

Things Happen to Things

EDITH DEKYNDT

1999





Untitled, installation, (artificial smoke coming out of the ground), Mariemeont, 1985



Le chasseur et le pêcheur, video, 1992



Laboratory 01, (frozen black ink, water), video, 1995



Laboratory 01, (frozen milk, wool), video, 1995



Laboratory 01, (calcium chloride, freshly plastered wall), 1995



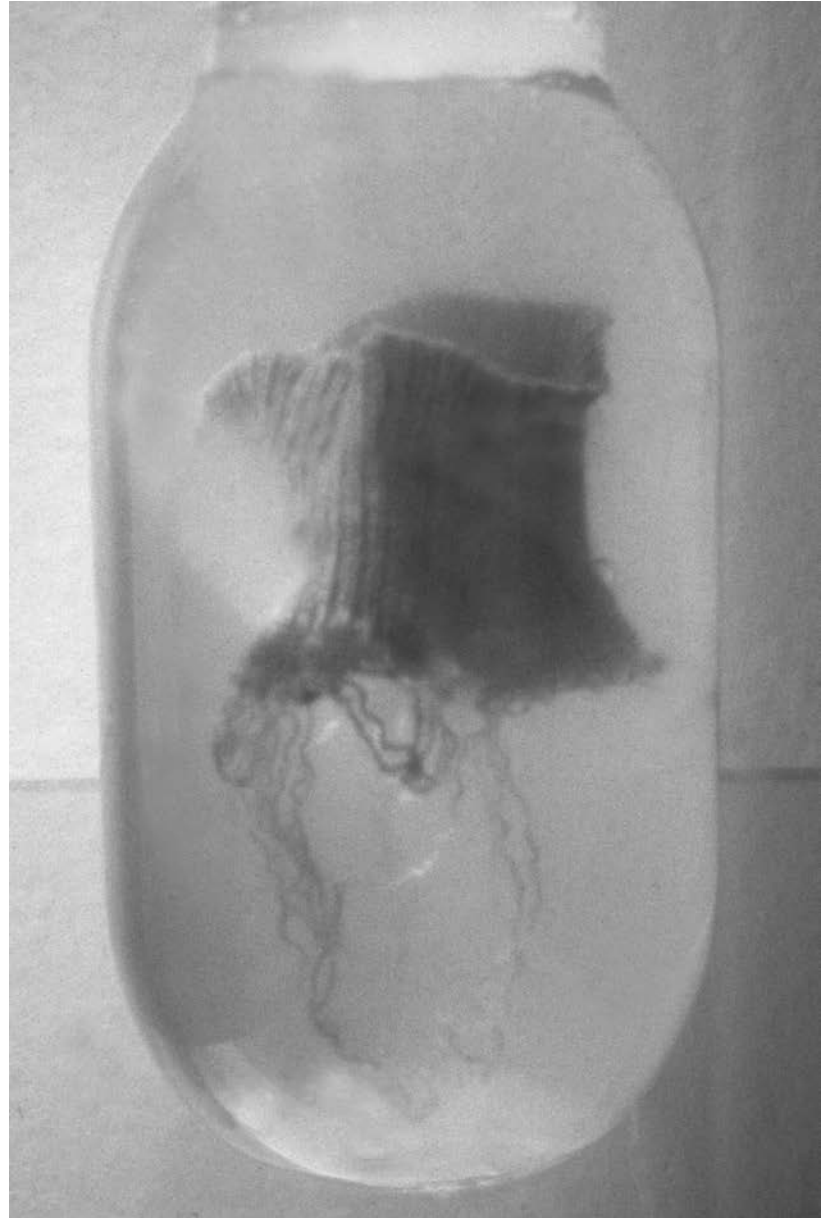
Laboratory 01, (white velvet, coffee),1995



