

a beach in Honolulu and died, revealed three pounds of plastic in its intestines that included beads, a comb, a golf tee, a toy wheel, a piece of rope, a balloon, a plastic toothpaste cap, baggies and a plastic flower. Although most of the plastic in Bergman's installation came from ocean dumping, the impact of the whole experience on the local community was such that recycling for certain types of plastic garbage has now been instituted in Santa Barbara. (Currently in the U.S., only ten percent of trash is recycled; Western Europe recycles thirty percent, and Japan, fifty percent.)

"Art may not change anything," Bergman states, "but the ideas we have about ourselves we project into the world. . . . Negative images have a way of coming alive just as positive images have. If we project images of beauty, hope, healing, courage, survival, cooperation, interrelatedness, serenity, imagination and harmony, this will have a positive effect. Imagine what artists could do if they became committed to the long-term good of the planet. The possibilities are beyond imagination. If all artists would ever pull together for the survival of humankind, it would be a power such as the world has never known."

A Moving Point of Balance, the multisensory environmental work dedicated to healing and balancing that was completed in 1986 by Arizona artist Beth Ames Swartz and shown at the University of Arizona Museum of Art in Tucson and the Nickle Arts Museum in Calgary, Canada, strikes me as another work within the aesthetic mode that attempts to overcome the subject-object separation by increasing the audience's sense of involvement. Here, too, one enters a darkened space and hears gentle music, moving consecutively into seven different baths of colored light while contemplating seven large paintings of the seven chakras of the body. Each painting represents a different chakra, or energy center, that governs our physical and emotional well-being, in a system developed by Hinduism, and each chakra is symbolized by a different color: red for the first chakra, at the base of the spine, energizing issues of survival and involuntary response; orange for the second chakra, in the place of the reproductive organs, generating creativity; yellow for the

third chakra, at the solar plexus, the source of personal power; green for the fourth chakra in the place of the heart; blue for the fifth chakra at the throat, the place of communication and speech; indigo at the sixth chakra in the center of the forehead, the source of clairvoyant intuition; and violet at the crown of the head, the place of opening to the higher realms. The viewer is encouraged to pause at each meditation station, following a path in a kind of pilgrimage from one painting to the next. An accompanying text suggests what things to focus on in relation to one's own body while standing before each painting and absorbing the colored light related to that chakra.

Swartz feels that in our culture we don't understand the mysterious quality of the energy flow that connects mind, body and spirit. Through a special computer study done when the work was shown in San Diego and in Aspen, where the audience was invited to fill out response cards, Swartz found that people of all ages and varying ethnic groups claimed to have felt "cleansed, strengthened, balanced, energized and exhilarated" by their experience with *A Moving Point of Balance*. Many people sat, meditated, or even lay down in front of the paintings to receive healing. Although she has been a student of both Native American and Far Eastern healing practices, Swartz claims it was after her visit to the Rothko Chapel in Houston that she was inspired to create a public meditational environment. But there is another precedent for what Swartz has done. In certain parts of Egypt, healing temples were constructed to allow the sun's rays to enter so that they would break up into the seven colors of the spectrum. Archaeologists have found evidence that people were sent to particular rooms to absorb the color they needed. The assumption was that imbalances in the color harmony of the aura—the energy field surrounding the body—cause illness.

The paintings themselves relate more directly to the metaphysical tradition in early twentieth-century art, and remind one easily of the rhythmic simultaneity of Orphism. I am thinking, in particular, of František Kupka's series of works the *Disks of Newton* (1912), cosmic color wheels that

are a whirling matrix of dynamic movement, where everything is in perpetual energetic relationships. In Swartz's case, the addition of gold leaf, microglitter, crushed stones and crystals reputed to have healing properties creates a more encrusted surface, suggesting meteorites, stained glass windows or the jeweled icons of the Byzantine era.

For me, however, what makes these pictures not just a throwback to early twentieth-century versions of "the spiritual in art" is their participatory aspect, which represents a long overdue breaking down of the wall that has effectively separated artists from their audience. To make the transition from an exploitative and divisive paradigm to a more systemic, ecological vision, the old schismatic and confrontational energy of modernism must give way to a unifying, healing energy. (In the political arena we see this coming into play even as I write this—a willingness to give up old patterns of confrontation, the animus *against*—in the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the shift into interaction and interrelation of East and West Germany. More currently, the Gulf crisis is an opportunity for all nations to acknowledge the manner in which everything is interdependent and affects everything else.) Obviously, we have not yet moved from the old dominator beliefs and ways of thinking to something else. Probably the biggest shift will be in these motivational or attitudinal changes. What we are mapping into place, I believe, is a kind of art that cannot be fully realized through a monological mode; it can only come into its own in dialogue, as open conversation, in which one is obliged to listen to other voices. *A Moving Point of Balance* was recently acquired by a California philanthropist, who intends to install it permanently in a new center for the creative arts to be established eventually in Sedona, Arizona, with the proposed mission of supporting interdisciplinary work "committed to global ecological harmony and the spiritual evolution of humankind." It will be the first study center for environmentally committed art.

A great deal of modern art was intended to be *against* the audience. But, as we have seen, there is another possibility. Art that realizes its purpose through *relation-*