

Ground Zero in New York City. Close-ups of a smoke-filled doorway or an emergency vehicle convey the horror of the event, despite its ineffable immensity.

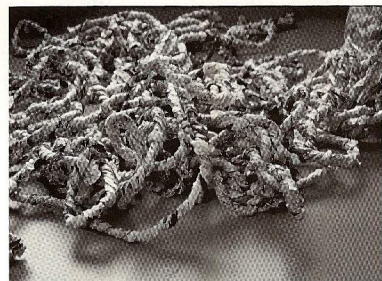
The success of this exhibition rests both on the inherent strength of the works and on their sensitive installation. The gallery's irregular floor plan creates intimate spaces that were used to reinforce the exhibition concept, a refreshing change from the more typical use of cavernous white cubes. Contemporary fear is fueled by events that greatly differ from what has happened in the past. Media coverage of health risks, political agendas that ignore reliable evidence or squash alternative views, and rapidly changing lifestyles all contribute to a sense of losing control. We are all affected as we take steps to avert potential hazards. *Parameters of Fear* allows us to reflect on that fact.

—John Gayer

ROME

Organized in collaboration with the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, **Stefano Arienti's** exhibition at the MAXXI (Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, November 4, 2004—February 6, 2005) is a survey of works from the mid-eighties to the present, with a few produced specifically for this show. Installed to establish intimate relationships between works and viewers, the exhibition reflects the process of endless experimentation that characterizes Arienti's eclectic, if conceptual, production.

If artistic style plays no part in Arienti's practice, neither does chronology inform the exhibition's installation. Instead, the artist and the curator privilege the breadth of Arienti's experimentation, process and attitude, resulting in the inclusion of the most diverse works and in unexpected juxtapositions. Wandering through the



Stefano Arienti, *Corda*, 1986-2004, newspaper, dimensions variable (courtesy of the artist and Studio Guenzani, Milano)

HELSINKI

Recent political events have brought fear back into the visual vocabulary. The nature of fear itself, however, still remains a lingering question. Is fear merely an emotion, or can it be a state of mind? Are we to understand fear in terms of personal, psychological reactions? Should we see it instead as a complex visual program that, like the Medieval Last Judgement laid out to emphasise the Church's authority, is here to consolidate power and operate as societal control. **Parameters of Fear** (Muu Gallery, October 1—17, 2004), a thought-provoking international exhibition of recent works by artists who met each other at a cross-disciplinary residency with Gillian Wearing at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in Florida, examined the nature and influence of fear in today's society.

The most common notion of fear may well come from the land of dreams. *I am unknowing*, 2004, a video triptych by Finland's **Gun Holmström**, evoked nightmarish visions. Short loops of manipulated imagery conveyed a sense of entrapment made terrifying because it was impossible to tell why or by whom. Although the faint details of the shortest loop—a head being held down by someone's foot—was no wider than a few inches, it evinced the effects of torture so viscerally that it was difficult to forget.

Beyond dreams, ritual provides another avenue for channeling fear. Ritual calls upon the transformative power of objects and performances to comfort and protect. Combining Christian and non-Christian elements, **Gabriel Martinez** likely drew on Cuban-American culture to make *Untitled (from Confidence & Faith)*, 2003, a decapitated St. Therese candle, burned down to the figure's chest. In *Antlers*, 2004, a deer head is adorned with hanging amulets, remnants of rituals with unknown or unspoken purposes. Strong visual statements, Martinez's works exhibit the inalienable power of anthropological artefacts.

The American-Irish duo **David Philips** and **Paul Rowley** presented the two-channel video projection *Security Fugue*, 2004,



Gabriel Martinez, *The Blessing of Helsinki*, 2004, photo-documentation of performance (courtesy of the artist)

where two hospital staffers rush out to meet a helicopter ambulance. This tense medical emergency scenario is enhanced through slow motion, distorted voices and somber music. The work's title, however, complicates matters. If fugue suggests a type of musical composition, it also refers to a form of amnesia whose symptoms are memory loss, the adoption of a new identity and the performance of rational actions. *Security Fugue* thus operates as a metaphor for an increasingly complex set of circumstances, complicating the potential medical emergency and leaving us to guess the identity of the victim of deception.

Mental instability and perceived threats inform Canadian **Juliana España Keller's** photo and video works. Looking at *Clenched Fists*, 2003, a photo of a masked person ready to fight, we quickly realize that we are the threat. In the video *Woman willing to defend her hotel*, 2003, however, the threat remains unidentified. Wearing a camouflage jacket, short skirt, a toy gun, and big sunglasses, a woman stands out sharply in an environment where machine-gun-toting guards normally grace the entrance of banks. In this fine performance, the artist treads the line between comedy and tragedy or, perhaps, self-importance and despair. The video *3:10 Ground Lapse*, 2003, provides a haunting glimpse of