Laboratory 01, (blue fabric, coffee), 1995



Laboratory 01, (white bread, black dog), video, 1995



Laboratory 02, (piece of sweater, transparent gelatine), 1996



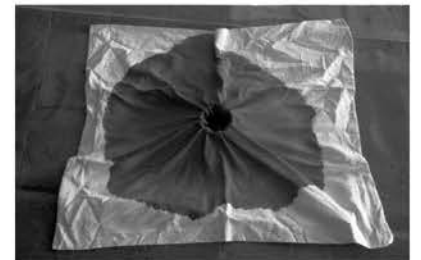
Laboratory 02, (blanket.), 1996



Windows, 1995



Laboratory 02, (lemon, black velvet), 1996



Laboratory 01-02, 1995-1996



Laboratory 02, (red gelatin on transparent gelatine),1996



Laboratory 02, (flower, transparent gelatine), 1996



Laboratory 02, (buried shoe), 1996



Laboratory 02, (elastic, transparent gelatine) 1996



Laboratory 02, (smashed chair),1996



Laboratory 02, (mud, Ca Cl₂, white velvet) 1995-1996



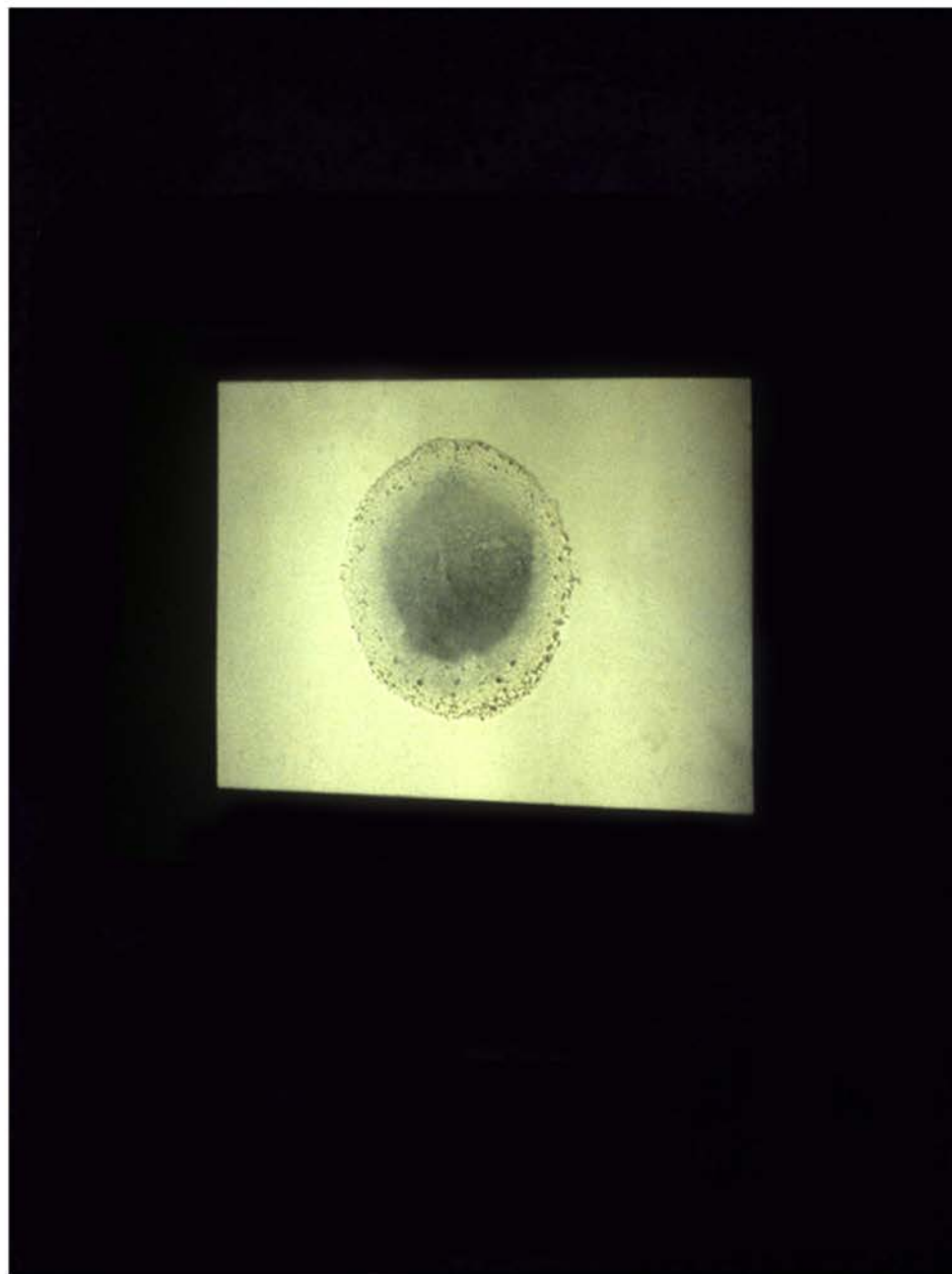
Something Blue, (record player, water) 1996



