

Flash Art

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LOS ANGELES

JESSICA BRONSON

Bliss

You enter an upwards-blowing blizzard with huge flakes of snow and wind whistling around you high in the Alpine mountains. Jessica Bronson's installation *It's Seethe, The Quietest of Whispers* lays a trail of video monitors juxtaposing reason and illusion to suggest a mesmerizing journey of survival.

Wooded wilderness in *Just Snow, That's All* (1996) is appropriated footage trimmed of people and narrative. Snow rises softly to the sky in a gravitational miracle of reversed tape. A list of imitation snow ingredients scrolls across the bottom of the screen emergency broadcast style — "sawdust... soap flakes... chopped feathers... balsa chips..." — poetically revealing the video's potential artifice. In *Snowy Subtitles For Mediterranean Landscapes* (1996) these phrases are fixed to the bottom of the gallery windows. Like bread crumbs, they lead us through rooms of weather and implicate the green Californian lawn outside with fakery.

The snowstorm's immanent danger segues to a room of motion sickening mortality. *White Hole* (1996), a handmade video vortex, sucks us, like Alice, down a snowy psychedelic rabbit hole — a white light at the end of the tunnel. *The Speed of Snow +-7000 Frames* (1996), consists of Bronson's home videos on permanent fast forward treated with feedback — pixels emerge endlessly from the center of the screen in molecular symmetry. Her life flashes before our eyes.

In the final room, *Washed Under Whitely* (1996) is a monitor set on a circular white rug displaying surveillance of the first room overlaid with the footage of the upward swirling snowstorm. Inserting our own experience into the excerpted commercial one, Bronson blurs the distinction between memory and imagination. Text, video recording, and physical phenomena hold equal weight in interpreting the present. Philosophical urgency underlies her simplicity of form: physical survival appears to be her subject, but it is our dialectic that Bronson ultimately challenges.

Ingrid Calame



Jessica Bronson, installation view, 1997.