

LONDON

ANTON HENNING

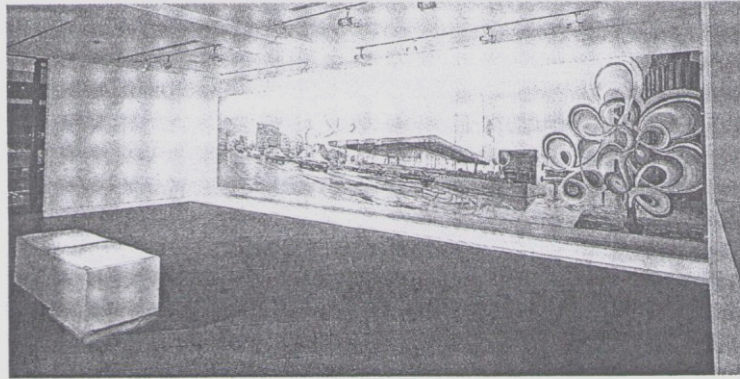
ENTWISTLE

As you descend into Anton Henning's lounge installation, *Mankers Melody Maker Lounge, No.79*, in the basement at Entwistle, you could be descending into a tomb — freshly opened by style-archaeologists where traces are preserved of the death-throes of late modernist design. Excavated here are those nauseating acidic colours — the yellows marigolds, tangerines and magentas — in broad, merciless bands, tourniquets strangling the room, a shocking reminder of how bright things got in the 70s — but like sherbet, a quick fizz and it was gone. Visitors lounging on the clear gel-cushioned, white light-boxes, hovering above apricot coloured contract-carpetting, as they watch Henning's video in its white-boxed monitor, enter the roles of 1970s lounge-lizards. This is a master-stroke of Henning's, getting the viewer to unwittingly, but appropriately, animate an otherwise inanimate tableau, whose hyperbolic homage to the 70s so luridly and tastelessly refers to Pop, Minimalism, and hard-edged abstraction, in one sickly-sweet scoop.

Somehow, we are not convinced that Modernism should have been so readily deflated and packed away in the 70s. A retroactive after-glow is being fanned into flame by such artists as Jim Isermann, Liam Gillick, Stefan Eberstadt, Sarah Morris, and Thomas Scheibitz. The common thread running through here is an examination, of our tendency to obsessive looking-back into generic cultural memory, but specifically the traces and after-effects, the nostalgic remains of a deceased Modernism. The current pluralist climate invites such projects. Henning is not merely reminiscing here. However, his installation is busy looking into itself, and there are memories folded into memories. Pin-up paintings on one wall of the gallery re-appear in miniature in a painting showing a similar room, on the opposite wall, resonant, perhaps of the self-reflexivity of much modernist painting. In this work, and in his mural-sized painting, swirling rococo ribbons of colour erupt here and there where a seemingly punctured picture-plane lets another reality bleed through into the otherwise figurative

composition, creating parody, in the latter painting, of its pictorial homage to the architectural modernism par excellence of Mies van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

Roy Exley



ANTON HENNING, *Metabolism at Dusk*, 2000. Installation view.