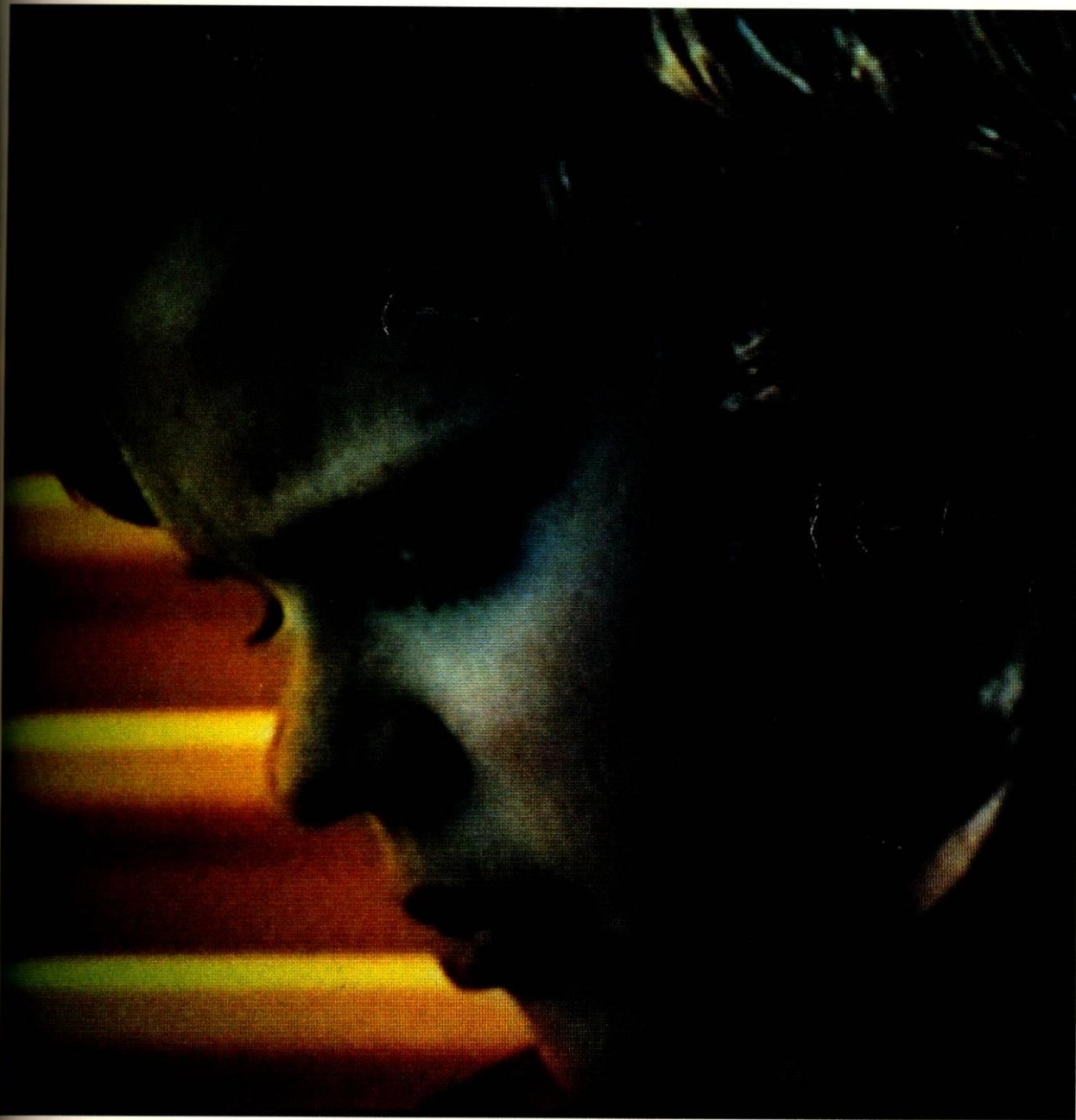


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Flash Art



Eija-Liisa Ahtila
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EUROPEAN GALLERIES

