

surface. Here, this basic work takes on monstrous proportions in terms of action and consequence.

Lachowicz's piece may be read reductively; visually, it remains a gentle confluence of modern forms. But what makes it interesting is the way in which Lachowicz has elaborated on this formal austerity by making a mess all around it. She articulates how many forces of nature and culture must be subdued or appeased in order to make an impressive work of art. Simplicity for simplicity's sake is ultimately hollow and meaningless. Complexity for simplicity's sake is something to think about.

SIMON MORETTI

PLATFORM, LONDON
15 SEPTEMBER - 7 OCTOBER 2001

Reviewed by Craig Burnett

Simon Moretti has held plenty of performances at Platform over the past few years, so it seems appropriate that his latest show, 'Collection Particulière', has the air of a domestic interior. Moretti has painted one wall green and created a group of small, intimate works, with no obvious thematic coherence, and sprinkled them lightly across the walls. The overall display comes across as a room in someone's house. But whose collection is it? And what is he doing to modernism?

Entering the gallery one is confronted by a streak of day-glow excrement. Titled *Orange Grid*, it hangs limp from the wall, and though deflated, its colour makes it ecstatic. If stretched out and strung up, the netting would become a harsh grid, and thus an icon of modernism. But the grid has collapsed, leaving an ooze of fluorescent, shocking pinkish orange. Orange grid starts the show, and lays out a few of Moretti's concerns. The artist plays with the leftovers of modernism, taking a legacy that is at least partly rational, masculine and severe, and converts it into something off-hand and garish.

A lot of artists pursue frivolity these days, but few do it so seriously or with such a lightness of touch. One cluster of images on the green wall contains two found images with biro scribbles over them, and another is a perspex frame with small yellow circles, bits of ready-made stationery converted to drawing. The yellow circles float over the wall and project shadows on the green behind them. The elaborate biro scribbles cover a reproduction of a painting of a dull, domestic interior c. 1900. The biro swirls around, creating an organic, ghost-like blob that floats over the top of the image of the room. The perspex and spot drawing floats on two levels, and its composition changes as you walk on either side of it, never coalescing into a fixed image. Everything, in the words of the artist, is in a 'state of suspension'. Suspended in space, and, as found objects converted to originals, suspended in their status as works of art.

Next to this cluster of images, and on the facing wall, three character-less illustrations break up the collection. Two watercolours, one of an earlier Platform performance by the artist, and another of a piece of gum folded into a severe point, broaden the sense of an intimate place, a bunch of snapshots or keepsakes with little value beyond a mysterious, personal one. The watercolours are by Juan Saffont, a retired fisherman who lives outside Barcelona. Moretti sends a few photographs to the artist by post, and Saffont chooses one or two to paint. He gives up his work to impersonal forces - or, conversely, very personal forces. As a document of the performance, the watercolour is thrice removed from the event. As a work by the artist, his hand

and mind barely touch it, and even the selection process is almost completely out of his control. Another illustration, in black marker, is of the artist, with the resident gallery cat in the window. The illustration is marked by lifeless professionalism, and yet it looks at home, a tawdry souvenir in the collection. The pictures provide a useful, and violent, contrast to Moretti's abstract interventions, and also contribute to the sense of the gallery and the collection as a place that is at once intimate and impersonal.

Near the window of the gallery, two small paper sculptures stand like garnishes atop their plinths. *Pink card drawing*, is a tiny, day-glow pink sculpture that vaguely resembles a miniaturised David Smith or Calder. From afar, it could be a leftover from a brainstorming session at an architect's office. The other sculpture, and one of the best pieces in the room, is a jagged, pseudo-futuristic thing constructed from the invitation to the show, and it's called *Sculpture for Sheila and Simon*. At about eight centimetres high, you have to crouch to look at it, and yet it mounts a wiry riposte to the inflated aspirations of modernist sculpture. Each sculpture - or drawing, as Moretti calls them - perfectly enacts his theme: they appear abstract and impersonal, but the scale and handling are intimate.

When I spoke to Simon Moretti about the show, he told me that he had been working a lot lately, and that he needed a holiday. But the sensation you get walking through 'Collection Particulière' is like walking through a gravity-free environment, a space bereft of any exertion. In one corner of the gallery, a post-it note sticks carelessly to the wall, ornamented by a scribble, a little ink abstract. Each work looks like a proposition, an aside, an idea yet to be executed. Some may long for something meatier or more substantial. Each piece doesn't detain you much - most appear too loose and haphazard on their own. But as a group, baguettes pile up, and the collection becomes a magnanimous, ecstatic gesture. In the end, I'd have to agree with the artist: anyone who worked so hard to expel gravity from their collection probably deserves a holiday.

