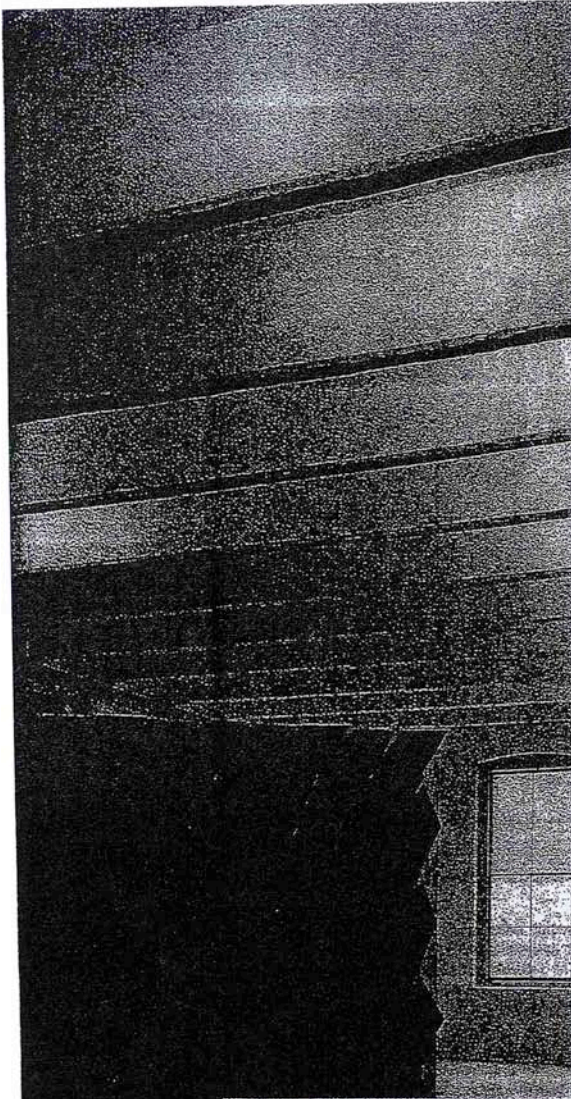


GLADSTONE GALLERY

Simon, Joan, "Sculpture as Theater," *Art in America*, June 2003



Sculpture as Theater

With her recent, quasi-architectural sculptures functioning as video screens, Rosemarie Trockel presented at the Dia Center for the Arts a cohesive yet characteristically multifaceted exhibition.

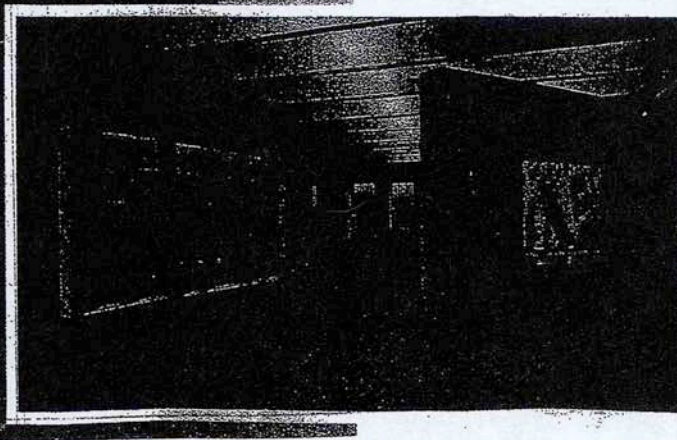
BY JOAN SIMON

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways. —William Shakespeare

Model: Book

Rosemarie Trockel once described a book she envisioned that would reprint all of the articles written about her and her works, all of her own publications and exhibition catalogues, together with all of her exhibition reviews, pro and con.¹ Such a book would evidence the different ways her concepts are embodied and transformed over time. It would serve to pinpoint when and where works were initially presented, and demonstrate how they were later reworked or re-presented in other places and contexts. Trockel follows different lines of thought in connecting her projects one to the next, often in response to the sites where they are exhibited.

Accordingly, the collection would show how different meanings pervaded each situation and how different publics responded in different instances; more importantly, it would establish which works were actually shown. The checklists of Trockel's exhibitions, as published in the accompanying catalogues, have at times failed to include crucial works added to a show at the last moment in an improvisatory act of revision and redirection. So routine is this last defining gesture in an exhibition practice that is also characterized by close collaboration between artist and curator that it might be seen as evidence of Trockel's "spleen," a word she has defined (the German word is also "spleen") as slightly peculiar or bad habits.² Today, the sense of "spleen" is typically limited to a "feeling of resentment or anger," as in the expression "to vent one's spleen." However, going back to an unabridged Webster's, the word's emotional range is



