WITTE DE WITH

THE LECTURES

1992

Stephan Balkenhol

Guy Brett

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Jean-Luc Moulène
'Il serait temps...'
rue Neuve Saint-Pierre, Paris

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Antoni Muntadas, *C.E.E.-Project*, 1989-92
A temporary installation in the entrance hall of Witte de With. The work was shown simultaneously in other art institutions and public buildings in each of the C.E.E. countries.
February - December 1992

INTRODUCTION

This book is a compilation of the lectures and debates that were held in conjunction with the 1992 exhibition program of the Witte de With, center for contemporary art in Rotterdam. *Witte de With - The Lectures - 1992* is a documentation of the critical discussion that Witte de With is conducting on the current state of affairs of contemporary art. These lectures and debates not only address the so-called theoretical points of interest which Witte de With considers essential to its exhibition programming, but they also serve as a communicative forum for the artists, critics, theoreticians and public involved in Witte de With's exhibitions.

The exhibition of the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980), who had been virtually unknown in both Europe and the United States, put the one-sided, ethnocentric European and American perception of contemporary art up for discussion. Simultaneous with the exhibition of Hélio Oiticica, Witte de With presented in its lobby the *C.E.E.-Project* (1989-1992) by the Spanish artist Antoni Muntadas (1942): united Europe symbolized in the form of a 'mundane' object, as a carpet depicting the European flag. This work created a provocative entrance for rediscovering Oiticica's oeuvre.

The exhibition of Oiticica likewise responded to questions concerning the purpose and necessity of exhibitions: one of the pillars of Witte de With's policy. That is to say, Witte de With wants to be a platform for exhibitions, projects, and publications that can not be realized elsewhere. In the case of Hélio Oiticica, Witte de With acted as a memory bank for contemporary art.

The exhibition of the Dutch artist Philip Akkerman (1957) also fit into this context. Since 1981, Akkerman has devoted himself to painting and drawing only self-portraits, without associating himself to any particular style or movement. In Witte de With, Akkerman had his first opportunity to show all of his self-portraits as a literal and figurative reconstruction of ten years from his life and career as an artist. At the same time, the works of Akkerman relate to the discussion, taken up by Witte de With and others, on the significance of the human figure in contemporary art.

The visual arts are often today made susceptible to social and economic developments because of the activities of the galleries, museums and exhibition spaces themselves. The boisterous growth of this infrastructure assured a veritable race for all new and different. Yet at the same time, it is precisely because of the 'terror of actuality' that the existent 'possibilities and probabilities' of the visual arts have not

yet been sufficiently explored and utilized.

This view was further demonstrated in the exhibition *Walker Evans & Dan Graham*, co-curated with Jean-François Chevrier, the French art historian. Walker Evans (1903-1975), who made the most important part of his oeuvre in the 1930s, is considered one of the masters of modern photography. Dan Graham (1942) is part of the generation of conceptual artists that appeared in the late 1960s.

Both share an interest for the photographic glance on daily life and architecture. While Evans's influence on the early stages of pop art is indubitable, Graham appeared as one of pop art's most critical heirs. The oeuvres of these two artists, despite their apparent differences, show the continuity of one in the same cultural development.

The significance of alternative exhibition formats was likewise strengthened by the American artist Haim Steinbach (1944), whom Witte de With invited as a 'guest curator.' Artworks, everyday objects, media images and slogans – all sharing the representation of water as a point of departure – were placed next to each other by Steinbach and compared one to another. With his exhibition *no rocks allowed.*, Steinbach questioned what now actually does or doesn't belong to the domain of the exhibition and thus, by extension, to that of art.

Witte de With, despite its youth, is an exhibition space with a history which it owes to its forebearers – the Rotterdam galleries 't Venster and Westersingel 8, both closed in 1989. These institutions, which pioneered the present center for contemporary art, were renowned for discovering unknown, often young, talent: a tradition that Witte de With seeks to continue. Thus for a third time, room was made for *Voorwerk*, where on this occasion works by W.J.M. Kok (Holland, 1959), Roman Signer (Switzerland, 1939), Pia Stadtbäumer (Germany, 1959) and Koen Theys (Belgium, 1963) were shown.

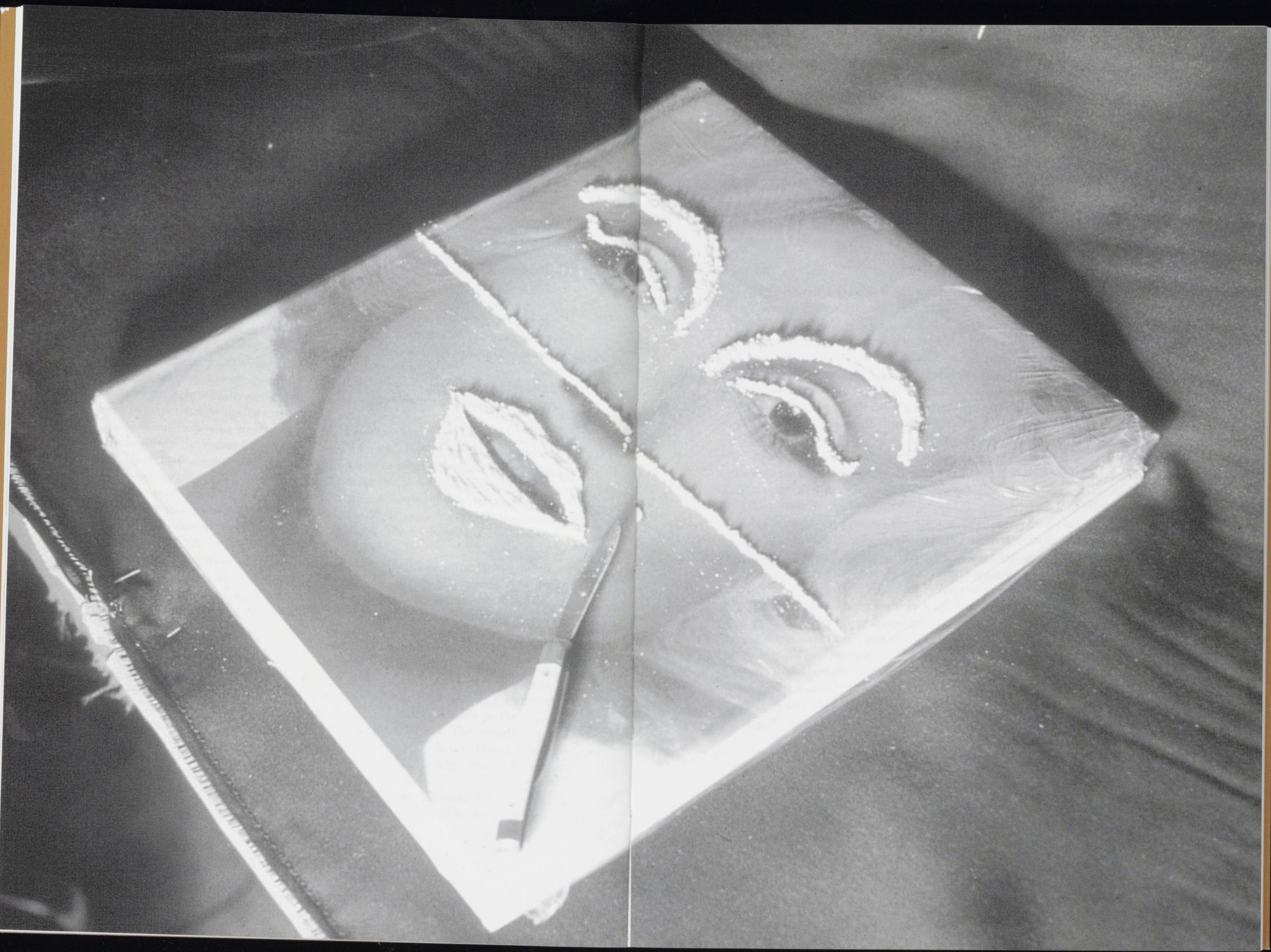
With the hewed and painted figures and faces of the German artist Stephan Balkenhol (1957), the last exhibition of 1992 addressed the concept of mimesis. This exhibition momentarily wound up Witte de With's examination of the return of the depiction of the human figure in contemporary art and of the aesthetic and ideological basis for this development.

