

REVIEWS

New York

PATRICIA CAIRE, Artists Space;

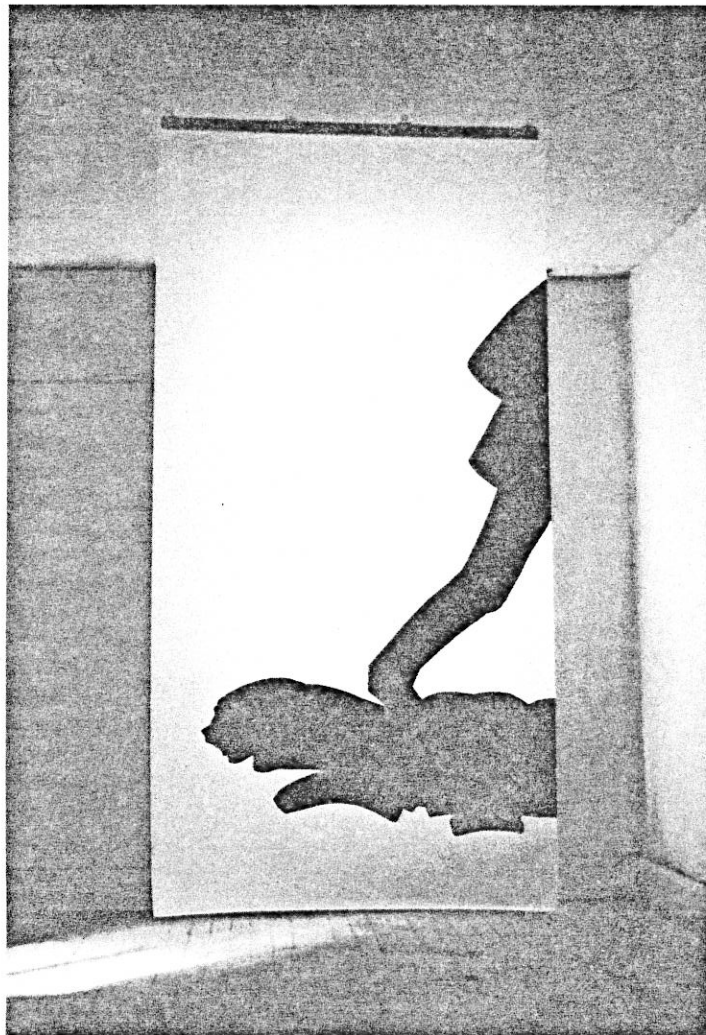
PATRICIA CAIRE paints black silhouettes on large rectangular sheets of translucent acetate. The imagery revolves around a gun-toting hunter, an image which has concerned the young French artist since her arrival in New York a few years ago. The hunter is the star of an exciting visual drama in which silhouettes, suspended from the ceiling by metal holders, are arranged in maze-like passages to evoke an ambiguous narrative structure in which directions and light are all important. Caire is very interested in image as surface, as material, and as space. In addition to paintings, she works with projected slides and films, an activity which has made her especially sensitive not only of light but of the relationship of flat surface to three-dimensional illusion. In her projections she is concerned about the directions of the images and the audience's relationship to them—all of these concerns are apparent in her installation *Black and Light Passage*.

We enter a maze of flat, light-sensitive surfaces. Images of a hunter peering out from one edge and disappearing into another bring to mind sequences of giant film frames or slides. The radical cropping and varying perspectives of the hunter give him a lively movement, which is enhanced by our own actual motion (which, in turn, we are extremely aware of, due to the sharp corners in the maze). We respond actively not only to the changing directions in the installation but to the space as well; in looking at one surface we see, lurking underneath, the shadow of others behind it. Besides the hunter, there is a t-slash window (the kind commonly found in New York) serving as the chief prop. Caire's juxtapositions of the window and hunter are the source of narrative ambiguities.

The hunter appears to be entering, leaving, in back of, in front of, the window. And aside from being a metaphor for space, light, and vision, the window is a sign-symbol for New York, and the place where black silhouetted figures

can be seen by passers-by. The window draws us into the drama, with its double-edged potential of revealing both the looked at and the lookers to each other. From voyeurs we become participants, leaving the maze with the uneasy sensation that we no doubt are the hunter's prey. With Caire, the Shadow has, finally, a place in contemporary art.

—RONNY H. COHEN



Patricia Caire, installation view, 1980.