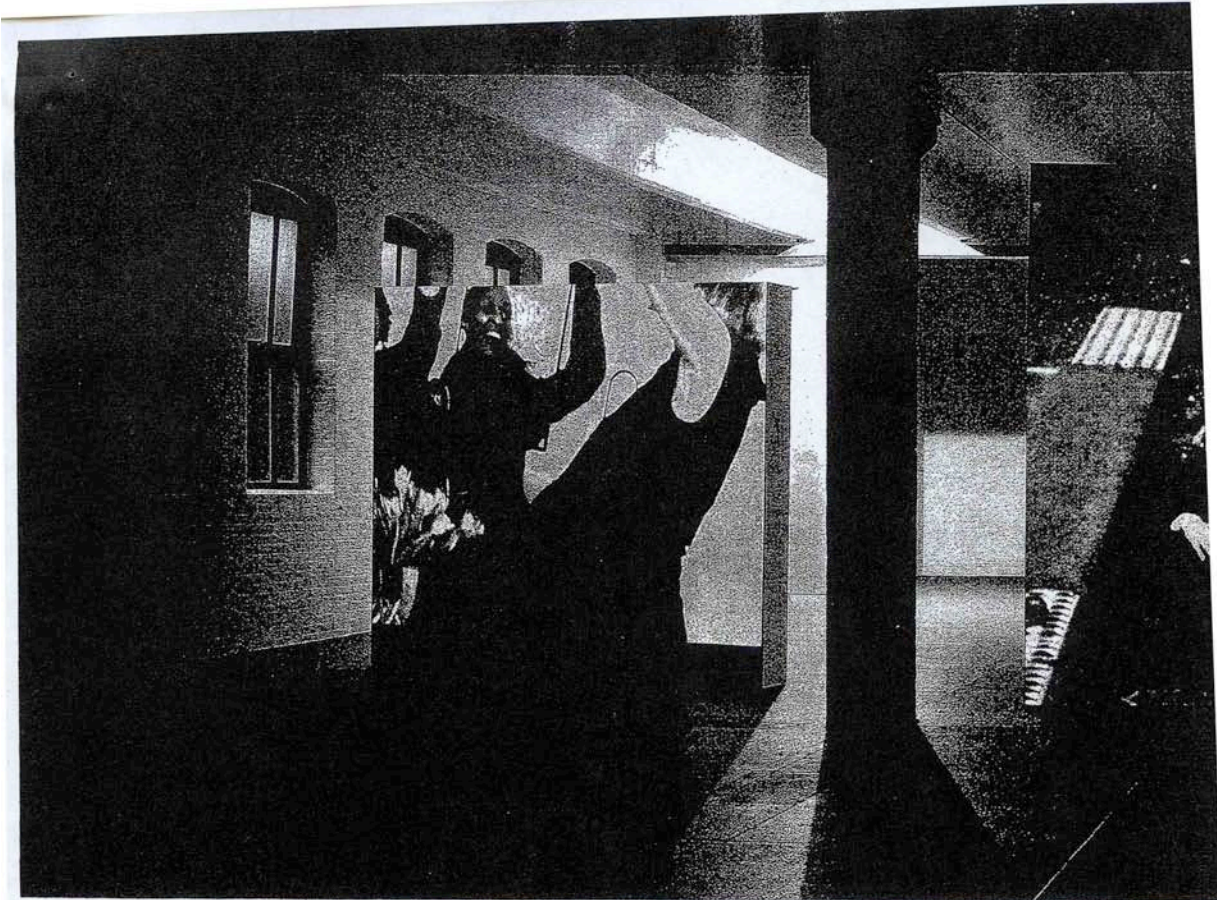
Opposite, Rosemarie Trockel's exhibition "Spleen," 2002-03, showing (left) Blackboard Jungle, 2002, 72 aluminum plates, 11 1/2 by 16 1/2 feet, and (right) Treasure of the Sierra Madre, 2002, 77 aluminum plates, 9 by 12 1/2 feet.

Inset, (right) opposite side of Sierra Madre with the black-and-white video projection Mann's Spleen 2, 2002, 10-30 minutes, and (near left) Beyond the Valley of the Dolls, 2000, 50 aluminum plates, 10 by 19 1/2 feet; at Dia Center for the Arts, New York. Photos: David Allison, courtesy Dia Art Foundation.

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Depicting a lively party, *Manu's Spleen 3* offers a double manifestation of spleen: the hysteria of a false pregnancy and the hysteria of laughter.

seen to be complex and contradictory (a state that Trockel always finds promising). She explores some of the ramifications of the word in a recent series of videos, to be discussed below.

Trockel's encyclopedic publication would afford the reader a sweep through her themes, motifs, mediums and formats, such as the wool knit "pictures" and garments, some of them preposterously elongated, for which she first gained wide public notice; the works in several mediums focusing on stove and oven imagery; the houses for people and animals, made in collaboration with sculptor Carsten Höller; the egg/chicken coop projects; and those works related to the initials "BB" (referring to Brigitte Bardot and also Bertolt Brecht), to list but some of the more familiar bodies of work. Also included would be the more recent "Living Is . . ." series of photo/assemblage floor pieces, as well as the "Manu's Spleen" videos and the architectural sculptures she generically calls "moving walls."

And there's more. Art historian Anne M. Wagner estimates that Trockel had by 1999 "generated something like a thousand drawings in the last twenty years";³ an informal survey by this writer indicates she has made more than 50 videos. Her work also includes designs for books, magazines, clothing and household furnishings, but these are harder to quantify. "Since 1986 Trockel has sent unobtru-

sively into the stream of commerce carpets, vases, china and clothing, and in 1994, designed a striped carpet, ceiling decorations, and porcelain coffee service for the Ladies' Drawing Room for the German embassy in Washington, D.C., writes Lisa Zeiger in *Nest*.⁴

With the exception of a retrospective survey exhibition that toured Europe in 1998-99, offering the fullest picture of her work to date,⁵ Trockel in recent years has typically focused each exhibition on one or two types of works, such as the 1999 show "Maisons/Häuser" (Houses), comprising shelters for animals and people, done in collaboration with Höller at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris,⁶ or the exhibition of stove/kitchen pieces at the Lenbachhaus, Munich, in 2001, or the kitchen works together with the wool works at the Moderna Museet Stockholm, also in 2001.⁷ An alternative model is to pick one or two new suites of works for the core of the show, and then add a variety of others in the same exhibition. For example, the drawing retrospective at the Centre Pompidou, Paris offered a year's production of Trockel's then newest body of drawings, the "Sleepers," in which the figures look ambiguously sleeping or dead. The exhibition also presented drawings since 1983, as well as a multimedia sculpture that is a drawing/slide show situated inside a camping tent; the video *Manu's Spleen* (2000) was also given its debut showing.⁸ The extensive works on paper component of the Pompidou show was subsequently on view at the Drawing Center in New York.⁹

"Rosemarie Trockel: Spleen," currently at the Dia Center for the Arts in New York [through June 15], is a concise and theoretically focused show. "For this exhibition," reads Dia's fall 2000 exhibition calendar, "Trockel will install a new suite of video projections connected by cantilevered aluminum walls that are suffused with warm ambient light." The show affords much new material and many surprises. This is the first time the five "Spleen" videos and five "moving walls"

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have been shown together as an ensemble, and in a framework that pairs each video with a wall in ways as quietly dazzling as they are structurally economical. The show also offers some "extras" to the billed installation: another sculpture, another video and two vitrines filled with maquettes for unrealized books that the artist brought with her from Cologne when she arrived to install the show.

