



Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters), 2008 (installation view, MoMA, New York). Photo: © Frederick Charles, fcharles.com. © the artist. Courtesy the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, and Hauser & Wirth, Zurich & London

Pipilotti Rist
Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)

Museum of Modern Art, New York
19 November – 2 February

In her monumental installation *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, Rist activates a candy-coloured capsule of dichotomies festooned with such visually pleasing trappings that we barely realise we are being fed a Soma pill, if watered down, of utopian ideals. While somewhat self-indulgent and lacking a little in conceptual edge, this crowdpleaser seems a wise choice on MoMA's part, given the current economic climate.

In the atrium at the top of MoMA's first main staircase, we're asked to remove our shoes in order to move across concentric carpet rings laid down in the shape of an eye, and to flop onto a smooth circular turquoise couch. A 25-foot-tall, three-part video projection spans as many walls of the space. The soundtrack recalls the mellow electronica of Yo La Tengo's accompaniments to Jean Painlevé's underwater films; fittingly, a good bit of footage takes place below the surface. It's clear, both through her choice of presentation, which harks back to the fantastic undulations of Danish interior designer Werner Pantón in the idyllic 1960s, and in the nature of the nonlinear video that unfolds, that the artist intends a mind-body connection. Besides trying to put us physically at ease, Rist also plays on our cultural perceptions of the future through hints of science fiction. The scale of the piece recalls omni theatres, and the videos are beamed out of domed alien-blob projectors designed especially for the space. The penumbral glow effected by the light-play, paired with comfy couches, recalls the 'feelies' of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). The contrast with the New York winter outside only heightens the impression of being cradled in the womb.

Cause and effect are frequently and subtly dismantled in Rist's marginally narrative chains, as the clips that constitute the 16-minute-long video careen casually between abstraction and representation, pairing unaltered footage with clips edited with Photoshop-like filters, or coloured in a violent psychedelic spectrum. In the visuals, a young fair-skinned, red-haired woman, appearing both clothed and in the nude, executes a series of interactions with nature, from tromping through fields of tulips and inserting constituent petals into various orifices, to staining a body of water red with her menstrual blood. Sensuality and visual perception are privileged over linearity, aided by changes in perspective; an extreme facial closeup yields so much epidermal detail that one might be looking at dinosaur skin. Because there is no obvious storyline to grasp, viewers are best off enjoying the pretty colours and simply 'having an experience', something Rist encourages both in her title and by exhorting visitors, in a text at the door, to dance or sing aloud if they feel so inspired. Overall the package is presented as easy to swallow and touchy-feely enough to impart the same warm fuzzies as a satisfying blockbuster film, without the vacuous mental aftertaste. It is an art-institutional installation for our times. *T.J. Carlin*