

Time Out

New York

The obsessive guide to impulsive entertainment
September 21-28, 2000 Issue No. 261 \$2.75

ART

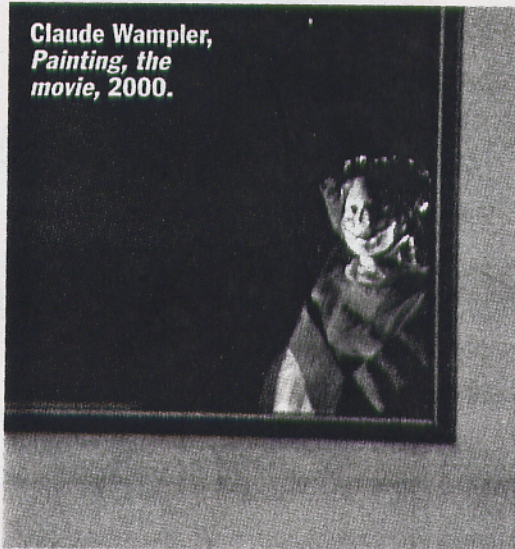
Claude Wampler, *Painting, the movie*

Postmasters, through Oct 7 (see Chelsea).

Claude Wampler's performance-based work has been variously billed as art and theater. Either way, she's something of a subversive who exposes the spatial and temporal limitations of her chosen venue, whether that happens to be a gallery or a stage. *Painting, the movie* is right in line with her previous work, although at first it might not look like much more than a stark minimalist installation: The gallery features four white pedestals topped with boxes made of grayish LCD (liquid crystal display) glass, and a rectangle of the same material framed in silver, mounted into one wall.

Approach the frame, however, and a light goes on inside which changes the glass from milky opacity to semitransparency—revealing that Wampler herself is behind the rectangle, dressed in an ornate costume of tulle and satin, such as you might find in Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. Things get stranger. One arm protrudes from her chest, and her outfit drapes over the sides of a wooden cart in which she stands (although the cart must not have a bottom, since we can see that her feet are planted firmly on the floor). Wampler walks with the cart, which is mounted on tracks that run diagonally. Wearing a demonic smile, Wampler seems more machine than human, more automaton than artist—and she'd almost have to be, since she's in the gallery all day long to execute the piece.

Claude Wampler, *Painting, the movie*, 2000.



If you step away from the glass, the light turns off and the artist disappears. That's the opposite of the cause-and-effect sequence in the four pedestals, which are lit from the inside until you try to take a closer look: The lights then turn off, frustrating and intensifying viewers' desire to see—an obvious play on the voyeurism implicit in looking at any artwork. Inside the pedestals' tops are still lifes of bloody stumps and mysterious hair clumps, and one must be patient in order to glimpse them in all their goriness.

On the whole, Wampler makes a good case for cross-pollination among art forms, and in this show, her work makes one think twice about the perpetually recycled phrase "Painting is dead." Maybe "undead" would be the more accurate claim.—Sarah Valdez

PLUS ISABELLA ROSSELLINI | DAVID BINTLEY | MICHAEL CHABON



9 771084 550019