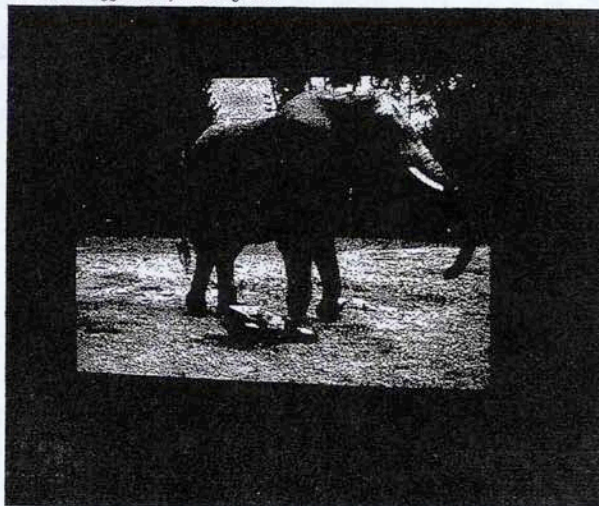
Wall as Sculpture

Dia's 7,000-square-foot second-floor gallery is, overall, a vast square interrupted by a massive freight elevator enclosure that partially bisects the space. Working with the architecture, Trockel has structured her show in response to the pair of side-by-side rectangular gallery spaces, with windows that admit changing daylight. Entering the gallery, viewers find themselves in a corral-like enclosure formed by five thick, freestanding wall segments. They range in height from 9 to 11 feet, and in width from 10½ to 19½ feet. The supports are each about 11¼ inches thick. They are covered edge-to-edge with the kinetic elements that constitute Trockel's "moving walls"—thin aluminum panels that project from the surface of each wall on the side facing the enclosure. These panels are set on devices that allow them to move independently of one another in response to changing air currents. The shifting planes and changing illumination play optical tricks; the viewer perceives the individual panels as changing color (which does not actually occur within the same piece) or shape (tilted rectangles are seen as trapezoids.) Three of the walls—*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (2000), with its 50 squares, *No Woman No Cry* (2000), with its 40 vertically oriented rectangles, and *Rancho Dehuxe* (2001), with 15 plates that are vertical rectangles with a small triangular extension at the upper left of each—are white or near-white, and constitute a zigzag lineup that "extends" the white wall forming one face of the elevator enclosure.

Facing the white-to-gray minimalist triad and in stark contrast to them are two

Left to right, Manu's Spleen 3, 2001, color video, sound, 1:50 minutes; Manu's Spleen 1, 2000, color video, sound, 7:20 minutes; Manu's Spleen 5, 2002, silent color video, 1:30 minutes; at Dia. Photo David Allison.

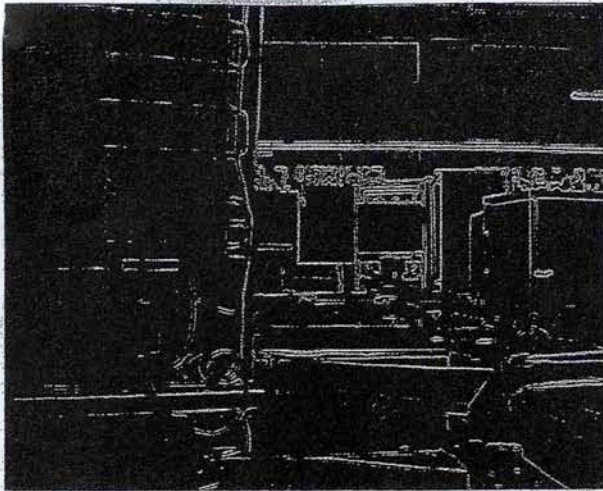
Detail of the Dia installation showing Manu's Spleen 5. Photo Nic Tiggenhorn, courtesy Dia.



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Video still from *Leaving Las Vegas*, 2002, 5:15 minute loop. Photo courtesy Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.

other moving walls that make a more dramatic coloristic statement: the black panels assembled on the black support of *Blackboard Jungle* (2002) and the dark amber diamonds over the saffron yellow wall of *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (2002). The panels, not perfectly rectangular, also form more complex patterns in slightly skewed grids. These wall/sculpture entities perform an additional function: the back of each sculptural unit serves as a screen for projected videos, which are unseen but nevertheless heard from within the overall configuration.

The various moving walls have a broad range of affinities with abstract art, from the black matte assemblages of Louise Nevelson to the white metal sheets of Robert Ryman fastened with distinctive hardware, or Robert Irwin's early, shadow-casting white discs supported at a distance from the wall. Trockel's pivoting geometric panels suggest, as well, the delicately balanced moving parts of George Rickey's kinetic sculptures; and in form, they call to mind Ellsworth Kelly's 1957 *Sculpture for a Large Wall*, with its 104 anodized aluminum panels spanning an architectural surface more than 65 feet wide. Also pertinent are the kinetic works of Germany's Group Zero, the counter-illusions of flat and projecting geometries by Jesús Rafael Soto, the kinetic architectural commissions of Richard Lippold, Sheila Hicks's light-inflecting disks and even the metal paillettes of those modern suits of chain mail that are the signature designs of veteran couturier Paco Rabanne.

Wall as Theater

That Trockel has titled her moving walls with the names of motion pictures, preceding their use as literal supports for her own videos, adds another layer of content to the mathematical cool of the sober, geometric constructions. Some of the films she alludes to are classics, others far less known (*No Woman No Cry* is more familiar as the title of a Bob Marley song).