Laboratory 02, installation view, in Structures, Liège, 1997



Laboratory 02, (lemon, white velvet), 1996



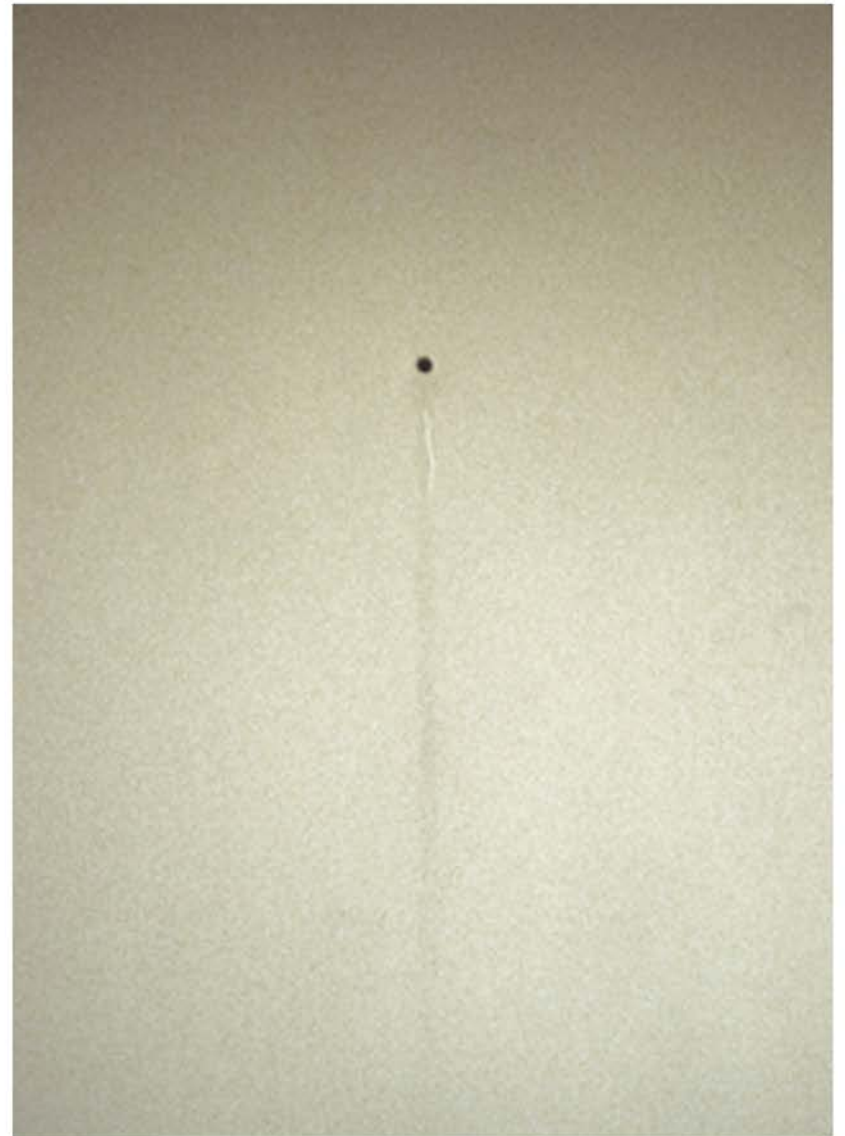
Ne touche à rien, (beverages on slide frames), slide projection, 1997