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Flash Art

EDITORS:

Helena Kontova, Giancarlo Politi

Assistant Editor:

Tiziana Casapietra: T. +39 02 69 31 12 17 e-mail: faint@tin.it

News Editor:

Patricia Ellis: T. +39 02 69 66 06 61 e-mail: flashart@interbusiness.it

Correspondents:

Western Europe: Scotland: Judith Findlay — **England:** Claire Bishop, Martin Coomer, Gemma de Cui, Gianmarco Del Re, Roy Exley, Cedar Lewisohn, Robert Montgomery, Lisa Prior, Stella Santacaterina, John Slyce, Richard Reynolds — **The Netherlands:** Gustaf Beumer, Jim Cook, Sven Lüticken — **Belgium/Luxemburg:** Luk Lambrecht — **Germany:** Heidi Fichtner, Peter Herbstreuth, Barbara He, Milena Nikolova, Angela Rosenberg, Andreas Schlaegel, Raimar Stange, Wolf-Günter Thiel — **France:** Hans Ulrich Obrist, Pascal Beausse, Sandra Cattini, Hou Hanru, Evelyne Jouanno, Jeff Rian, Nicola Trembley — **Switzerland:** Lionel Bovier, Harm Lux, Bettina Tschumi, Yvonne Volkart — **Spain:** Man Jose Balcells, Issa Maria Benítez Deñas, Rosa Martínez, Alicia Murria — **Portugal:** Isabel Cels — **Northern Europe:** — **Sweden:** Maria Lind, Mats Stjernstedt — **Norway:** Ina Blom, Lotte Sandberg — **Finland:** Maria Hirvi, Paula Toppila — **Denmark:** Lars Bang Larsen — **Estonia:** Ando Kesküla, He Treier — **Lithuania:** Liutauras Psibskis — **Moldova:** Iulian Robu — **Belarus:** Irina Bigdai, Victor Kozlov — **Russia:** Oleg Kireev, Viktor Misiano, Victor Mazin, Anatoly Osmolovsky, Olesya Tutina, Elena Tsvetaeva — **Ukraine:** Natalia Filnenko, Olexandr Soloviov — **Central and South Europe:** **Poland:** Agnieszka Wolodzko, Piotr Rypson — **Czech Republic:** Andrée Cooke — **Hungary:** Jut Angel — **Albania:** Edi Muka, Gëzim Qëndro — **Austria:** Johanna Hofleitner — **Bulgaria:** Loredana Boubnova, Nedko Solakov, Dessislava Dimova — **Romania:** Ruxandra Balaci — **Greece:** Maria Fokidis — **Macedonia:** Suzana Milevska — **Slovenia:** Sasa Glavan, Marina Grzinic — **Serbia:** Lila Merenik — **Middle East:** **Israel:** Sarit Shapira — **Turkey:** Ahi Antmen — **Asia:** **China:** Chao Y. Chen — **Japan:** Midori Matsui, Satoru Nagoya — **South Korea:** Sun Jung Kim — **Taiwan:** Rita Chang, Yuan Chien, Manray Hsu — **Thailand:** Apinan Poshyananda — **Oceania:** **Australia:** Damien Brett, Simon Rees, Nike Savvas, Ben Cumow — **New Zealand:** Jeff Gibson — **Africa:** **South Africa:** Ch Kellner, Rory Bester — **North America:** **USA:** Saul Anton, Francesco Bonami, Dan Cameron, Clara Campbell, Denise Carvalho, Jeff Carter, Christopher Chambers, Michael Cohen, Adrian Darnat, Julia Decter, Lauri Firstenberg, Ruben Gallo, Susan Giles, Tim Gilman & Frantiska Sevcik, Berin Golim, W. Henry, David Hunt, Giovanni Intra, Reena Jana, Paul Myoda, Odili Donald Odita, W. Jackson Rains, Martha Schwendener, Berta Sichel, Irene V. Small, Grady T. Turner, Octavio Zaya — **Canada:** Côme Ghaznavi, Kitty Scott — **Central and South America:** **Mexico:** Cuauhtémoc Medina — **Brazil:** Adriano Pedrosa — **Columbia:** Jaime Ceron, Jose Ignacio Roca — **Venezuela:** Jesus Fuenmayor

