

MANIFESTO
HOHENTHAL UND
BERGEN, MUNICH



KATHARINA SIERVERDING,
DEUTSCHLAND WIRD DEUTSCHER,
1992.

The posters of the action "Manifesto," developed by Benjamin Weil for the urban environment, raise questions about the aesthetics of everyday life. They have been put up everywhere on fences, walls, and advertising columns and they aren't at all conspicuous to our eyes, accustomed as they are to advertising images. In contrast to the isolated context of a gallery, a closed space, posters in the city live on the repetition, the irritation provoked by their context. Is the aesthetics of everyday life revealed as a double-sided game when Yasumasa Morimura's cynical and ironic *No pain no gain* — the inscription above a picture showing a submissive demonstrator with a policeman unambiguously holding his weapon to his temple — laughs down at us from the wall? Using himself as a mirror image, Morimura transposes a now classic photographic situation to the context of a foreign city, in this case Tokyo, and the art work thus attains its own criteria of alienation and turns a political manifesto into a consumable particle of the advertising-accustomed eye. A similar blend of effect and demystification is apparent in the work of Gavin Brown, sticking the contents of an average refrigerator, in accordance with the prevailing levels of

Western consumption, on a mail box. In the sheltered square of the gallery, Katharina Sieverding's *Deutschland wird deutscher* (Germany's getting more German) brings "Manifesto" into an "inner space" of political perception. A private confrontation, despite the time-lag, with the portrait surrounded by a knife-thrower's knives, allows an emotional development and includes the spectator as a dormant but active element. Cologne photographic artist Ursula Böckler goes one step further toward personal and private experience. Her manifesto is a collage of photographs of the environment in which she is directly involved.

Three projects, quite independent in origin, in similar ways examine the persistent question of whether art can open itself to the spectator's eye when answers about meaning or non-meaning are not explicitly provided.

Anne Maier

(Translated from German by Shaun Whiteside)