

## **'Possibilities of Extension'**

Christopher Bucklow  
Jo Holland  
Susan Derges  
Garry Fabian Miller  
Phillipe Dufour  
Daro Montag  
Adam Fuss  
Ruth Mylius

### **ASPEX GALLERY 1995**

"Between the Middle Ages and the present day the concept of what constitutes art has changed radically.., since the modern interpretation of art is based on varying relationships to real being, to nature and to the sensuous life of man on this earth. For this reason it is not at all easy for one to penetrate abstractly a world which conceived all values of reality, or everything finite and limited, as simply reflections of the absolute, the eternal, the infinite."

Dvorak: Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art

#### **Exert from the catalogue - Jo Holland**

The notions of the soul and human consciousness is continued within Jo Holland's series of work, *Eyne*, in which Holland has dissected the eye which is often referred to as '*the window of the soul*'. Through her dissection Holland refers to the eye as an alternating medium – both as a passage to exterior perception and to interior consciousness. As such, there is an investigation into the notions of truth and beauty. The eye is the medium through which we perceive external characteristics which we define with reference to beauty; and the eye is also recognised as the route to a person's consciousness, that which outlines the disposition of being and which can be defined as truth. Holland outlines the close relationship between beauty and truth which developed from their theological synonymity with God.

The association between truth and beauty was first discussed by the Greeks who interpreted the "*beauty of the world as an image and reflection of Ideal Beauty*". Ideal Beauty thus conceived the universe as a revelation of God in His beauty. It is therefore relevant that the photographs in this exhibition are beautiful as they intend to represent the presence of God. It is also significant that the artists have responded to light.

Light throughout history has been conceived as a metaphysical reality. In medieval ideology the notion of beauty was developed to include the significance of light as an image of God. Grosseteste defined light by its unquantifiable beauty as having identity with the beauty of God: "*Light is beautiful in itself...it is...most harmoniously proportioned and equal to itself: for beauty is a harmony of proportions*". He related light as denoting the presence of God by the similarity of their proportions: "*God is supremely simple, supremely concordant and appropriate to himself*". Grosseteste insisted on light as a source beauty and being.

However, St Bonaventure considered light as beautiful because it is through light that colour and luminosity come into being: "*Light is common by nature to all bodies, celestial and terrestrial...Light is the substantial form of bodies; by their greater or lesser participation in light, bodies acquire the truth and dignity of their being.*"

Thus light was defined in two ways: Light as the source of beauty and being – a creative force – was substantial form; light as colour or splendour of an opaque body was accidental form. Light in both states was recognised as having a metaphysical significance. The presence of light within these photographs refer to light in these two states, as a creative energy and which defines form.

Photography with its reliance on light is the ideal 'tool' to examine the metaphysicality of form. The artists in this exhibition have through their use of light indicated light's associations, such as, denoting the presence of God and as a life force. Through light and the photographic process they have also explored the relationship between nature and science and/or culture. The artists' chosen use of photography is therefore significant. Photography is a record of light and as such it is a scientific process reliant on natural phenomena.

Photography is able to record light which defines forms undetectable by the naked eye. In *Eyne*, Holland has photographed tissues from the inner eye. Holland dissects our primary sense – sight – by which we try to understand the world. Her work directly pertains to the relationship between seeing and understanding; and also to the photographic eye, which is known to have altered our way of seeing. It is important to recognise that none of the images in these photographs can be seen with the naked eye. All the images in the exhibition are all reliant on some method of photographic process.

**Lisa Moran - Curator**  
**Aspex Visual Arts Trust 1995**