



Hush Now

form the epicentre of the scheme, though the speed and intensity of their activity is determined by a random computer sequence. As the two operate, independent of one another, their dissonance varies and continually alters the texture of the sound—a hollow clatter that evens out when the rhythm becomes increasingly frenetic.

It is captivating to see the simple internal mechanics on display. But Hlady's piece pushes further: although the toys labour to produce noise, their soundproofed containers ensure that their efforts are displaced. The jars mutate the amplified sound so that it seems distanced from its source. The viewer experiences a kind of synaesthesia, a slight disjuncture between seeing and hearing, like hearing someone speak from behind a glass barrier when their disembodied voice seems to come from another location.

The installation merges simple and complex systems in a slightly disquieting way. The primitive robots are subject not only to the vagaries of the computer sequence, but also to local conditions as the computer program is turned on and off by movement sensors in the gallery. Although the sensors were not installed as an integral part of the piece, the viewers' presence nonetheless disturbs the machines' state of rest, initiating their activity. In this configuration, disparate types of movement

coalesce: haphazard patterns of gallery traffic end up affecting the randomly generated computer sequence, adding another element of chance. The mechanical repetitions are anything but predictable. Hlady's installation is most intense when it happens to fall static. The periodic intervals of silence leave one slightly on edge, listening to detect a continuous pattern or internal logic to the scheme. ■

by LEE RODNEY



Marla Hlady
Untitled (interior detail) 1999
 Painted plywood with mixed media
 on castors with glass jars and speakers
 46.0 x 46.5 x 46.5 cm Photo the artist
 Courtesy Women's Art Resource
 Centre/WARC Gallery