In the lectures and debates that were programmed with the aforementioned exhibitions, the following themes came up: the importance of the work of Hélio Oiticica today, the past and the future of the catalogue as a documentation of art, the significance of Walker Evans for a contemporary comprehension of photography, the status of the exhibition program and of the program as institute, and the sense or the nonsense of the depiction of the human figure in contemporary art. The contributors were: Stephan Balkenhol, Guy Brett, Jean-François Chevrier, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Ludger Gerdes, Craigie Horsfield, Martin Kreissig, Rodrigo Naves, Walter Nikkels, Stephen Prina, Sônia Salzstein-Goldberg and Jeff Wall.

In this issue of *The Lectures* we are including Bruce Mau's talk held in the beginning of 1993. For indeed, his contribution and that of Walter Nikkels provide interesting points of comparison for the future of art publications, such as this which lies before you.

We would like to thank all of the participants for their effort and precision during the lectures and debates as well as during the preparation of this publication. We wish you considerable reading pleasure.

Witte de With



Hélio Oiticica, *Quasi-Cinema*, Block-Experiments in Cosmococa, *CC3 Maileryn*, with Neville d'Almeida, New York City, 1973

p. 19:
Hélio Oiticica, *Spatial Reliefs*, installation view, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 22 February - 26 April 1992

p. 23:
Hélio Oiticica, *Eden*, 1969
left: *Nests*; middle: *Penetrable PN5 'Caetano-Gil Tent'*; middle front: *Area Bolide with Straw* and *Area Bolide with Sand*; back: *Penetrable PN6 'Cannabiana'*; *Penetrable PN7 'Lololiana'*; *Penetrable PN8 'Yemanjá'*
Reconstruction, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 22 February - 26 April 1992

p. 27:
Rodrigo Naves and Sônia Salzstein-Goldberg during the debate on the exhibition of Hélio Oiticica.

I ASPIRE TO THE GREAT LABYRINTH*

Guy Brett, Catherine David, Rodrigo Naves and Sônia Salzstein-Goldberg

February 23, 1992

– Rodrigo Naves: I want to thank Witte de With for their invitation and to congratulate them on their work, which is of the greatest importance and which, paradoxically, has not yet been done in Brazil. Even for Brazilians, this is undoubtedly the best opportunity so far to truly see Hélio Oiticica's work. To a certain extent, the significance of Oiticica's work can be understood, with reasonable clarity, from its actual development. The guiding logic behind it is so strict that the work is commonly said to follow an extremely rigorous and coherent trajectory. While this is true, what I would like to stress is the presence of a somewhat dubious, tense, and complicated condition. What is, after all, this trajectory? It seems clear that, at least initially, Oiticica's work is guided by a constructivist outlook. If we examine his work from the *Metaesquemas* to the *Nuclei*, passing through the *Monochromatics* and the *Spatial Reliefs*, several issues emerge in connection with modern discussions, such as the attempt to break with the standard figure-ground relationship.

This passage is made with exceptional greatness by Hélio Oiticica. The room at Witte de With which contains the *Spatial Reliefs* is frighteningly beautiful. So this is not just a mechanical passage, a sort of linear development of an idea – but an extremely successful creation. What I find interesting is that this development, so constructivist in nature, has an extremely paradoxical side, namely a drive towards greater exteriority which, when we reach the *Penetrables*, the *Tents*, the *Nests*, and even the *Parangolés*, progressively leads to a growing interiority. Thus an evolution which begins with a desire to conquer space, by making the painting leave the canvas plane, progressively and paradoxically leads to its opposite. The attempt – so clear in the work of Hélio Oiticica and in the work of Lygia Clark – at dissolving the contemplative relationship with the work of art by promoting experiences which involve viewer participation, flows instead into an exploration of intimacy. It fosters an extremely particular concept of life, one which does not contain the notion of the Other, of alterity. And it does so through the generation of extremely intense and radical experiences which aim to abolish any relationship with the Other aside from the one generated by the environment in question.

Didactically speaking, this is an initial impulse in Hélio Oiticica's work. What seems very interesting to me is that this tendency to abolish all difference and to break with any exteriority does not ultimately succeed. The simple fact that the works permit a kind of filtered vision of the exterior prevents this growing intimacy from

taking place because the exterior continues to exist. There is always a relationship to the outside, but it is still very mediated by the artistic screen imposed by the works themselves.

But the most important obstacle to this growing interiority – which, if it were to happen, would be extremely regressive – is the establishment of relations, particularly in the final works, which are so abrasive, so dirty and dilacerated, that they prevent this somewhat homely movement towards interiority, and the submission of all things to this form, from taking place. And what I call 'dirty' in Oiticica's work – without any pejorative connotation – is the relationship he establishes between materials which in their malleability, plasticity, density, and durability are completely incompatible. And this bellicose coexistence of discrepant matter appears, most of all, in those *Bolides* filled with pigment. It is precisely here that a material which was destined to become something completely different, pigment, – destined to cease being matter to become painting – appears as porous and brisk, in its maximum crudeness and rawness. This double movement is very revealing of Oiticica's concerns.

Thus the attempt to ordinate – producing maximum interiority and submitting all things to strong forms – leads to an inversion of the process: the establishment of relationships which resist any possibility of harmonious and peaceful relations. It is precisely the tension between these two tendencies which is so notable in Oiticica's work. And it is a very interesting critique of the universalist aspect of constructivism, particularly relevant for Brazil, because it exposes the limits of the ordering impulse behind constructivist movements while displaying an extremely profound, and somewhat outraged, insight into Brazilian reality.

In Brazil, there is a certain tendency to understand the work of Hélio Oiticica in the light of its 'content': its relationship with carnaval, with samba, with criminals. My viewpoint is necessarily somewhat formalistic. The formal relations generated by Oiticica's work possess, to an extreme degree, the potential to expose and transform Brazilian reality. I believe that from Oiticica's preoccupation with relating life and art, one can draw two very different notions of life, which are always in tension within his work. On the one hand, life understood as protection, as civilization, reflected in the welcoming and warm side of the *Penetrables* and *Tents* – if I could be allowed a Dutch digression, Vermeer is the greatest expression of this formal tradition, while Dutch doll houses are almost the caricature of it – and on the other hand, life as a place for the undomesticated, as a place where no formalization is possible, as something very raw, even savage. It is the extremely well-realized combination of these two aspects that imparts greatness and specificity to the work of Hélio Oiticica.

Ultimately, however, it is precisely this tension which generates some structural problems. Given this tension, it seems to me that, had Oiticica unfortunately not died so young, the continuation of his work would have been very difficult. The very notion of continuity contains a positivism discordant with the spirit of his quest.

– Sônia Salzstein: I want to thank Witte de With, the curators of the exhibition, and the Projeto Hélio Oiticica for this extremely important opportunity to see, for the first time, so many works of Hélio Oiticica, with an articulateness, a comprehensibility, and a context. While preparing for this debate, I tried several times to imagine what a retrospective exhibition of Oiticica's works would look like. I systematically ran into a certain conceptual difficulty because I felt that, in a retrospective situation, the notion of an oeuvre would inevitably be postulated for a work whose trajectory dramatized, step by step, precisely the dissolution of this concept of oeuvre. So I was surprised when I first saw the exhibition because it generated a very different experience from what I had anticipated. I noticed, of course, the conceptual precautions taken by the curators to preserve the actuality of these works, which present themselves as unstable and residual in an incessant attempt to establish a kind of social materiality averse to any prior fixation of form. It is this fluidity which one risks losing with every formalization made from a distance, such as in an exhibition of this kind.

When I wonder about the permanence, about the true dimension of Oiticicas work today, it seems to me that it has yet to be fully accounted for by the Brazilian art milieu. I think that one cannot speak here of the traditional concept of oeuvre, where one perceives a sequence from one generation of artists to the next. It seems to me almost a contradiction to call Oiticica's work that when its power and intelligence take the form of a methodical series of ruptures that embody above all else, the "continuous experimental practice of a poetics," to borrow the expression coined by Mário Pedrosa, whose ideas were very important for Oiticica. It is more relevant to conceive his work as the continuous experimental practice of a poetics than to dwell on their actual formal manifestations. It is as if Oiticica constantly searched for the minimum quantum of formalization, of aestheticization, and, why not, of institutionalization of the work of art in order to obtain a maximum coefficient of intensity. In keeping with Oiticica's investigation, the work was, therefore, aimed at its immediate social circumstance, as well as at life.

