

DR. SLAVKA
SVERAKOVA-
'CIRCA' no 8
1983

**8 WEEKS/8 WORKS. A SEASON OF
INSTALLATIONS**

Art and Research Exchange, Belfast.
26 October—18 December 1982

Nick Stewart, born 1952, offered a Paradigm. This work consisted of a floor piece a suspended piece and two framed drawings, thus providing several visual clusters: (1) two superb drawings placed on either side of the large window provided the two-way visual membrane between inside and outside. (2) Mirrors: one on the ceiling, the second in mid-air, and third on the floor functioned as a frame for the wedge entering the spiral, representing the visual force in an up and down direction, and tropes for a vertical two-way system (3) Earthwork with candles and paper with male and female silhouettes at one end and a spiral of slow dark movement on the other, stood for a direction in time, namely before and after, and for horizontality as a realm of activity. The pronounced horizontality of this work was strengthened by the material (earth, wax) and by the slow roundness of the spiral. The balancing centre between the spiral and the more dynamic tongue-like vectors snaking towards the window was empty. Predictably. Roundness, spiral, earth indicate objects or happenings that "belong nowhere and everywhere" (viz. Arnheim, 1982). In such a theme there is no room for particular details, it must be universal. Since there is no microtheme in the balancing centre, the main theme appears to unfold in two parts, in the slow movement on the left (Earth) and in the dynamic allegro on the right (Mankind). The empty balancing centre is the pause between the two movements of the story of man. The third, faster and vertical, presents a mirror reading a mirror, two drawings stopping one's sight syncopically in a rhythm of two fast beats to one long one of the window, which lets it go. The whole is an optimistic joyful statement about the species we belong to. Perhaps it was intentional to let the human figures appear burnt, thus reminding us of our ways of destruction.

The positioning of the two figures at the end of the composition and the absence of a theme in the balancing centre produces a case of significant ambiguity. What is supposed to be important is placed at the edge and yet is dominant. The centre is then in fact subordinate to the edges and the middle towards which the composition converges is empty. This ambiguity mutates the meaning into irony supported, perhaps intentionally, by noble content expressed in humble material, which at the same time is the source of life: earth.