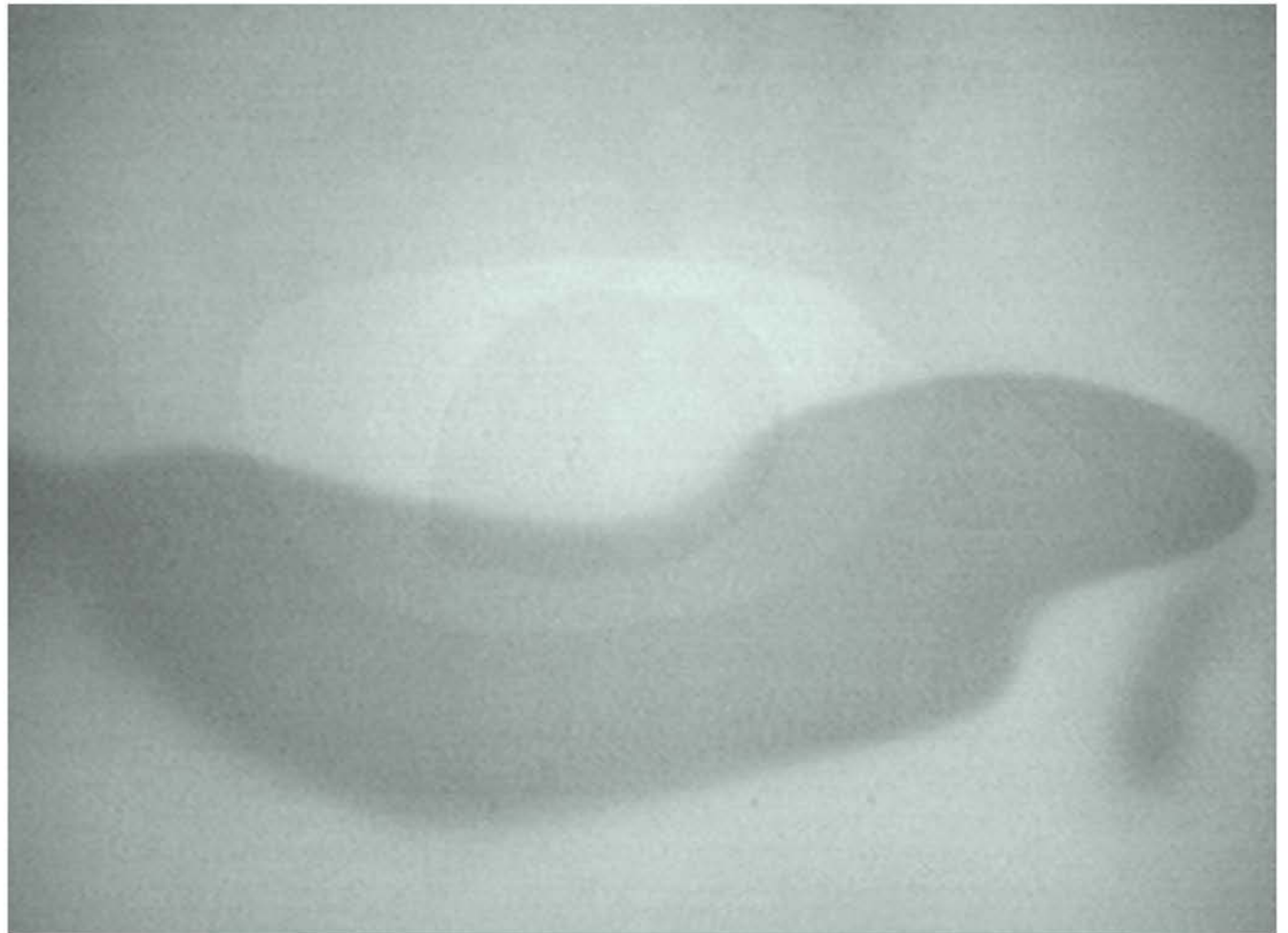
Laboratory 02, (thread of silk, radiator), Structures, Brussels, 1997



