

MONICA HELIN

TAIDE ART MAGAZINE FINLAND

OPTIK @ Amorph 98! Performance Festival

This was already the fourth Amorph, this time organised in Helsinki. The theme of the festival was "Friend or Foe". Performances about contacts, communities and communications, looking for things in common and pointing out differences. The budget was surprisingly small, but the result was a very stylish event. There were performances not only from Finland but also from Canada, Great Britain, Indonesia, the United States and Norway, including a review of international performance videos. **Optik's lines**The performances of Optik from Britain were precisely crafted and directed, the performers were a young woman and a man (Hannah Seaton and Simon Humm). Barry Edwards has been the artistic director of the group since 1981. Optik User, as always, was accompanied by Terence Tiernan, who records its performances on video.

Optik presented one work in two very different settings: first in Kojootti, a charming, open L-shaped castle rampart, and then in the spacious Pirunkirkko (Devil's Church). Optik's works can be seen as performance rituals, where emphasis is on the structural aspect of the work. The schematic work searches the unforeseen and contacts during an hour's performance. The performers travelled the space sometimes at a marching tempo, sometimes running breathlessly, following set movement paths. Occasionally they moved together side by side, but mostly they cut through the space alone.

The first half an hour kept the audience guessing, until the performers' rhythm sucked the audience into their whirlpool, translating the movement to and fro into an anticipation of alternating rhythms. Some in the audience started to move, and this "strategy" is an essential part of Optik's minimalistic style - the audience plays a part in the development of the work.