

Dan Graham

(Urbana, Illinois, 1942)

Dan Graham's work is based on a coherent theoretical reflection on the relationship between art and the public. In the art movements of the 1960s, particularly in Minimalism and Post-Minimalism, the artist recognized two assumptions that he set out to reveal as baseless: that the viewer is a singular and isolated individual, and that the viewer's perception is immediate, a priori, without any contamination from the cultural, historical and social context. Graham is convinced that the process of perception exists in continuous dialogue with the collective and private memory, and that knowledge of the world depends on interaction with others. "I was more interested in what happened when spectators saw themselves looking at themselves or looking at other people." (Bishop, Claire (ed.), *Installation Art*. London: Tate Publishing, 2005).

To emphasize the social and public aspect of perception, he creates environmental and video installations where the spectator is reflected, becoming an active part of the work, thanks to the use of mirrors and various projections and monitors that entail a physical passage within the exhibition space. Graham's intention is to make people aware of themselves and their own bodies, which come up against the glances of other people in the room. The use of video allows the introduction of a temporal flow and the concept of duration within the work of art and its fruition, heightening the sense of contact with reality. *Sunset to Sunrise* is a documentary film that records the horizon, first at sunset and then at dawn, moving the video camera in a spiral motion and describing the entire topological surface of the sky. In *Binocular Zoom* Graham arranged two movie cameras with identical zoom lenses at the height of each of his eyes and then focused them on the sun, partially obscured by the cloudy sky. The two final films projected on a single, divided screen show the disparities between the images on the right and those on the left. The point of departure for *Roll* and for the two *Helix / Spiral* films is also an analysis of the medium of film through the movement and different points of view established both by the filmmaker during the work's realization and by the public.

Graham's reflections on psychological and interpersonal investigations have led him to develop numerous architectural projects for social interaction in public spaces, including *Children's Day Care*, which is now part of the CRT Collection. It is an actual pavilion for very young children, conceived to be placed within a museum or a library. As in his projects for adults, here, through the computer's video camera, glass panels and mirrors, children are invited to play and, at the same time, to observe themselves and the movements of others.

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