



New York

Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel

Art Galaxy

Before this collaboration with Andrew Ginzel, Kristin Jones' individual work has always made reference to natural phenomena; ambiguous celestial landscapes, icy spaces, tempests, and desert mirages have been recurrent motifs. In this installation the complexity of the phenomena became more concrete than in earlier pieces. If, on the one hand, the contribution of Ginzel's technical abilities was fundamental to the project's practical realization, it is also true that Jones' interest in cartographic representation played a key role in the visualization of this particular "small world." The combination of their different approaches augurs interesting future developments for this new duo.

Spheric Storm, 1985, implied two contrary levels of vision, one absolutely public, the other strictly personal. The work was on view 24 hours a day for more than two months; it was visible from the exterior of the building and didn't require entry into the gallery space. From the sidewalk, the spectator could climb a ramp and look through a small, black-curtained window into the gallery space. From this point on, one had an individual relationship with the work. By pushing a button, the viewer could activate a complex gear mechanism which set off fans, stroboscopic projectors, water and air pumps, and was controlled by timers to last four minutes.

At first the space was completely dark. After a few seconds a myriad of little lights appeared like stars in a nocturnal sky. Slowly a rosy light began to reveal a landscape: a mountain at the center, a lake to the right, a continuous waterfall to the left. Closer to the viewer, sand spewed out of a crater, while a column of smoke erupted from another crater half hidden behind the mountain. A storm of wind and lightning came up against the background, while another strong current of air began to blow from the sides of the viewer's window, at the height of one's face. Throughout the duration of the piece, a turning antenna, in contact with a pulsating surface, moved along the inner edge of the window, combining regular cyclical movement with an intermittent beat, like a continuous breath. Soon all the activity waned, the lights dimmed, and the storm quieted. Once again darkness overtook the space.

It was impossible to decipher the vastness of the territory as a whole. The walls that enclosed the landscape were black, creating a sense of infinity—a space without bottom, sides, or borders. Perspective seemed indefinite, and the landscape, lacking points of spatial reference, acquired gigantic proportions. A small portion of the larger universe was thus conveyed through a restricted space, and one's vision was transported to that no-man's-land of the realm of dreams, a territory marked by mystery and primordial beauty.

It is impossible to remove oneself from the force of natural events; they occur beyond will or prediction. Time



Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel, *Spheric Storm*, 1985, installation view.

is not fixed, but slides along regularly according to its own inexorable, uncontrollable flux. *Spheric Storm* allowed the re-creation of its primary event—the darkness/light/darkness cycle—and since it was activated by a viewer-controlled mechanism, the viewer became a powerful magician, the creator of cyclical time. The machine let one slip beyond time, toward the untouched territories that existed at the world's beginning. It conveyed a sense of the marvelous, not only by joining one's visual experience to the experience of the represented event—entering a state of synchrony—but also through its avoidance of formalistic representation. *Spheric Storm* played on the element of surprise that exists even within predictable cycles.

—IDA PANICELLI

Translated from the Italian by Meg Shore.