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1/0 berlin, 1/0 joël bartoloméo, 1/0 rebecca bournigault, 1/0 serge comte, 1/0 alain declercq, 1/0 matthieu laurette,  
1/0 philippe meste, 1/0 bojan šarčević, 1/0 institut français, 1/0 gebauer ... 1/0 new york

Berlin Tickets, das Magazin für die Stadt, April 1999

FRIEZE, Septembre 1999, Dominic Eichler

eine ausstellung kuratiert von marie-blanche carlier und nathalie boutin

## Soft Résistance

Galerie Gebauer, Berlin

The exhibition title 'Soft Résistance' was sprayed across the facade of the gallery entrance on Torstrasse, a grimy through road for trucks in East

Berlin that follows a line of fortifications which have long since disappeared. In a city covered in scars from bitter ideological battles, the graffiti operated like a kind of non-specific call to every passer-by, but for what and why? Inside the gallery seven French artists presented no obvious unified front, although each of them

will be making a work in a public space in Berlin over the next few months. At one end of the spectrum of work – which ranges from the obscene to the witty – is Philippe Meste. Hanging on a door were two ordinary shoulder bags *Gunbag Power 8 (Technics)* and *Gunbag (Camouflage)* (both 1999) fitted with five live rockets. The video *Poste Militaire* (1994-97) involved the artist meeting fire with fire in an assault on an aircraft carrier using a self-designed boat, a kind of crazed parody of military machismo. On the walls were his revolting *Watercolours* (1995-99) – fashion magazine cut-outs which the artist defaced with his sperm – which were complemented by a crouching hard plastic female body shell entitled *Le Sexe Moderne 2* (1999), an apparatus which exposes the commonly agreed erogenous zones of its hapless victim. This kind of testosterone storm made you glad Meste is an artist not a politician.

Relief was around the corner in the form of Joel Bartoloméo's captivating video about voyeurism and seduction, *La fille à la robe rouge (Kiss me my darling)* (1998). Most of the frame is filled by a back view of the head and shoulders of a 30-something guy at the party of a provincial French wedding. Elvis croons in the background while a woman in a 50s-style dress approaches, crouches down and makes hesitant eye contact with the man. He takes a drag of his cigarette (great for giving away a desire to consume while placing a protective burning ember between you and a potential lover) and the woman in the red dress gets up and walks away. It's impossible to know if this is a beginning or an end. Although the sequence is taken from life – it's his friends celebrating – the protagonists seem filmic, the result of Bartoloméo's careful eye.

either portraiture or representations of the self. Rébecca Bournigault's *Portraits 15 Minutes* (1995) is a collection of videotapes of friends and acquaintances doing ordinary things. There were a few familiar artist's names on the tapes, but M. Le Dauphin seemed as good a place to start as any. He turned out to be an agreeable looking art collector with a stylish moustache in a red room filled with gilt frames. Serge Comte's tessellated *Post-It note* digital print-out *Lilith* (1996) – named after the mythical first woman – combines his own face with that of a porn artist taken from the Internet. But amongst his output of low budget pop afterglow videos, sound recordings and paper works, most charming was *Serge le Greyser* (1997), a discreet, tiny star-spraying video projection – a magical presence, like a sweet, invisible essence.

Matthieu Laurette's *Apparitions* (Selection 93-95) documents his systematic attendance and participation in hyper-ridiculous talk/game shows. Everywhere you look there he is again, whether as a young multi-media artist looking for love, a hermit who likes to film himself, or an expert refund seeker. Also media fascinated was Alain Declercq's *Feed/Microphone* (1999), a nest of microphones on a broad desk and a row of big speakers behind it that amplifies and repeats any old noise into a growing feedback – a distortion which mimics those created by all closed systems of media and power.

Bojan Sarcevic built *Coin du monde* (Corner of the world, 1999) – a corner cut from an anonymous Amsterdam apartment – into the corner of the gallery. Maybe it's this kind of tension between adaptation and displacement that constitutes a kind of 'soft resistance' – more about refractory pondering than pragmatic acting.

Three of the artists work with

Dominic Eichler



Serge Comte  
*Lilith*  
1996  
Ink jet print on  
Post-It notes  
150 x 150 cm



Joel Bartoloméo  
*La fille à la  
robe rouge*  
(Kiss me  
my darling)  
1998  
Video still