

SAM TAYLOR-WOOD

ARA DE MONVEL

SAM TAYLOR-WOOD'S video installation *Travesty of a Mockery*, portrays a cliché-ridden domestic argument between a man and a woman and consists of two projections, each on an adjacent wall of the gallery. One tape depicts the woman, a professional actor, in a kitchen and the



Travesty of a Mockery, 1995. Color video. 10 minutes. Photo Stephen White.

other frames the man, a non-actor, who appears to be in an adjoining "neutral" room similar to the gallery. White Cube's domestic scale works to the artist's advantage and easily becomes the space of the ensuing melodrama.

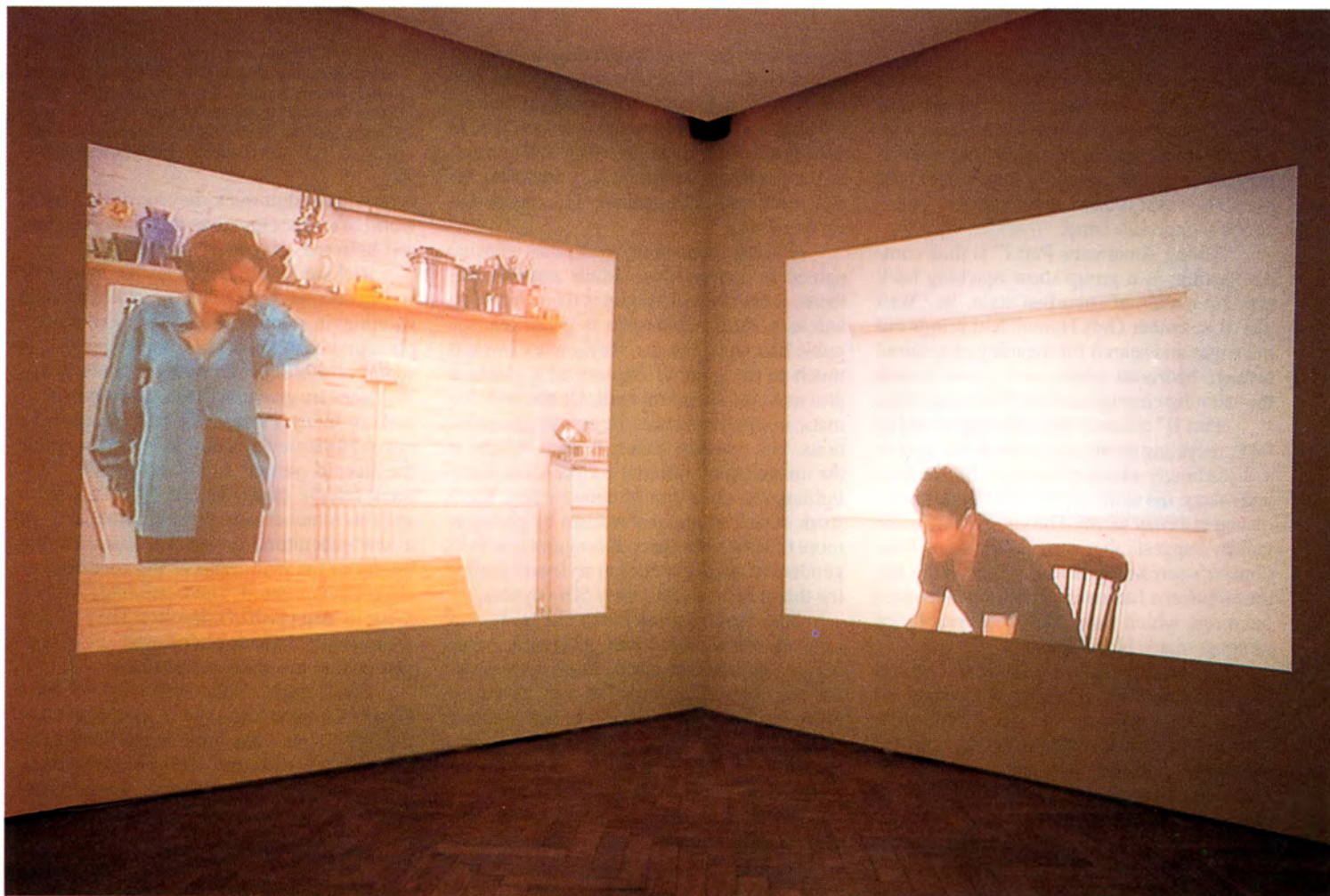
Edited into short vignettes, the 10-minute video fragments into a lexicon of domestic abuse. Sometimes she stands and smokes while he sits on his chair

looking at her. She throws something at him. The object appears to fly through the gallery as it crosses the gap between the two screens, eventually hitting the wall behind him. In one encounter, he goes into the kitchen to kiss her, then she spits in his face and in another scene, she leaves the kitchen only to slap him in the face. The dialogue includes such banalities as "shut the fuck up" and "you don't fucking love me" layered over upbeat muzak. Each episode is cut short before the violence escalates or the conflict is resolved. The physical gap separating the two screens, like the breaks between the vignettes, emphasizes the spatial and psychic distance each character maintains from the other.

Spectators are literally caught in this middle ground of an irresolvable mock disagreement and the ground expands as neither character warrants support or empathy.

Travesty develops Taylor-Wood's fascination with the mechanics of implied violence as photographed in *Slut* (1994) where the artist sports a colorful necklace of love bites.

At the White Cube, London.



Travesty of a Mockery, 1995.