

## Artists in the Exhibition

# Robert Whitman

## *Shower*

Robert Whitman created some of the first, and most significant, mixed-media performance works of the late 1950s and early 1960s. He began to use projected images as early as 1959 and incorporated Super-8 film projections in the classic performances *American Moon* (1960) and *Prune Flat* (1965). *Shower* is one of a group of four film "sculptures" Whitman made in 1963–64. The others are *Window* (1963), *Dressing Table*, and *Sink* (both 1964). In each work, an everyday action is depicted by fusing a filmed image of the action with the physical object with which it is associated—a woman takes a shower, applies cold cream to her face at a dressing table, brushes her teeth, or combs her hair and applies her makeup in a mirror above a sink.

In *Shower*, a film of a woman taking a shower is projected in a continuous loop onto a curtain, behind which water cascades inside a metal shower stall. Whitman described the piece as an environment, closely related to George Segal's sculptural tableaux. It was first presented during "9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering" (1966), a landmark event at the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory in New York organized by Billy Klüver and Robert Rauschenberg for Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), of which Whitman was a founding member. *Shower* is one of the earliest examples of the projected image's shift away from the cinema screen into the medium of sculpture. In its presentation with his three other film sculptures at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1968, Whitman issued a record on which he had recorded his own voice, altered by devices invented by the Bell Telephone Laboratories, singing four songs related to each work.

Robert Whitman  
*Shower*, 1964  
Installation at the Newark  
Museum, New Jersey, 1999









# Andy Warhol

## *Lupe*

*Lupe* is one of the first of Andy Warhol's double-screen films and, as Callie Angell notes, one of three films he made in the winter of 1965–66 dealing with scandals involving Hollywood actresses (*More Milk Yvette*, 1965, focused on Lana Turner and *Hedy*, 1966, on Hedy Lamarr). In *Lupe*, Edie Sedgwick enacts the hours leading to the suicide of the Hollywood siren Lupe Velez. Billy Name also appears, cutting Sedgwick's hair as she reclines on a daybed. The film marked both the end of Sedgwick's collaboration with Warhol and the beginning of Warhol's experiments with multiple projection. At the end of 1965, when he met the Velvet Underground, his film-making was shifting toward experiments with double and triple screens, and *Lupe* was shown on three screens at its premiere. Warhol instructed that, in distribution through the Film-Makers' Cooperative, the film could either be shown on a single screen, at 72 minutes, or on two screens, at 36 minutes.

Angell, who is preparing the catalogue raisonné of Warhol's films, to be published by the Whitney Museum, notes that "the extremely poor quality of the sound in this film was caused by Warhol's single-system Auricon camera, which recorded an optical soundtrack directly on the original film during shooting. Since optical tracks require black-and-white processing in order to retain sharpness of tone, the color processing of Warhol's Ektachrome original resulted in a considerable distortion of the film's sound."<sup>1</sup>

1. Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994), p. 25.









# Yoko Ono

## *Sky TV*

*Sky TV* is one of the earliest examples of video sculpture, and Yoko Ono's only video work. The piece also exists as an instruction, which may or may not be executed for the work to be realized. A camera is placed on the outside wall or roof of the gallery, trained on the sky. Live images of the sky are relayed to a television monitor in the gallery. *Sky TV* anticipates the self-reflexive video installation works of the later 1960s and reflects Ono's Fluxus-inflected, conceptual approach to video. Significantly, the camera is aimed not at the viewer but at the sky, implying the necessity of considering an infinite world beyond the ego and the hypnotic pull of commercial television. *Sky TV* was first shown at the Indica Gallery, London, in 1966, in Ono's first British solo exhibition. The same year, Ono made a series of black-and-white, slow-motion, fixed-frame films in New York and London, focusing on single actions (the lighting of a match; naked buttocks walking), to which *Sky TV* is conceptually related. *Sky TV* also anticipates the film *Apotheosis*, made with John Lennon in 1970, in which the camera is placed in a hot air balloon and films the landscape and then the clouds as it rises, until all that can be seen is the sky.

Yoko Ono  
*Sky TV*, 1966  
Installation at the Israel  
Museum, Jerusalem, 2000



## William Anastasi

### *Free Will*

In 1968, William Anastasi made two video sculptures, *Transfer* and *Free Will*, both of which engaged the space of the gallery, focusing on two of its most mundane, ignored features: a wall socket and a corner. In both cases, a camera on top of a monitor is trained on the feature, whose black-and-white image is relayed live onto the monitor screen. The live image of the gallery corner in *Free Will* suggests the depth of the space through its focus on the wall's right-angled corner at floor level, and by the lack of movement in the live image, which emphasizes the volume of the feature, rather than any sense of action around it. *Free Will*'s ironic title refers to the shift Anastasi felt was occurring in ideas relating to selfhood, and in particular free will, which artists during this period were claiming to be a misguided illusion. Made at the height of the Vietnam War, *Free Will*, with its focus on an empty corner, also suggested the dead end that he and many others of his generation felt both art and politics had reached. *Free Will* relates to a number of other tautological works Anastasi made during this period, including *Untitled* (1966), in which he hung six photo-silkscreens of the walls of the Dwan Gallery in New York directly onto the walls themselves, and *Nine Polaroid Photographs of a Mirror* (1967).

