

Tenement gallery opens window into horrifying heart of cybe

A trip into the hysterical, unreal heart of cyberspace is being offered by the artist Maggie Roberts at the Cabinet Gallery in Brixton this week. Her show provides a horrifying insight into the effects of computer-linked television, video cassette recorder and telephone on the human imagination.

Cabinet is a tiny two-room gallery in a shabby, Victorian block of flats. Roberts has painted walls and ceilings a dull, metallic silver to suggest the inside of a machine. Against this background, she has arranged glossy, colour photographs of varying size shot from freeze-framed images on a video recorder - images of vampirism, swarming bees, desert dawn, polar landscape, helicopters, war, drugs, discarded syringes - the motley muddle of images and colour that pours off the screen into the minds of the Nineties.

Roberts says that she belongs to "a generation addicted to extremity in order to feel". She has arranged the images on the metallic walls in configurations that parallel computer circuit boards and provides canned music to accompany the visual experience.

CONTEMPORARY ART MARKET

Geraldine Norman

So how do you buy the work? The photographs used on discreet segments of the walls, some 30 images a time, are to be sold in silver reflecting boxes, with instructions inside, for £2,000. Andrew Wheatley and Martin McGeown, who run the

gallery, only started thinking about how to sell the work once they had got it on the walls.

"If they're bought for a permanent display, the images will be dry-mounted with aluminium," Mr Wheatley explained. "Maggie will come and arrange them." Alternatively, he said, the images "can be furtively looked through as a boxed set".

They also plan to get the artist to make arrangements of

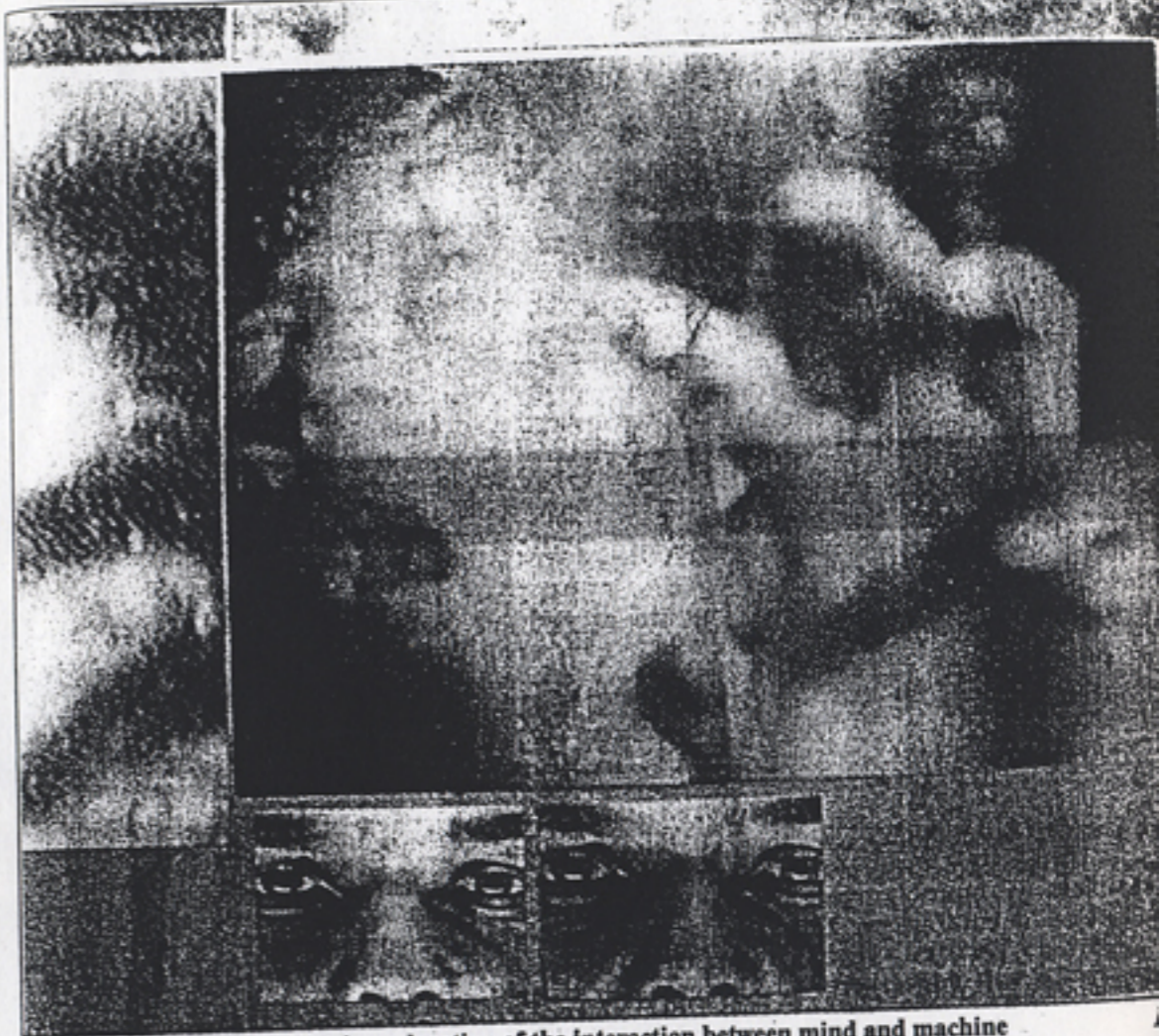
images on 4ft by 2ft sheets of aluminium to be sold for £1,200 to £1,800 a time.

Roberts is exploring one of art's sharpest new concerns, the interaction of the human mind and artificial intelligence globally linked through computer networks. Last weekend, the Institute of Contemporary Arts mounted a two-day conference on fear of technology, called "Technophobia". The four sessions were "The Barcode", "The Body Scan", "The Camcorder" and "The Ansaphone".

"From the most mundane to the technologically complex, machines dominate life," the organisers explained.

Meanwhile, the first issue of a new publication called *Mute*, billed as "London's art and technology newspaper", goes on sale this week with a cover price of £3. It is expected to come out four times a year and will be available at avant-garde art venues (or by order through E-mail at: mute@skysc.demon.co.uk).

■ Maggie Roberts's work is at the Cabinet Gallery, 8 Clifton Mansions, 429 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9, open Fridays and Saturdays, 12 to 6pm, until 20 May.



Images from Maggie Roberts's exploration of the interaction between mind and machine