The five numbered videos were completed out of sequence; to complicate matters further, except for the first, *Manu's Spleen*, they made their debuts in nonchronological order—not unlike Matthew Barney's five-part "Cremaster" series. (The first three completed have been shown elsewhere, independent of the others, and in different contexts.¹⁰) With her placement of the walls, Trockel creates individual screens for the videos; four of the five face darkened sections of the gallery that function as mini-theaters. Each video is scaled somewhat differently to its supporting wall, some of them to the full height and width, others not. The walls themselves create different types of viewing spaces at Dia. Three of the videos (3, 1 and 5), for example, on the backs of the three white walls, offer a triptych of sorts in a unified viewing space.¹¹ Those screened behind the black and yellow walls are in more distinct spaces. Behind the largest of the "moving walls," *Blackboard Jungle*, in the triangular space most defined and offset from the rest of the exhibition, is where Trockel shows her version of Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, recast as *Manu's Spleen 4*. Behind *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is the first video encountered upon entering the exhibition, *Manu's Spleen 2*.

This wall and this video stand alone, having characteristics that distinguish them from the other walls and the other videos on view. The deep yellow handsomely frames the black-and-white video (the others are in color). The projection field is scaled to a large wide-screen TV, emphasizing the news/documentary aspect of the video. During the brief interval between the end and startup in its continual replay, the gray-white rectangular surface into the colored wall reads, ever so briefly, as the kind of Minimalist painting you would find itself at home at Dia.

Demo

The opening shots of *Manu's Spleen 2* (2002, 10:30 minutes) are slow, panning studies of a modern building's patterned facade. We soon see a black bar entering the lower part of the screen from the right and moving left to traverse the bottom of the field. As the camera pulls back to a long shot of the building, it reveals an assembly of people and a couple at a microphone; it becomes a TV news "crawl," white lettering on the black strip spelling out simultaneous translation in English from the German of the speech being given by the man, who is the well-known German actor Udo Kier.

"Sentenced to death we have come to protest" are his opening words. The protest is against the decision of Cologne's powers-that-be to demolish the Kunsthalle (which also housed the Kunstverein) and incorporate these cultural institutions, with several others, into a new arts complex. The structure in question was the distinctive Franz Lammersen-designed building, which offered ideal staging areas for contemporary art exhibitions and other actions since the '60s. Trockel took up this cause with fervor, organizing, with others, protest counter a decision already taken.

The video and its script are part of Trockel's contribution to what was an ongoing protest; petitions were solicited during the demonstration that was also "shoot" of *Manu's Spleen*. They are published in an accompanying volume to the video called *PRO TEST: Rosemarie Trockel Manu's Spleen 2*, reproduced in grid of eight per page; the petitions take up the bulk of the book's 368 pages.¹²

The patterned facade of the Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, completed in 1967, is as much a character in the video as the speaker and the blonde woman at his side, who is similarly holding some sheets of paper and who bears more than a passing resemblance to Trockel herself. She is the German artist and illustrator Manu Burghart, who appears in all five videos. In the context of the Dia exhibition, one cannot miss the resemblance of the building's patterned-relief facade to the similarly light-activated surfaces of Trockel's low-relief moving walls.

As Kier reads his speech, his words are variously a rallying cry, a manifesto of an impassioned questioning of why one should protest when it is already too late. The speech is essentially about the necessity of protest even in the face of a seemingly impossible situation. In the end, the cause was indeed lost: the Kunsthalle was recently torn down.

Manu's role remains ambiguous throughout. By the time the video ends, although she appears to be ever-ready to step up to the mike with her pages, she has not done so. When the speaker finishes, she hands her pages to him. The last shots show a crowd around a table, along with a group of photographers; among the latter, if we scrutinize the group, we find Manu behind a camera as well—as an amateur snapping those at the table.

If we think of Manu as Trockel's double, she, like Trockel, plays a dual role: she is the camera, and uses the male speaker as a ventriloquist would a "vent"—an apt word under the circumstances. Trockel alludes to the entertainment value of protest, or of protest in the context of popular entertainments, when, in the middle of her filmed protest, we see a stalker run behind Manu and the speaker, bringing a smile to her face as he continues to read his speech; here we are reminded of the live, world-wide broadcast of the Academy Awards in 1974, when a naked fellow ran across the stage behind David Niven. Among the many credits that roll when Kier's speech has ended are those to "the stalker Martin Lackner and all protesters."

Flashback

Trockel's videos have since the '90s taken a central position in her body of work. She began working with a Super-8 camera as early as 1978, having studied with filmmaker Robert van Ackeren; at first she trained her view on animals, especially those in her own apartment—among them ants, spiders and her dog. She got a video camera in 1979, and soon began to collect footage from scientific institutes and television. She did not show any of her films or videos until 1990, when she made a kind of video-transfer compilation reel called *Tverfilme* (Animal films) to use with three cast-bronze sculptures of dead animals.¹³

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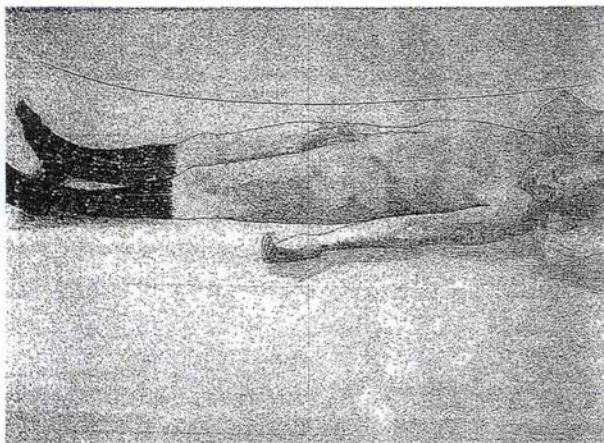
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In the cutting of the old footage, Trockel began to work anew with video, often incorporating her emblematic images and treating them with a wry humor (a moth eating through a piece of fabric in *A la motte*), finding new animal help-meets, such as poisonous processionary caterpillars, and using lyrical commissioned scores.¹⁴

Her video triptych for the German pavilion at the 1999 Venice Biennale revealed the expanding range of her video work as well as its conceptual grounding. A black-and-white, mural-scale projection of a single, ever-changing eye in the central gallery was flanked by two rooms presenting two other, contrasting video installations. In one of the videos, shot in an inflatable dome of Trockel's design, the floor-to-ceiling image offered tired wanderers vicarious respite with its vision of silvery beds, white blankets and pillows, suspended in glowing plastic sleeping pods. (Several real camp cots were set up where visitors could nap in the shadows at the back of the pavilion.) The other video, *Kinderspielplatz*, projected at the scale of an easel painting, was a Bruegelesque scene of a children's playground shot during the course of a day; the working mini-cars seen in the video are Trockel sculptures (now in the collection of the De Pont Foundation for Contemporary Art, Tilburg, Holland).