William Anastasi  
*Free Will*, 1968  
Installation at the Whitney  
Museum of American Art,  
New York, 1981





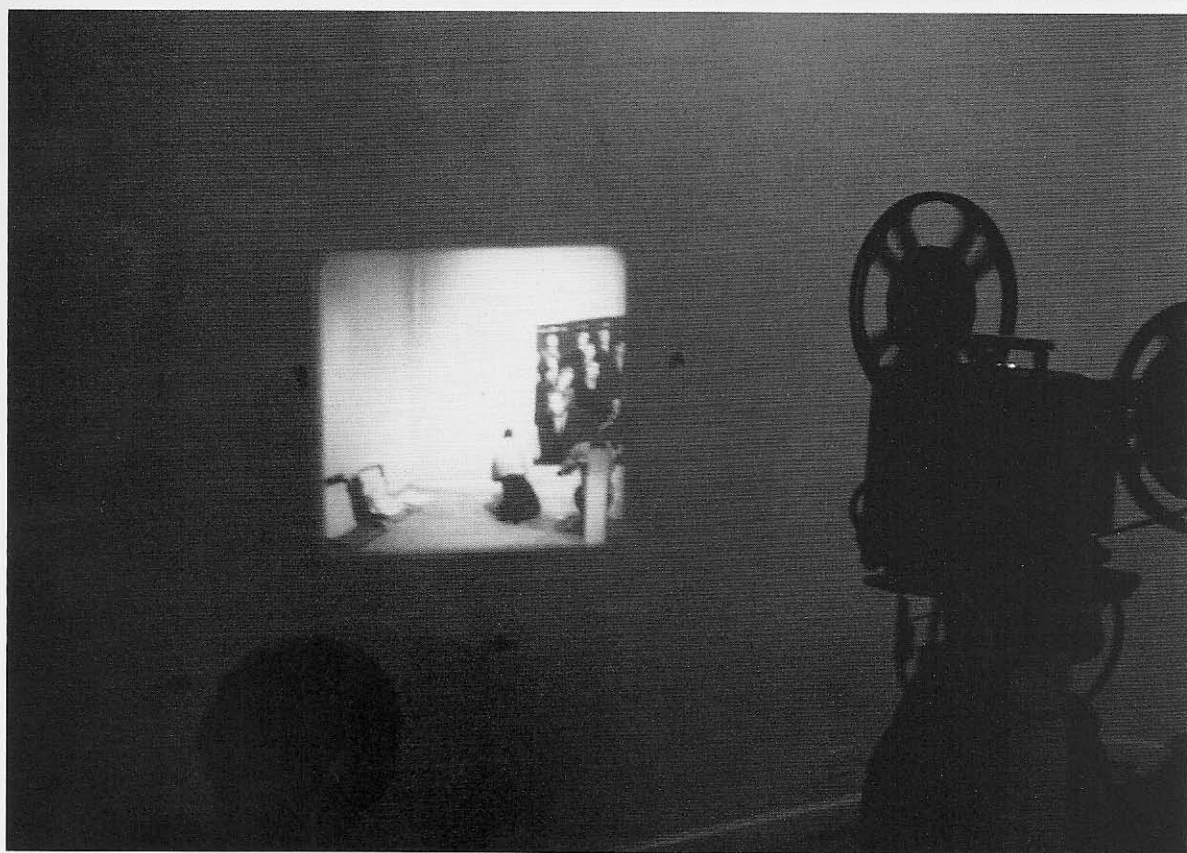
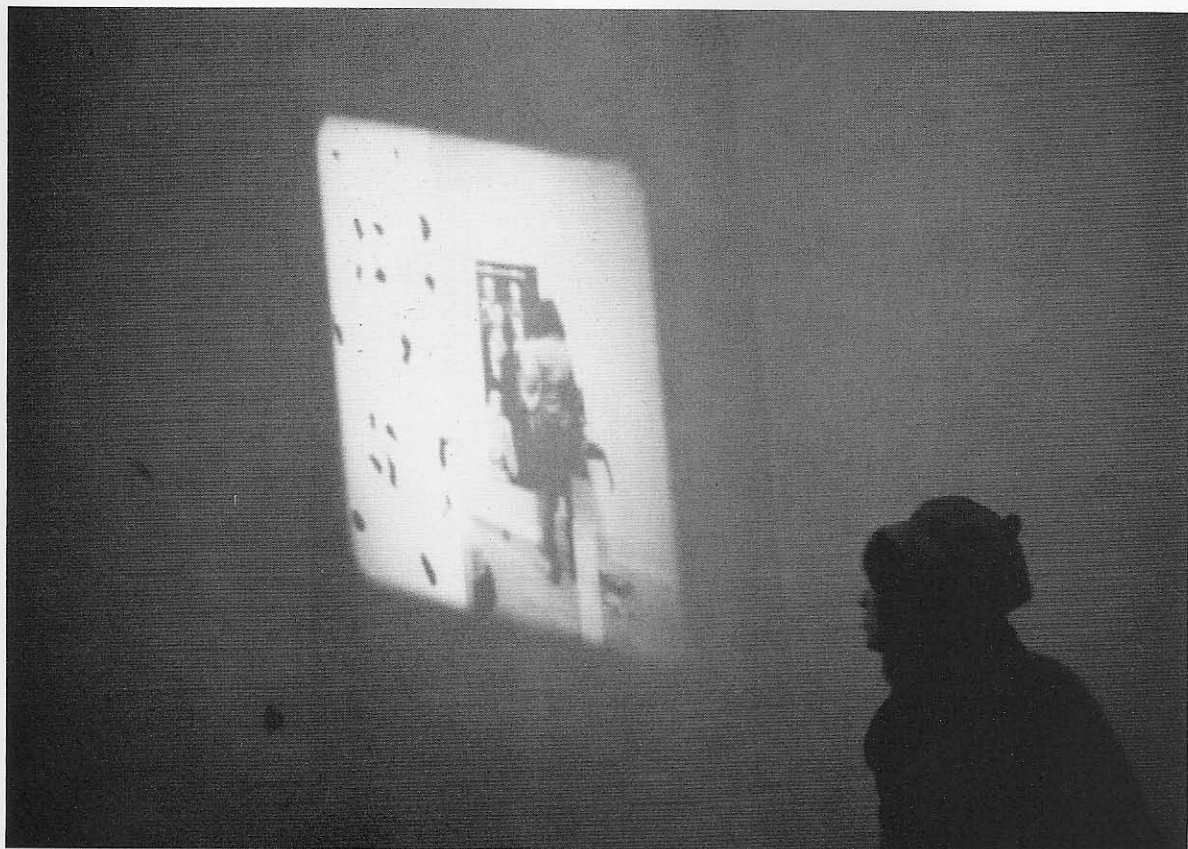
# Robert Morris

