

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
June 1991

PROJECTS: THIERRY KUNTZEL

June 28 - September 2, 1991

The Museum of Modern Art's summer **PROJECTS** exhibition is a video installation by French artist Thierry Kuntzel, on view from June 28 through September 2, 1991. Titled *Winter (The Death of Robert Walser)*, the installation explores time and memory and the impact of subliminal images on the viewer. **PROJECTS: THIERRY KUNTZEL** was organized by Barbara London, assistant curator, Video, Department of Film.

Winter is the second installation in Kuntzel's series *Quatre Saisons Moins Une (Four Seasons Less One)*, inspired by the early writings of Swiss author Robert Walser that foretold his death in the snow and Nicolas Poussin's paintings of the four seasons. It consists of a large electronic triptych projected directly onto the gallery wall, with a central image of a motionless male figure (Robert Mapplethorpe model Ken Moody) lying on his back. A computer-controlled camera pans the entire body in the path of an infinity symbol. Slowly repeating the same movement four times, the camera progressively moves in closer to the figure, which gradually emerges from a sheer white veil. This relief-like image is flanked by two projections of identical color fields--a cobalt blue which fades in and out to gray and white and creates a tension with the image of the almost entombed body.

Ms. London writes in the brochure accompanying the exhibition, "Kuntzel is interested in the way simple patterns of light depicting ordinary representational images can have a deep, emotional impact on the viewer's

- more -

mind. He is preoccupied with time and memory, and with what happens below the surface of representation, beyond a narrative story line."

A respected film theoretician and writer, Kuntzel taught film theory in the United States and France before turning to videomaking. In his videotapes and installations, Kuntzel addresses large questions through details. For example, in the videotapes *Nostos I* (1979), *Time Smoking a Picture* (1979), and *Echolalia* (1980), he uses light, minimal form, and simple gestures to examine emotionally charged situations.

Thierry Kuntzel was born in 1948 in Bergerac, France. He studied philosophy at the Sorbonne and linguistics and semiology with Christian Metz and Roland Barthes in Paris. His work has been shown throughout Europe and the United States. His installation *Été (Summer)* is presently on view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, Columbus, as part of PASSAGE DE L'IMAGE, organized by the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

PROJECTS, a series of frequently changing exhibitions devoted to contemporary art, is made possible by generous grants from The Bohen Foundation, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support for this exhibition has been provided by the Sony Corporation of America and the Association Française d'Action Artistique. The next exhibition in the PROJECTS series is GUILLERMO KUITCA (September 13 - October 29, 1991).

* * *

No. 43

For further information or photographic materials, contact Barbara Marshall, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752.