In this respect, we are reminded of the instigating contrast between the nearly methodical rigour of Hélio Oiticica's theoretical writings and the almost agonistic anxiety and fluidity of his works. On the one hand, the writings tend toward an ever greater density, while on the other, the work moves in the opposite direction. It is what Oiticica called "objectivity" in the work of art: the work presenting itself as both social and aesthetic experience, raised to its most elaborate degree; objectivity, here, refers to the notion that the experience has no other purpose, no other content, than this immediate realization of the work within its circumstance. From this stems the importance for Oiticica of the notion of construction – a term used recurrently in his writings. This is an extremely singular way of conceiving constructivism, and it appears on two sometimes contradictory levels. Firstly, the constructivist tradition is the framework of thought through which Oiticica was able to place Brazilian art as an affiliate of, and participant in, the great modern tradition, particularly the constructive lineage of Mondrian. It is a development through which Oiticica radically

claimed the entire legacy of the renovation of modernity for Brazilian art. As far as the works are concerned, I believe Oiticica was interested in the idea of constructivism as the possibility of conceiving the artwork as experience itself, as social objectivity through which subjectivity incessantly occurs. Secondly, the notion of construction addresses the urgency of a peripheral artistic milieu like that in Brazil, the urgency in overcoming provincialism while simultaneously embarking on a path towards contemporaneity. And this, of course, could never be achieved through a popular nationalistic rhetoric of searching for one's roots. This was the frame of reference in Oiticica's time, which must have appeared to him as a symptom of a purely reactive and, thus, guilt-ridden demand. Seen through this prism, Oiticica's constructivist attitude seems to aspire to establishing a kind of 'ground zero' for Brazilian art as a precondition for the development of an aesthetic experience unmediated by tradition; of an experience which can thus establish itself as singular, free from the commitments of form; of an experience able to reveal itself as available both for immediate immersion into life and for the production of art on a social and cultural scale, an otherwise unthinkable objective. In this case, Oiticica's development is constructivist to the extent that it initiates and affirms, inverting the initially adverse cultural circumstance of heteronomy. For the artwork, it constitutes a cultural and political development rather than a formal one.

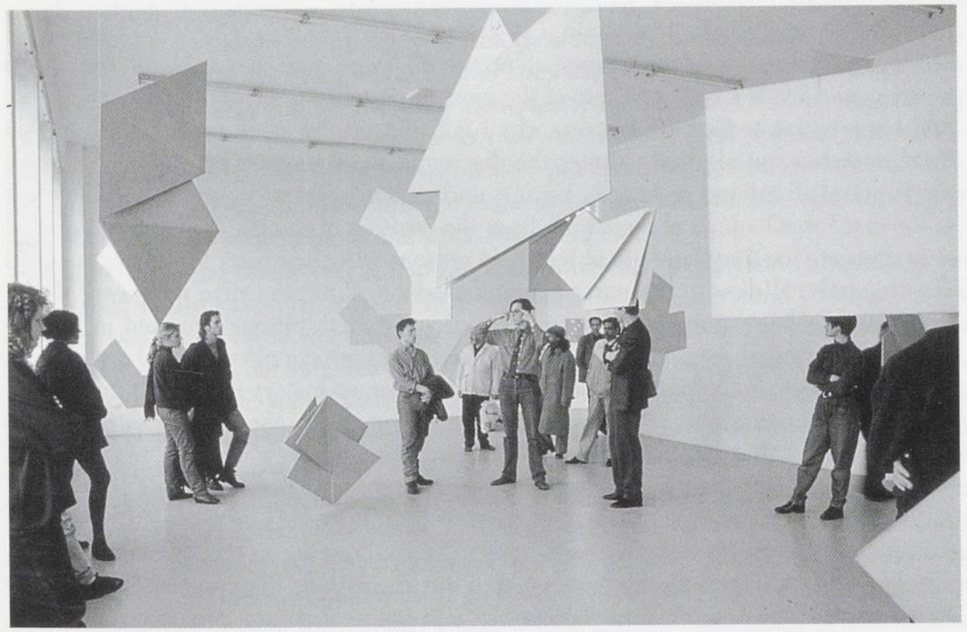
Here Hélio Oiticica's work generates consequences which go beyond the premises of modernity. Like the works of Lygia Clark and, in a broader perspective, those of the neoconcrete artists, Oiticica's works may be considered among the first effective manifestations of modern thought in Brazilian art, proposing themes and issues which decisively insert Brazilian art into the most crucial dilemmas of contemporary culture.

Hélio's work lives from the conceptual tension of being moved simultaneously by a critical and political disposition and, concurrently, by a desire to constitute a poetics. It is notable how these precarious and tenuous works, reduced almost to the essential, lucidly deliver themselves to this rigorous process which attempts to dissolve an institutionalizing destiny for art in the contemporary world. I believe this is one of Oiticica's fundamental contributions to contemporary art; particularly at a moment when the international art circuit presents itself as a system of very bureaucratic relationships – a development of which Oiticica's work was always suspect.

This kind of contradictory approximation of the modern tradition informs a viewpoint which is critical and to a certain degree external. It is a viewpoint which allowed Hélio Oiticica to conceive the broader project of a Brazilian art directed towards the social scale as a strategy of cultural emancipation. By achieving this dimension, his works make all other attempts to claim a cultivated register of modern tradition for Brazilian art seem formalistic and academic; and they stake out an original and productive position for Brazilian art in the context of a growing internationalization or fetishization of local cultures – by all intents and purposes the same thing. I would interpret the entire meaning of Oiticica's work as representing, for Brazilians, a

qualitative insertion of profound and lasting resonance. And let us not forget that this development of Oiticica, coming from a vantage point outside the international art system, acquires an even more singular character because it overcomes, in a single stroke, the provincialism of local practice while achieving, with impressive precision and incisiveness in the face of contemporary cultural debate, a universal pertinence to his inquiry. More than thirty years ago, starting with the *Metaesquemas*, and continuing through the *Parangolés* and up to his final works, Oiticica was able to realize those pure, expressive structures, mentioned several times in his texts, where the art object becomes indistinguishable from the social and cultural object. In some passages from his text "I Aspire to the Great Labyrinth," Oiticica said that what he made was not experimental art but, rather, experiments. In other words, he performed the metacritique of the production of artworks. This idea of the artwork as incessant experimentation is one of the most important aspects of Oiticica's thought; particularly because it is formulated outside of any normative connotation which the expression 'experimental art' might invoke, and because it reveals itself, in the artist's work, as the possibility of permanently establishing subjectivity in its social circumstance, oblivious to any rationalizing movement generated by a formal tradition or by the art system itself.

Some problems emerge when one transposes this reflection to the present. When Hélio Oiticica created the *Parangolé* in 1964 – and I think this is a moment of plenitude, of great conceptual tension, where he achieved the pure, expressive structures



he so often mentioned – the evidence was already inescapable that the idea of experiment, so dear to his thinking, would not culminate, after all, in the dissolution of art into life. Instead, it would run the risk, from that point onwards, of finding itself imprisoned within several institutional frameworks. Furthermore, the Brazilian cultural environment has become increasingly internationalized in the recent past, and this new situation brings, as an important consequence, a repositioning of the issues of emancipation and 'regional versus international' as we have grown used to seeing them. With regard to the contribution of Oiticica's work, it must be admitted that the meaning of experience also needs to be redirected since contemporary Brazilian production, much like any other, occurs in an extremely cultured artistic environment where one no longer knows if a work emerges from specific cultural circumstances or simply from an associative process, a linguistic game, in which one work emerges from another and so on. It is, thus, a very different context from the one lived by Oiticica, and it surely requires new positions from us.

With this goal in mind, we must rethink the meaning of experience for a work whose development remains somewhat averse to tradition, but which, for this very reason, retains a kind of permanent vocation towards actuality. Somewhat paradoxically, in view of what was said at the beginning of this talk, I believe we must reappraise Hélio Oiticica's work historically and examine the conditions under which his idea of experience as cultural intervention could exist today. This is a possibility which might come true, if artworks show themselves effective in consolidating specific points of view, pertinent for any production in an environment of increasing indifferentiation.