## *Finch College Project*

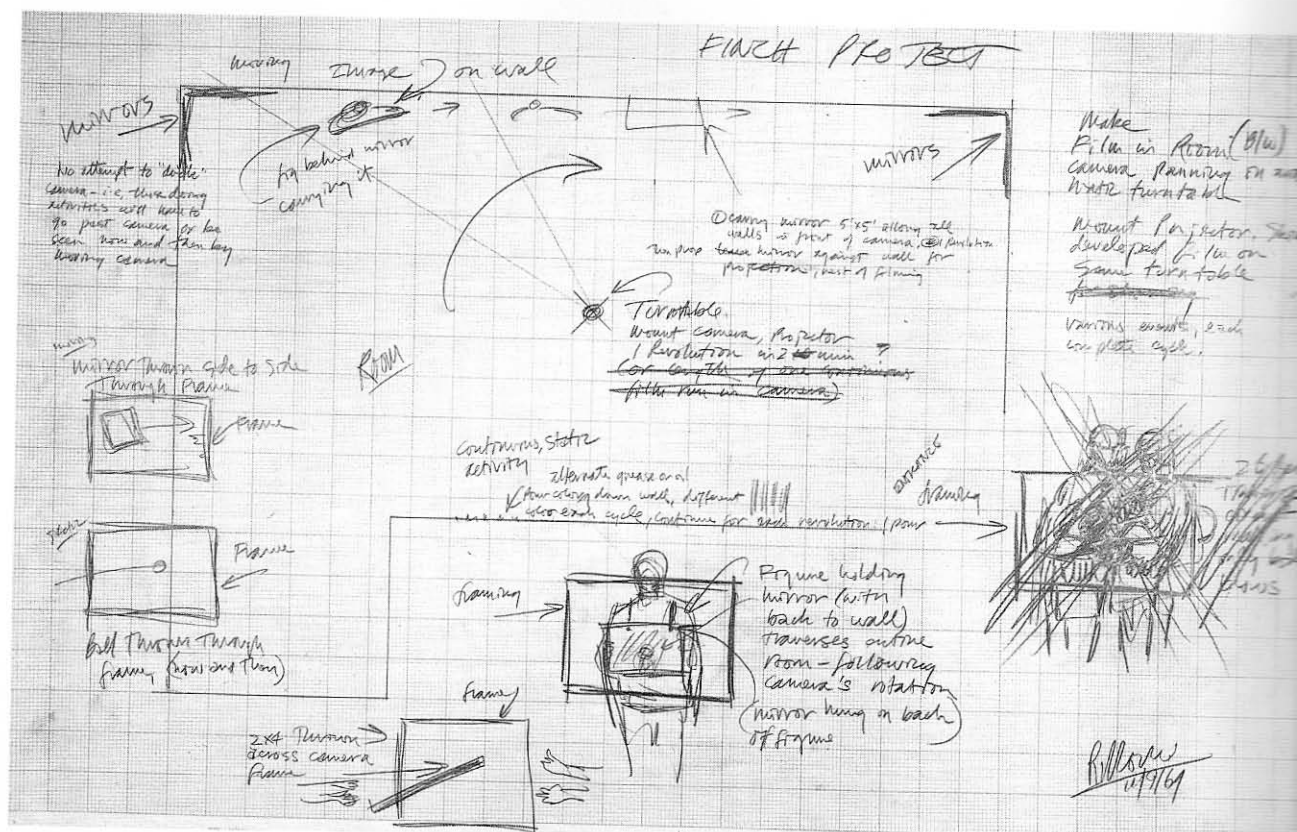
In 1969 Robert Morris made five films, as well as the film installation *Finch College Project*. The installation was originally made for the Finch College Museum of Art in New York, and this is its first re-presentation since its initial showing. The filmmaker Robert Fiore was cameraman for the project, filming a crew installing and de-installing a grid of mirrored squares and a gridded black-and-white photograph of a movie audience on opposite walls of the gallery. Fiore made the film slowly, rotating the camera around the space on a turntable revolving at 1rpm. The resulting film was then projected into the same space, rotated around the now blank walls, on which the marks made by the attachment of the mirrors and photographic grid were visible, the turntable revolving at the same rate as Fiore's camera. The crew's movements evoke the tasklike actions of Morris' earlier dance works, and at certain moments the camera can be seen reflected in the mirror it is filming, recalling the image of the camera in a reflection of the landscape in Morris' film *Mirror* (1969), to which *Finch College Project* is closely related.