White Song, (record player, white velvet), *Structures*, Brussels, 1997



Laboratory 02, (Ca Cl₂, hole on a wall), 1995



Somnium, (humidity on slide frames), slide projection, 1997



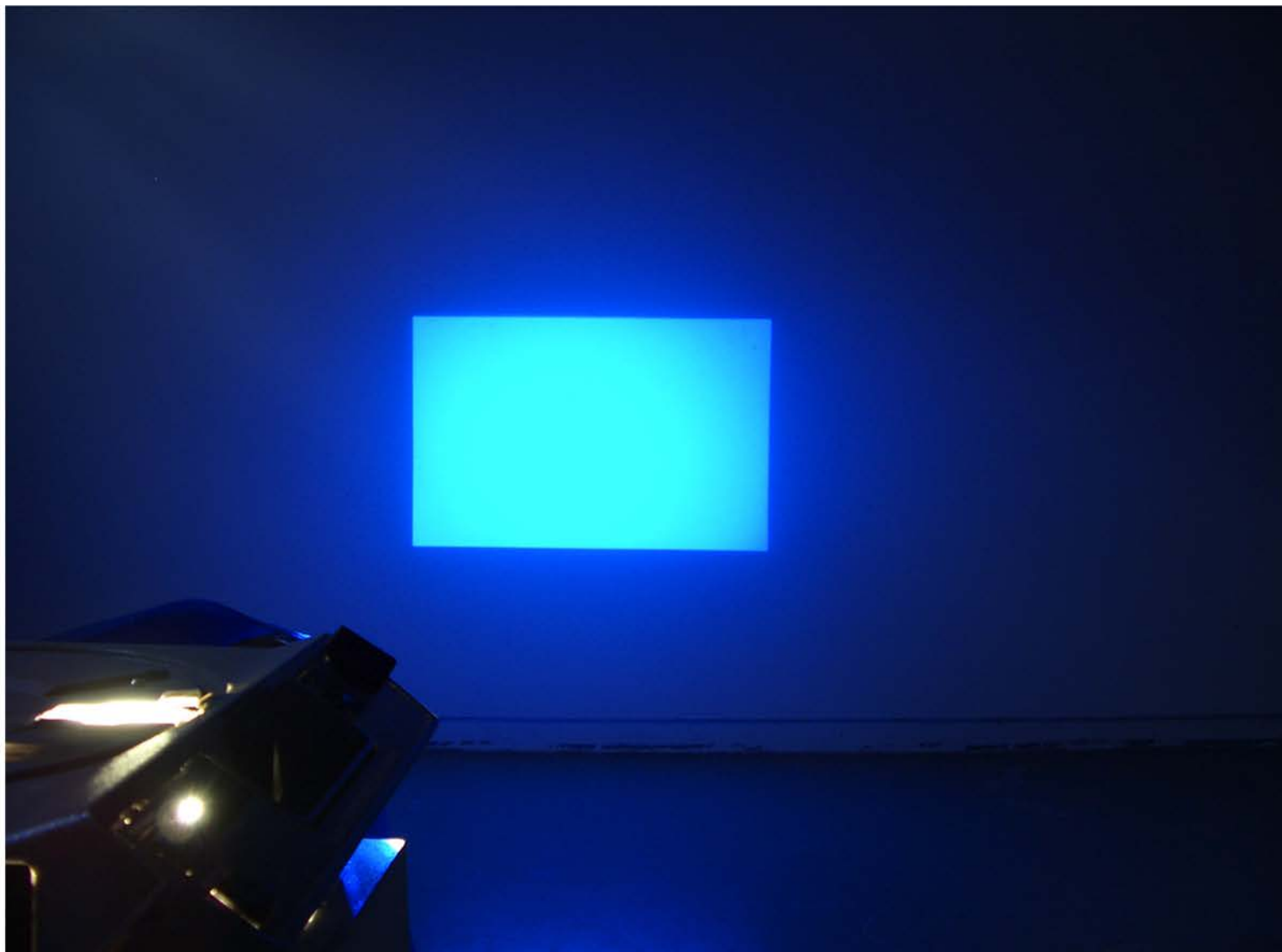
Laboratory 02, 1996



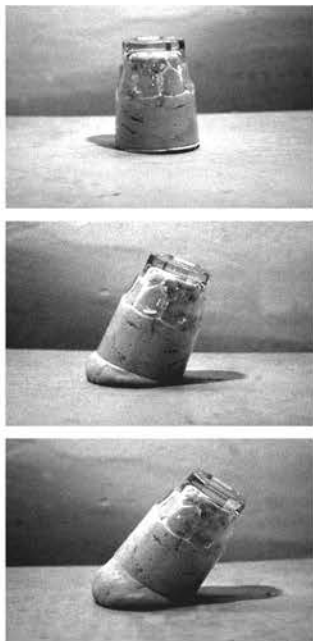
Windows, 1995



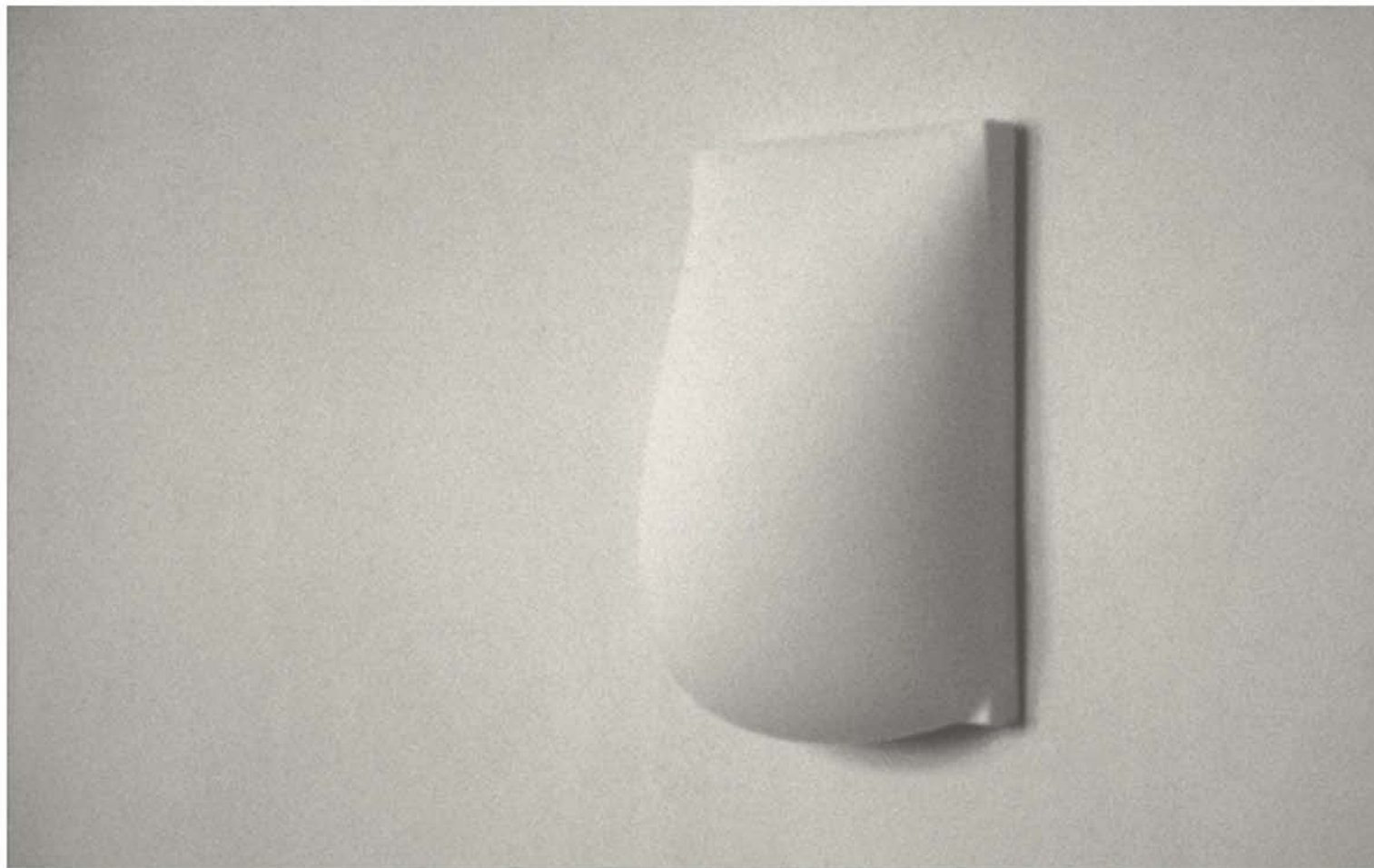
