

EMPHATIC INTERCONNECTIONS * **1997, Joanne Evans**

Joanne Evans lives and works in Wales.

Furthering less 'destructively' Jackson Pollock's action painting, Helen Frankenthaler gave paint an unrestrained continuance through the pouring and flowing of pure colour. Joanna Jones has 'revolutionised' this intimacy, as she paints with her body, her-self, creating her own specific tactile territory, as she emphatically interconnects with the 'body' of the canvas.

When Joanna Jones paints with her body the tangible is prioritised as she does not see but feels where she paints. The invisibility of her process allows the inner its visibility, eliciting a differing 'logic', as sublime experience which does not privilege mind over body as in the writings of Longinus and Kant, rather a 'matrixial' elevation, where touch coincides with movement, the movement of the mind and the body.

The Phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty recognised the correlation of the visual with the tactile, which manifests itself when viewing Joanna Jones' paintings. As I recorded the paintings on video, my eye was visually/tangibly guided around the gestured layers of colours that 'co-emerged' with the skin/surface of the canvas. Layers of swirling formations emanated from each canvas, yielding their own distinct treasure, coordinating from the four colours used in off-set printing: cyan, magenta, yellow and black. These were the works which would later be seen as paintings on canvas or painting surface merged with wall surface through projection, percolating second skins onto the remembered walls of the *Charité* hospital in Berlin.

The ruin of the Virchow lecture hall in the Institute of Pathology is a site historically renowned for its allegiance to the interrogation of the body; an ideal environment for Joanna Jones' paintings and ephemeral projections which became apparent after dusk. The unconventionality of the location enabled the artist to directly explore and transform its structure with a luminous energy and vitality, whilst transitorily reaffirming the fragility and temporality of our bodily existence.

Joanna Jones' concern with expressing a connection of mind and body can be traced back to her artistic practice at the Royal Academy Schools in London, in the late 1960's where she caused unrest in the life drawing room as she 'opened up the body'. Her attention to unfolding the invisible led her away from painting to work in performance art and film. In 1979 Joanna Jones moved to Germany, where the anonymity of being a 'foreigner' and its encouraging art scene provided her with a space and the finances to develop her artistic practice. Here, she returned to painting but with a difference. She contends:

I returned to all the qualities of painting that I had been missing with my work in other media, only this time not as a removed translation of experience, but with myself, in action, inseparable from the painting itself. I had actually found a way to be in the painting.

The heterogeneity of today's feminist art criticism perfectly times the relocation and acknowledgement of Joanna Jones and her body paintings.

1. Immanuel Kant, the Critique of judgement, trans J.C.Meredith, Oxford University Press 1992
2. Bracha L. Ettinger The Matrixial Gaze, Leeds, Feminist Arts and Histories Network, Dept of Fine Art, The University of Leeds 1995
3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of perception trans Colin Smith, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962
4. Joanna Jones Painting on location Generations and Geographies conference, Leeds Feminist Arts and Histories Network Dept Fine Art, University of Leeds 1995

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