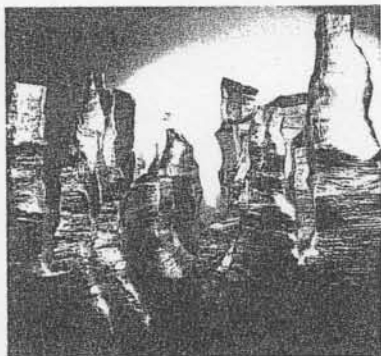Organized by the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland, the traveling exhibition **0044: CONTEMPORARY IRISH ARTISTS IN BRITAIN** (Albright-Knox Art Gallery, September 18—October 31)—contained curious postmodern projects by Daphne Wright, Frances Hegarty and Andrew Kearney—truly hybrid creations of light, sound, matter, image and the physiotemporal manipulations of a complete space. Drawing from conceptualism (in their close wedding of product to concept), the three productions seem neither dated nor contemporary. This fuzziness could be

Daphne Wright, Indeed, Indeed, 1998, tin-foil, glue, sound, 96" x 180" x 96" (photo courtesy of Crawford Municipal Art Gallery).

attributed to the trend across the arts to re-appraise forms, movements and artists from past decades, especially the 1970s.

In Indeed, Indeed Daphne Wright constructs shapes variously described by the artist and critics as "icebergs" and "stalactites" out of fastidiously folded and wrapped strips of aluminum foil, in an act that transforms the very manipulable household product into something solid, crustaceous, and sheltering. Though the approximately eight-foot-high forms do not dwarf the viewer, there is the sense of (the recollection of) childhood in wandering from one simulation of organic matter to another. The evolutionary shapes evoke the interpenetration of nostalgia and expectation by referencing the schlocky vision of the '50s TV show Lost in Space.

The other element of Indeed, Indeed, which meaningfully complicates the spiraling-upward forms, is the sound rebounding around the space of a man reciting, "Deed indeed. I was dead indeed...." The voice—smooth, crisp, cultivated, actorly—both calls attention to the speaker's "Irishness" and is readily intelligible to the unversed American ear. This nonlinear repetition and absurd presencing of the "dead" invokes Irish playwright Samuel Beckett and to a lesser extent James Joyce. The apparent incongruity of Indeed, Indeed's two elements, sculpture and sound, jolts the viewer out of instantaneously assimilating the work as a whole.

In Andrew Kearney's Isn't it Normal? lightbulbs rest in custom-made holes in the shelves of free-standing units. Cables drape to form an inchoate mass on the floor below; and off to the side several large water-bearing bins emanate a bluish light. All around is a dissonant audiovisual rhythm of flashing lights and industrial noise, whose patterns are determined by computer-processed live audio feed from outdoors. The work's sheer frenzy impacts the viewer fully, enveloping through a myriad provocation of the senses that recalls the psychedelic era's states of unchecked limits. Within the highly controlled context of the art museum and against its contents of primarily detached objects, there is a certain autonomous pleasure in a work that seeks to submerge the viewer in unchecked sensory experience.

In Frances Hegarty's Auto Portrait #1, a short video loop shows the face, divided in two, of a woman, the artist (born 1946), in black and white projection. The image alternates between the left—face and screen—and the right, with a tinny click marking each shift back or forth. The tempo builds from languid to adrenaline-overdosed. The initial longer pause on the half-face affords the opportunity to look and heightens the sense of the face's incompleteness. As the pause becomes increasingly subsumed by the shift, there is less time to focus on one half or the other. The fixity of the half-image is lost and the face, in composite, comes into being—even if the illusory nature of the image is underscored. The clicks, by now out-of-control, are orgasmic in intensity.

As the audience enters Auto Portrait #1 at random, the piece does not climax in an orderly fashion. The installation obviously speaks to the duality, disintegration, and pathos of the self, and one wonders if it is intended to reference the search for unity or the fragmentary nature of postmodern existence. But its blatant sexual mimicry offended more than one viewer and this ambiguity adds to the work's level of success.

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