



View of "The Gesture:  
A Visual Library in  
Progress," 2005.

The exhibition design, by architect Eleni Kostika, was ingenious, indeed original, as it seemed to distinctly "cradle" and support the entire exhibition. The majority of the videos were shown on monitors, all of one size, with only a few screen projections. By arranging humble movers' pallets made of wood at varying heights along the full length of the exhibition area, Kostika created a uniform sequence of alternating recesses and platforms on which the monitors were positioned, each with headphones. The attractive wooden structure had a warm handmade look and there was none of the incessant cacophony or fumbling

around in the dark black box typical of many video exhibitions.

This democratic installation did, however, detract from the emphasis on spectacle and narrative that has taken on such importance since the mid-'90s, as evident in Marina Abramović's beautifully made *The Lovers*, the Great Wall Walk, 1998, or in the sex scene on horseback, candidly filmed in startling, fast-moving close-up, in Rustam Khalifin and Julia Tikhonova's *Towards an Understanding of Limitations*, 2004. Yet despite the striking aesthetic differences—so much recent video seems all too eager to please, in compliance with the codes of spectacle culture—Khalifin and Tikhonova's work recalls the groundbreaking work of seminal video artists of the '60s and '70s like Bruce Nauman and Chris Burden in its concern to test the body's limits.

—Catherine Cafopoulos