



Gayil Nalls Permutatude 1991 mixed media installation

place." It consists of three sections dealing with the accumulation of mass media, the centerpiece being stacks of newspapers dating from weeks before the Persian Gulf War until June 10, 1991, the day of the Operation Welcome Home celebration in New York. The magazines are packed and labeled in cellophane on a pallet which is attached to a rope and pulley. A heavy piece of cast bronze, shaped like a broken viny branch grabbing a ball, weights the installation holding the pallet in the air. A feeling of organic nature tied to media proliferation makes an uncommon comparison.

At first one is impressed and taken aback by the amount of information accumulated and the lofty, involved explanation that accompanies the installation. One part of the installation is a 500-page text documenting the daily world events during the year of the Persian Gulf War. But to Nalls, the mass media crowns a structure she calls "the beauty of mass anatomy, the massing of the multitude," and her attention to detail is an attempt at constant awareness, like the centeredness of zen observing capitalism and Karl Marx.

An amazing experience occurs while watching the third part of the installation, 16 video monitors lined face up in a grid alternating images from New Year's Eve at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, 1989, with the Operation Welcome Home parade in New York. The boisterous almost flippant American segments contrast with the solemn, ephemeral fireworks of the Brandenburg scene, which is shown silent.

Here, as in most of Nalls' work, the simple straightforwardness of materials counterbalances the complexity and chaos of events. The inner trial and turmoil is set against but becomes a part of the outer celebration. Nalls stresses that the decision to go to war "stole the collective soul of the nation when half the country that favored sanctions lost their voice." Whether or not there is an organized nature to chaotic world events or a complicated nature to our own individual makeup, what we can include as part of our domain has extended. In *Home* Nalls has engraved the letters H-O-M-E on futuristic scraped and chiseled monoliths of titanium.

All events have the potential to affect all people, especially in an age of "neat" precision aerial bombing and 24-hour CNN. We as individuals are part of the welcoming home, the Berlin Wall, the demise of nature, even the mental state of those individuals involved. As Nalls puts it when talking of mass propaganda, "I had not thought of the deadliness of who controls and who sees, of mass awareness and mass blinding, events exploited and history erased. The damage of vision as direct transmission. Unaware of how we remember, we believe images but we feel form." The medium is more than the message.

CROWN OF TITANIUM

—STUART NICHOLSON

The Mass is the Medea

Gayil Nalls

PHILIPPE STAIB GALLERY

Titanium is a metal which has the strength to travel to the moon but is unique among metals in that it bonds with human bone. Gayil Nalls writes, "We are at a time in our evolution when we must use foresight, self-restraint and free will for survival. Will we bond with our technology or allow it to destroy us? I believe our choice of titanium reflects our deep psychic need for co-existence." Nalls' cast titanium pieces look like prehistoric tendrils or slabs of some technological waste as much tied to earthly processes as modern gadgetry. They are full of natural anguish—"The nature of man, the forces of nature," as Nalls puts it.

Nalls has tied the workings of man and nature together since the mid-'80s in work that steadily extends itself to include mass media, politics, the individual, streamlined technology and mass psychology. Her sculptures have employed iron, steel, titanium, bronze in a variety of patinas with striking virtuosity and monumentality. A small antler of bronze bubbling over a block of laser-cut titanium atop a stark base of rusted cold-cast iron—a ball of bronze with a protruding obelisk shape rests on a cabinet containing the history of Gorbachev.

Her recent installation called "Permutatude" continues this exploration. Nalls defines "Permutatude" as "the necessary transformation of individuals' attitudes on a global scale allowing a rapid social reordering to take