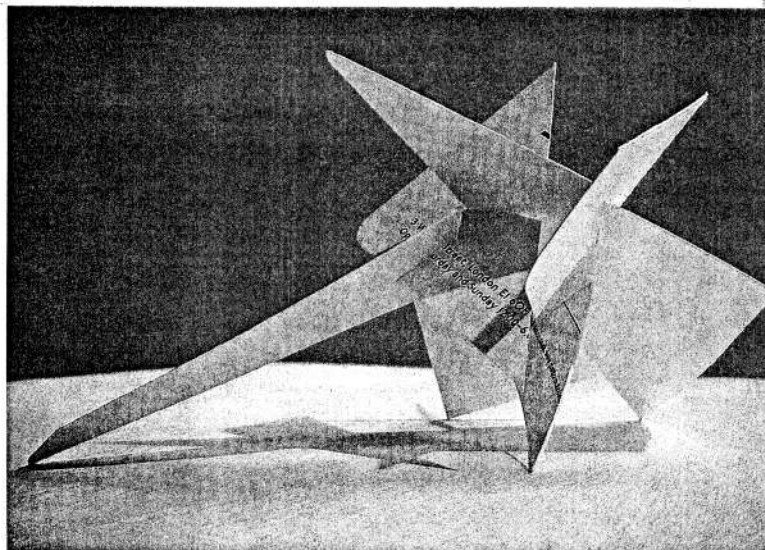
SAMUEL BECKETT

ANTHONY REYNOLDS GALLERY, LONDON
7 DECEMBER - 23 DECEMBER 2000

Reviewed by Andrew Chesher

Although plays normally lend themselves to interpretation - which after all is part of the logic of staging - this is a concept that doesn't quite fit with the later drama of Samuel Beckett. Everything in his work is so integral that slavish reconstruction seems to be the only way forward. But reconstructions are tedious; didactic and illustrative. Asked what the best version of a Beckett play committed to tape or celluloid was, my response would be *Comédie*, the film which he made of his own *Play* in collaboration with the filmmaker Marin Karmitz in 1966. With *Play*, Beckett's theatre becomes more compact and less easily interpreted, yet *Comédie* is sufficiently uncompromised and uncompromising that it makes a strong case for the screen as the natural medium for the writer's late work. As only Beckett's second foray into film, his young collaborator Karmitz must take a large portion of the credit. *Comédie* was shot with the cast of the original Paris production and screened at the Venice Film Festival, after which it disappeared for thirty odd years, reappearing in Paris last year.

The film opens on three immobile heads,



• Simon Moretti *Sculpture for Sheila and Simon* 2001. Courtesy Platform, London

at first barely detectable spots of light in the middle of a black screen. The camera closes in until they span the screen. The grey urns from which the heads protrude are almost indistinguishable from the background. The characters speak in turn, the faint light on each face suddenly intensifying as they do so and dimming as they cease. Their voices are impossibly fast; every syllable is articulated but even a native French speaker would not catch half of it. This inhumanly fast speech was produced by recording the voices, then eliminating the gaps between words and directing the actors mime to the resulting tape.

Play's characters interrupt each other as they each give their separate perspective on an unhappy love triangle, which we assume to be their story. However, though their urns stand side by side, they never address one another. They face straight out and stare unseeing into the audience. The hell they occupy is that of existing solely in their never-concluding story, unable ever to reach outside it: Are you listening to me? Is any one listening to me? Is any one looking at me? In late Beckett there is often a gap between the story being told and the scene on the stage or image on the screen. In *Play*, voices issues from visible sources. A rift opens across which the perfect past of the memories that the characters narrate (the voice) and the present in which the characters no longer perceive (the image) attract one another but never meet.

The most striking thing about *Comédie* in comparison with the original play is the changes in scale of the heads. They appear as distant stars, infinitesimal points, one minute, only to loom before us the next. Sometimes one of the heads will expand independently of the rest. These alternations and the remarkable rhythm at which they take place give the work a vertiginous quality and emphasise the isolation of the characters from one another in a way which would be impossible on stage. The idea of a moment in time sequestered from linear narrative, the characters circling endlessly within themselves, is brilliantly evoked.

Beckett's late plays are not merely texts, they are images. *Waiting for Godot*, which was inspired by a Casper David Friedrich painting of two men looking at the moon, can survive without the physical image. *Not I*, based on a figure in a Carravaggio painting who looks on aghast as John the Baptist is beheaded, would be lost without the image of an open mouth. A late Beckett play is often little more than a tableau with accompanying words, and because of this they can work fantastically well on screen.

In *Comédie*, the bare, grey box room which appeared as the set of *Endgame* is replaced by the screen, on which Beckett's

imagery appears like writing on a page. There is nothing beyond it, everything happens on the surface. The heads seem to brighten from within rather than being illumined from without. They give the impression of being imagined, made up like the graphics of some early computer game, and disappear at the end as if they had never been. What Robbe-Grillet suggests lies beyond the stage set of *Endgame* wasn't the desolate landscape Clov reports to his blind master Hammi, but the endless timelessness of non-being. The same might be said of *Comédie*.

TRANSMISSION BOOK

BLACK DOG PUBLISHING, LONDON, 2001
Reviewed by Sarah Lowndes

The eighteen-year history of Glasgow's first artist-run gallery is a convoluted story. Even more complex is the story of how this book, a project initiated in 1993, came to be published. Fortunately, its protracted development turns out to be a blessing, allowing it to encompass the major developments of the intervening period in addition to the two early phases of the gallery. These could be described as the neo-Expressionist/political phase of between about 1983 and 1989, and the neo-conceptual phase that commenced with Christine Borland and Douglas Gordon's involvement around 1989. A 1988 press release from an early durational performance by Gordon and Craig Richardson states, 'Our currency is memory'. As *Transmission* is still run by an unpaid committee, for a largely underfunded local artistic community, this phrase still has resonance.

When *Transmission* first opened, it wasn't called a gallery, it was 'a committee for visual arts', and was as left wing in intentions as that title suggests. At first, the art exhibited consisted mainly of paintings by the 'New Glasgow Boys': Adrian Wisniewski, Steven Campbell and the rest. In the early years, pressure groups such as Worker's City staged events there. Sole British Situationist Ralph Rurney and performance artist Stuart Brisley were also favoured. This period is documented in the book with informal snapshots from openings, old posters and flyers, reviews, and reminiscences from Malcolm Dickson and Billy Clark, two of the most prominent early committee members.

By 1993, *Transmission* had shifted in both location and approach, to the 'white cube' King Street space, and to a programme dominated by time-based, issue-based, installation and site-specific work. This was the