

## Rehearsal of Memor Harwood



Originally commissioned as an installation for *Video Positive 1995*, *Rehearsal of Memory* is an artwork created by Harwood in association with the patients and staff of Ashworth Arts, in its new form ROM will be available as a CD ROM.

During the winter of 1994 and 1995, Harwood worked with a group of people from Ashworth Maximum Security Hospital to produce an interactive program that embodied their life experiences. The skins of those taking part were scanned to assemble physical traces of their lives, defined by notions of insanity. These were then made to form a composite individual through which the program user can make close contact with significant events in the lives of those involved.

Ashworth Mental Hospital is located near Liverpool. The hospital is both home and prison to 650 people of whom seventy per cent are mentally disordered "offenders". Their crimes include murder, manslaughter, arson, kidnap, rape, assault and criminal damage. These patients are admitted to Ashworth Hospital on the authority of the British courts or from other prisons at the direction of the Home Secretary.

Horror stories grow out of folklore, fed on the deluge of rhetoric poured out by the technology of Hollywood, of the art world and of the media. Their electric images fill the mental spaces left by our own lack of personal knowledge about the mentally ill individual. This misinformation sentences the mentally ill to be executed, beaten brutally, fined, shamed, incarcerated, drugged, hospitalized or even treated to heavy doses of tender loving care. But, first and foremost, they are excluded from passing as normal women or men.

*"Rehearsal of Memory* simultaneously challenges our assumptions of normality and confronts us with a clean comfortable machine, filled with filth, with the forbidden and the demented, its hygienic procedures contaminated by the effluent of excluded human relations. For a long time we have assigned machines our dirty laundry while maintaining the image of their enameled white veneers.

Now is the time for filth."

Key personnel

Richard Pierre Davies — Producer

Robin Rimbaud — Sound Artist

Matthew Fuller — Writer on Art/technological subjects

Kevin Rowe — Artist in Video and Installations

Harwood — Multimedia artist

Ruth Piecece, Mick Galleher — Programming

Pom Martin — Multimedia Designer

Ralph Sager — Multimedia Designer

Anne O'Conner — Multimedia Designer