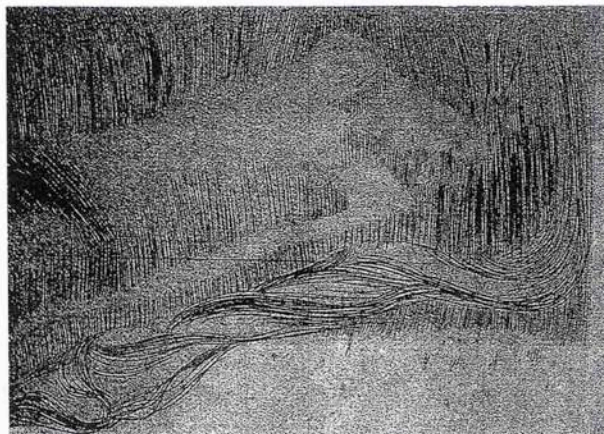
Manu (Triptych)

At Dia, *Manu's Spleen* (2000, 7:20 minutes) is the first of the Manu series and the first of the group to have been publicly shown (after its Paris debut it was seen at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York in 2001). It is installed in the gallery as the central panel of a "triptych"; *Manu's Spleen 3* forms the left panel, and



Untitled, 2000, crayon on paper, 27 1/2 by 39 1/2 inches.

Untitled, 2000, crayon on paper, 27 1/2 by 39 1/2 inches.
Photos this page courtesy Monika Sprüth Galerie.



In *Manu's Spleen*, two figures in a grave appear to be in a suspended state. The camera dwells on this image, reminiscent of Trockel's recent drawings of "Sleepers."

Manu's Spleen 5 is at right. In these three videos, by contrast to the other two in the ensemble, Manu is the principal or solo player. *Manu's Spleen* opens with the camera following two women (both blondish, youngish Trockel look-alikes, one of them Manu Burghart) and a young man. They enter what might be a park but is soon revealed as a cemetery. They walk, talk and smoke, and come upon a freshly opened grave. There, already in place, is another young man, neatly dressed, lying on his back.

His eyes are closed, and there is no coffin. Whether he is dead or asleep is not initially clear, but as two of the visitors descend into the grave and with difficulty shove him to the side, it becomes evident that he is dead-weight, and thus to be presumed dead. They are actually making room for Manu, who steps into the grave and lies down beside him. She stays there for a while, blond hair splayed behind her; the two "sleeping beauties" appear to be in a suspended state. The camera dwells on this image, which is reminiscent of Trockel's recent drawings of "Sleepers" (not in the Dia show). Meanwhile, the two others go about their business, talking on cell phones and to each other and smoking. After what seems an eternity, Manu gets up and, with a little help from her friends, steps out of the grave. The three leave the cemetery as casually as they entered.

The atmosphere in this video is darkened yet strangely luminous, the video palette seemingly blued and grayed. The action is as undramatic as it is melancholy, overcast. It recalls Baudelaire's poem, "Spleen," where "the sun pours down on us a daylight dingier than the dark."¹⁵

Since ancient times, the spleen, an oval organ on the left side of the body between the stomach and the diaphragm, has been considered "the seat of emotions." (The spleen's function was mysterious until the 20th century; today, we know that it produces cells involved with immune reactions.) Its inventory of older meanings also includes, per Webster's, latent spite, ill humor, malice, a sudden motion or action, melancholy, caprice, even a fit of immoderate laughter or merriment.

In *Manu's Spleen 3* (2001, 1:50 minutes), the second of the series to be shown to the public, the situation is a lively party—actually a baby shower, in which Manu, stylish and obviously pregnant in her form-fitting black dress, is laughing among guests. As she blows out candles on a cake, a pop is heard like that of a champagne cork, but in fact it is the balloon that had been her stomach, exploding and deflating. With a puncture of a pin Manu has vanished the pregnancy among gales of laughter. The action here is repeated four times (the balloon is punctured by alternating gestures with Manu's right and left hand), all to the sound of Madonna's "Don't Tell Me," played backwards in remix form. *Manu's Spleen 3* offers a double manifestation of spleen: the hysteria of a splenetic biological condition and the hysteria of laughter.

Manu's Spleen 5 (2002), a silent video, is the shortest of them all, at 1:30 minutes, and the lightest evocation of spleen's darker meanings. Manu walks into a park, carrying a sign with the words "WHERE IS MR. COMES" lettered on it. She wears a jacket with epaulettes and metal buttons. An elephant soon comes into view. When the two cross paths near an overturned minibike, Manu shows the elephant the sign and seems to ask if the elephant has seen the man whose name is on the card. Manu here evidences many Trockel attributes—the woman who would talk to animals, who makes films and videos of them and makes houses for people to share with them. She gives up her search for Mr. Comes, and the video ends with her laying down the sign on the "dead" bike and walking away from the elephant.

The sign Manu carries might also be seen as serving something of a practical purpose. Attentive credit readers of the other videos will have recognized Comes's name, which appears at the end of each of them. Among the credits for *Manu's Spleen 5* are those acknowledging Manu Burghart, the elephant Sinta and the cameraman, Marc Comes.

Revisiting Mother Courage

Manu's Spleen 4 (2002, 7:42 minutes), a reimagining of Bertolt Brecht's play *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941), is more complex than the other videos in the Dia show, in scale, subject and theatrical rendering. Trockel replays

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Trockel replays Brecht's chronicle of the Thirty Years War, as Courage follows the armies back and forth across Europe in a canteen wagon. For her, war is business.

