

## ADRIAN PIPER

**Exhibition dates:** 17 October 2003 to 11 January 2004.

**Curator:** Sabine Breitwieser. **Production:** Generali Foundation in Vienna

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**This exhibition, organised by the Generali Foundation in Vienna, brings together a broad spectrum of the work of Adrian Piper, artist, writer and professor of philosophy, born in Harlem, New York, in 1948. After a small selection of paintings from her earliest period such as *LSD Void* (1965) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1966), almost all her conceptual works from the sixties, documentation of her performances, her most famous installations and some recent works will be on show.**

Adrian Piper began to study philosophy in the seventies, since when she has been a university lecturer. Her academic training and her early interest in yoga and Vedanta, the fundamental philosophy of Hinduism, are inseparable from her work as an artist. She is one of the precursors of the use of popular culture; we find fragments of Emmanuel Kant, Aretha Franklin, aspects of everyday life, funk music, Afro-American culture and particularly the prejudices it suffers side by side in her work. She directly poses and analyses subjects such as racist stereotypes, xenophobia and human nature, while shunning any elitist "artistic language".

In her works –whether installations, photographs or drawings– Piper tries to create situations in which the spectators can react immediately and be surprised at their own impulses. From that idea –which she refers to as "indexical present– a series of works have emerged using concepts such as "here", "now", "I", "you", "this"; they often contain elements of direct provocation of the spectator. Another concept that underlies her whole career is *meta-art*, by which she means openly showing the activity, the thought processes, the procedures and conditions in which any kind of art is produced.

Subjects such as the way in which the spectator perceives the work of art and the role the artist chooses to assume, the possibilities of art for effectively communicating political and social issues, and the way of posing that confrontation so that it does not provoke merely aesthetic reactions: these are the central aims pursued by Piper in her work. Far from any formalist tradition, she defines the work as the spectator's reaction to it and her role as artist as a "paradigm of society". In her work she reflects –and thus reveals– the treatment she receives from society as a specific subject: woman, Afro-American and artist. From that perspective, the work of art and the artistic subject are integrated and her work is not defined as political art but as a specifically political activity.

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