

Flash Art



August – September 2004

MILAN

HELIDON GJERGJI

If the film *Blue* by Derek Jarman can be considered, however reductively, as the expanded cinematographic version of a monochrome by Yves Klein with special audio and musical effects, the installations by Helidon Gjergji can be seen as the transposition of American abstract expression by means of cathodic tubes.

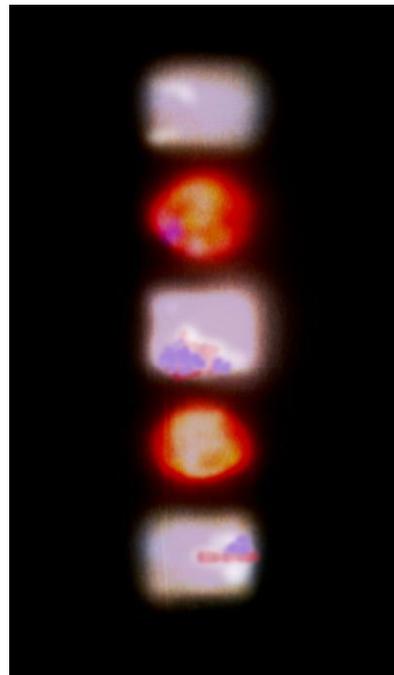
The work of the Albanian artist, who has been a resident of the United States for years now, poses the twofold question of the obsessive pervasiveness of television and the pronounced, but never realized, prophecy of the death of painting.

In Gjergji's works, television programs are altered, or veiled, to obtain pictorial effects. This is the case of *Action TV Painting*, an interactive installation that invites the spectator to change the chromatic field formed by televisions hidden behind a canvas by simply surfing with a remote control. The tiny televisions thereby become the marks and signs of a dynamic, abstract work. In *Physio-TV*, a horizontal sequence of 5-inch monitors is deftly occulted by a row of variously colored beer bottles, which transforms the banality of the media's imagery in the illusion of an evanescent multichromatic band of liquid.

Helidon Gjergji seems to draw upon the lessons of Popper, nonetheless exhibiting how this redundant household appliance can become the source of a new visual suggestion, the creative instrument by which one can restore to the spectator, if not the actual capacity of critical vision, then at least the honesty of an aesthetic experience. *Hawaii*, the work that gives the title to the show, is probably the most ironic piece by Helidon Gjergji. Suspended above an inflatable pool, six small televisions project the name of the famous American archipelago. Television is now omnipresent, a background of uninterrupted sounds and visions, a receptacle of prepackaged dreams hawked to the rhythm of advertising.

In this invasive cathodic Wasteland, painting seems to offer itself as the last refuge of the gaze. Helidon Gjergji has succeeded to perform magic: he has used the TV as a tube of varnish. He has emptied it of its content and obtained color.

Ivan Quaroni



HELIDON GJERGJI, *Action TV Painting*, 2004. TV- set, canvas. Dimensions variable.