

Vamp r y

She made a place for herself in her old spot. Carefully draping the red velvet around her body, naked again. Force of habit had led her to shed her clothes. It was dark. The time of night when she could no longer tell time, when it wasn't to be considered any longer. When even time couldn't tell, this time that was timeless, she thought. It was this time that she had chosen. A time when she could be anything, claim any past, absorb any fantasy. Like this, at this time, she felt she could most be herself.

Her past didn't add up to much yet, but there was no one she wanted to be. She wasn't a special woman singled out for great achievement. She would never be a mayor or a president, a famous artist or intellectual. And the tragic women of the past didn't interest her much either. There was no one she wanted to be but herself.

She knew there were ways to dream, as a few had, carrying their private fantasies out into the world, creating empires held together by a logic not of money or territory, but of the solemn power of desire - endlessly exchangeable, yet never satiated. This desire had passed through her on its way somewhere else, as it had propelled her to another place, perhaps even here. This desire had moulded her in its imageless way to be like it was, capable of assuming many forms, capable of circulating, so that part of her was always held up, watching for the other parts to catch up, to continue circulating. She spent much of her time waiting in this somewhere else, looking on as a voyeur, totally and completely absorbed, galvanized as she approached her own perversion.

In the daylight, faced with her desire, she rarely succumbed to it, preferring instead to sleep the disinterested sleep of a dreamer. So that when late night came and she awoke, the day took on an unreality already half-remembered by the night.

It was in this state that she had placed herself. In this domain that she waited for what she knew must eventually happen.

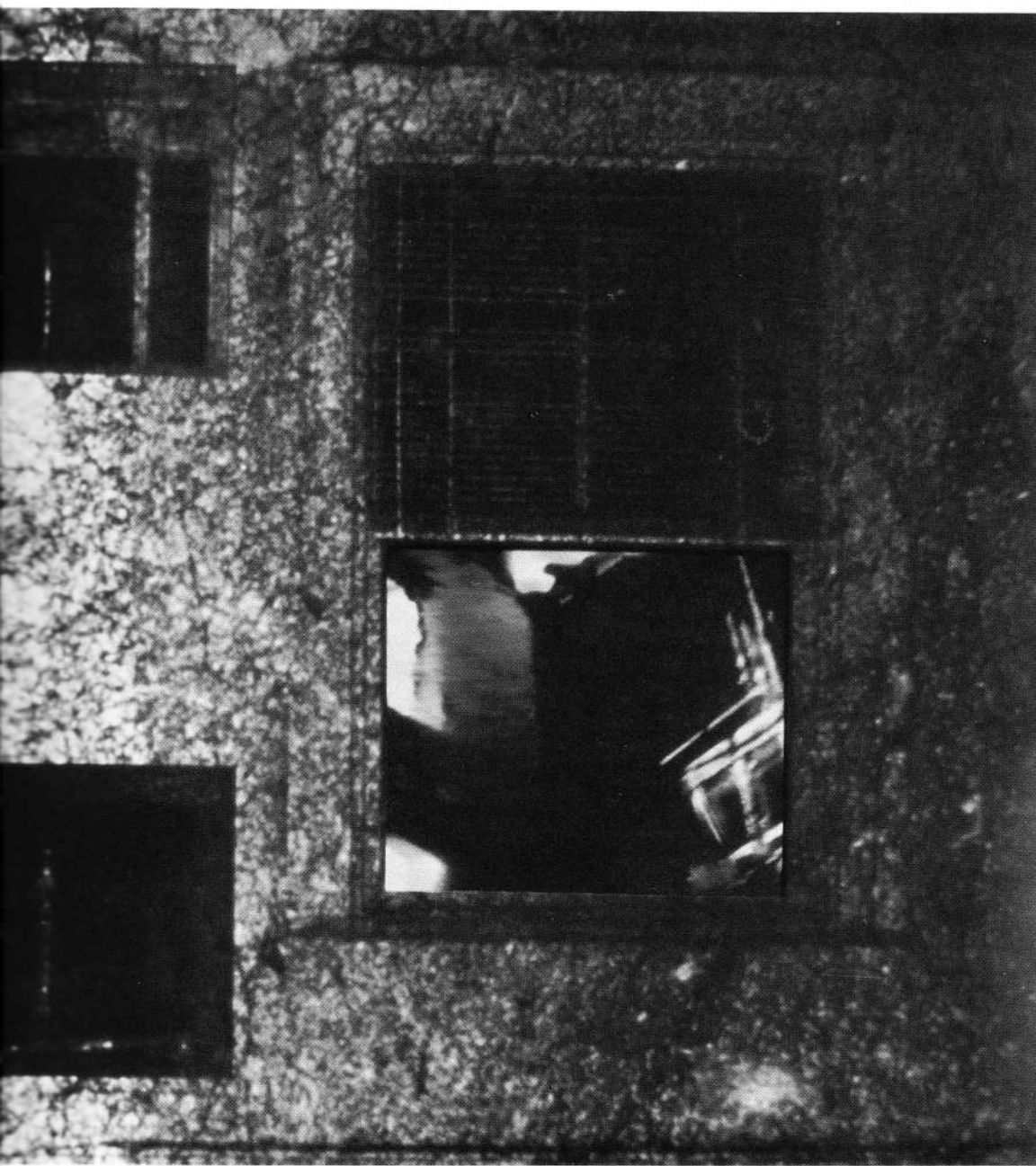
The room grew darker now. The faint moonlight from behind the jalousied windows moved off. The mansion was still. Nothing filtered through from the swimming pool, no bodies were outlined in the glass of the one-way mirror lining the walls of the huge bedroom. No laughter seeped under the heavy chateau door. No one was playing at the billiard table.

