

Below right: Helidon Gjergji, *Kaleidoscope*, 2001. 3 painted TVs, mylar mirror, and Plexiglas mirror, 55 x 24 x 24 in. Right: Interior view.

the viewer physically in her vision. She equipped the exhibition space with ultra-sonic sensors. Placed on beams close to the high ceiling, the sensors were meant to be activated by the viewer's movement in the space, triggering shifts in image and sound. It was, in fact, impossible to perceive any interactive consequences. By design, the media was already in constant flux.

No matter. The hypnotic infusion of sight and sound was heady enough. *Plateaus* offered a multi-layered physiological encounter with art. And in this rich environmental approach to image-making, Hornbacher reached her own new plateau.

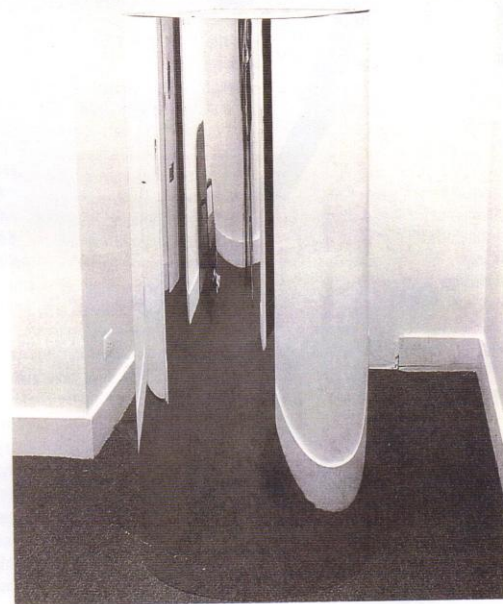
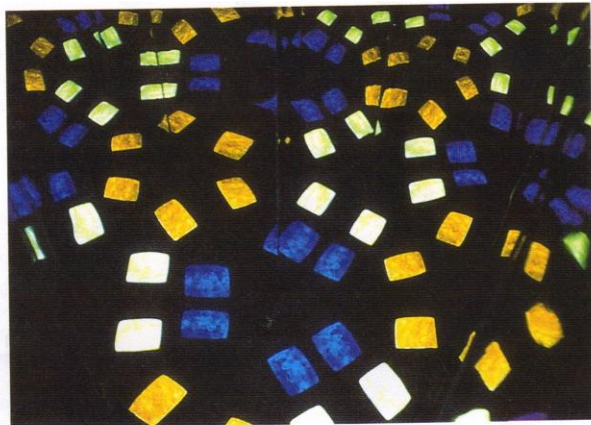
—Cathy Byrd

Chicago

Helidon Gjergji

Temporary Services

Like the monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Helidon Gjergji's sculptures have an iconic quality to them. In his most recent show, Gjergji has produced work that expands form farther away from the material and into the senses. *Kaleidoscope* is a cylindrical structure that contains three small painted TV sets and mirrored Plexiglas (which creates the kaleidoscope effect). The exterior structure of the kaleidoscope is made out of mirrored mylar. When one approaches the shiny structure, the view inside is that of an endless field of televisions. The sound coming from the televisions also plays an important role, making the information in *Kaleidoscope* hard to grasp. Playing inside at the time of my visit was a selection of local programming ("All My Children," "Judge Mathis," and "Wheel of Fortune"). The random repetition of images and sounds in



Kaleidoscope mirrors social relations of contemporary culture in the age of globalism, given the important role television plays in Western culture. Based on the commercialization of the medium and the strong influence of the entertainment industry, the triumph of *Kaleidoscope* lies in the way it slowly unveils a polished image of the trivial, so much in

abundance and out of control that the viewer is left with an impression of frivolity, remembered long after the visit, especially when in front a TV back at home.

The next room contained a ghostly presence, *Tele Television*, a light sculpture that works like an impoverished James Turrell. But unlike Turrell, Gjergji's production values are all visible. A

considerable number of old televisions, with painted surfaces and bad reception, have been placed against the wall of the main room, by the entrance door. A glossy black surface, as big as the wall, is placed on the opposite side of the room. The room is dark—the only light source emitted from the TV sets. The images coming from the TV sets are reflected in the glossy surface. The result is a beautiful, crisp, and clear field of abstract, colored light that reflects off the black wall of the room. In a way, the fields of colored light that the viewer sees serve as the reflection of television as a whole, as if it were alive and aware of its own existence. But because of the beauty of the meditative space Gjergji has created, *Tele Television* is a reminder of the possibilities of enlightenment that television could provide if it were not so rooted in entertainment. Gjergji doesn't hide any tricks under his sleeves; he lets the natural irony of the content in the diverse shows (think, for example, of the nightly news alongside Jerry Springer) play out like an accusatory finger. Not to say that Gjergji is a preacher, but there are some moral questions to be raised in light of his obsessive treatment of the television monitor. Gjergji makes us think about how moral or educational television could or should be.

—Pedro Velez