– Guy Brett: For a long time, since about the mid-sixties or so, I have felt that Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark were two of the most important artists of the postwar period, and I was trying to find the reasons why I felt this. At the same time, I realized that their work was not allowed to enter the discourse about modern art which was being constructed all around us here in Europe and in North America, and it became clear to me that I was looking at their work from the position of somebody living in London.

It seems to me that there are at least two reasons why their work has not been, until very recently, allowed to be part of this discussion. First, because they were Brazilians, and we know that the big international survey exhibitions mounted in Europe and North America – with just one or two exceptions – have not included artists from outside Europe and North America. Neither has our art history discussed their work, nor have we been aware of the histories of modernism in other countries outside of Europe and North America. This situation may be beginning to change, but only very recently. The second reason is the challenging nature of the work they have done. This in itself is a paradox because, at one level, their work is very accessible, but at another level very challenging, and especially challenging to the institution of art, which would include both the museum and the art market. I am putting this forward as a complex and very subtle relationship, and not as a simple problem of 'burning

down museums.' Obviously, this question bears on the whole relationship between art and life, between the fictive space where art lives and the so-called 'real' space, and the increasingly complex relationship between them.

The works of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark share many of the ideas and notions and desires and projects of the international movements of the 1960s and 70s. Again, the diversity – in terms of national backgrounds – of the participants in these movements has never been properly recognized. Wherever the artists happened to live – whether they were living in metropolises or in their own countries of origin – their work shares many of the same concerns, but I think I would say that Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark occupy a special position among those projects. This is, in my view, because both centered their work on the living person rather than the product, a notion that has many ramifications. They both experienced an evolution in their work, from beginning to end, which went beyond the accepted categories in which we place artistic expressions. Both had what I can only call a 'social vision,' in which they were concerned with the way everything fitted together, from the body to the environment – from the inner subjectivity to the whole environment – and the relationships between them. This is, I think, the meaning of the conceptual categories which Oiticica, for example, invented, from the *Bolide* to the *Penetrable*, to an environment such as *Eden*, which is a kind of model of a social way of being.

– Catherine David: If we had some questions before the opening of the exhibition about the actuality, about the itensity, and about the necessity of Hélio Oiticica's work, I think that those questions have been resolved. However, I was highly surprised by the very modernistic analysis which came from the Brazilian critics in particular, because I think that the most interesting aspect of Oiticica's work, now, may be that it can show us that the classical modernistic lecture of art is over, or, for many reasons, should be over. But for reasons everyone knows, both political and sociogeographical, it is still very alive and still very powerful; but for me the work of Oiticica was not separable from his life and experience, and what he left behind is like a bar of soap, and the meaning of the work still escapes us.

I also think that this vision of central modernities and peripheral (adaptations of) modernity really has to be revised. It is very difficult to understand Oiticica's work without bearing in mind what his marginality – because he was marginal in his own culture – and what his outsider position meant in a very complicated geographical, political and social moment. I was also surprised that most of the readings ignored the problem of showing residuals, which is the same kind of issue we have now with works by Joseph Beuys, Gordon Matta-Clark or Robert Smithson. The main problem now is to clarify, to see, and to show the line which divides a certain conception of art – which is really a productive conception, a market conception – from another one, which still sees art as a pure or strong experimental project. I think that what Rodrigo Naves said about alterity could be very interesting; but I think that all the arguments for and against alterity have really to do with a certain conception of the experi-

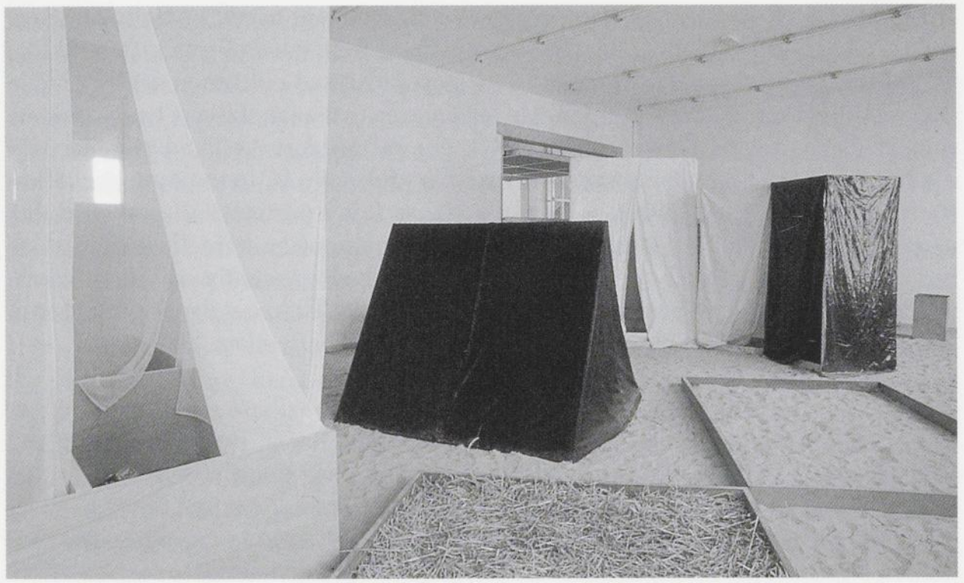
mental, so I think we should depart from there. And my question – maybe to Rodrigo Naves – is that it is very difficult for me to understand why you want to maintain a very modernist position, this idea of form and content, because I think the tension is not a problem; it is what makes the work alive.

– Rodrigo Naves: Mainly because Hélio Oiticica's work is, above all, a complicated, and tense but nevertheless decisive moment in modern art. And it is completely wrong to connect Oiticica's work to his person. What interests me most in Oiticica's work, because I consider it revealing and at the same time projective of a certain Brazilian reality, is the central presence of a form which does not realize itself. And that is Brazil! Brazil is a form that does not realize itself. And I think that Oiticica did this with a greatness rivaled by few. For me, it is not important to discuss the relationship between his texts and his works. I don't agree with Sônia Salzstein, for instance, that there is a great coherence in the texts which cannot be found in the works. Because, more and more, Oiticica's work will have to speak for itself. And for me, regardless of any dubious relationship with the notion of 'work,' I can only see his work as a work of art. And I think that this residual aspect, this dilacerated and dirty aspect, is the formal truth of the work. Otherwise, we reduce Oiticica's work to a certain kind of performance, to a certain kind of installation, and that, for me, can mean just about anything. In other words, though Oiticica used to say, "What I make is music," I think that what he made was art!

– Sônia Salzstein: What I said is that there is density in the texts, and it is paradoxical that the works represent a dramatization of the loss of this density. The dilemma of Brazilian art is how to identify itself without being reactive. In this context, we have yet to extract the consequences of a work as full of possibilities as Hélio Oiticica's. I did not mean to detract from the formal quality and effectiveness of the work. I simply want to point to new possibilities in the understanding of form, beyond the premises of the modern tradition.

– Rodrigo Naves: (in response to a question from the audience about how Oiticica is seen in Brazil) There are two problems, as I see it. In Brazil, today, I think the image or the person of Hélio Oiticica is stronger than the work itself. And that may be for the simple reason that we have not had much opportunity to see the work. On the other hand, I notice from my experience as an art critic that Hélio Oiticica is a compass for some artists, and this I consider substantial and interesting. That is why my talk was based on an attempt – and merely an attempt – to understand the *work* of Hélio Oiticica. I think it is extremely necessary to separate the figure of Hélio Oiticica – the man – from his work, because it does not exist in any other way.

– Rodrigo Naves: (in response to a question from the audience about the Brazilian context in the late 1950s and early 60s): During the neoconcrete movement, there



was a very intelligent appropriation of international constructivism by Brazilian artists and critics. This was the first instance of a non-provincial artistic environment in Brazil, one which generated works of the highest quality, not only those of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark. The work of Amílcar de Castro and Lygia Pape is extremely interesting, and it is very enriching to discuss the relationship between the work of Oiticica, Clark and de Castro. It is very interesting that in the beginning the relation between the concept of perception as construction, which has its origins in *Gestalt*, and a very intelligent reading made by Brazilian critic Ferreira Gullar, based on Merleau-Ponty, generated a theory – if one can call it that – called the "Theory of the Non-Object," which is extremely dependent on phenomenology and was responsible, I feel, for much of the particularity of Brazilian constructivism. The "non-object" – and this is very clear in Oiticica's *Spatial Reliefs* – is an object which, through the virtue of being artistic, contains the possibility of ceasing to be an object in order to become pure appearance or phenomenon.

