



As the audience changes, so too does the meaning of the works of postmodern artists Christian Boltanski, Cindy Sherman, and Andy Goldsworthy. Each audience brings to a work, their own experiences, ~~and~~ emotions and histories thus, shedding their own light on the work.

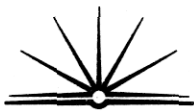
Installation artist, Christian Boltanski says that his ~~his~~ "works must act as a stimulus to rediscovers a previous forgotten emotion". He wants his audience to "bring their own histories and memories to the work". His work "Les Ombres" (Shadows) (1984), as with all of Boltanski's works, alludes to but does not deal directly with the Jewish holocaust of World War II. His linear sculptures look magical, from a distance as the shadows dance, but upon close inspection the figures become hanged men and skeletons. An audience viewing Boltanski's installation in real life would be able to look at the detail of the sculptures and understand the ~~meaning~~



allusion to death. An audience merely viewing photographs of Boltanski's installations would be unable to appreciate ~~the~~ what the figures are representing and thus miss the universal theme of Boltanski's work, that is the passage from life to death. Each audience would then place their own meaning to the work.

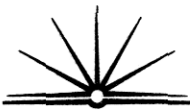
Boltanski's 1986 installation "The Children of Dippi" incorporates photographs of children, as well as light bulbs. The photographs Boltanski uses are not meant to be recognisable figures but are in fact photographs of photographs to reinforce the absence of individuality. This process allows each audience to bring to the work, their own memories and emotions and thus give each child its own story, giving <sup>the work</sup> a different meaning for each audience.

The work of performance artist and photographer, Cindy Sherman deals with



sex stereotyping and the portrayal of women in the media. Sherman says "my intention is to suggest very little so the viewer may make up their own, hopefully very diverse narratives". Sherman's photographs may be seen as self portraits, as Sherman herself appears in each photograph. Her photographs are of characters dressed in very time specific clothing, and each character has a past and future story for the viewer to decide on. Her work "Untitled Film still #31" (1976) features a woman dressed in 1950's clothing looking distressed, as if something is about to happen. The woman could well be the character of "Lois Lane" from "Superman". As an audience brings to Sherman's work, their own experiences, each audience creates a different story for the character in the photograph, and thus gives it a different meaning.

Sherman's works such as "Untitled #188" (1989) deal with notions of ugliness and



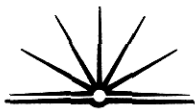
beauty. Using disgusting objects Sherman creates a collage of objects at the centre of which is a blow-up doll, with Sherman's face. It is left for the audience to decide whether this "doll" is the victim of sexual abuse (suggested by the imminent male presence felt in Sherman's photographs) or perhaps just a piece of trash, surrounded by other rubbish. Because each viewer will have their own opinion and will give the work their own meaning, it is clear that as audiences change, so too does the meaning of an artwork.

Environmental sculptor Andy Goldsworthy hopes through his works to "reinstall in his audience an awe of nature". With no preconceived idea about what he will create, but relying only on what nature gives him, Goldsworthy creates works that deal with the impermanence and mortality of our environment. His sculptures are photographed



at various stages. "Each work grows, stays, decays - integral parts of a cycle which the photograph captures at its height, marking the moment when the work is most alive". Goldsworthy's works "Black Stone" and "Red Pool" (both 1992), present to the audience the fact that despite our attempts to control nature, it eventually controls us. The meaning of Goldsworthy's works changes as its audience changes. Depending on a person's value of their environment, one audience may see his work as simply making patterns with natural objects. An audience that has an appreciation for the natural environment may view works like "Red Pool" where red dye is added to a stream of water and photographs are taken of the water as the colour trickles away, and see the beauty of the power of natural elements. An audience's opinions can produce different meanings for an artwork.

The works of post-modern artists show



that as the audience changes, so too does the meaning of the artists work. The beauty of the works of artists such as Christian Boltanski, Cindy Sherman and Andy Goldsworthy, is that their meanings are open to the interpretation of the viewer, and differ according to a persons, experiences, opinions and emotions.

Gottanski - Les Ombres (1984)  
- Children of Dyon (1986)

Sherman - Untitled Film still #31 (1976)  
- Untitled #188 (1989)

Goldsworthy - Black Stone }  
- Red Pool } 1992