

the notes and references are concise and comprehensive, and the clarity and precision of the author's style radiates authority. This is a hugely important book.

## DVD

### SEEING/HEARING/SPEAKING

Takahiko Iimura. Takahiko Iimura Media Art Institute, 2002. Distributed by Heure Exquise! ISBN: 4-901181-06-8.

*Reviewed by Fred Andersson, Department of Art History and Musicology, Lund University, HS 59, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden. E-mail: <konstfred@hotmail.com>.*

This DVD is basically a presentation of the idea, structure and different realizations of Takahiko Iimura's video-and-performance piece *Talking to Myself*. The title *Seeing/Hearing/Speaking* refers to the two general sections of the DVD. In the one section, called *Hearing/Speaking*, a 2001 revision of the original piece is presented and performed. The other section, *Seeing*, is a shorter piece in which the act of talking to oneself is replaced by the act of seeing oneself. The visual system used in *Seeing*, including two video cameras and two monitors, is taken from Iimura's earlier *Observer/Observed* pieces. The DVD also contains the video recording of the original talking piece from 1978, and a documentation of how a section of the piece was conceived as a video installation in 1985. This material sheds some light on Iimura's method of reworking ideas over long spans of time. One more video of an earlier date is included, namely *Talking in New York*. This is a dreamlike documentary in which Iimura repeatedly, in both English and Japanese, utters the circular phrase "I hear myself at the same time that I speak to myself at the same time that . . ." This performance was done at various locations in New York. There are also some short texts on the DVD. Simplicity and clarity characterize this excellent presentation, and it surely reveals some of the most essential ideas of Iimura's work.

If I were to write a monograph on Iimura, I could well use as a heading a quote from his film-script *Talking Picture* (1981): "I have nothing to show." Still, this nothingness is, to borrow a metaphor from another of Iimura's

texts, comparable to the stillness of a wave, or to a film strip showing immobile objects. Even if nothing seems to move in that kind of film, there is of course a constant movement—24 frames per second! Iimura's dryly rigorous investigations of the space/time of film and video *viewing* give the patient spectator and listener a rewarding experience of losing ground. What is at stake here is the ontological status of seeing, hearing and speaking. The talking piece is an instructive example of this. When it was first realized in the late 1970s, Iimura had read David B. Allison's English translation of Derrida's *La Voix et le phénomène* (misleadingly titled *Speech and Phenomena*). Despite the limitations of any translation of French into English, Iimura must quite immediately have recognized a close affinity between his own work and one major theme of Derrida's critique. That very theme is contained in the following sentence taken from Allison's translation: "When I speak, it belongs to the phenomenological essence of this operation that I hear myself at the same time that I speak."

By simply isolating the phrase "I hear myself at the same time that I speak" and adding the words "to myself," Iimura had the basic material for his talking piece. In order to create what he terms a "phenomenological operation," he turned the phrase into the loop mentioned above. An inversion of the original statement then appeared: "I speak to myself at the same time that I hear." By exhausting the logical alternatives of interchanging singular pronouns within the original phrase and its inversion, he ended up with a number of variations such as: "I hear myself at the same time that you speak . . ."; "He speaks to himself at the same time that I hear . . ."; etc. This minimal poetry opens up a vista of unresolved questions already present in Derrida's text.

What if the hearing and speaking is all in my head? What if I hear my thinking and think my hearing (to turn it all around in Iimura's own manner). Can I hear myself, or any person, if I do not hear myself think what I hear? Is the other really another? Is the same time really the same? Without getting too much into detail here, the following observations could be made (and I think they are essential): the image of Iimura's ear in the talking piece has nothing to do with the validity of the statement "I hear." All we see is an ear. We cannot see the hearing. In this

context, which also involves Iimura's bilingual sensitivity, it is interesting that "I hear" rhymes with "I ear" or "my ear." How do we know, then, that what we see is really Iimura's own ear? When dismembered, the parts of a body or of an image lose the identity given by the whole.

## MATERIALS RECEIVED

### Audio Compact Discs

*Arcane Device: Engines of Myth*  
David Lee Myers. ReR Megacorp, London, U.K., 2003.

#### *In the Garden*

Yusef Lateef, Adam Rudolph and Go: Organic Orchestra. Meta Records, Venice, CA, U.S.A., and YAL Records, Amherst, MA, U.S.A., 2003.

#### *A New York Minute*

Alan Licht. XI Records, New York, NY, U.S.A., 2003.

#### *The People's Music*

Jon Rose. ReR Megacorp, London, U.K., 2003.

#### *You Can Hear Me*

Ehmes. Ivoctam Records, New York, NY, U.S.A., 2003.

### Books

#### *Applied Quantum Mechanics*

Anthony Levi. Cambridge Univ. Press, New York, NY, U.S.A., 2003. 523 pp., illus. Trade, paper. ISBN: 0-521-81765-X; 0-521-52086-X.

#### *Biocosm: The New Scientific Theory of Evolution: Intelligent Life Is the Architect of the Universe*

James N. Gardner. Inner Ocean Publishing, Makawao, HI, U.S.A., 2003. 336 pp., illus. Trade. ISBN: 1-930722-26-5.

#### *Classical Film Violence: Designing and Regulating Brutality in Hollywood Cinema, 1930–1968*

Stephen Prince. Rutgers Univ. Press, New Brunswick, NJ, U.S.A., 2003. 320 pp., illus. Trade, paper. ISBN: 0-8135-3280-9; 0-8135-3281-7.

#### *The Cold Wars: A History of Superconductivity*

Jean Matricon and Georges Waysand. Charles Glashauser, trans. Rutgers Univ. Press, New Brunswick, NJ, U.S.A.,