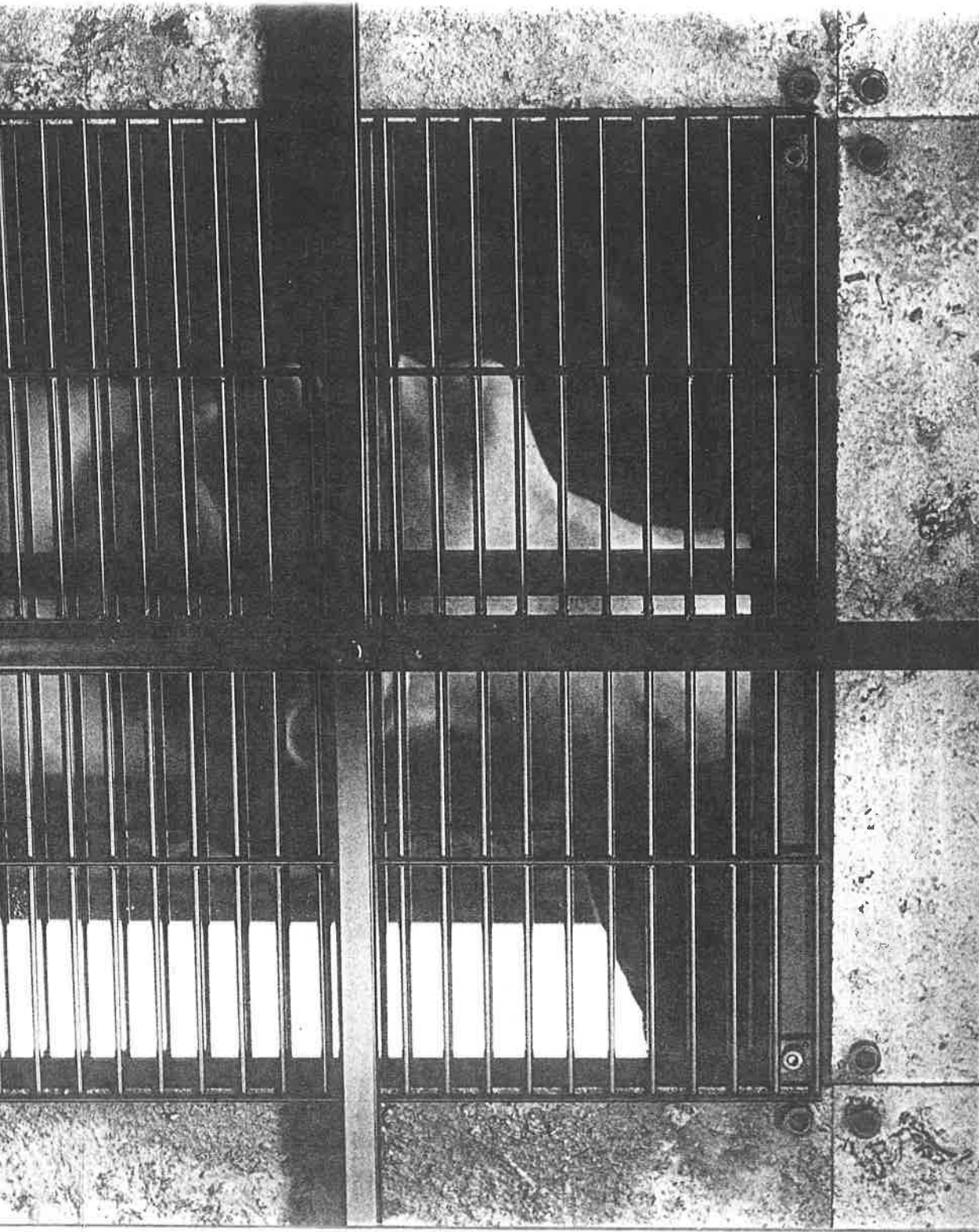


STAPLES®



**Marina Abramović**   **Brian Catling**   **Philip Glass**

**Roberta Graham**   **Joan Jonas**   **John Latham**

**Denis Masi**   **Post-Industrial Performance Art**

IR \$6.40 — Lire 16,000 — DM 24 — DKr 90 — Ft 25 — Sch 150 — FF 70 — BF 400 — SF 18 — Plus 1,350 — US \$13 — Can \$15 — Aus \$17

four; a man buried up to his neck in sand on a beach, eyes closed; a couple on a train. Mulfinger succeeds in engaging our curiosity as to their unknown histories, chronologies and geographies — we almost know this person; that must be Los Angeles? 1930s? are they lovers, or brother and sister? The sense that we can almost, but not quite, read the signs in these black and white images is underpinned by the surrounding of embossed Braille, some of which is actually punched through the photograph; we can almost decode its meaning, imagining the unknown text. The desire to touch the Braille focuses our desire for a closer connection with these almost-known, intriguing moments of mundane history.

