

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOVETT/CODAGNONE

*"Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte..." (If I could wish something...)*

March 8 - April 13, 2003

Opening Reception Saturday, March 8, 7-9pm

From March 8 - April 6, 2003 PARTICIPANT INC will present *"Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte..." (If I could wish something...)*, a large-scale single-channel video installation by the collaborative team Lovett/Codagnone. As part of our inaugural season, the installation will mark an important development in the artists' career to date. *"Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte..." (If I could wish something...)*, 2001, accentuates the artists' rigorous engagement with performance-based photography and video, combining an investigation of a still photograph from Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1973) with a sound excerpt from Joseph Losey's, *The Servant* (1963), to deliver a study in power dynamics.

The original still image was photographed during the filming of the party scene and represents an angle that never appears in the final editing of *The Night Porter*. Here, it is extracted from its cinematic context, recreated and performed by Lovett/Codagnone in a real-time elongation staged at Anthology Film Archives in New York. Their performance, fifty minutes in length, references a play within a play in the style of scenes from John Casavettes' *Opening Night* (1977), occurring in a minimalist theater in which characters overstep the roles that were written for them. The complex human dynamics explored in each of the original film sources are distilled in a pose demanding intensity and endurance, transforming the particular instant of the still and extending it to a full length movie. The strenuous performance conveys the complicated and uncomfortable relationship between two characters, in which the power dynamics between them is constantly shifting. This is accentuated by dialogue from a scene in *The Servant* in which "the master" and "the servant" play a bitter game of role reversal. This repeating soundtrack accompanied the performance in the movie theater during recording, and is the major sound component of the installation.

*"Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte..." (If I could wish something...)*, furthers the artists' ongoing exploration of relations of power, as manifested in explicit cultural signifiers as well as clandestine or unconscious practices. Previous photography-based collaborations have referenced S/M through the displacement of gay subcultural signifiers into suburban environments or urban public spaces. However, the content of their work is not limited to this ironic juxtaposition. As culture has inoculated itself against the destabilizing power of these practices through fashion and other mainstream depictions of S/M and drag performance, Lovett/Codagnone have commented on this trend and refocused on the underlying dynamics of interaction that sexual role-play can literalize.

*PLAY* (2000) was the first of such video works to strip away the S/M gear while still emphasizing the artists' investigation of power dynamics,

intimacy, and varying abilities to communicate. *PLAY* took the final scene of the film *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* as a point of departure. On four screens facing inward, George and Martha are played by various configurations of the two artists and their parents in simultaneous reenactments of this concluding interchange, a physical grappling with the inadequacy of language. Performed by non-actors who share real-life intimacy, this appropriation of theatrical fall-out reflects on the performative identities and scripted communication that comprise patterns of interaction and dysfunction within family structures. "*Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte...*" (*If I could wish something*) is the ambitious follow-up to this breakthrough exhibition, and was designed specifically for PARTICIPANT INC.

Concurrently, Lovett/Codagnone will present *ASK\**, a week-long performance at *TRANS>area*, 511 West 25 Street, Suite 502.  
Opening reception, Saturday, March 29, 6-8pm  
Tuesday, April 1 - Friday, April 4, 6-8pm  
Saturday, April 5, noon-6pm

Lovett/Codagnone live and work in New York. They have been working together since 1995 and have exhibited in public and private spaces including Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2002; Centre of Contemporary Art, Riga, Latvia, 2001; Galerie Praz Delavallade, Paris, 2001; Brent Sikkema, New York, 2001; Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan, 2001/1997; Thread Waxing Space, New York, 2000; Musee des Beaux Arts, Nantes, 1998; Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, 1998. Upcoming exhibitions include Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan, The Laura Mars Grp., Berlin, and Neue Gesellschaft fur Bildende Kunst, Berlin.

This exhibition is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. PARTICIPANT INC has received generous support from The MAT Charitable Foundation and numerous individuals.

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 95 Rivington Street, between Ludlow and Orchard Streets on the Lower East Side.  
Gallery hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-7pm.