seductively physical and at the same time eerie in its allusion to a techno-fetishistic otherworldliness. With their well-considered orchestration of these seemingly opposed attributes, Nachman's prints invite sophisticated questions about the uneasy relationship between subjectivist interiority and the evolving technology that surrounds it.

—Mark Van Proyen

Regi Müller: *Eccentric Circles*, 1999, hydrostone, approx. 3 by 55 by 500 inches; at Kunstverein Katharinen.

PARIS

Michel François at Jennifer Flay

Forty-three-year-old Michel François, one of two artists representing Belgium at Venice this year, belongs to a loose fraternity that might be called "peripatetic sculptors of the apt gesture"—artists such as Richard Wentworth, Gabriel Orozco, Fischli and Weiss, and the late Felix Gonzalez-Torres. François's art is made of visual incongruities remarked, commonplace occurrences reframed and things found. This show, which sprawled across the gallery's three rooms, was at once funny and anarchic. François mixed objects, often only slightly modified, video works and large black-and-white photographic images. One typical object, emblematic of the show's spirit, was an 8-inch black wooden die with the single words "sex," "sleep," "tv," "nothing," "friends" and "read" written in chalk on the six faces. Faced with rolling this instrument of chance, we sense our private lives being taken hostage by the artist.

François is obsessed with accumulation and has a singular way of organizing disorder. Quantity in his work points not to wealth and abundance but rather to impoverishment and violence. In the gallery's entrance room, hundreds of spent gun shells, as well as thousands of pharmaceutical capsules, threatened to engulf the computers on the gallery owner's desk, evoking the wars we fight both inside and outside our bodies.

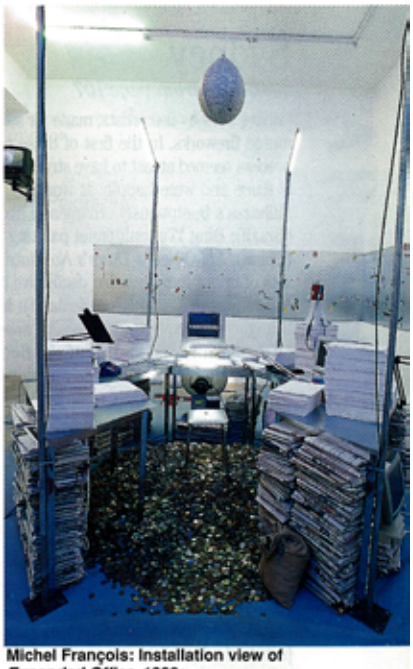
In the gallery's main room, *Bureau Augmenté* (Expanded Office) worked outward from five tables with angled corners pushed together to form an open, hexagonal desk-of-a-sort. Its surface was piled high with video monitors, various electronic devices (many of them recently obsolete) and much more, while a babel of stacked newspapers closed off the tables' undersides. Pouring outward from under the desk, at its open side, was a massive coin spill (seen previously in Paris and New York). Newspapers by definition lose their value in a matter of hours, and the coins, which came from countries whose currency had been hyperinflated or revalued, were equally worthless. Two adjacent walls of the room were covered with a wide band of galvanized steel plates on which a passel of multicolored plastic numbers and signs could be moved about by viewers. Rectangles the size of sheets of typing paper were cut out from the carpet and strewn about.

Among the many objects on the table was a monitor showing a looped videotape of a wooden chair as it clattered down stone steps to end in pieces—an offhand reference to Eisenstein's famous baby-carriage scene in *Battleship Potemkin*—while nearby a computer monitor showed a screen-saver of zeros trailing endlessly. Also on the desk were first-generation cell phones, a toy intercom, two additional videos, two slide projections, a mechanism that broadcast a soundtrack both inside and outside the gallery, prominent fluorescent lights and very much more. If offices today tend toward the pristine and anodyne, François's manic and uneasy installation vividly evoked the deluge of the everyday and the rapid rate at which contemporary objects obsolesce.

Many black-and-white pictures, photocopied and blown up to poster size, covered three walls of the gallery's back room like wallpaper. Most of these images were taken in the developing world; some were new, others had been exhibited before. Typically, they show a child or adolescent in relation to an object or a natural element: a shoeless young boy grips a fat wooden cylinder like a batter waiting for a pitch; a dark-skinned man, crouching on rocks, blows fire toward the ocean; a girl buries her face in a monstrous white lily as though in a handkerchief.

Visitors could take away copies of a large poster of a young woman—the artist's daughter—steering a bouncing outboard in open water while talking on a cellular phone. The contemporaneity and social class of this image contrasts with those of the other pictures. But again the prevailing mood is expectancy, as if the interaction between the human agent and its inanimate partner opened a field of possibilities. Though François's images flirt with exoticism, they treat the familiar and the foreign equally, as opportunities for accurate seeing.

—Anne Rochette and Wade Saunders



Michel François: Installation view of *Expanded Office*, 1998; at Jennifer Flay.

ST. GALLEN

Regi Müller at Kunstverein Katharinen

This renovated 750-year-old former women's cloister is an adjunct to the local art museum and is often used to display the work of younger or less-well-known artists. It was an ideal location for a floor installation by Regi Müller titled *Eccentric Circles*. This Swiss artist has now lived in New York City for three years; she temporarily returned to install the show. Müller's earlier work was two-dimensional, pristine and geometric—often compositions of silkscreened dots. While occasionally engendering a unique sense of space, it was cold work, too well-mannered and too graphic-designer-like. New York seems to suit her: this show was splendidly powerful, yet tranquil.

A "runway," 55 inches wide by 500 inches long, abutted the far wall and stretched along the floor toward the gallery entrance. This strip was an arrangement of 81 discrete, three-dimensional ellipses, each roughly 3 inches thick. All are variations of five basic ellipsoids, forming a progression from almost circular to nearly sticklike. Roundest is about 9 inches in diameter, the longest and thinnest 19 inches long, the others in between. They pointed every which way within the confines of their carefully albeit randomly arranged rectangle. The off-white, semi-hollow sculptural elements are individually cast of artificial stone, then hand-sanded and waxed until each achieves a personality of its own. Surface tactility dominates. They exude both fragility and strength: resilient like bone, brick or stone; sensitive like china, mortar or chalk. The elements were laid on the floor yet seemed to lightly hover above it. Their translucent whiteness reflected some of the dark wooden floor's hue, but bestowed more of itself to the polished boards than one would expect.

Müller's installation quietly commanded the space, bringing together the ostensibly distinct sensations of concrete tactility and form-dissolving light. This balanced duality, like the two centers an artist or engineer uses to generate an ellipse, is at the heart of Müller's accomplishment.

—Mark Staff Brandl