Brecht's chronicle of the Thirty Years War, where Courage follows the armies back and forth across Europe in her canteen wagon, provisioning them and profiteering. She hopes to save her children via her merchant's trade, yet she inexorably loses them. This is an anti-morality tale, filled with many contradictions; it offers Mother Courage as an epic anti-heroine or, in Brecht's words, a character with "a realistic, un-ideal quality."¹⁵ There are, though, at least two certainties: war is business and, as Brecht wrote, "war teaches people nothing."¹⁷

In creating her version, Trockel went back to Brecht's sources. She also worked with the notes and photographs that make up Brecht's own "Mother Courage Model" for the 1949 staging of his play in Berlin.¹⁸ Trockel has streamlined the number of characters in the play, and uses some of her own stock figures that have appeared many times in her previous works. These include Brigitte Bardot, whom Trockel herself has likened to Mother Courage,¹⁹ or her "Jackie," who appeared in an earlier video of Trockel's, *Paparazzia* (1993).

In Trockel's staging, as in Brecht's, Courage and her family are the "little people" of war, who will be deformed or consumed by it. Young men offer themselves up as soldiers, young women present themselves as sexual goods; all of them negotiate with one side or another, in daily complicity. In Trockel's staging, one of the more successful profiteers is Yvette, the camp prostitute, embodied in the "Jackie" figure who is shown diligently, sensuously, polishing a cannon.

Brecht based his play on the works of a 17th-century writer, Hans Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen, who himself had served in the Thirty Years War before publishing his saga *Simplicissimus*, and who also wrote *Die Landstörzerin Courasche* (The Life of Courage) from which Brecht's title and title character derive. Trockel, too, went back to this source, and incorporated the lead figure's background from a higher social class into Brecht's lower class camp cook. Mother Courage, in Trockel's condensation of the play, has some of the charms—and the high-styled clothing—that in Brecht's play were the attributes of Yvette.

Mamù plays Courage, dressed in '60s Courrèges; she looks like she'd not dirty her hands or her black-banded white shift; this camp cook now uses her frying pans and other kitchen utensils as mirrors and primping devices. Thus Trockel makes Courage an equivalent to Yvette, the only character to profit (somewhat) from the war by marrying a grotesque colonel. In her Yvette, Trockel calls up two Jackie types: the revered widow dressed in elegant black and the one remembered, and criticized, for marrying for money the second time around.

Courage's daughter and sons are oppositely disposed. Trockel doubles the identity of the mute Katrin, upgrading her position by dressing her in armor as Joan of Arc. Katrin also hears voices, albeit from the radio she holds dear. Courage's sons, by contrast, are less sharply characterized, wearing "nude" leotards to which external flopping stuffed penises are attached; the boys function as funny, interchangeable male symbols—from the horses that pull the canteen wagon (as they do in Brecht's famous opening) to the human bullet that dives into the gun barrel, as Trockel doubles back on the sexual symbolism, turning the phallic symbol of the cannon from penetrator to penetratee.

The way Trockel uses her figures for comic relief within the brutalities of the play is also specifically Brechtian: As he wrote in "Concerning these notes": "It is to be hoped that the present notes . . . will not make an impression of misplaced seriousness. . . . [A] carefree lightness . . . is essential to the theatre. Even in their instructive aspect, the arts belong to the realm of entertainment."²⁰ Nor does Trockel forget the audience as envisioned by Brecht: spectators were supposed to be dispassionate and detached, and were not to empathize with the characters. As a further distancing device, Trockel uses a pair of her Bardot figures in the video's foreground, as though in a prompter's box:

blank-faced and turned toward the audience, they mouth the words of what we hear.

Trockel's complex, layered soundtrack plays an important role.²¹ Her radio not only serves as her "voice" but comments on various aspects of it. Turning the radio dial, Katrin picks up fragments of speech that amplify texts and offer contradiction to the activities on stage. As images alternate between Katrin/Joan of Arc at the radio and Yvette/Jackie at the cannon, we hear radio reports from Dallas as the news broke of JFK's assassination; we hear Marilyn Monroe singing "Happy Birthday, Mr. President."

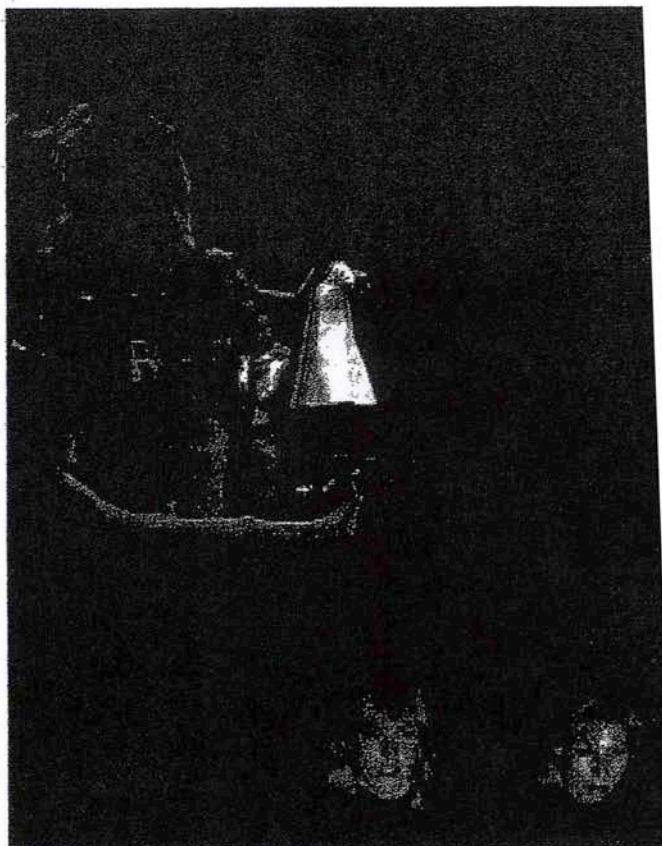
Just as Brecht had the mute Katrin serve as the "voice" that warns of the armies by banging her drum loudly from a rooftop (she dies a martyr's course of doing it), so Trockel loads the image of Katrin: her radio blares warnings, and she, too, as her Joan of Arc costume indicates, will be martyred.

We hear fragments from Brecht's testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee, in which he says, "I was not a member and am not a member of any Communist party," and the voice of his wife, the actress Helene Weiger who says, in a contrary fashion: "Communism is good for us." As their evocations of the McCarthy era, we are reminded of the blackness of the postwar period.