Editorial, Executive, Advertising, Subscription, Distribution Offices:

Flash Art: 68, Via Carlo Farini, 20159 Milan-Italy
T. +39 02 66 86 150 / +39 02 68 87 341 F. +39 02 66 80 12 90

ANSWERING MACHINE +39 02 68 87 341

e-mail: politi@interbusiness.it

website: http://www.artdiarynet.com

U.S.A. Special Projects:

Boris Moshkovits: e-mail: Flashart1@aol.com
799 Broadway, Rm. 226, New York N.Y. 10003, T. +1 212 67 71 647 F. +1 212 47 70 70

Publisher: Giancarlo Politi

Assistant to the Publisher: Betty Furiase T. +39 02 69 66 06 54

Advertising Services: Fabio Biffi: e-mail: faadvert@tin.it

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ADVERTISING SALES:

U.S.A.: Kate Shanley, 799 Broadway, Rm. 226, New York N.Y. 10003, T. +1 212 47 70 70 F. +1 212 47 75 016 e-mail: Girlmonkey@aol.com — **EUROPE & ASIA:** Fanny Dubois, London House, 266 Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL, T. +44 171 35 15 981 F. +44 171 35 19 47 e-mail: fanny@flashart.demon.co.uk — **Australia:** Ashley Barber, T. +612 96 99 99 99 F. +612 96 99 99 36 22 e-mail: barber@cottier.com.au — **Belgium:** Barbara Beaumont, T./F. +32 9 22 39 566 — **Finland:** Hannele Kolsio, T./F. +358 2 82 26 671 — **France:** Frederique Meunier, T. +33 1 48 04 03 80 F. +33 1 48 04 37 04 — **Germany:** Margrit Scher, T./F. +49 221 23 01 92 — **Greece:** Alexandros Stanas T. +30 932 68 00 09 F. +30 1 70 16 86 e-mail: astanas@yahoo.com — **Italy:** Cristina Natale Riccio, T./F. +39 02 54 12 12 e-mail: cristinariccio@hotmail.com — **Israel:** Shimshon Crystal, T. +972 3 60 51 825 F. +972 3 60 47 90 **Portugal/Brazil:** Maria Amélia Ferreira da Silva, T./F. +351 1 77 89 512 T./F. in France +33 1 43 84 68 46 e-mail: maria.amelia@wanadoo.fr — **Spain:** Mónica Pareta, T. +34 93 41 27 23 F. +34 93 41 24 443 e-mail: mpb-politi@seker.es — **Switzerland:** Peter Schär, T. +41 1 36 41 984 F. +41 1 36 41 984 e-mail: grafotra@active.ch — **The Netherlands:** Ellen De Bruijn, T. +31 20 53 04 996 F. +31 20 53 04 990 e-mail: edbprojects@compuserve.nl **Turkey:** Beral Madra, T. +90 212 23 11 023 F. +90 212 24 74 852 e-mail: bermal@netnet.net **Japan:** Hiroko Seki, T./F. +81 3 34 31 60 42 e-mail: hirokoski@tky3.web.ne.jp — **Hong Kong / China / Taiwan / South East Asia:** John Millichap, T./F. +852 29 82 11 11 e-mail: jinll@netvigador.com — **South Africa:** Geraldine Gowar, T./F. +27 11 80 21 80

