeland many had left. The non-narrative video shifts between a rainy day in Nanning and a clear one in Shanghai. Fabião's own movements in the car, her occasional use of slow and fast motion in the video and quick transitions between details make for a dizzying whirl of images, which double as a voyage of discovery. One sees street-side vendors, staircases, office buildings, gritty apartments, signage, traffic and an eclectic assortment of people from different social strata. Oftentimes, mundane things—someone's momentary expression, or a shadow jutting across a building's facade—are completely captivating, but because everything is in such rapid flux, one gets mostly fleeting impressions. The video does not focus on the gleaming skyscrapers and massive developments of the new China, but instead on a daily, tenacious, unremarkable China that still seems inviting, and packed with diverse information.

Curated by New York critic Carolee Thea, and funded and assisted by several organizations and private donors, Fabião's outdoor projection had a spectacular quality, akin to larger-than-life billboards or movies on the big screen. Still, its origins are humble: just one woman's darting, ever-curious view as she drives through unfamiliar places. While transported to distant Chinese metropolises, one also paid heightened attention to this particular corner of New York, with its own mixed architecture, snarled traffic and vibrant street life. In an internationally fractious time, Fabião's linked cities were both welcome and apt.

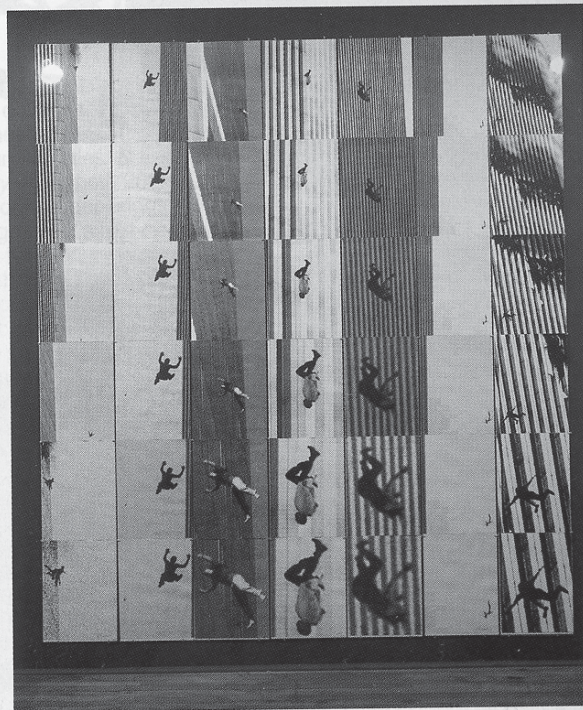
—Gregory Volk

Pentti Sammallahti and Alexey Titarenko at Candace Dwan and Nailya Alexander

The storied "Northern Light" that serves as title to this exhibition—cooperatively organized by two galleries that share space on 57th Street—affects the black-and-white photographs of two artists in radically different ways. Alexey Titarenko of St. Petersburg and Helsinki native Pentti Sammallahti are residents of opposite ends of the Gulf of Finland at 60 degrees north latitude. The nuances of Titarenko's relatively large square prints convey solitude and arrested motion, the blurred effect of long exposures and the camera's intentional movement: a painterly gesture to pictorialist effect. Seeking higher contrast in considerably smaller format, Sammallahti locates moments of seemingly heightened awareness in his varied, often animal subjects.

Titarenko's photographs are driven by an intense interest in the esthetics of the image; the blur he creates is enhanced by the humid air along the city's canals and rivers. His medium-format camera allows for versatility in the urban field and high resolution in prints as much as 15 inches on a side, with a rich gray tonality sometimes altered by toning. From his "Time Standing Still" series, the central figure of *Untitled (Begging Woman)*, 1999, sits at the stepped edge of a street excavation in the foreground, totally focused on an intensely white envelope in her hands (the result of selective bleaching). Pedestrians blur in the middle distance. In another instance of selective toning, a warm, golden light draws the eye to a centrally oriented, sidewalk-level window in *Untitled (Window/Snow)*, 1996, from the series "Black and White Magic of St. Petersburg." Solitary pedestrians move in opposite directions, leaning into wind-blown snow enhanced by the diagonal movement of Titarenko's camera. The human tide of urban Russia floats up the stairs in *Untitled (Variant Crowd 2)*, 1993, turning into a nebulous foglike mass.

The 21 untitled examples of Sammallahti's "Helsinki" series included here are arresting in their formal clarity, composed of objects and subjects that seem placed for specific reason by some natural miracle of rightness and order. Not more than 4½ by 6



Carolee Schneemann: *Terminal Velocity*, 2001, computer scans of newspaper photos, inkjet on paper, 42 elements, 96 by 84 inches overall; at P.P.O.W.

inches and dating from 1964 to 2005, the photographs draw the eye to the clearest of legible images. In a work dated 1968, two young girls play to the camera while a sedan and a gypsy's trailer occupy the distance, like some scene out of Danny Lyon. The event seems oddly mirrored by a 1973 image of two ducks on a small ice floe, adrift on a chilly sea. A photograph dated 2002 is all about an enormous ruin of a tree, a large and barren member supported horizontally across the center of the image. In a 1999 image, a spotted dog stands by a mottled birch in a

feat of protective coloration. Fully absorbed in their work, Sammallahti and Titarenko pursue their respective courses in geographically parallel worlds.

—Edward Leffingwell

Carolee Schneemann at P.P.O.W.

One summer 15 years ago, a macaque monkey sat in a special lab chair in Parma, Italy, with its inferior frontal cortex (the region of its brain responsible for hand function) wired so that every time it grasped or moved an object, a monitor would emit



Left, Alexey Titarenko: *U* photograph, 15½ inches 2002, gelatin silver print, Nailya Alexander.