Photograph and Braille surround are set in a large expanse of plain card, inviting the viewer to re-do the work of finding and isolating the image. We have the uneasy sense of intruding on these people's lives, the voyeurism which is inherent in image-based art being intensified in the case of these pieces by their particular intimacy.

On one wall of the gallery which has been painted a lush green, pairs of spectacles are lined up on glass shelves, one above the other, in three groups. From a distance the impression is of pages of text, the sentences and paragraphs being delineated by the placement of the spectacles; and in fact when one approaches closely, words are actually etched into the lenses of

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**Jane Mulfinger**

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Lost for Words

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Flaxman Gallery

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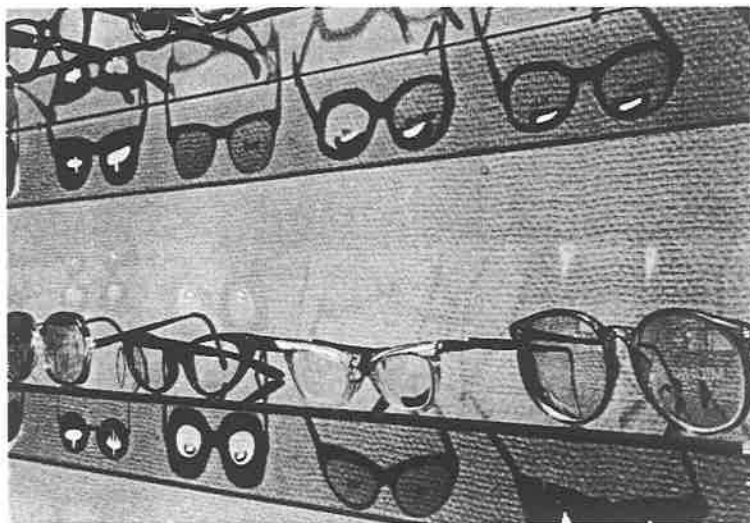
*Reviewed by Richard Dyer*

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The exhibition falls into two distinct bodies of work: firstly a set of found photographs carefully chosen for the archetypal quality of their images of people, and secondly two installations using second-hand spectacles.

The photographs, snapshots as opposed to professional studio pictures, are of the most ordinary people posing self-consciously for the camera: a young couple standing arm in arm in a suburban garden; a double exposure of a family of

Alighiero e Boetti. The



each pair of spectacles. The words are in mirror image, to be read backwards from top right to bottom left, together making up a composite text drawn from first hand accounts of Hiroshima, a solar eclipse, a first view of the Swiss Alps and the visions of Bernadette of Lourdes.

These are experiences of great power and emotion, epiphanic and ineffable. The various narrators' attempts to translate essentially inexpressible mixtures of vision, revelation and emotion are etched into the glasses as if the magnitude of the events has burnt a lasting memory into the lense/retina/mind.

Because all of the glasses are second-hand and of different makes and styles, they refer to specific individuals; and as with the Braille photographs, the content of the work concerns private lives and experiences made public. The theme of voyeurism is indeed implicit in the use of spectacles, aids for viewing closely and in detail — we are also looking through the

lenses as we read the text, at the unknown wearer made partially present by the words. The three 'paragraphs' are lit by one spotlight each, creating archways of light which conjure up associations with ecclesiastical architecture, thereby reinforcing the reference to mystical revelation. The light also causes the reflections of the lenses to fall on the wall just behind the spectacles, looking unnervingly like the ghostly eyes of the narrators.

On another wall are three small glass shelves, each of which holds a differently etched pair of spectacles in its open case; one is covered in musical notation, one in Braille and the third in Morse code. Because these codes are to most people indecipherable, not only is attention drawn to the interplay between medium and message, but connections are pointed to between comprehension and mystery, and between vision and blindness, both at a physical and at a cultural level.