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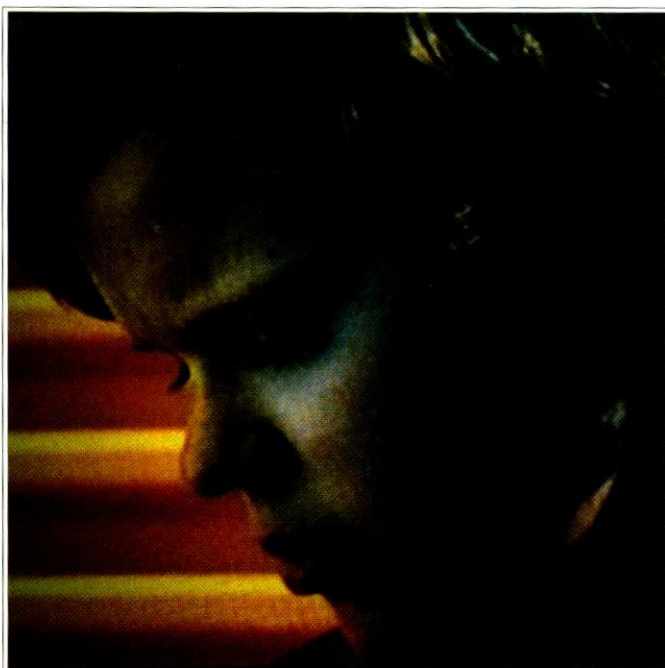
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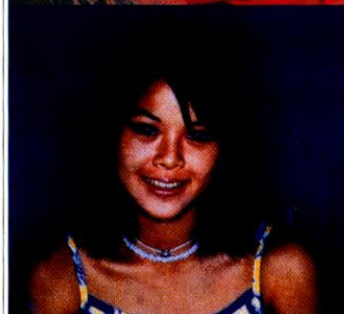


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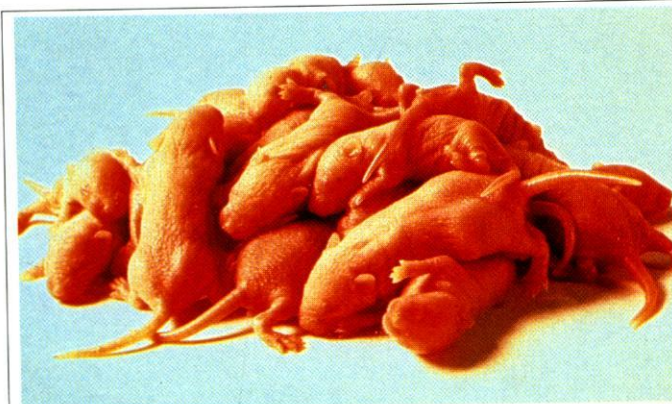
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SOUP

GARAGE PROJECT 4 AT SUNJUAE ART CENTER, SEOUL

GROUP SHOWS

What's been happening at the humble basement of the magnificent museum building since its opening in 1998 is the 'underground' — literally — exhibitions to 'excavate' non-established young artists.

Lee Bul, the curator of this show, presents six multimedia-based artists in their twenties under the title of "Soup." Emphasizing its association with stickiness, which represents the artists' minute sentiment toward their memory and self-reflection with a hint of humour.

In the center of the garage, Ji-a Jung presents *Physical Condition to be an Artist*, a video projection featuring a close-up of the artist herself, in which she is sadistically being abused by the hand of an unseen guy plucking off her long neat hair and throwing eggs at her. Her efforts to keep smiling are spoiled by the brutal force, Jung represents the violence of

the system by revealing her masochistic position.

The cold silver mechanical assemblage by Nam Zie, titled *Portable Assembly Machine — Grinding Out & Refining* at wall opposite the entrance visualised psychological instability, reminding us of the children's habit of biting their fingers in anxiety. These nail-clipper-like apparatus are devised to clip the nails and grind away the calluses of our hands. Monotonous squeaky noise adds the dull and depressing atmosphere.

It is Kim Sang-gil's glossy photos that you come across in the last corner of the exhibition space. Reinforced by the red lighting and fixed by its explanatory title, the unusual situation in his work — for example, in *Ha Jin, Drying Her Telephone*, a girl is crying over the telephone blowing it with a dryer in the other hand — is weird enough to invite the curious au-



KIM SANG-GIL, *Ha Jin, Drying Her Telephone*, 2000. Photograph.

dience to intervene in the absurd interface between the reality and unreality.