The video ends with a view from on high: the wagon circles counterclockwise on a circular stage, which revolves in the opposite direction. Jackie is pulling the cannon, while Courage hauls the canteen wagon, having taken the place of her sons, who have both died (literal cannon fodder). Courage's daughter up at the driver's seat of the wagon is slumped over the radio, ambiguously sleeping or dead, like so many of Trockel's recent drawing subjects, as well as the cent "sleepers" in *Mamù's Spleen*.

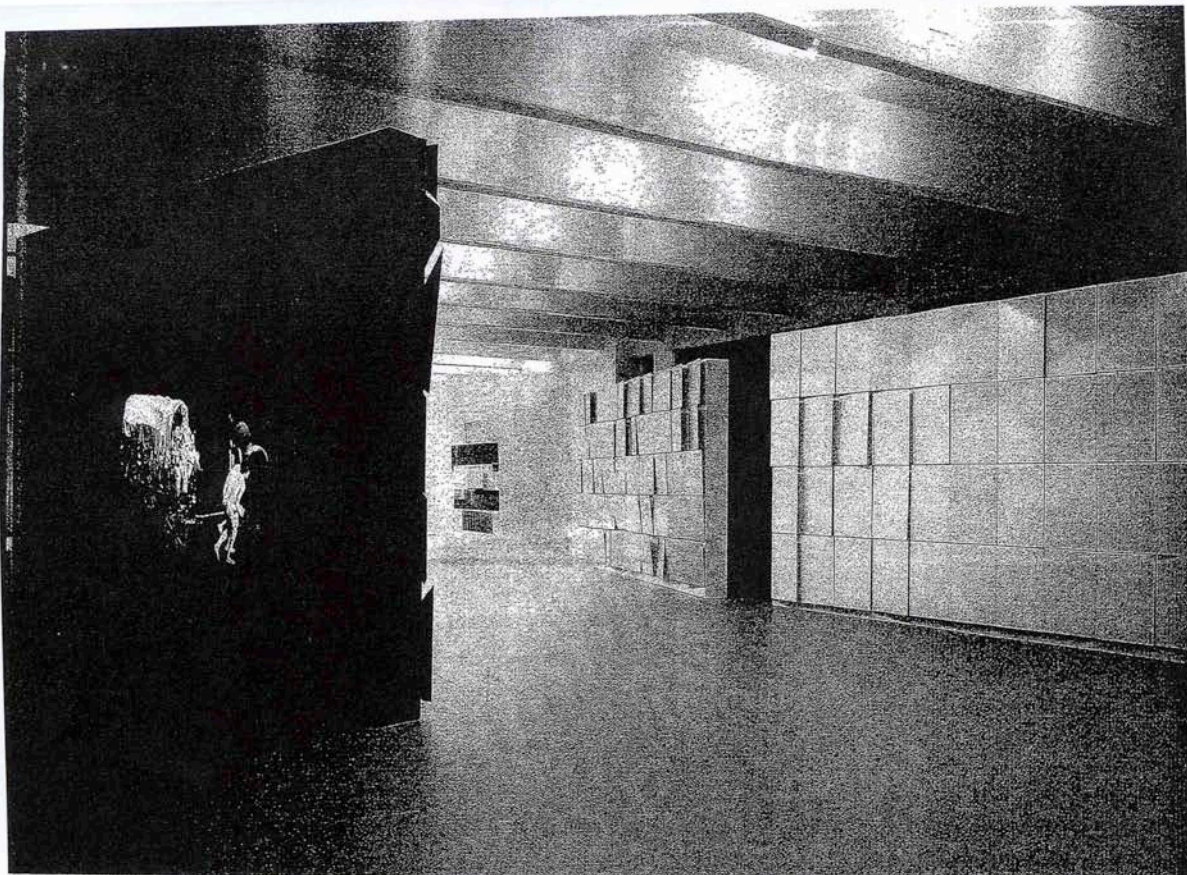
Coda

It would be unlike Trockel to end a show with a neat closing, and of course she doesn't. In the final quadrant of the Dia space, one finds Trockel's loop *Leaving Las Vegas* (2002), seen on a small, wall-mounted, flat-screen.



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Above left, *Manu's Spleen 4*, 2002, color video projection, sound, 7:45 minutes, (rear) *Phobia*, 2002, 5 aluminum plates, 10 by 19½ feet, (right) *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, and *No Woman No Cry*, 2000, 40 aluminum plates, 11 by 16½ feet; at *Dia*. Photo David Allison.

Left, *Still from Manu's Spleen 4* (detail). All works this article courtesy Monika Sprüth Galerie, Cologne, and Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.

monitor, and a group of maquettes for books in two vitrines. The video shows a near-abstract of outlined rectangular forms on a dark field, almost as if drawn in highlighter ink. The forms recall the aluminum panels of the "moving walls" as well as the sides of Trockel's familiar stove forms. The straightforward production facts are noted by Lynne Cooke in the exhibition brochure: Trockel has her camera "cruising slowly through a silent storage site where abandoned refrigerators await recycling."²²

If there were an ideal ending to Trockel's collected volume, it might correspond to the last two vitrines of the *Dia* show. Here, maquettes are at once model and end result. Together with other raw materials awaiting use, and along with Trockel's many works in progress, these items would ensure a book "without end," somewhat like her own endless knitted stockings or the source of so much of her thinking—the endlessly "in process" Cologne Cathedral.

Trockel's catalogues and artist books deserve a show of their own, and these "sketches" for unrealized projects are curt and summary. A number of the maquettes refer specifically to other artists. *Phobia* (1988), for example, as the caption reads, "was meant as a commentary to the psychological classification of Donald Judd's attitude toward the female sex. Therefore I used an early photograph of Judd showing him contemplating his work, and I effeminized his haircut, the fly of his trousers and the contour of his shirt."

