

The Museum of Modern Art

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PROJECTS: ELIZABETH DILLER/RICARDO SCOFIDIO

July 1 - August 15, 1989

The Museum of Modern Art continues its PROJECTS series with a site-specific installation by Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, on view from July 1 to August 15, 1989. Organized by Matilda McQuaid, curatorial assistant in the Department of Architecture and Design, the exhibition, titled para-site, uses video in combination with Museum architecture to alter the viewer's experience of the gallery space.

Diller and Scofidio, both teachers at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, have collaborated since 1979 on numerous architectural projects. Their temporary installations go beyond conventional architecture and recall performance art of the seventies. The human body as active participant or as viewer is central to their work.

In para-site, seven surveillance cameras are mounted on metal rods and attached "like parasites" above the Museum's entranceways and escalators. They transmit fragmented images of Museum visitors to monitors in the Garden Hall Gallery, recording their movements from various angles and vantage points. Some of the cameras are mounted directly above the revolving doors, flattening them into an architectural plan; others focus on a specific point on the escalators, scanning visitors in elevation as they ascend or descend.

Within the gallery, convex mirrors and dissected chairs are suspended by structural elements that seem to defy gravity. Dotted lines halve the room vertically and provide a point of reference for the viewer. The effect is

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perplexing: video cameras and monitors orient the viewer within the context of the Museum, while mirrors and upside-down chairs disorient.

Diller and Scofidio emphasize the structural nature of the materials they use in the installation. Video cameras are mounted on finely crafted metal pieces that resemble the legs of an arthropod or jut outward aggressively on attenuated cantilevers. Ms. McQuaid writes in the brochure accompanying the exhibition, "The structural supports for the video machinery complement this scientific scrutiny of the body and create a highly technical and disturbing environment, one that is measured by the machine and not by the human body."

Born in 1935 in New York City, Ricardo Scofidio graduated from Cooper Union in 1955 and received a bachelor of architecture from Columbia University in 1960. Elizabeth Diller was born in 1954 in Lodz, Poland, and received her bachelor of architecture from Cooper Union in 1979. Previous collaborations include installations for Galleri Rom, Oslo, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (1988); the Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, and the Capp Street Project, San Francisco (1987); and Art on the Beach, New York (1985), as well as group exhibitions in Frankfurt, Milan, and New York.

PROJECTS is made possible by a generous grant from the Lannan Foundation. Additional support for this exhibition has been provided by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Lyda Ebert Family Foundation. Video equipment has been provided by Sony Corporation of America. PROJECTS: MATT MULLICAN, the next exhibition in the series, is on view from August 24 - October 24, 1989.

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For further information or photographs, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.