

RAYS [work in progress]

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Photo: Klomfar & Sengmüller

RAYS [work in progress] is part of a large-scale project dealing with "rays" such as light, radioactivity, shortwaves, microwaves etc. The installations *Ohne Titel 1* [1992] and *Ohne Titel 2* [1992] as well as *No empty space available?* [1994] are video, light and object installations. In *No empty space available?* a white light laser [in ideal circumstances] endlessly [in ideal circumstances] scans a band saw blade stretched out over 150 meters in 20 lines. A searchlight, simultaneously a "weapon" [laser] and a scanning signal, is reflected by the highly-polished saw blades. That could end in disaster. Works such as *KELOIDS of HEARTs* and *Protective Sculpture* [1996] require weakly radioactive material as a pulse generator for the video installation and as a radioactive source in order to actually make the *Protective Sculpture* into a protective sculpture. The radioactive material is presented like a piece of jewelry, set upon a pedestal and closed off by a barrier whose actual function is to protect the viewer. The viewer wants to be protected, and must be. He cannot get close to the material without getting his fingers burned.

Kazuo M., the Japanese poet from Hiroshima, became a murderer as a result of the effects of the atomic bomb. In one of his poems, he speaks of the keloids in the heart, scars which have remained in the hearts [the feelings] of the people of Hiroshima. The high-level thermal radiation following the bomb blast left behind shadows on building walls, shadows of things and of living creatures. [Many are now mere shadows of themselves. Death has cast its shadow upon them.]

In the installation *KELOIDS of HEARTs*, radioactive material [weak radioactivity, low half-life] serves as pulse generator for the video projection. The weakly radioactive source turns on and off the machine [video player] which is primarily responsible for the shadows on the wall [projection surface]. A Geiger counter measures the particles and serves as pulse generator for the on-off switching mechanism. The installation space is weakly contaminated with radiation. The radiation from the material out of which the building is constructed is included in the calculation. *KELOIDS of HEARTs* is a seemingly [virtually] closed circuit installation, in which the shadows become prisoners of the source and dancers around it. The shadows out of the past can be summoned at any time, stored in archives, museums, data banks, in human memory. They can be projected at any time, onto walls, projection surfaces, human beings.

RAYS [work in progress] can be carried out only with the support of physicists. [Austrian Atomic Institute of the Universities in Vienna; in planning: Cambridge University].