Worthlessness 01, video, 1997



Blue Limited, slide projection, 1997



Slow Object 02, (bread dough, glass), 1997



Slow Object 03, (bread dough, framed fabric), 1997



Slow Object 01, video, 1997



To Peel a Ball, 1997



Slow Object 04, video, 1997



Slow Object 04, installation view, Plug In, Winnipeg, 1999



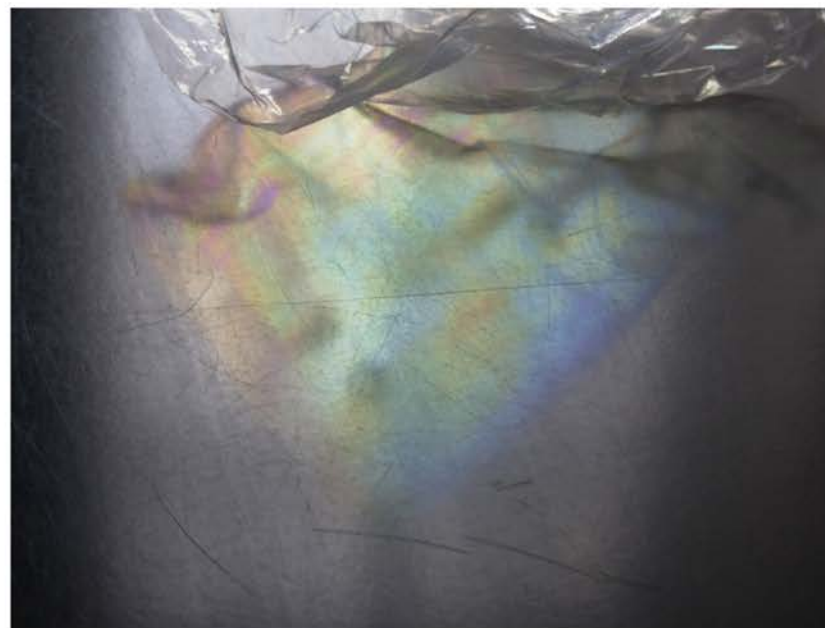
