

LIVING RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

By Papo Colo
New York, 1989

The Homeless Vehicle and the Tompkins Square Tableaux are components of the same metaphor. The dispossessed want their rights back and Wodiczko is ready to give it to them with the force of his photo theater installation and the utility of his object of transportation. Audacity is the wand that clicks the camera and rearranges reality. An army of erased people assuming practical solutions of physical and dangerous interventions. Plans to reorganize the defunct wills into defense aggressions. Unity and organization against ignorance and disarray. To hold their ground, they have to transfer fear into fury, madness into clarity and then more madness to survive.

The functional void also has memories
Immediate murmurs caress
The apparatus that works outside of shameless skyscrapers
Nameless people walk around the city noise
The silent crowds are crying crowds
Authority observes the random speed in which a meal is digested
Dirt between fingernails are heated in metal drum fireplaces
Aspirations and ovens intertwine
Dignity finding a home?
Awake but sleepy

Krzysztof Wodiczko transports his militia into a hundred and twenty five feet of photomontage, transforming the gallery space into an imaginary battlefield for the homeless, with his vision of an anonymous, powerless crowd making a statement of power. The labyrinth of projections, city as a stage with the reflections of the slide machines, fabricating an image in a transparency. With the changing of slides, Wodiczko changes the protagonists.

If the metaphor is real the vehicle is their transportation. This art with a purpose certifies the homeless as outsiders who with their mobility become more dangerous and possess space by their obligation to invent it. The object then enters the city's inferno by providing a service—mobility for nomads, portable architecture, protection against the misery of the body. With this vehicle, the artist helps them to endure.

The vehicle of invincibility looks like science fiction and has immediate intentions, independence and monumental definitions. The Homeless Vehicle by its name implies travel not shelter, change of status, a survival of urban history, autonomy of shifting populations, obliged to transport their belongings on anything that had wheels. Wheels are a luxury of the displaced.

The vehicle is not a home but illegal real estate, architecture provoked by poverty, a missile, the indication of flight, of retreat, or invasion and attack.

This installation is as alive as fiction. The protagonist travels in a portable artifact telling us that when oppression is institutionalized violence is justified. When shame is lost, presence is another vehicle of the homeless.

Text for the exhibition at Exit Art NY
KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO: NEW YORK CITY TABLEAUX: TOMPKINS SQUARE
9/23/1989 - 10/28/1989