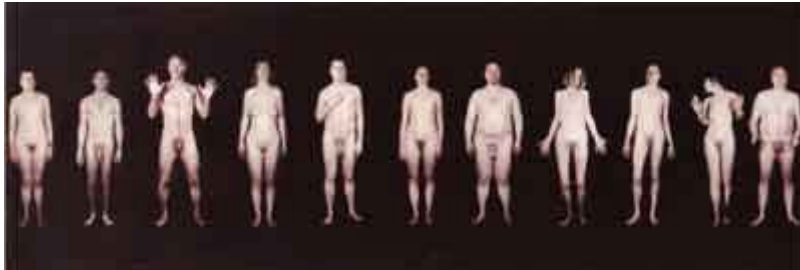


**Gina Czarnecki**  
**Stages Elements Humans**

**A digital video installation**



As you push aside the curtain within the doorway and enter into the space, the images and sounds that you are confronted with are dramatic and disturbing; a wall of video projections—nine figures, naked and staring straight at the audience—span the width of the gallery space. Two meters high and eight meters wide, the life-size figures initially appear motionless, then gradually, and at different paces they appear to come to life, become aware of their surroundings and of you, the audience. The figures illuminate the otherwise empty dark space, the different nuances of what is termed "white skin" glow, caught as if behind the screen, pressing against it, enclosed and compressed in the darkness and seemingly unaware of one another. The abstract tones of the soundtrack envelope you and compound further a sense of the figures' isolation. These images live behind the screen in a constricted cycle—displayed, subtly manipulated, changing specimens becoming aware of their surroundings and of their entrapment.

In a sense we are all encased in this space—we are forced to think about the comparisons, conscious or otherwise, that we make between our own and other bodies, what we believe is ideal or perfect and how we or they compare.

The video medium as a document of the "real" has been turned around; the images are not real—they have all been digitally modified—yet still appear to be possible. Digital culture is altering our perception of the world. We can no longer believe in the truth of the photographic image; what is real and what is not real seems no longer a valid question. Cosmetic modification, organ replacement, prosthetics, cryonics, gender alteration, cloning and genetic

enhancement have all changed our perceptions of the physical body. *Stages Elements Humans* raises issues surrounding the possibilities of genetic engineering and what this could mean when genetic alterations / corrections / modifications / mutilations can be purchased as easily as cosmetic enhancement.

