

14.12.1999 until
05.02.2000

Art in Ruins

Appearances are against us

As part of the *Critical Interventions* project Art in Ruins (Hannah Vowles and Glyn Banks) will present three projects made between 1991 and 1999. The exhibition includes the first complete showing in Britain of *Conceptual Debt*, made during their 1991 Berlin Residency. It focuses on the practical effects of third world debt and institutional racism, as well as the 'hidden economy' which supports western culture and consumerism.

We Live Here: Reclaim The Streets (1995-1999) is a new work which uses photography and text to document a direct action coalition, exploring a "collection of broken reflections" as "sites of voluntary and involuntary collaboration".



Image: Art in Ruins
Billboard Project, 1992

Power, Politics and the Art Market

11 December

This one-day event is designed for all those interested in the visual arts, and runs in conjunction with the *Obscene Powers* Conference. It will include contributions by curators, artists, writers, critics and art historians.

Critical Interventions Conference

11-12 December

Obscene Powers: Corruption, Coercion and Violence

The final years of the millennium have seen the extension of corporate control, the escalation of military control and the proliferation of political scandal. These developments have led many to conclude that contemporary configurations of power pose a grave threat to social justice, human rights and democratic decision making. This international conference, the second in the *Critical Interventions* series, will bring together scholars from a range of disciplines, including Politics, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Ethnic and Racial Studies, International Relations, Gender Studies and Art History.

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ART IN RUINS

Appearances are against us

14 December 1999 – 5 February 2000

"If a crisis exists today, it is first and foremost a crisis of reference (ethical, aesthetics), an incapacity to take stock of events in an environment where appearances are against us." Paul Virilio

For the exhibition 'Appearances are against us' and as part of the second in the series of *Critical Interventions* (exhibition and conference) entitled 'Obscene Powers' Art in Ruins are *re-presenting* work made for their D.A.A.D. residency in Berlin. This will be the first time that this work, originally produced for the exhibition 'Conceptual Debt' and shown in Holland, Germany, Denmark and Italy, has been shown together in this country.

With this work, which includes a catalogue specially designed by the artists, Art in Ruins focus on the practical effects of Third World Debt and institutional racism as well as the 'hidden economy' which supports Western culture and consumerism. Art in Ruins here aim to problematize any easy consumption of "political art" and by extending the concept of *the readymade* in art into the realm of the 'political' world (of competing forces), Art in Ruins seek to *recover* the *lost political moment* of conceptual art through its *re-use* as generic form.

These *re-makes*, as much homage as critique, also point to the ironic fate of the radical impulse of the *democratisation of the aesthetic* implied by the very concept of modernism and the avant-garde, as the *aestheticization of everyday life* of consumer society where both art and life, rather than *sites of conflict*, become the (digital) manipulation of images and the political management of appearances.

The exhibition will also document the response to, and circulation of, the work of 'Conceptual Debt'.

"Critically and anarchically.....in their role as shadow ministers of post-modernism ...Art in Ruins' relationship to current art practice is iconoclastic." Michael Corris Artforum Sept '91

Included in 'Appearances are against us' is the series 'We Live Here: Reclaim the Streets' 1995 – 99, Art in Ruins' new work uses photography and text to explore a "collection of broken reflections" as "sites of voluntary and involuntary collaboration".

"While we're on the subject of ethics, let's talk about Art in Ruins. Their entire project has been a sort of supersensitivity (sic) to the politics of art andby including documents relating to their participation in the 'Reclaim the Streets' demonstration, their work focuses for once on themselves as political animals rather than political artists." Art Monthly July/Aug 1998

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