

# Al Wong

LACE

Los Angeles, California

September 19, 1981

Al Wong's work gently probes a shadowy borderline between film and live performance, toying with illusions in light and darkness. Three-dimensional props are introduced into an environment determined entirely by light from a single source — a projector. The props themselves are the live performers while living people and their shadows manipulate matching props on film.

In the LACE piece Wong employed a sheet,

a chair and a microphone. The sheet was hung in a corner of the gallery, providing the screen for a film of the same sheet moving slightly in the wind. The effect was so subtle as to be almost subliminal. This film was followed by another in which Wong's shadow manipulated venetian blinds, adjusting daylight and shadow falling on a sheet positioned between him and the camera. The sheet's movement distorted the linear forms cast by the blinds. Wong's hand running up and down the blinds further changed their patterns. In yet another "sheet" work, Wong's shadow played with light

by moving and separating several layers of sheeting hung in a doorway, creating a spectrum of greys in the projector light.

A folding chair was used behind a film of a chair being painted with luminous paint. Light did magic as the luminosity interacted with the film's shifts in tonalities.

The final illusion featured a standing microphone onto which was projected a film of a woman in shadow who lip-synched a Billie Holliday recording into an identical microphone. The image was followed by the shadows of others who approached the microphone with apparent reluctance and

stage fright.

— L.B.

Photography: Darryl Lee