– Guy Brett: (in response to a question from the audience about Oiticica's social class and his relationship to popular culture) In relation to popular art, Hélio Oiticica was an intellectual who came from a middle-class family, but his take on the popular culture of Brazil, his involvement with it, the way that he could relate to something like that, was, of course, a key aspect of his work, full of contradictions and tensions. But he made a very big attempt to work within that reality, to include it in his conceptual thought.

– Lygia Pape (Brazilian neoconcrete artist, colleague and friend of Hélio Oiticica, and member of the Projeto Hélio Oiticica, speaking from the audience): I would like to say something about this division between popular and cultivated art. For Hélio Oiticica, there was no such division. He used to say that each thing is true within its context. For example, he often went to Mangueira[1] because he liked to dance. He used to say that a fat mulatto woman dressed in pink satin is, in the context of Mangueira, something true, neither popular nor kitsch. It is a poetic manifestation of that particular place. This idea also permeated his cultural and intellectual outlook because he read Nietzsche a lot. This idea flourished constantly within his work, within his concept of art and culture, as a unified whole. This was also the meaning of Mário Pedrosa's concept of the "experimental exercise of freedom."

– Catherine David: I think that we (again thanks to a Brazilian) are re-entering another modernistic discussion, which is about high and low in Brazilian culture and Oiticica's work. I think this is very strange because what is again denied, with that kind of vision and with that kind of framework, is the most important thing, to me at least, which is the cultural gesture, the transformation – and sometimes transfiguration – of some part of the culture into another. The problem is not to discuss where the work is coming from, if he liked to dance the samba, if he preferred such and such colors, and so on. I think the important part is what he did with that, how he transformed his feelings, his relation to the world. At this point I think Waly Salomão should say something about that.

– Waly Salomão (poet, friend of Hélio Oiticica, and a member of the Projeto Hélio Oiticica, speaking from the audience): What I felt mostly, while listening to Rodrigo Naves and Sônia Salzstein, was that the "remove your shoes" principle was not being observed in either of their lectures. To a certain extent, their lectures struck me as applications of *a priori* frameworks, instead of commentaries based on the work. For example, I don't feel that the main issue is the phantasmagorical symbiosis between Hélio Oiticica's life and work, and the impossibility of separating them; likewise, there is at the entrance of *Cosmococa* in Witte de With an invitation to remove one's shoes.

If I were to look at, say, Gilles Deleuze talking about the work of Francis Bacon, all the issues would depart from the work, not from *a priori* schemes which attempt to mold and frame it. I was thinking a lot about *Cosmococa*, which I had only seen Hélio Oiticica show privately in New York through slides. Now that I see it actually realized, millions of diverse issues are raised by this work. For example, *Cosmo-coca* could just as well have been *Cosmo-coffee*, in which the coca element would not seem to be as petrifying, as Meduseating, as coagulating an element as it seems! In this plastic sense it could just as well be coffee as coke. The *coca* element is not a Meduseator, is not a coagulator, is not a petrifier! And yesterday, at the opening, it was amazing to see how an element which can be so heavy can have an almost kindergar-

ten-like character. Many children were throwing the balloons around, and this made us see the formal aspects of the work which Rodrigo Naves, in fact, brought up. So you could see Marilyn Monroe, slowly deformed and altered and drawn, and that the coke is not there as an element to be sniffed but as a painting material. Not just the coke, but also the pocketknife which breaks up the nugget of powder, the scissors, and all the elements which make up the composition and deform it. What always seems fundamental to me in Hélio Oiticica's work is this lofty and decolonized dialogue with all of contemporary art. In *Cosmococa* the relationship with Jackson Pollock, with action painting, achieves a similar or even greater degree of dynamism. The same occurs with Marcel Duchamp who painted a moustache on the *Mona Lisa*, except that with Hélio Oiticica the issue is extended to its catatonic or obsessive exhaustion. And by the very act of lying there, performing a trivial act like filing my nails, it is hard to break down what is a very personal experience. At the end of the exposition – in the total Latin sense of the word – since I was 'exposed' to that experience, it was hard for me to get up. It was as if I had snorted a ton of powder! So, Hélio Oiticica's work, associated or dissociated from the ghost of his life, raises many more questions and cannot be treated in this manner.

– Rodrigo Naves: First of all, I absolutely do not want to be pigeonholed. You are the one who mentioned Deleuze, Pollock and Duchamp, and I am saying nothing of the kind. Furthermore, I absolutely did not intend that my talk be the application of a preestablished scheme to Hélio Oiticica's work – I rigorously do not believe this. What I believe, in fact – and this irritates me a lot – is that you are among those who feed an absolute desire for Oiticica's work not to exist! In other words, Oiticica's work would only have value to the extent that it does not become materialized, that it does not convert itself into work, that it remains a myth.

– Chris Dercon (co-curator of the exhibition *Hélio Oiticica*): I would like to ask Guy Brett what he thinks about these viewpoints. I would like to know what we Europeans can learn from these opposite opinions.

– Guy Brett: Well, I don't have anything to say specifically as a European, but I want to know what is meant, or what people mean, by Hélio Oiticica's *work*. Is Oiticica's work the physical objects that are in Witte de With? Or is his work the objects plus the writings or are the writings a commentary on the work or are the writings part of the work or are the works a commentary on the writings? I don't think you can divide these things, and I don't think there's merely a work that you can point to as a material object, which you can discuss when you are using the term *the work*. Are projects physical works, or are projects the desire to make something which one cannot make because of circumstances? Are they to be put aside in favour of something called *the work* which is more real?

– Rodrigo Naves: I agree to a significant extent with you. I just do not agree with what Hélio Oiticica himself said on several occasions about his own work. As I said, I think there is a trajectory – and this was the axis underlying my reflections – which must be analyzed through the works, and I mean here the works, not *the work*. Without a doubt, Oiticica's writings are very lucid – some more, some less – but I am interested in understanding the meaning of the works he left behind.

– Guy Brett: To take another example, if we are trying to understand an artist like Vladimir Tatlin, who had certain public commissions to undertake, and certain projects of his own which he tried to realize but could not – the whole interest of Tatlin is not just in the physical objects that happen to remain from his life. And if we limited ourselves to those physical objects, why, that would seem to me to be a false protocol from a kind of, I don't know, idealistic position of some sort.

– Rodrigo Naves: The projects are certainly works, so much so that several works exhibited here used to be projects; they are realizable, they can come into being.

Oiticica's work has some similarities with that of Joseph Beuys. The vitalism, the organicism with which Beuys – the person – tried to impregnate the work, creating a personal mythology, is not, in my opinion, interesting for an understanding of it. Critics do not have to accept an idea attributed by an artist to his work. Otherwise we could not even discuss it, the artist would just say "this is this, and that is that."

[1] A Rio de Janeiro samba school.

* Hélio Oiticica, January 15, 1951 (from: Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto, Ed. Rocco, Rio de Janeiro, 1986).

Guy Brett is an art critic working in London. He is author of Kinetic Art *(London, 1968),* Through Our Own Eyes: Popular Art and Modern History *(London and Philadelphia, 1986), and* Transcontinental: Nine Latin American Artists *(London and New York, 1990), and he has published extensively on Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica. He co-curated the exhibition* Hélio Oiticica *at the Whitechapel Gallery (London, 1969) and the retrospective of Hélio Oiticica (Rotterdam et al., 1992). Recently, he has worked on the exhibition and catalogue for* The Airmail Paintings of Eugenio Dittborn 1984-1992 *(London et al., 1993).*

Catherine David is a curator at the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris. From 1981-90, she was a curator at the Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris where her exhibitions included Gilberto Zorio *(1986),* Reinhard Mucha *(1986),* Lothar Baumgarten *(1987),* L'Époque, la Mode, la Morale, la Passion *(1987), and* Passages de l'Image *(1990). Her recent exhibitions include* Lazlo Moholý-Nagý *(1990),* Robert Gober *(1991),* Marcel Broodthaers *(1991) and* Eva Hesse *(1993). In addition to co-curating the retrospective of Hélio Oiticica (Rotterdam et al., 1992), she has written extensively on Brazilian cinema and such artists as Cildo Meireles and Tunga.*

Rodrigo Naves is an art critic, professor of art history at the Universidade de Campinas, São Paulo, and editor of Novos Estudos, *a publication of the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP). He is the author of* El Greco: O Mundo Turvo *(São Paulo, 1985), and has written extensively on such Brazilian artists as Amílcar de Castro, Guignard, Nuno Ramos, José Resende, Eduardo Sued and Volpi.*

Sônia Salzstein-Goldberg is an art critic and the director of the visual arts department of the São Paulo Cultural Center. She co-curated Imaginários Singulares *(1987) for the XIX São Paulo Bienal, and has recently curated an exhibition of Guignard (Museu Lasar Segall, São Paulo, 1992), and several exhibitions of emerging Brazilian artists. She has written on such Brazilian artists as Waltércio Caldas, Iole de Freitas and Guignard.*

Kunst bei Prestel, brochure of Prestel Verlag, Munich, 1991

p. 32/33:
Catalogue of the exhibition of Henri Matisse, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, 1946

p. 39:
Catalogue of the exhibition *Wenn Attituden Form werden*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969

THE CATALOGUE: AN ORDERED LIST OF WORKS

Walter Nikkels

May 17, 1992

With great fanaticism, we catalogue the shreds of information, because our view of the whole has altogether vanished.

