

Catalogue-Appliances**Arena, René**

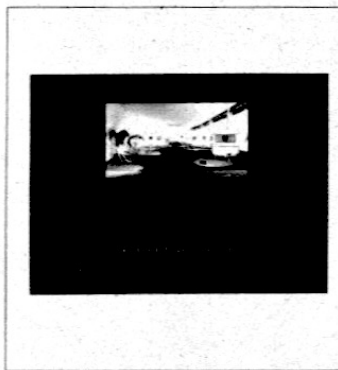
Just as our household appliances have fallen into line with our aesthetic exigencies, art—in the form of hefty aluminum and plate-glass panels—is being now touted as appliance. The pieces—predominantly rectangular, black expanses occasionally broken up by barcode-like designs—are illustrated alongside technical specifications and an optional “decorator color” range with which to personalize the pieces.

**Panza di Biumo—The 80s and the 90s from the Collection Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, April-July, 1992**

The much-vaunted Panza di Biumo collection airs its last five years of acquisitions in a museum space while Jean-Michel Foray duly addresses the relationship between art and the museum in his text. The works included in the collection span the 50s, Pop, conceptual, minimal, light and space installations, recent acquisitions on show including Kosuth, LeWitt, Barry X Ball, Ettore Spalletti, Roy Thurston, and nine more on color plates. There is an extensive background chronology on all artists plus insights into the formidable collection by Panza di Biumo himself. Texts in Italian and English.

Guillaume Bijl**Visie**

The vast photographic documentation in this publication represents an array of installations addressing the bemusing space that exists between the art lover and his role as consumer, looking at the Belgian artist's career from the late 70s to the early 90s. The 223-page hardback edition is divided into “Transformation-Installations,” “Situation-Installations” (Indoor and Outdoor), “Sorry Installations” and “Compositions Trouvés.” Jan Hoet and Bijl himself both contribute introductions while Bert Jansen's essay, “Fiction as Reality,” points to the “fictitious” personalities who leave behind subtle, tell-tale signs of their existence (in the “Transformation” series) and the relation between the artist's irony and socio-critique and the spectator when confronted with the “fictitious” decor created by the artist. All texts are in English and Dutch.

**Peter Halley—Beyond Art and Commerce Toward a Philosophy of Manic Optimism****Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, 1992**

In his text, Jordan Doner praises Halley for answering “the most ‘pop’ question that exists in art.” What does it mean? Throughout the 20-page booklet, the author proceeds to expand insightfully on Halley's work, the writing interspersed with full color *écorchés* of large-scale 1991/92 Roll-a-Tex on canvas pieces by the artist.

Keith Haring**The Authorized Biography****John Gruen****Prentice Hall Press, New York**

Because Keith Haring was such a public artist—more approachable than Warhol, more famous than most of the names printed in gallery listings—the most telling parts of *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography* are in his pre-fame days, growing up in boring Putztown, Pennsylvania. Haring's frankly

commonplace origins, trying to find existential significance by overcoming his conventional setting (which, despite it all, was a part of him through the end) and average looks, Haring latched on to the most accessible alternative available to him: 60s hippy culture. The combination of Dead-head imagery and suburban hallucinogens, a haphazard yet wildly impressionable taste for literature, and a sexually confining family and social context—ingredients of mainstream teenage experience of the 70s—metamorphoses with ease into the decade he's identified with: the 1980s. His relationship with 60s-spawned Warhol somehow connects the two decades—not unlike the way the 70s are often compared to the newly serious, understated 90s. The bond of their similarities—fame, canned imagery, an unsuspecting childishness derived from a very adult proximity to extremes in sex and drugs, the questionable compa-

nies they kept—are borne out in their sincere and productive friendship.

One wonders whether he would have been capable of maintaining the image jumps of, say, good friend Madonna and allow himself to grow out of the high tops and street clothes that connected him to his smalltown teenage anticonformism or the urban underside he had grown up so far away from. His vocation in bridging black and white—his sexy, nightclub side and the Euro-serious, business side never seem to have really coalesced in his social relations—is so different from the multiculturalism in vogue today, so much more personal and believable than the current academic take on it. Keith Haring's contribution to getting art *out there*, creating and sustaining his role as celebrity—a famous person to love—contrasts with say, Koons's strategy, which risks strengthening the alienation and mistrust

of the non art public. It's impossible not to acknowledge the virtuosity of his drawings and their brilliant, universal applicability, on walls, columns, corrugated metal, subway cars, human bodies, T-shirts, hospital murals, paintings, blimps, mugs, stairwells, LED boards; drawn, sold, merchandised, and spread across the whole worldwide bidimensionality of our streets and homes and surroundings. His *Unfinished* painting, a corner thoroughly and painstakingly covered and patterned, suddenly left in abandoned drips, makes you think it could continue all over the tiny perimeters of the canvas and go on and on and on, everywhere. If art succumbs to the death announced by so many, Haring's epidemic art, the contagiousness of his draftsmanship, is the living side crushed in the end by art's suicidal insistence that it follow the system.

Gilda Williams