In alleged context of experimenting with space, that is, the counter of something unusual in a familiar space for a fresh look, the garage project is considered a paradox to

convert the familiar garage space to the unfamiliar gallery space. However, it is quite successful in terms of excavating and encouraging promising young artists, the future occupiers of the upper show room, at an early stage.

(Keunhye Lim)

EUROVISION

SAATCHI GALLERY, LONDON

The appeal of seeing European Art in London, is that you don't feel like a tourist. Limiting a group show to just European Artists and making that the reason for it, suggests that this is the way they see the world. It is true, visually they speak the same language, but with a bit of an accent. Ugo Rondinone takes centre stage in the gallery with his *I don't live here anymore* series of photographs and target paintings. By implanting his own head onto the bodies of beautiful girls in various fashion shots his obsession with glamour and desire to become a part of that world ends up destroying both. The photos look like the egocentric dreams of trash tv. Rondinone succumbs to the glare and stare of wanting the limelight, but wanting it so much he doesn't try to disguise himself very well. In wanting to be seen, he distorts the whole thing — you start to look at the girls' feet thinking how ugly and manly they are, rather than they are big because she is a tall girl. His fetish puts us off. Rondinone's target paintings that are spotted around the gallery are

similarly eye catching, using a soft focus and dazzling colour combinations. They are full-on tacky versions of beautiful paintings. After almost laughing at the way Rondinone has fallen for fashion, you realise that you are also being seduced.

Rineke Dijkstra's *Beaches* features portraits of teenagers who have been instructed to pose against a backdrop of sea and sky. The charm of teenage naiveté is crossed with a strong sense of adolescent discomfort. The scale, pose, and presentation of the photographs have a similarity to fashion advertising campaigns. When it's in a fashion mag, chipped nail varnish and acne will look as over-styled as airbrushed cleavage. What Dijkstra gives the viewer is the real thing — there is nothing to promote but the image itself.

In a separate room are three portraits of mothers holding their new-born babies. The women look defensive, protective, and vulnerable. If you were walking down a hospital corridor and were confronted with the same scene it is unlikely that you

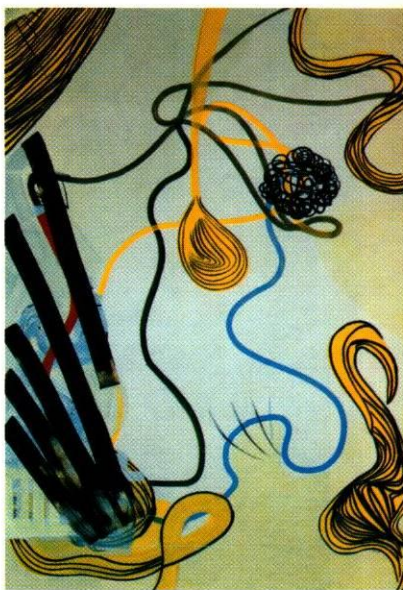
would even make eye contact. In the security of the gallery where you have gone with the intention to look, it is not about wanting to stare especially but the fact that in reality you would not look at all. Without even venturing out of the ordinary Dijkstra controls the viewer to the point where you do not just engage with the image but with your own insecurities.

Juan Usle's paintings are visual regurgitations of technological bombardment. Each painting seems to fit a different kind of categorisation. He has used an abstract painting style which he then picks and pastes on top of. The paintings look as if they have been painted with colours that are too dark or the mark making is not fluent enough. They look heavy. When he includes a section of the painting which is similar to other paintings such as something from Jonathon Lasker or Laura Owens it seems as if it is weighed down; the work becomes less like a comment on how you might interpret the electrons and microchips of a computerised society and more like a dark

view of the future.

For a three person show, the Euro art has much to say.

(Gemma de Cruz)



JUAN USLÉ, *Yonker's Imperator*, 1995-6. Mixed media on canvas, 274 x 203 cm.