The placement, the display of catalogues in the halls of our institutions for modern art is the exoneration or justification of the very exhibition that is held.

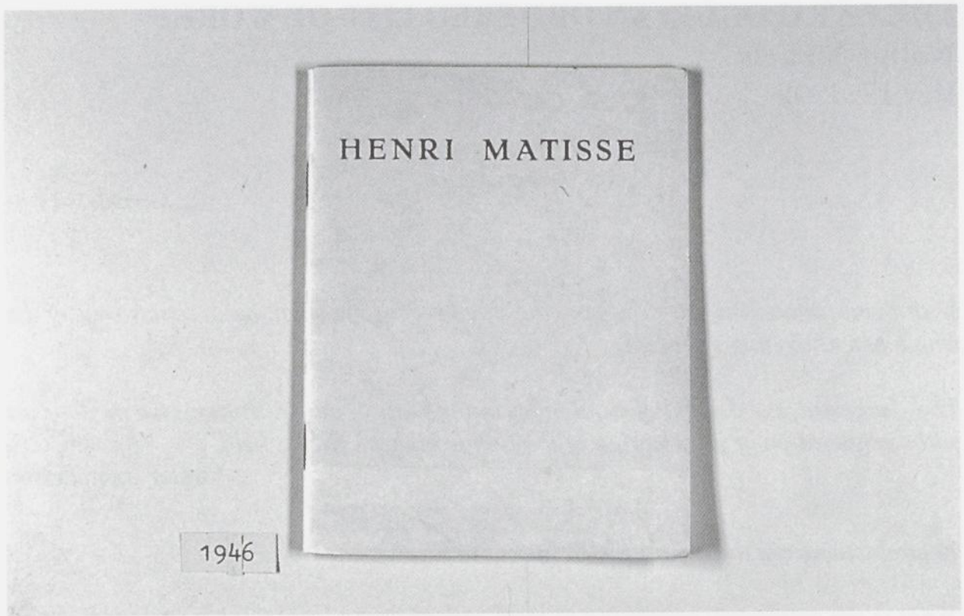
Lothar Baumgarten

Reproductions are the 'vanitas' still lifes of today.

What is the catalogue: something to read, something to look at, or is it simply a summary? The three possibilities, which are exploited alternately, as desired, or which are sometimes all used, even combined, within a single catalogue, make the catalogue, with its varied paces of reading, a quintessentially restless *and* modern *book.*

Do we look at a catalogue, read a catalogue, read an article in the catalogue or just leaf through the catalogue? Do we like the catalogue for its design and typography, for the quality of its reproductions or is the catalogue a reminder of a beautiful exhibition that we once saw? Or do we use the catalogue for a subsequent catalogue, deriving information from it for yet another exhibition or feeding the title and further bibliographic information into the memory bank of a computer, to then stash away the catalogue, perhaps forever, in a place where the acid of time will do its work? We make many, sometimes I think too many, exhibitions. And so we make just as many catalogues - sometimes I think too many. The catalogue is a means of obtaining information about art, used worldwide, but how many catalogues do we actually produce? In order to have more than a rough idea and to avoid any presumptions, I asked a typical museum of modern art how many catalogues were added to their extraordinarily active and 'inquisitive' library per year. In 1973, the number came to 811 actual catalogues (not books on art), and in 1990 this had risen to 1735, including only catalogues within the realm of modern art.

Now the question is: how do I order this overwhelming mass of material for you and describe this new type of book? There seems to be no other choice. "Ich bin ein Buch,

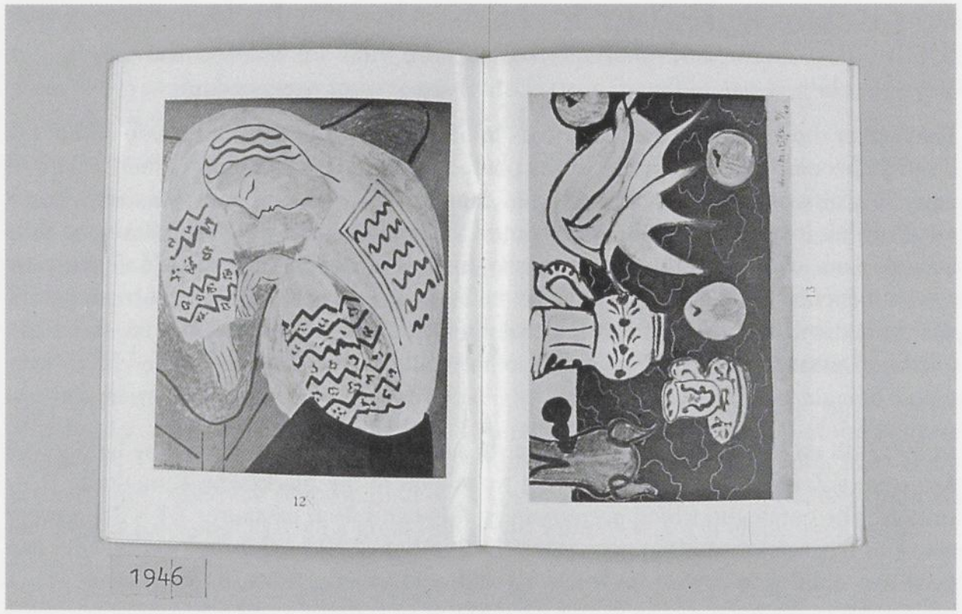


wenn Du mich liest," (I am a book, when you read me), writes the artist A.R. Penck somewhere, so let's read a few catalogues in order to legitimize them as books.

Looking for models of catalogues to use in this lecture, I came across a small book with the manageable size of 12 × 15.5 centimeters. Actually, it wasn't much to look at, except for the fact that this little book, which proved to be a catalogue (though it referred to itself as a brochure in the colophon), had a cover printed in a monochrome rose color, faded by time – which then made me think of the title of another little book *Mit einem Hauch von Rosa*, by Lawrence Weiner, published in 1978 by the Kabinett für Aktuelle Kunst in Bremerhaven.

My not-much-to-look-at little book was inscribed with the capital letters HENRI MATISSE; this was aligned with the upper edge of the type area of the body of text inside and printed onto the previously described rose color in a grey-blue.

Despite the simple design of this little publication (I assume that a designer did not come into the picture at all, probably only a typesetter), there are nonetheless many decisions with regard to the form and arrangement of this book that can be reduced to a grammar that has its origins in book typography. A photographic portrait of the artist has been placed opposite the title page, as frontispiece. The colophon is on page six: the Matisse (and Picasso) exhibition took place in May 1946 at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels and, in spite of the small catalogue of no more than twenty-four pages, was "under the protection of His Majesty." The introduction follows this up with the list of paintings, in effect the heart of the catalogue since a catalogue is really



no more than an ordered list of works. And then there are twenty illustrations in black-and-white. The number of the illustration is centered under it, which makes sense typographically, and refers to the catalogue list. Something that stands out, though, is that the horizontally oriented illustrations, in accordance with an old and sensible tradition, have made a quarter turn in their placement on the page, whereby the problem of differences in scale between the horizontally and vertically oriented illustrations has been basically solved. Otherwise, the horizontally oriented illustrations would have had to be reduced considerably in relation to the vertical ones. This old method became obsolete under the influence of new ideas in typography, also perhaps because 'non-objective' painting did not provide a clear basis for painting and thus resulted in an uncertain direction of view in the book.