And just as her body began to ache from remaining lifeless for so long, she heard the door slowly open. Barely breathing, she watched as he entered the room, to the blackness that was familiar. He seemed tired. He didn't reach for the lights, but moved carefully, avoiding the big circular bed that usually occupied his attention, side-stepping the litter of newspapers, teletype print-outs, and other emblems of his empire that were uncharacteristically left to accumulate and remind him of the passing of time. This was his empire she knew, the place where he, too, was most himself.

All memories would stop soon. They would become what they were. She could see from her vantage point that he had stopped pacing and was looking towards the window, towards the city that he could only image through the blinds. A city he no longer saw. Soon he would approach the bed and turn the cameras on, just as he must have wanted to do when he was an usher at the movies. But unlike then, this movie would never end. And she would be immortalized, living forever, like the other women he possessed and then democratically shared with those who consumed the glossy pages of his magazine. In this mansion whose sole function was to protect the endless night, they would be forever. The only question was who would take the first bite.

She pushed the curtain aside and came up behind him. Her body lightly touching his back. As he turned and began to suck her, he asked again if she was already dead, or just so different she couldn't exist.





IN THE SHADOW OF THE CITY... VAMP R Y... 1982-85

1x2 ratio screen, 4 Super-8 loop projectors, 4 slide projectors, 2 dissolve units, cassette player, amplifier, 2 speakers

This work simultaneously presents interior and exterior scenes. The viewer first encounters a giant projection of a parking lot; shot at night the scene includes 2 buildings. At the window of one, a woman stands and smokes, watching a young man sleep. A picture-window incongruously placed in the other, shed-like building, shows several figures looking out through half-drawn venetian blinds. The overall scene fades around the windows which are transposed into a different image. A high rise apartment block appears, equally cinematic in scale. The 2 scenes being enacted through the windows continue, but with totally different meanings, codified by the change in their exterior settings. The other side of the screen shows the interior of an expensive, circa 1850 apartment and a 'post modern' couple, dressed in black and flanking 2 windows. One window shows a film sequence of a young suburban man returning home from work and tripping over the children's toys in his driveway. Shown in slow motion it is difficult to tell if he is tripping or flying. The other window shows a de Chirico-like pan of the bombed out buildings of the Bronx. Also in slo-mo the picture changes very subtly, almost like a dream. The slide image dissolves into another shot of the same apartment, uninhabited, ossified. The film loops continue playing, indicating that nothing 'outside' has changed. The sound track is a mix of 16th century religious music and electronic sounds. It is reminiscent of the reverberations in a cathedral after the sound

of chanting has died and as the city sounds of a business day take over. The spectator's relation to the film sequences is one of expected narration. We wait in front of the screen for something to happen, so we can come closer to be involved. But on each side, in different ways, we are refused entry, enthralled by an apparatus which was always intended to be literally overpowering. Unlike a film where we identify with an 'I' that will take us in (to the story and toward eventual mastery and control) here we identify with the place each image has created for us, and with the distance or separation that keeps us away. For me, architecture as the bearer of the inscribed social relations structuring the world has been subsumed by media so that it can no longer exist in a 'platonic' way, as an idea expressed in built form, to stand forever. Instead I see this architecture as most like the montage theories of the cinema, particular images with symbolic importance which take on meaning as we move through the environments that shape our existence. Architecture has become transparent, a giant screen into which social life dissolves. By making explicit certain unspoken yet intensely felt subject relations, my work attempts to develop a theory of mass/media consumer culture, whereby as opposed to Baudrillard's schizophrenic, we inhabit the world like vampires, those last great, sentient beings of the 19th century imagination who are neither dead nor alive.