

METAMIMESIS: The Calamity of Plato's Looking Glass

Terri Thomas' interdisciplinary practices disclose autobiographical narratives obscured within constructed themes that explore issues of sex/power, self-preservation/mortality and 'modes of representation'. Thomas uses strategies in her work, inviting the viewer to become the art itself by being the focus of performances. These efforts are an attempt to 'breach the Fourth Wall' (a term in the performance arts) that assist in breaking down the virtual barrier between the viewer and the art, in order to generate deeper levels of social engagement and a sense of *community*.

For MoHA's exhibit, "Tap the Glass", Thomas creates a site-specific video installation, a *mise en scene*. This layered 'stage' consists of a space for the viewer and their own shadow to engage with fabricated silhouettes of spectators 'tapping the glass' at the *flawed* underwater mimes - an aquatic mermaid, a clown disguised as a shark and the stereotype of twins in bikinis - contained within an illusory aquarium tank. During the opening, the viewer will again become part of the art, as a camera films the entire mimetic narrative space, documenting both real and feigned spectators and the making of the art, not the art itself.

This video installation show title, "Metamimesis: The Calamity of Plato's Looking Glass" was inspired by Pirholt's book, *Metamimesis: Imitation in Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre'*. Accordingly, Thomas thinks of the video component much like an underwater puppet show, focusing on a duomodality whereby, the "omnipotent" artist plays both narrator and actor, juxtaposed by the artist's narrative that fluctuates between an intra and extra-diegetic gaze. Within this low-tech, campy aesthetic, peculiarities are highlighted in order to create a break from mimetic expectations.

Thomas aggravates Plato's rejection of Imitation, by creating a video documentation of a fabricated mimetic stage, whereby the artist and her twin sister in the audience cast shadows to mimic the painted silhouettes on the wall that are taking photos of themselves imitating twin-stereotypes within this illusory aquarium tank glass, reflecting the mimes in both a one-way and two-way looking glass, such that the mime becomes a mirror for the spectator and the viewer becomes the pleasing reflection for the mime.