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Robert Morris  
*Finch College Project*, 1969  
Installation at Finch College  
Museum of Art, New York, 1969







Robert Morris  
Diagram for Finch College  
Project, 1969  
Graphite on paper, 22 x 34 in.  
(55.9 x 86.4 cm)

This drawing shows Morris' sketches for possible formats for Finch College Project. The drawing of the figure holding the mirror recalls the figure of Morris in his film *Mirror*, made the same year.

OPPOSITE:  
Robert Morris  
Stills from *Mirror*, 1969  
16mm film, black-and-white,  
silent, 9 minutes





## Bruce Nauman

### *Spinning Spheres*

The film installation *Spinning Spheres* is one of sixteen installations Bruce Nauman made in 1970, in which the viewer's perception of space is destabilized. In his notes for the installation, Nauman wrote: "A steel ball placed on a glass plate in a white cube of space. The ball is set to spinning and filmed so that the image reflected on the surface of the ball has one wall of the cube centered. . . . The image reflected in the spinning sphere should not be that of the real room but of a more idealized room, of course empty, and not reflecting the image projected on the other room walls. There will be no scale references."<sup>1</sup>

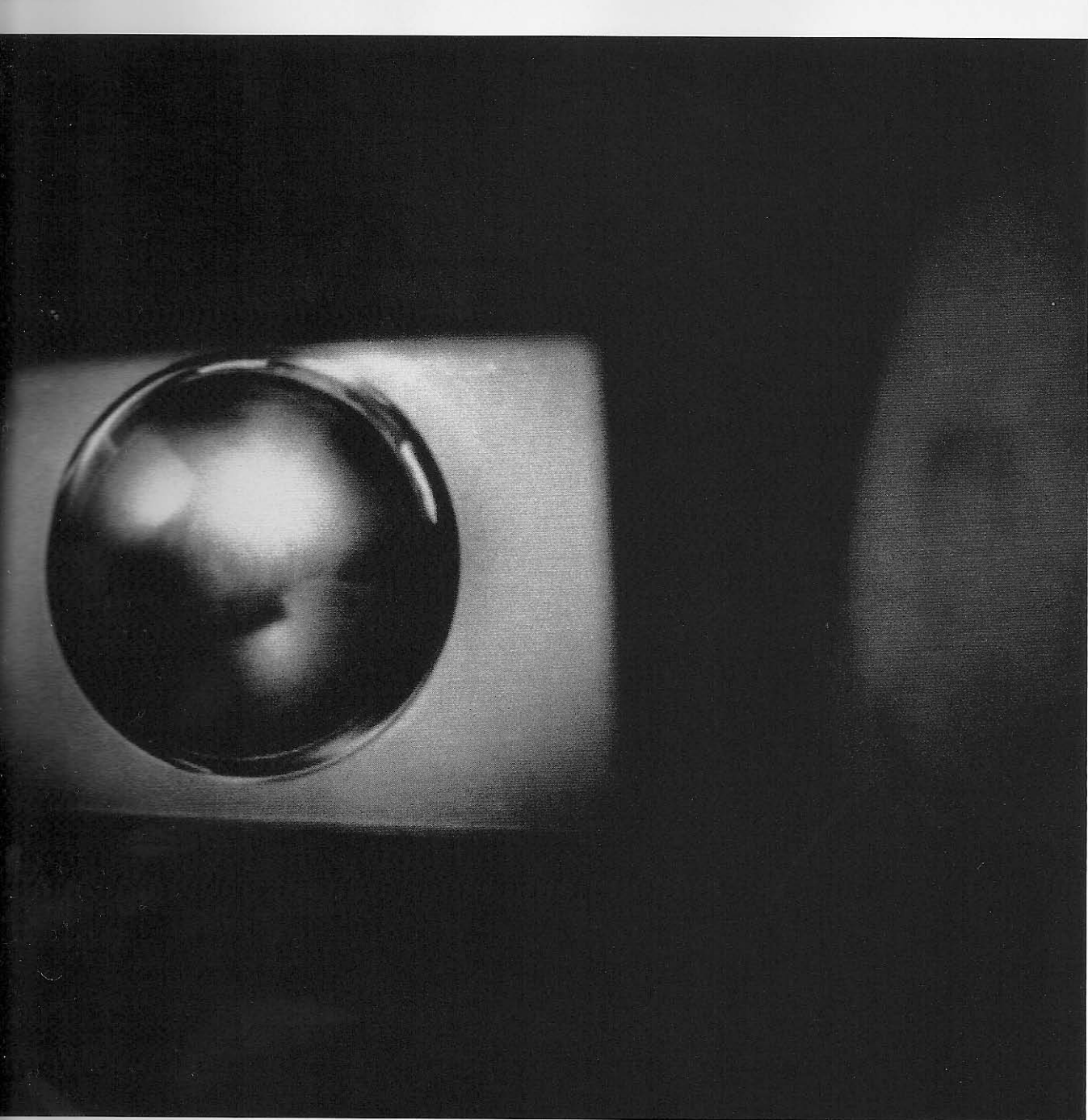
Spinning and rotating, movements that disrupt perspective, appeared in Nauman's work for the first time in *Revolving Upside Down* (1969), a videotape in which a camera, turned upside down, records the artist executing a series of exercises in his studio. In *Spinning Spheres*, the relation between object and space is reversed. A tiny steel ball is made gigantic, and its expansive abstract surface obscures all spatial coordinates.

*Spinning Spheres* was made as four 16mm film loops, transferred to Super-8 film to show in Super-8 film loop cartridges. A color and a black-and-white version were made. The color version was first shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in 1971. This is its first showing on 16mm film loops since its initial presentation.

