

Kevin Concannon, "Brian Eno/Michael Chandler," *Artforum*, April 1984, p. 11.

## Boston

### **MICHAEL CHANDLER and BRIAN ENO, Institute of Contemporary Art:**

The dimly lit gallery which housed the Michael Chandler/Brian Eno installation transported its visitors to a quiet contemplative otherworld. Eno's ambient sound recordings permeated the gallery, setting not only the tone of the piece but the modus operandi as well. After an early, successful career as a rock musician, producing work which incorporated John Cage-inspired methodology and Dadaist poetics, Eno abandoned lyrics completely, choosing instead to work in an ambient mode which, itself compositionally ambiguous, offers no clear foreground or background. Walking through this installation, one was apt to forget the music; it was at once geospheric and atmospheric. One didn't listen to it; one entered it.

Eno's compositions layer track over track, not quite erasing the one before. Chandler's paintings are similarly constructed. Each of these small, sculptural works suggests a mysterious history of its own. Carrying more than the aura of the hand, the paintings hold the status of artifacts from an indeterminate time and place. Incorporating found objects, mostly of an organic type (stones, wood, etc.), these assemblages exhibit a refined elegance which separates them from the more familiar "anything is art" sensibility on which the tradition of the found object rests. The refined use of found sound also informs Eno's audio compositions.

Many of the paintings were displayed inside wood-framed, scrim-walled structures, some inviting the viewer to enter, some serving as yet another layer which didn't so much shelter the painting as dematerialize it. The effect was not unlike that of Eno's video piece of the Manhattan skyline, recycled for this installation, in which presumably subtle shifts of illumination, both on the building facades and in the vast sky above them, are distorted and exaggerated. In addition to this older video piece, Eno contributed several video sculptures. These geometric, architectural, foam-core works are lit by video monitors hidden beneath them, playing tapes which automatically rewind. No camera was used to make the tapes; squares were gridded out on a mixer to correspond to the layered sculptures placed on top of the screens. Shifting color patterns project light through openings in the sculptures: Kandinsky illuminated.

These light pieces relate not only to the earlier video, but also to the "buildings" which enclosed Chandler's paintings. Uniting Chandler's physical artifacts and Eno's atmospheric pieces was an overall landscape sensibility inviting the viewer to explore the terrain and the atmosphere, or perhaps to just relax and take in the air. Surely a wonderful place to visit.

—KEVIN CONCANNON