

## electronic mirror II CHRISTIAN MÖLLER

Mirrors provide certainty — a banality that proves itself anew every day, at the latest during the morning toilet. Electronic Mirror II refutes this banality at first glance. In a way similar to the mirrors in funhouses, this installation of mirrors produces, rather than an accurate likeness of the viewer, his or her animated, irritated struggle to find the true image. However, in contrast to funhouses, the viewer's experiments in Electronic Mirror II are in a marked field, a mirrored stadium, which must be passed in order to obtain a clear image of him or herself.

The mirrored stadium is defined on one side by a mirror, the transparency and clarity of which can be varied, and by a flat surface on the other side, in which the laser-disk sequence of an observing eye is shown. The viewer, searching for an accurate image of him or herself, moves between the mirrors and the eye. When he or she approaches the mirror with the golden frame to focus, the mirrored image will blur. The reason for this vague experience of self is the connection between an ultrasonic sensor, which measures the viewer's distance to the mirror and a PC, which regulates the mirror's transparency and the reflective clarity via a dimmer. Directly in front of the mirror, the viewer cannot focus his or her image. The object is — in Kierkegaard's words — too close to the longing, "so close that it is within it".

The experience of the classic myth is also the source of this variable focus of the self-image: Even Narcissus' own mirrored image was a surprising experience late in his wanderings. An experience he had while in motion, just like the viewer of Electric Mirror II. This ur-scene of an experience with a mirror and its deadly consequence is met by Electric Mirror II with deprivation under computer control: The mirrored stadium prevents the viewer from falling into the self image which he or she is in love with. The recognition of the self at a certain place in the gaze's axis requires distance and is set in another ur-scene: It is coupled to the observing, acknowledging eye of another. In fact, it is the exact point on the room's central axis where one must stand in order to open the eye, which shows the viewer's self-image in all its clarity.