Worthlessness 02, video, 1998



Second-hand Experience 01, Plug In, Winnipeg, 1999



Provisory Object 01, video, 1997



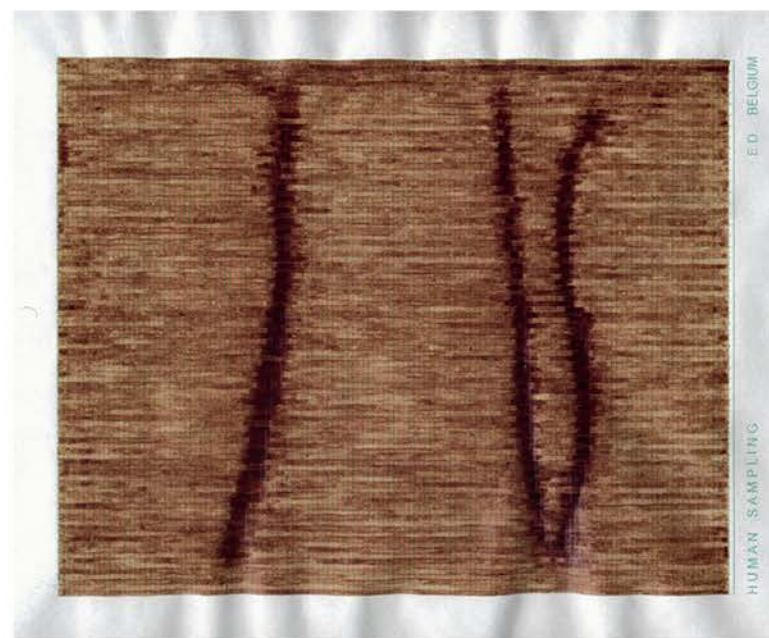
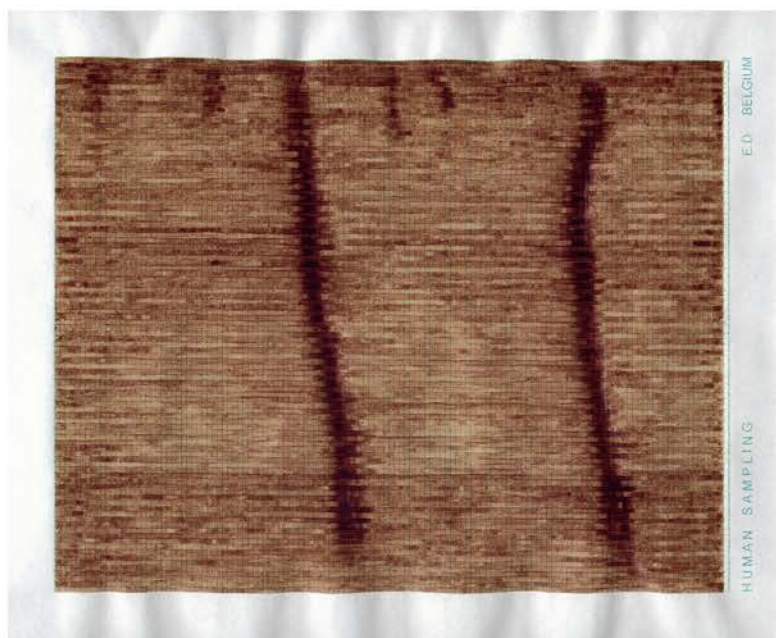
Untitled, 1999



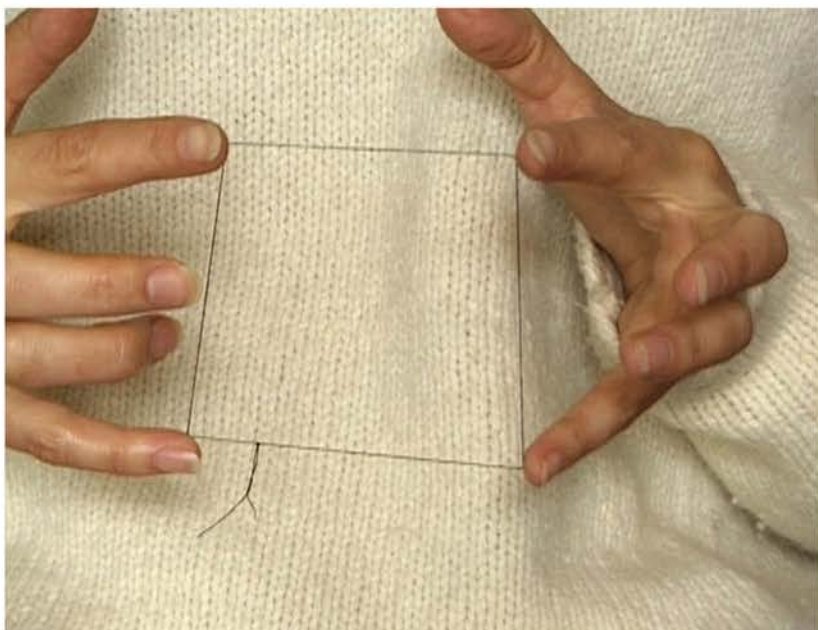
Discreet Piece, installation view, Plug In, Winnipeg, 1999