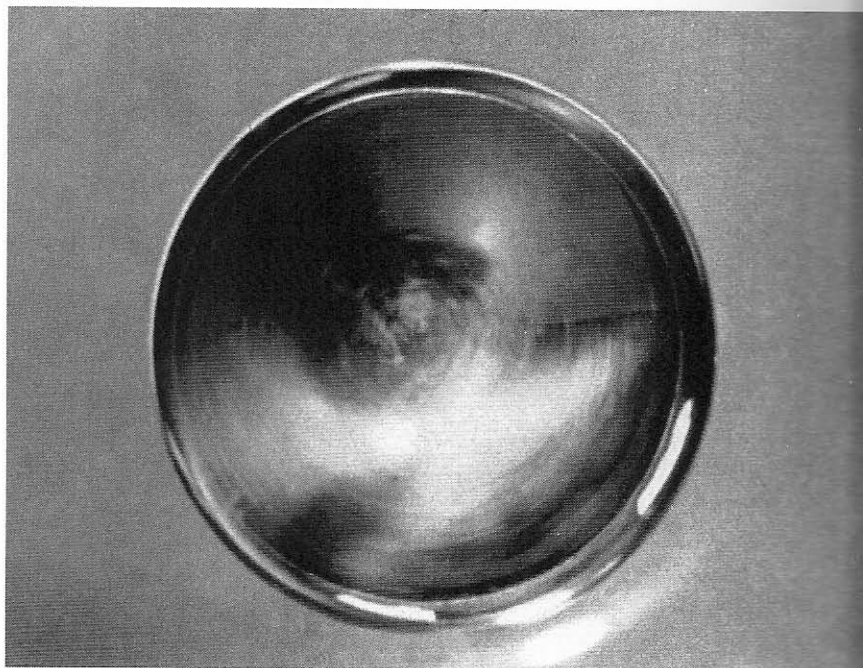
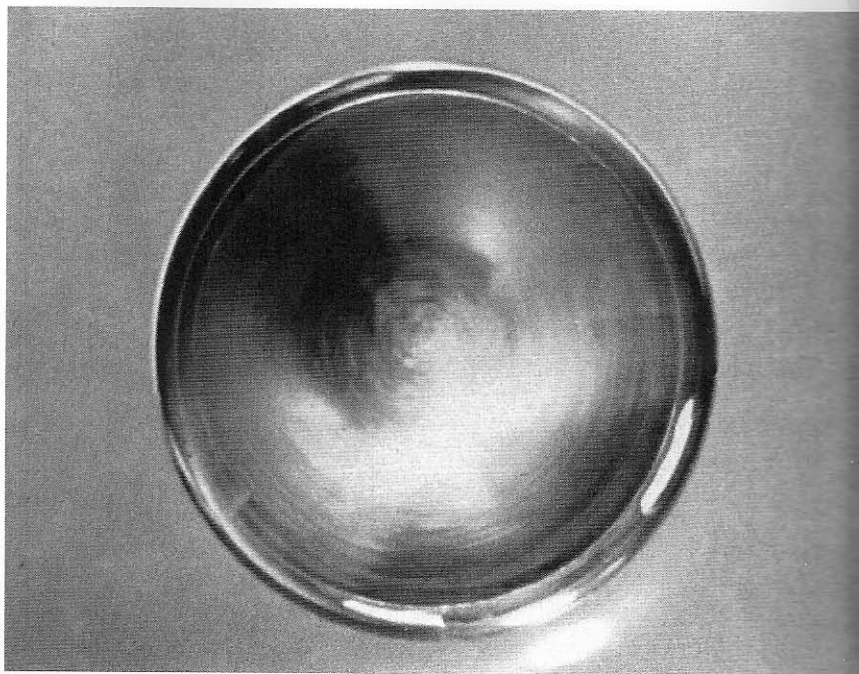
1. Bruce Nauman, "Notes and Projects," *Artforum*, 9 (December 1970), p. 44.

Bruce Nauman  
