

west-östlicher diwan

installation

29 March to 25 May 2003 — CentrePasquArt, Biel, CH — In diesen Zeiten/c'est le moment, group exhibition — curated by Dolores Denaro

Background — In 1819, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published a volume of verse entitled West-Eastern Divan; it was inspired and influenced by Hafiz, a fourteenth-century Persian poet, dervish, Sufi, and Sheikh. In 2003, millions of people worldwide protest against the war in Iraq.

Setting — A large, neutral exhibition space. Well-lit.

Materials and Preparation — A field of multiple thick, white styrofoam panels, 50 cm x 100 cm x 3cm and 50 cm x 100 cm x 10cm. Around the perimeter, a free margin of 80cm. The thicker panels form two islands in the surface. Three styrofoam cubes, 50 cm x 50 cm x 100 cm, are inset. On one of these, a chrome-plated samovar, white plastic spoons, white plastic cups and a box of sugar cubes. Diagonally across, a refrigerator filled with cans of Coca-Cola. One corner of the surface is not finished and the grid of doublesided tape that holds the panels to the floor remains visible. There, a home-made monitor made out of white wood and styrofoam, 150 x 70 x 50 cm, on four 170 cm-high white wood stilts. The screen with back projection shows live feed from an infrared camera that pans back and forth.

Procedure — Little signs in the entry area ask visitors to take off their shoes before stepping onto the styrofoam surface. The visitors are then invited to help themselves to tea and Coca-Cola. The black-and-white heat-sensitive image on the monitor shows the hot tea in white and the chilled Coca-Cola in black.