The seemingly uncontrived solution of simply stating the name of the artist is standard for the art catalogue. The color scheme definitely alludes to one of Matisse's color schemes. The purely typographic cover seems like that of a novel or a book of collected poems. But in that category of bookcovers, the accent lies with the title of the publication; the name of the author is of secondary importance. On the cover of the art catalogue, the artist is both author and protagonist. The writing derives its meaning from the name MATISSE; the history of cataloguing the work of an artist thus becomes the history of the increasing significance of his name. Let us call this example – this souvenir – an illustration of a historical model of an exhibition catalogue. With it, a relationship between the exhibition and the information about it is illus-

trated. And over the past three decades, this relationship has been changing constantly.

The farther the exhibition lies behind us in time, the vaguer the impression of that exhibition becomes; aside from a bit of photographic documentation (which is stored away in archives), the *catalogue* will be, at a certain point, the only remaining document of that exhibition, albeit in a printed and multiplied form. The catalogue thus becomes an art historical and culturally historical document. The catalogue possesses a documentary responsibility. At its best, the phenomenon can become part of design history, but it is my opinion that this phenomenon should not be an end in itself and must be seen independently of the obligation to document.

In 1982-83 an exhibition of the work of the same artist, Henri Matisse, is held at the Kunsthaus Zürich, and that exhibition travels on to the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. The catalogue which accompanies this exhibition measures 24 × 28 centimeter and has a total of 308 pages, along with a list of 122 exhibited works. One can view this catalogue – with its foreword and acknowledgments, about five essays, a biography, the actual catalogue and a list of photographs – as a typical current model of the publication intended for a retrospective exhibition of a 'classic' modern artist.

In contrast to the early catalogue from 1946, now a different yet, in terms of the catalogue, just as stereotypical solution is used for the cover: a reproduction without any further mention of a name. The aura of the unique, reproduced work of art seems sufficient to make the cover *informative*. The name of the artist, however, is placed in large type on what has now become a respectable spine.

The placement of the reproduction on the right-hand page, across from a nearly empty left-hand page containing captions and in this case minor entries, has become the compositional scheme of the art catalogue.

Sometimes I think: we are, with a certain refinement, interested only in the exceptions. This is particularly true with architecture; that which is average is present in such large quantities that there is a certain immunity towards it. I will show you many exceptions, but they only confirm the rule. Nine out of ten, nine hundred out of a thousand catalogues that we produce, look more or less like this.

This 'art as product' catalogue continues to echo the basic principles of book typography, but that typography no longer has any meaning whatsoever. The reproductions are excellent, for what the visitor to the exhibition actually buys is not a book but a large number of reproductions whose sequence is fixed by a stitching of the pages on which they are printed; this is furnished with a cover, whereby the whole takes on the shape of a book.

A great deal is said about objective and subjective typography. Because subjective typography has become the only form of characterizing that which is individual, objective typography seems to have made itself truly invisible and free of value judgements. Objective typography should defend its values better.

Here is a recent example of this product development, extending the historical examples from 1946 through 1982 on to 1992: a catalogue of the work of Ellsworth Kelly, his years in France, 1948-54, which accompanied an exhibition at the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris. Ten years, therefore, after the previous catalogue of this type. Several minor deviations which illustrate a change of times can be noticed. The size clearly outdoes even that of the Matisse catalogue – 26.5 × 30.5 centimeters. The paper is more luxurious and of a heavier weight. The reproductions are big and have a quality that is pleasing to the eye. The typography is sparser than that of the Matisse catalogue. The book was published by Prestel-Verlag, in Munich; this fact is not insignificant, since the participation of the publisher in the production of exhibition catalogues has come to have a great (too great) influence. I will come back to this.

There seems to me to be a similarity between the way in which we present works of art in our modern museums, mostly on white walls (I hardly need mention that in this space), and how we place the reproductions on the pages of a (even this) catalogue. Somewhere in a German book, which is why it must remain untranslated, it says, "Eine Entwicklung zu grösserem Purismus und zu ästhetischer Kontemplation des Einzelwerkes."

The virgin and chic, white page of the catalogue has become a literal translation of the museum wall, which denies any allusion to surroundings and history by way of the white. We should have the courage to provide our spaces, as well as our printed matter, with meaning again. That would allow for a convergence of meanings. Our paper would have to be dealt with in a different way. But I am aware that, for this to come about, a coherent idea with respect to architecture and typography would have to be developed. And that idea cannot be designed; it will simply have to arise from historical necessity. For the time being, the mere wish for this is leading to considerable anecdotalism in typography and architecture.

I will show you a series of catalogues, not a series in typological terms but in that they are all catalogues of work by the same artist, Georg Baselitz. The choice was not determined so much by personal preference; this series illustrates, in my view, the various standpoints in the art business and the types of catalogues that are developed from these standpoints.

This series is not meant to be 'exemplary' from an aesthetic point of view; the development can sooner be called cynical, though it is typical of the development that is now taking place.

The first catalogue is from a 1965 exhibition of the Galerie Friedrich & Dahlem in Munich. In no way whatsoever does it concur with our current image of the catalogue. It is a very thin book with a noticeably elongated format; somehow this format is emphasized. One immediately senses the format of the book upon taking it in one's hands. Its cover is entirely black, not a reproduction of black. The paper is of a utilitarian sort and is black through and through; it doesn't even reveal the name of the artist. But this in itself creates a certain anticipation with regard to the contents, i.e. the work of the artist.

This utilitarian paper also refers to its historical use as a means of protecting the contents. But through the understandable meticulousness of the choice of this paper, it acquires meaning: the black emphasizes itself and, at the same time, denies that this is simply a utilitarian 'copybook.' The dull, black sheen, however, sets a sombre mood. On opening the book, its size is doubled (a fundamental occurrence with any book), and with the choice of crimson for the title page, a second mood is created; together with the black of the inside of the cover, this forms a tragic harmony.

The name of the artist is printed on the crimson in an elegant script letter, which alludes to the ambiguous function of the 'copybook,' since this typography gives it the prestigious touch of an invitation; the gallery, after all, has to have some purpose. The alert reader will notice that the name of the artist is not preceded by the first name Georg. The name Baselitz is now a pseudonym, derived from the birthplace of the artist, Deutschbaselitz; suddenly the red and the place and the name act as a reference to the door that holds access to the book, the door that bears the artist's name. At the bottom of the page is a quote from *I. Pandemonium*, a manifesto written by the artist; here the 'green' of his youth is complementary to the red of the page.

We turn the page. Two more announcements have been placed on the colored page at the left, but one's eye is nevertheless immediately drawn to the page on the right: the right-hand page always has a more important position in the book (as object) than the left, which heralds it so to speak. A black-and-white reproduction can be seen on the right-hand page; this has a narrow, white margin, which acts more as a frame around the reproduction than a traditional margin, like the one we use in book typography. This step also causes the painting, with its thin white frame, to become part of the space surrounding the book. A succession of illustrations follows: these are treated very casually, as though they have been pasted into a scrapbook, and the typography of the captions is a far cry from the meaningful introduction to the book, since they have purely informative value.

The end of the book is closed off symmetrically with the beginning, a red page and then the final black of the cover. It should be mentioned that the duration of the exhibition is indicated with precise dates, but the year is missing. In its function as an invitation and a meagre framing of works, the book has a somewhat ephemeral character; here the artist is only twenty-six years old. Simple as the publication may be, it sublimely reveals its purpose as a *gallery catalogue*, enticing the reader more than it actually informs him.

I shall interrupt the development of the gallery catalogue as a genre by discussing a type of catalogue produced by the Kunsthalle, which shows an increased appreciation of the artist. It is frequently his first presentation on a large scale, accessible to a broad audience. The Kunsthalle emerged through the initiative of artists' associations and has served the need for contemporary work to be exhibited, something which prior was not being done by institutional museums. Even now the Kunsthalle continues to play an important role in the presentation of work by young artists, and that intention has resulted in a type of catalogue. The Kunsthalle functions under the guidance of a director with a small staff and on the basis of a personal commitment to those presentations. The Kunsthalle catalogues are characterized by a certain reticence in the design and often conform to conventional solutions in the treatment of books, insofar as the contents permit this.