*Spinning Spheres*, 1970  
Installation at Leo Castelli  
Gallery, New York, 1971



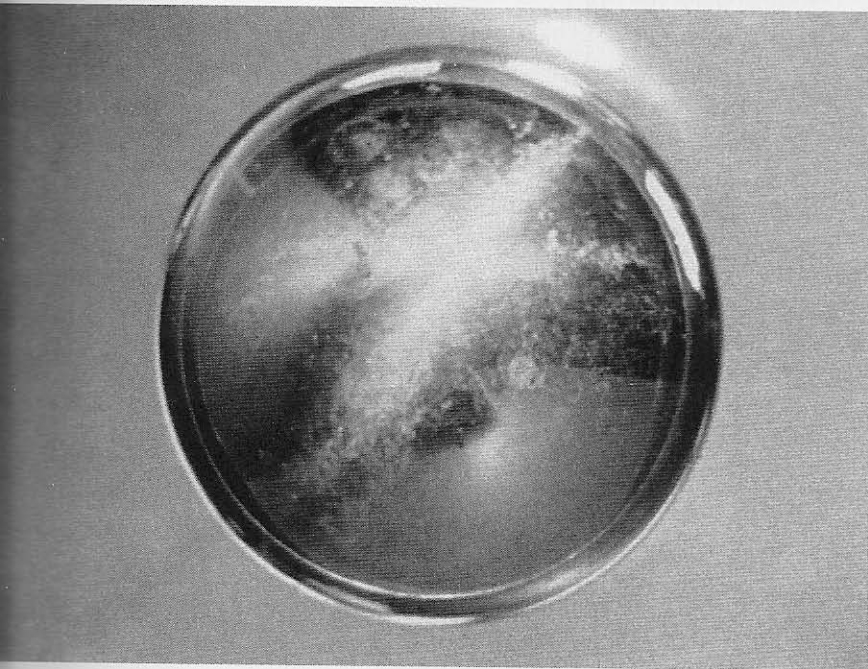
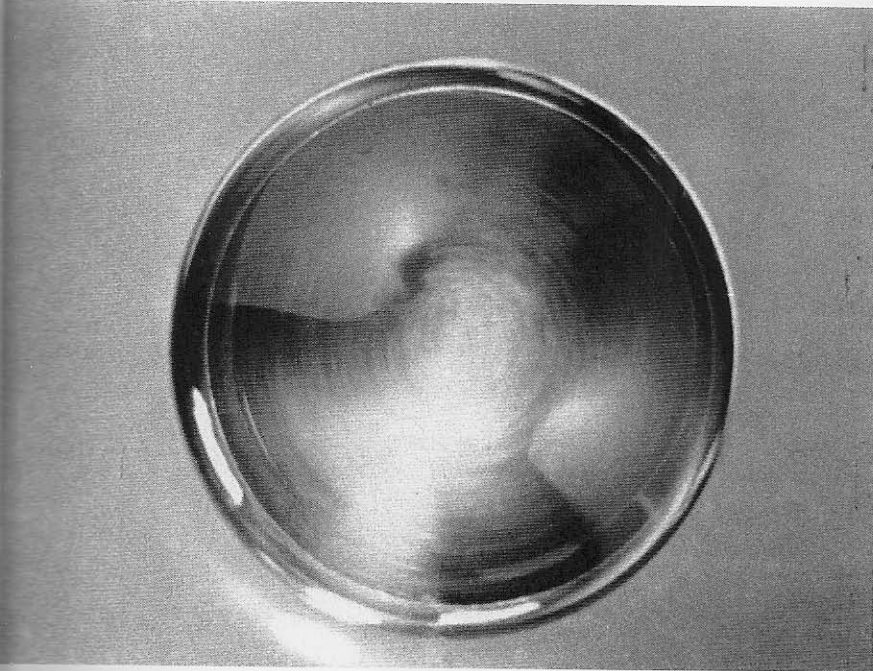


