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Movement that Restructures Space

Joëlle Morosoli, Centre des arts contemporains du Québec à Montréal. From November 20 to December 19, 1991

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MOVEMENT THAT RESTRUCTURES SPACE

Joëlle Morosoli, Centre des arts contemporains du Québec à Montréal. From November 20 to December 19, 1991



Joëlle Morosoli, *Pièces/pièges*, 1991. Wood, steel and motors; 8 x 8 x 7 m. Centre des arts contemporains du Québec à Montréal.

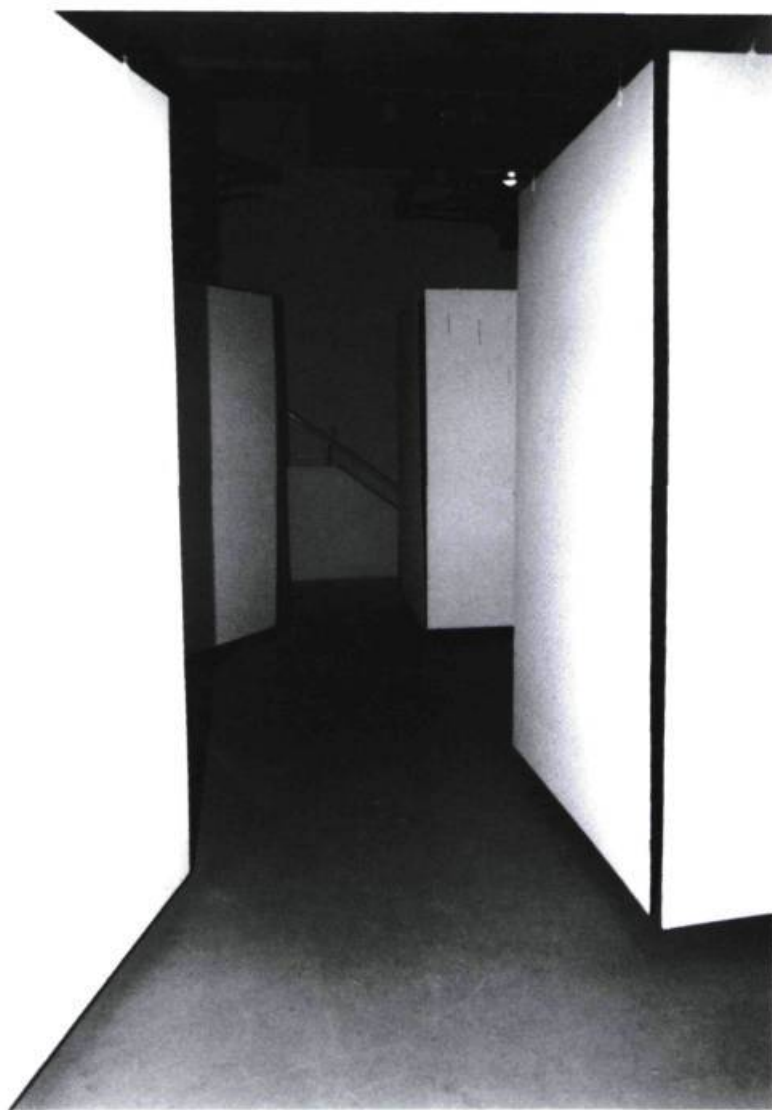
Morosoli's installation *Pièces/Pièges* constantly redefines the spatial proportions of the exhibition hall: movement dictates the properties of space and how it is perceived at every second. As in real life, nothing stays the same in this work, the continuous motion of objects in space determines our feeling towards the environment and how it is experienced, and also offers a choice of whether to move through the presented space and interact with it, or stay at the sidelines as a mere observer.

As an observer one sees space actively restructured by plywood panels, one side of which is painted white, while the other side is a painting. They are attached to electrical devices mounted to the ceiling that cause them to rotate back and forth 90 degrees. There are four such devices; three of them move four panels each and one, three panels. The panels are seven feet high and are placed four inches above the floor. For those standing next to them they create an impression of being substitute walls. When they close in, they form either four- or

three-sided columns that hang suspended in the air; these columns are white, as the real walls of the exhibition hall. At that instant, a spectator sees geometrical sculptural form occupying the real space of the gallery. A moment later, the sculpture begins to disintegrate: the classically-arranged architectonic space that was previously perceived gives way to almost chaotic spatial relationships as the moving panels fragment the visual field into constantly redefined geometrical configurations that are pulled and stretched and broken as the panels rotate and come to proximity and pass each other. The white sides of the panels become moving walls, and this impression lasts until the other sides, the paintings, come to view, and with them the virtual space that they represent. The majority of the panels portray outdoor space – the woods – and thus symbolic fragments of scenery enter the real space of the gallery. In a few seconds the stark architectonic sculpture had unfolded into a painterly experience where segments (the separate panels) of the same painting are moving in space,

redefining and restructuring not only space but the painting itself. When interacting with space, one walks among the moving panels and for a moment is situated between sculptural columns or is enclosed in their inner space. This inner space is either a cubic rectangular enclosure, not unlike that of a real room, or a triangular one. In the case of three columns, one is enclosed within outdoor scenery, or, more precisely, its schematic painterly representation. A dichotomy arises where the inside becomes the outside, and the outside (when outside the enclosed panels) is actually the inside of the gallery as defined by the gallery's white walls and the white sides of the panels. Only one of the enclosures deals with the interior space that is indicated by a prison window with bars, and the blue sky behind. The motion of the panels is rhythmical; their inclosure, disclosure, and movement past each other create a specific flux, a mobile harmony in space.

Morosoli's installation, though appearing simple and even playful, examines some complex artistic issues: the interconnection of sculpture and painting, real versus virtual space, the sculptural properties of the inside and the outside, unity and fragmentation, and the role of movement in a work of art. She introduces various categories separately, then breaks their boundaries and blends them into each other a moment later, juxtaposing in cadence inside and outside, real and virtual, painting and sculpture, colour and its absence. She skillfully manipulates these divergences and creates an illusion of their unity that is acquired through movement. The



Joëlle Morosoli, *Pièces/pièges*, 1991. Wood, steel and motors ; 8 x 8 x 7 m. Centre des arts contemporains du Québec à Montréal.

device of movement visually enacts issues central to Morosoli's work; it causes a constant flow of artistic elements in space, as if in a three-dimensional sculptural kaleidoscope. Her installation makes a statement that a contemporary work of art is not bound by categorizations, that its unity can be achieved through a multiplicity of expressions and devices.

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