

Review

THE CRITICAL STATE OF VISUAL ART IN NEW YORK

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Marta Chilindron

Cinema Kinesis

El Museo del Barrio through June 30

BY ROBERT C. MORGAN

A MOST REMARKABLE Postminimal sculpture is on display at El Museo del Barrio. Created by the Uruguayan artist Marta Chilindron, *CINEMA KINESIS. 1999* explores the relationship of Minimal art to the projection of a narrative, and in a wider sense, Chilindron's work relates to how we see cinema. In the United States, the term "cinema" is not often used to describe what we observe in multiplex prefab shopping malls, the more common term being "movie." But, of course, we make a clear distinction - movies represent the Hollywood system of predictable plots and special effects, and cinema is an art form that may or may not be narrative and is rarely predictable.

The form of Chilindron's work consists of a large frame made of a synthetic, tough plastic (PCB) and supported by an aluminum structure. The frame is positioned in front of four rows of connected chairs such as one would see in a movie house. Gradually the frame begins to descend over and around the chairs. Concurrently, the chairs also begin to fold as the screen descends, operated by a motor that raises and lowers the frame and simultaneously collapses the chairs.

As critic Richard Vine points out in his perceptive essay, Chilindron's sculpture reiterates two of the most frequently cited theories from French poststructuralism: namely, Guy Debord's concept of "the spectacle" and Gilles Deleuze's concept of "the fold" in cinema. Whereas cinema may relate directly to Debord's spectacle as a diversion from capitalist control and exploitation, Deleuze's idea of "the fold" refers to the collapsing of time

through cinema's removal of narrative structure. Chilindron's work, however, is more than a mere illustration of postmodern theory. She explores the reductivism of geometric form in terms of narrative, and she also exposes certain psychological attributes of the arbitrary observers who may want to position him/herself in one of those chairs. Her work further suggests a political encounter with imagery that literally pulls the ground away from the viewer - it, in fact, dissipates our normal relation to gravity - so that as spectators we are literally caught by the fantasy.

By being pulled into the clutches of the cinematic illusion as it is being represented on the screen, one may easily lose contact with the reality that is outside the frame. In an era where we as viewers are so completely inundated by images, it would seem that Chilindron's *CINEMA KINESIS* is, in actuality, making us aware of what happens when we no longer see what is occurring in the tactile physical world. This is an important work that far exceeds the simple manner that one might expect upon seeing it at first glance.