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LONDON  
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Bruce Nauman  
Stills from *Spinning Spheres*,  
1970





# Mary Lucier

## *Polaroid Image Series*

(*Room, Shigeko, Croquet, City of Boston*)

Between 1970 and 1974 Mary Lucier made a series of slide projection works titled *Polaroid Image Series*, begun as a collaboration with the composer Alvin Lucier and based on the structure of his composition for voice and tape *I Am Sitting in a Room*. In this sound work, Alvin Lucier recorded himself reading a text describing the making of the work. The recording was played back into the room repeatedly, rerecorded each time, until the original statement became unintelligible as a representational form. Following the same structure, Mary Lucier created a series of black-and-white photographic images that were copied repeatedly, up to 131 times, using a Polaroid copier. As in Alvin Lucier's sound work, details and small errors made during the process were incorporated into the work. The images are projected simultaneously with Alvin Lucier's thirteen-minute audio work. The first performance of *Polaroid Image Series* was *Room*, presented as a collaboration between the two artists at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on March 25, 1970. Other titles in the series include *Shigeko, Croquet, City of Boston, David Behrman*, and *Three Points*. For its presentation in this exhibition, *Room, Shigeko, Croquet*, and *City of Boston* are projected onto four walls of the gallery, all synced to the audio soundtrack.

### Mary Lucier

Slides from *Polaroid Image Series*

(*Croquet*), 1970–72

From top to bottom, these

images are the original, seventh,

eighteenth, and thirty-sixth

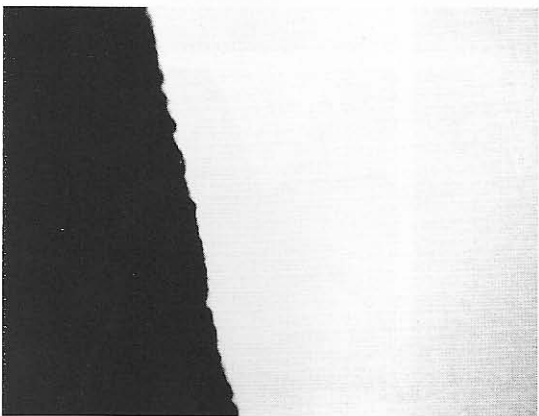
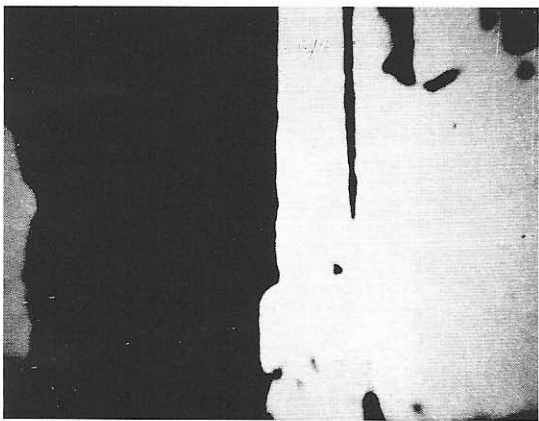
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Pages 108–110:

### Mary Lucier

Slides from *Polaroid Image Series*

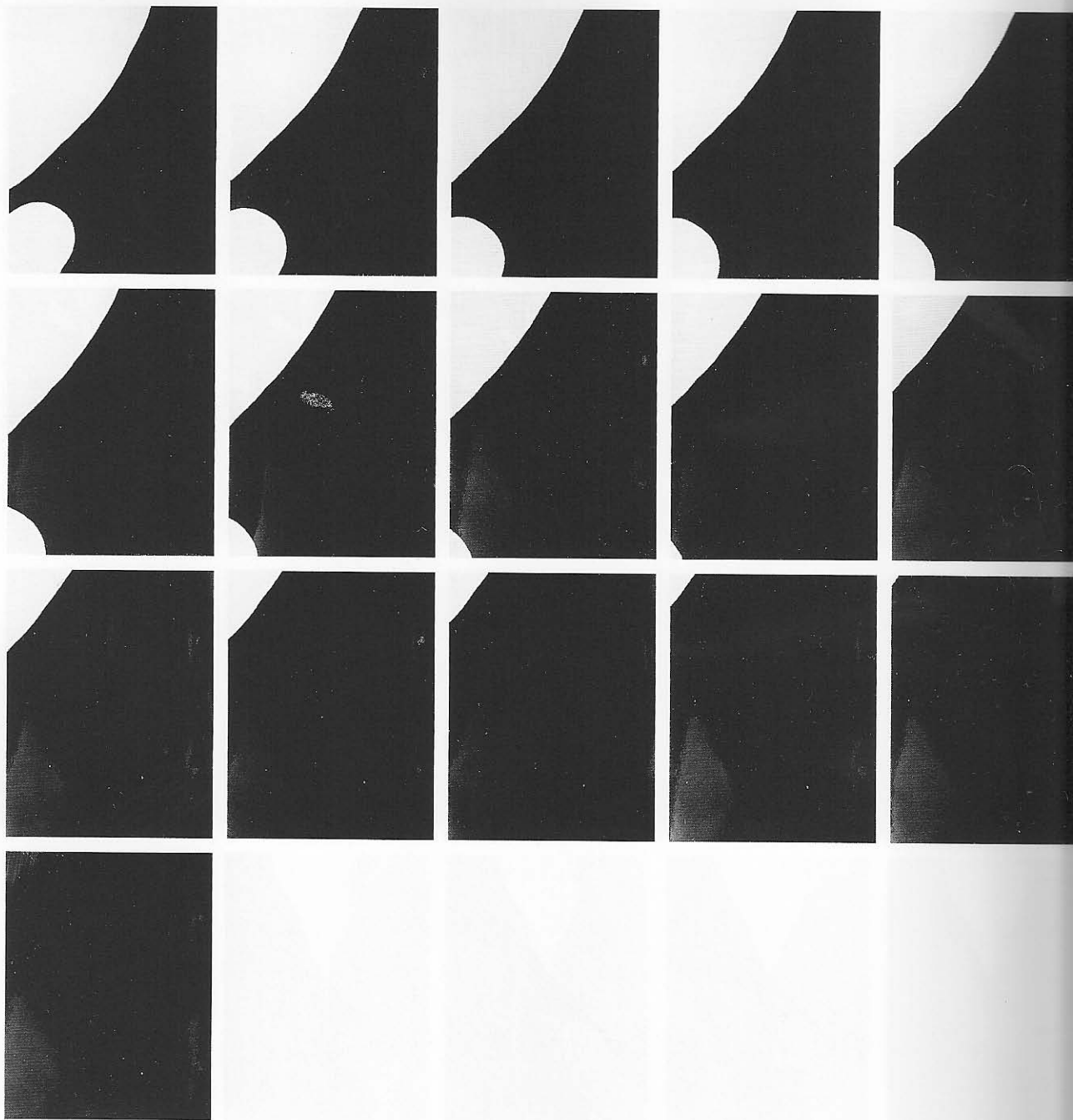
(*Shigeko*), 1970–72

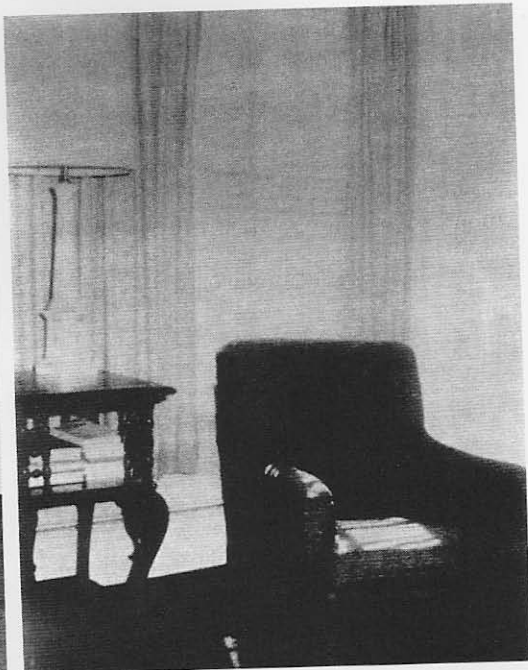












Lucier  
 s from *Polaroid Image Series*  
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