True Stories, Tel-Aviv, 1999



Human Sampling, (drawing with blood), 1999



Second-hand Experience 02, video, 1999



Daughter's gift, 1999



Untitled, (egg on water), 1999



The Hunters, video, 1997



Sun trajectory in my room, 1999

KITTY SCOTT- Edith's Laboratory

One day, I was Already old, in the entrance of a public place a man came up to me. He introduced himself and said : « I've know you for years. Everyone says you were beautiful when you were young, but I want to tell you I think you're more beautiful now than then. Rather than your face as a young woman, I prefer your face as it is now. Ravaged.»
Margherite Duras, *The Lover*, 1984

While many exhibition spaces for contemporary art are thought of as places experimentation the definition of what it is that constitutes experimentation is severely limited. In the generic contemporary art exhibition artists display a selection of finished works which in themselves signify experimentation in the field of artmaking. It is rare that visitors see the artist physically engaged in the act of experimenting within the exhibition space. Such activities usually occur beyond the gaze of the viewing public, in the isolation of the artist's studio, in the exhibition hall prior to the opening or wherever the artist chooses to make and place a work. Artist Edith Dekyndt used in 1995 Galerie L'Escaut as a laboratory, in a traditional scientific sense, to exhibit a dense series of ongoing and lengthy time-based 'experiments' impinging on a territory between the practices of sculpture and performance. Piece in progress, as if mimicking the formal research procedures, shat on shelves, hung on the wall or were scattered across the concrete floor. Edith worked at L'Escaut for the duration of the exhibition and spoke with visitors to the space. her method summons a variety of hypothesis touching on life and death, the delicate balance between man all living things, as well as the history of art and the space of exhibition.

The majority of studies underway involved the transformation and testing of some sort of material be it a scrap of fabric, a loaf of bread, a lemon or a measure of milk. During the course of a so-called experiment each substance was undergoing a process/ some were absorbing, others melting, freezing, soaking, drying, and still others decaying. For one exhibit, Edith filled a small rectangular fake fur volume with milk which she then placed in the freezer. Once frozen she removed the solid form and placed it on the floor leaving the milk to melt, to return to liquid, to assume its earlier characteristic qualities, to bleed out, to form a creeping white pool on the cold hard gray floor.

However in the context of the L'Escaut project, the drying lemon is interconnected to a whole 'eco-system' of soft forms that absorb, leak, melt, dry, freeze and evaporate. It is possible to conclude that the small synthetic fur ball sited on the floor, some distance from the lemon, is actually robbing the fruit's very life, not to mention the life of anything else nearby. The innocent toy-like ball is filled with moisture absorbing particles : humidity collects within the object only to seep out as water. The liquid trickles out form a small opening onto the concrete floor. Inadvertently, this investigation has the ability to make spectators conscious not only of their bodily processes, but also of their place in a intimate network linked their immediate surrounding and the larger environment.

Such a sculpture recalls Hans Haacke's sealed Plexiglas Condensation Cube, 1963-65. Haacke's cube responds to the temperature of the room it is place in . Evaporating, condensing and evaporating again : the water is locked into an isolated and repetitive performance specific to its location. Stitched together by hand, yielding and round Dekyndt's ostensibly virtuous plush ball by its ethically questionable ability to drain moisture from all matter within its sphere of influence including the artist and the spectators themselves only to later expel the liquid as if waste.

Galerie L'Escaut's hard but somewhat romantic industrial qualities provocatively frame the artist's project. The building itself has undergone a major transformation. Worn out, no longer useful industrial life of Brussels and in an era of electronics, it has been converted into a gallery, office and living space. Yet the building oozes with the memory of its first purpose and such history is bound up with the once viable story of scientific and technological progress. The very presence of the artist's modest, low-tech and somewhat naive procedure in the former warehouse/factory space of L'Escaut gently pokes fun in a self-reflexive manner at very existence of the now highly suspect notion of progress.

Dekyndt's work is not easily defined, however her use of 'poor' materials combined with a strong presence of objects introduces a hybrid category relying on a marriage of the material aspects of Arte Povera to a soft, organic and messy Minimalism. The experiments and the materials used articulate a knowing ingenuousness. The simplicity of the individual 'experiments' with their generous sense of play and humor, underscore the complexity and seriousness of the darker themes embodied in the L'Escaut project.