

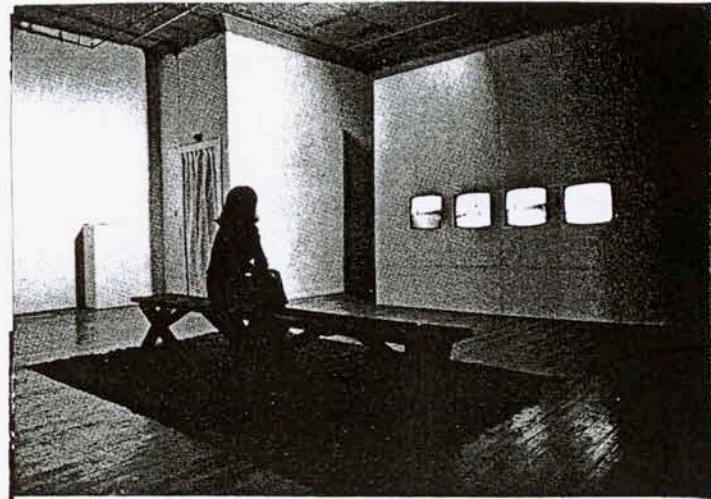
VIDEO/TELEVISION SPACE

John Hanhardt

DACHAU 1974. Beryl Korot's four-monitor installation is a treatment of a place, the concentration camp in Dachau, West Germany. The monitors are horizontally placed, with monitors one and three and two and four each having identical sequences. The rhythms articulated through the timing of sequences and juxtaposition of spatial perspectives create for the viewer a many-leveled experience. There is the nature of the images—selective compositions which cumulatively present the camp as a geographic, architectural place. The viewer is disturbed when he realizes what the place actually is. There is also the elegant structuring of sequences which involves the viewer on an exploratory participation into the interconnections and decipherment of these sequences.

The entire presentation is a contradiction of television and a subversion of its accustomed presentation. The documentary expectation of television is totally subverted. The presentation of the camp is unlike what one expects from single-monitor (image) television. Also, each of the four images is masked by a white partition that only leaves room for the individual screen. This demands from the spectator a frontal viewing, and the four screens require the viewer's complete concentration. The greater the attention paid the work, the more rewarding the work is, as its viewing is a process of discovering both what the place is and how it's presented. Its installation at The Kitchen in New York had a simple bench placed directly in front of the monitors, and positioned on a nearby wall was a diagram describing in chartlike form the sequencing of images. This schematized chart is a further step in divorcing the experience from television, by describing the conscious plan involved in presenting the four sequences. The further masking by the paneling eliminates the dials of the monitor, including its casing, thus even denying the screen its context

Korot has very deliberately stripped the piece of any connection to television or customary framing of the experience or approaches to the television set. *Dachau 1974* demands to be seen as a piece in time—it should be seen all the way through from beginning to end—and from a direct frontal position with no distractions. The strategies to achieve this have included eliminating all evidence of the TV set, including isolating the monitor's screen by masking. The screen is that part of the television with which the viewer is least familiar, since television is customarily taken as a whole experience and a complete piece of furniture (as Telethon has shown).



Dachau 1974, a 4-channel work by Beryl Korot. photo: Mary Lucier