On the way out, one might note a new wall-hung sculpture/relief on the far side of the elevator enclosure. It, too, is called *Phobia* [see cover], and

extends Trockel's rejoinder to Judd.²³ Constituted of five flat, horizontally elongated metal panels, placed one above the other in a (Judd-like) "stack," the elements pivot slightly in front of the wall, as do the aluminum panels attached to her moving walls. But the high-gloss industrial components of *Phobia* (2002) are accessorized with sinuous black fringe—yet another manifestation of Trockel's "spleen." □

1. Unless otherwise noted, remarks attributed to Trockel are from conversations with the author, from the early 1990s until now.
2. Trockel to Grace Glueck, "Drawings as Enigmas Wrapped in Metaphors," *New York Times*, Mar. 23, 2001, p. E34, referring to *Manu's Spleen* and *Manu's Spleen 3*, when they were shown at Barbara Gladstone Gallery; and in comments to the author.
3. Anne M. Wagner, "Trockel's Promise," *Drawing Papers* 18, New York, Drawing Center, 2001, p. 7.
4. Lisa Zeiger, "Everything but the Chick," *Nest* 2, fall 1998, pp. 124-129. See also Web page of A/D gallery [www.aditions.com] for installation views of "Rosemarie Trockel: Rugs and Related Work," November-December 2001.
5. *Rosemarie Trockel: Bodies of Work*, London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1998. The show toured Hamburg, Stuttgart, London and Marseille.
6. *Maisons/Hauser: Carsten Höller, Rosemarie Trockel*, exhib. cat., Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, and Cologne, Oktagon, 1999.
7. *Rosemarie Trockel*, exhib. cat., Stockholm, Moderna Museet, 2001, is a revision and expansion of the 2000 Lenbachhaus catalogue, following the same design and format.
8. *Rosemarie Trockel: Dessins*, exhib. cat., Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 2000. The *continued on page 137*

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10. *Manu's Spleen* (2000), in "Rosemarie Trockel: Dessins," Paris, 2000; *Manu's Spleen 3*, in "Rosemarie Trockel," at the De Pont Foundation for Contemporary Art, Tilburg, Holland, 2001; and *Manu's Spleen 4*, 2002, in "Rosemarie Trockel," at Sammlung Goetz, Munich, 2002.
11. The diagram prepared in advance for publication in time for the opening does not reflect the final disposition of *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, 2002, and *Manu's Spleen 5*. In addition, in two cases the published dimensions of the moving walls do not correspond to the walls' sizes in their New York incarnation. "Rosemarie Trockel: Spleen," brochure accompanying the current Dia show, New York, Dia Center for the Arts, 2002, np.
12. *PRO TEST: Rosemarie Trockel Manus Spleen 2*, Cologne, Walter Koenig, 2002. The book includes the entire speech, in German and English.
13. These sculptures were titled *Gewohnheitstier* (Creatures of Habit). The video and the animal sculptures were included in 1991 in her traveling U.S. retrospective (organized by Elisabeth Sussman and Sidra Stich for the ICA, Boston, and the University Art Gallery, Berkeley). *Tierfilme* escaped the catalogue, and press attention, for the most part, with the notable exception of Thyrza Nichols Goodeve's text in *Artyforum* (September 1991), which appeared as a sidebar in Deborah Drier's article "Spiderwoman" (pp. 118-23).
14. In 1995, at the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Trockel exhibited videos in a retrospective of sorts, in a room-sized installation, with a dozen monitors suspended from the ceiling, punctuating a grid in a 5,000-square-foot space.
15. Charles Baudelaire, "Spleen," *Les Fleurs du Mal*, translated by Richard Howard, Boston, David R. Godine, 1982, p. 76.
16. Bertolt Brecht, "Two Ways of Playing Mother Courage," 1951, quoted in John Willett and Ralph Manheim, eds., *Mother Courage and Her Children*, John Willett, trans. London, Methuen, 2000, p. 145.
17. Bertolt Brecht, "Misfortune in Itself Is a Poor Teacher," 1954, quoted in Willett and Manheim, p. 147.
18. Brecht's own models often begat contradictory results. Some directors, in being too faithful to them, gave the plays such "a rigid lifeless copying," wrote Willett and
19. Trockel to Lynne Cooke, "In Medias Res," *Rosemarie Trockel*, exhib. cat. Sammlung Goetz, 2002, p. 23.
20. Bertolt Brecht, "Concerning these notes," from *Mother Courage and Her Children*, quoted in Willett and Manheim, p. 144.
21. Cooke writes ("In Medias Res," p. 28), "this collaged soundtrack is composed of some 20 extracts, opening with the aria in Tchaikovsky's opera, *The Maid of Orleans*, 'Holy father, help me, I am afraid,' and ranging from the culminating drumroll in Bresson's *Jeanne d'Arc*, to excerpts from several of Brecht's songs from both *Mother Courage* and *Saint Joan*, to Bardot singing the pop tune *Contact*, and John Lennon crooning 'Imagine all the people . . .'"
22. Cooke, Dia exhib. brochure.
23. Following her typical practice of changing the context and reversing the meaning of previously employed ideas and elements, Trockel reused the *Phobia* form *fantôme de la liberté* (2003), included in her recent show in a Paris gallery. Her work made reference to the relation of two women—Trockel and her dealer, Gilles Vilpeux. The whole show, "L'imitation d'Anne," treated this theme.

"Rosemarie Trockel: Spleen" was curated by Lynne Cooke, who also wrote the exhibition brochure. The show is on view at the Dia Center for the Arts, 1 [Oct. 16, 2002-June 15, 2003]. Other solo shows took place at Galerie . Villepoix, Paris [Feb. 22-Mar. 22], and the National Gallery in Prague [Apr. 8]. Works by Trockel are on view in a group drawing show at Donald Chicago [Apr. 26-May 31], in a 20th-anniversary group show at Monika Philomene Magers, Cologne [Apr. 25-Oct. 10], and in a three-artist show Bridget Riley and Agnes Martin, at Karsten Schubert, London [May-June]; produce a special exhibition for children at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, in September.

Author: Joan Simon is a critic and independent curator based in Paris. She is currently organizing a William Wegman retrospective for the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Mass., to open there in 2005 and then travel.