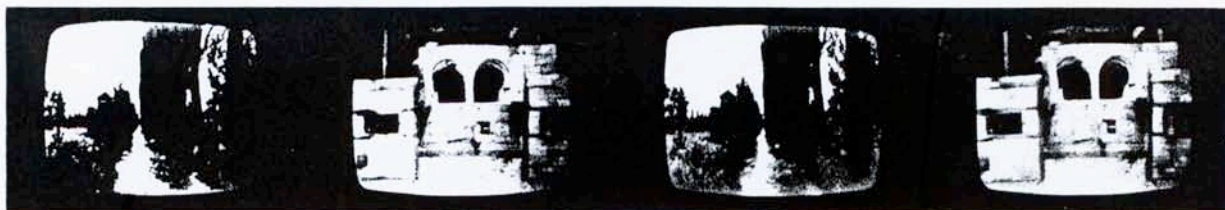


ARTFORUM

SUMMER, 1975



Beryl Korot, *Dachau*, 1974.

In describing BERYL KOROT's videotape *Dachau*, I could concentrate on the elaborate structuring of the piece. Four monitors flicking on and off, changing vistas at different intervals. The threads of a tapestry, weaving the fabric of narration. In fact, several diagrams hung on the walls illustrate this intertwining of relationships. But somehow that seems unimportant, an addendum (conceptual justification maybe?). Watching the tapes what comes across is a sense of endless time, repetition and sameness punctuated by the blinking on and off of the image. A kind of relentless rhythm which complements the scene of Dachau, the memories of Dachau. Monitors one and three begin by flashing identical tapes (out of synch with each other) of the highway running alongside the concentration camp enclosure. The routine flow of traffic (image and sound) contrasting with the silent barriers of Dachau. Monitors two and four come on showing the other side of the fence. A long gravel path corridor to the upright guard tower. Eventually one and three shift to the same scene. And one watches a man and a woman, then two girls approach along the path until they disappear from the screen, only to begin again, approaching, in an ongoing cycle. One hears the crunch of footsteps on the path backed by the hum of cars now out of view. The

tape on each monitor is identical but out of phase with the others. An impression of time unchanging, somehow still despite the steady, almost inexorable beat as the images blink in periodic sequence off and then on again. Finally two then four change to a distant view of a long building stretching across the screen. The dotlike tourists move to and away. And one then three show a close-up of the windows through which one sees a man walk forward and later back, again and again. Other shots include the interior hallways jostling with sightseers. Their repeating movement, the ceaseless murmur of voices accentuating a later view — the ovens, stark and empty. The last scene reveals a country stream flowing alongside the compound. The water softly bubbles. But the close-up repeating on monitors two and four glimpses over and over the wire barrier shadowing the brook. One by one the monitors turn off. What remains is not a comprehension of or even an interest in the formal structuring of the piece. But a sense of its coincidence with the subject. The way in which the regularized, monotonous yet emphatic, recurrence of the selected shots recreates the impact of Dachau.

— SUSAN HEINEMANN