

# Reviews

*International*

CANADIAN ART / FALL 1992

## Documenta IX

Kassel, Germany

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD RHODES

(EXCERPT)

Hoet and his team must be given credit for this kind of adventurism in *Documenta IX*. They attempted to come to terms not only with the purpose of art but with its state of restlessness. In the Neue Galerie, whole floors of a traditional museum were given over to a Socratic intersection of historical and contemporary art. Works by Joseph Kosuth, Stephen Prina and Canada's Angela Grauerholz, among others, were chosen to break the spell of museum display, giving their audience an opportunity to reinvent the works from the permanent collection. They showed with their interpretive force how we have become inured to looking and thinking with rigour about art: how, in front of it, we simply move on, and then move on again. Grauerholz's works in particular presented images that made one self-conscious about the act of looking. In one, two women look through a window onto a landscape in the same way that the viewer in the gallery looks onto the picture. This strategy of intervention was continued in the Brothers Grimm Museum next door, where Vancouver's Rodney Graham made a work based on subtle manipulations of computer-generated renderings of the brothers' twin studios. This was a work about its own minute scale of observation, a work about the littleness of living inside history.

A whole subsection of art in *Documenta IX* shared this sense of modesty; it was the other trope of the exhibition. One felt a cutting back from ostentation, as if art's ultimate strength was in a lightness and quickness that couldn't be bogged down by rhetoric, or cant, or by any other of culture's heavy shoes.



Angela Grauerholz  
*Lessing* 1992  
Colour photograph  
64 x 96 in.