That reticence with respect to design is probably related to the investigative nature of the exhibition. The catalogue is frequently produced in trilateral collaboration with the director, artist and printer. The affirmation of design has not yet become an issue. Kunsthalle Bern, which opened in 1918, developed a series of catalogues (among which is one for Georg Baselitz, then thirty-eight years old), which again lack any sort of aesthetic pretension but have great art historical importance. These are informative, contain many illustrations (mostly in black-and-white, due to the scarce financial means) and are introduced with an essay, which is often the first theoretical approach to the work of the young artist. These catalogues moreover often provide the first impetus to document the oeuvre of an artist.

Our artist becomes famous. The art museums show an interest in realizing exhibitions at a museum level. The contact between the institution and the artist becomes more formal; responsibilities are delegated to the staff, and graphic design makes its entrance. The museum's function as a public institution requires that consideration be given to the streamlining of the information. That information also changes in character; the streamlining serves the identity of the institution more than that of the artist.

In the meantime, the gallery system has not remained the same; interests have expanded, and the product Baselitz has become more expensive. The accompanying product catalogues gain refinement and costliness in their execution. Their size becomes noticeably lavish; illustrations are placed only on the right-hand page, and the information is layed out, as delicately as a price tag, on the left. The publication is given a text in yet another distinguished typeface, providing the work with an art historical context.

Baselitz, as you probably know, is a German artist, and it was in his country that participation by the official publisher first occurred with publications of art and exhibition catalogues. Initially, during the second half of the seventies, this involved large catalogue projects for historical exhibitions; later came the 'classic' modern artists. This trend eventually led to a new type of art book: a hybridization of the catalogue, which was usually produced for a retrospective exhibition, in a hardbound edition

that can no longer be distinguished from the popular artist's monograph. The list of reproductions and the catalogue have become interchangeable.

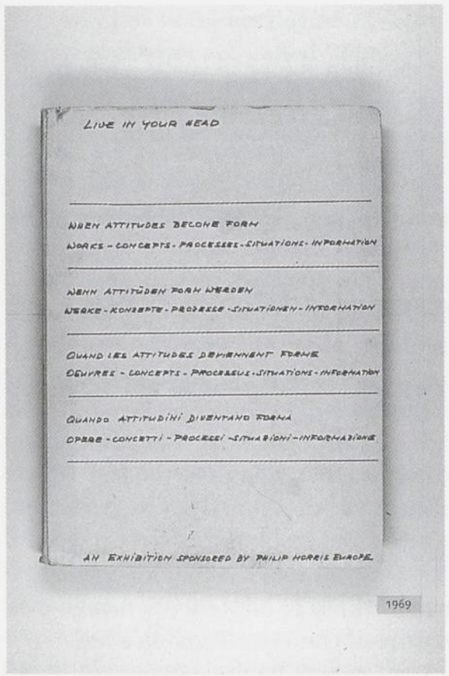
My chosen illustration of this type of book speaks volumes. *The artist is then fifty years old.*

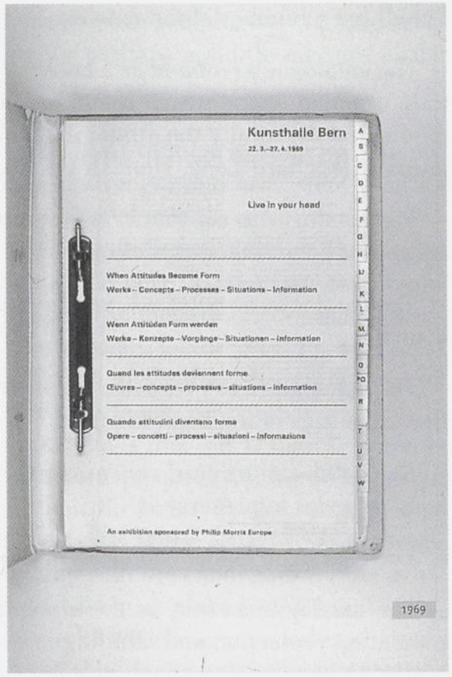
There is a striking difference in the treatment of the color reproductions, many of which are now spread across left- and right-hand pages. In relation to the size of the book, which is already large, these reproductions have the largest possible dimensions; the publication is thus flooded with color, and this naturally adds to the price. The text is set in a nice, big typeface. Even the covers of these publications all look the same, and the lettering on them is just as barbaric.

In this monotonous profusion of published catalogues, an attempt is made to break through the deeply stereotyped form with deviant forms and sometimes even the denial of the catalogue's very function.

I have shown you how the catalogue has made very modest progress with the features of book typography. For a long time, it remained a simple brochure with an ephemeral character. Book typography continues to provide points of departure for the design of catalogues; but in terms of its implementation of reproduction as a formal element, it is somewhat uncertain.

The broad format also makes this implementation difficult. The typography of literature and poetry is still based on the Renaissance model of the book and on a proportional standard of height and width. The artificial world in which the catalogue performs its informative function, the 'art world,' is by its very nature sensitive to new developments in book design. This century's 'Révolution Typographique', the typographical ideas of futurism, for instance, and dada, the Bauhaus, Die Neue Typografie and fluxus provide a constant reservoir of concepts for the design of the catalogue; but along with this, specifically avant-garde book types, whose origins lie with book types and typography of the nineteenth century, are continually cited, sometimes copied outright. But catalogue design also lends itself to other impulses and interactions with autonomous art, and this complicates things. Conceptual art, to name an example, has had great influence on the design of the catalogue, which became so necessary to this tendency in (the dematerialized expression of) visual art as a channel of information. Sometimes there was no exhibition at all, and the catalogue functions autonomously; sometimes the catalogue itself is the work of art. A documentation of this is the famous catalogue from the exhibition *Wenn Attituden Form werden* (When Attitudes Become Form) made by Harald Szeemann and held at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969-70. This catalogue is the first of a series that I would like to show or recall in order to examine them for their historical significance and references. The design, which is apparently confined to the making of a choice (not conforming entirely to our general conception of design), refers to cataloguing as a process of documentation. The catalogue is everyone's idea of an extremely ordinary office file folder, whose contents include the title of the exhibition handwritten in capital letters with a felt-tip pen; this is rather formal handwriting which I recognize





as that of the artist Lawrence Weiner, one of the participants in the exhibition. He always places dots above several capital letters, something that is very ahistoric, but as a typographer I can never actually take offense at anything he does. This handwriting is, in fact, printed, that is to say reproduced. The opened folder shows us contents, dividers and information on loose sheets of paper, printed and held together by mechanical means that we can operate ourselves. We can change the order of the information, and even add information. The position of the artist's photograph at the upper right-hand corner of the page moreover alludes to the documentary photograph and its use in card systems. As such, this catalogue can be interpreted simultaneously as a comment on his own position. The use of the artist's photograph alone is revealing here! This could serve as a premise for a great deal of study on the history of the catalogue, providing us with yet another lecture.

This ever so meticulous catalogue becomes the model for an interminable series of catalogues that adopt the loose-leaf system, starting with the catalogue for *dokumenta 5*, an exhibition also by Harald Szeemann, with a cover by Edward Ruscha, and hopefully ending with the documentation of artists from the north of North Holland. The plastic organizer has thus become the tragic symbol of documented but unseen artistry. In my opinion, it makes no sense whatsoever to catalogue bad art.

I shall list a number of the catalogue's forms:

– The catalogue as *album*, as a book with pictures, often oblong in shape – a horizontally oriented shape which refers to such things as the Liber Amicorum, the photo album and especially the album in its metaphorical sense and use as an account of a journey. (Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, Lothar Baumgarten)

– The catalogue as *copybook*, in the sense of being as yet meaningless though it offers itself as a potential carrier of meaning.

– The catalogue as *notebook*, as a holder of personal notes that are the basis of a 'discourse.'

– The catalogue as *object book*, the book being a model of the world, in which the tactile properties of the book are used.

– The catalogue as *card system*, as the metaphor for archiving that which is significant in order to preserve it.

– The catalogue as the *quotation* of a previously existent type of book.

– The catalogue as *box*, as the metaphor for that which is mysterious, though also indicating protection and alluding to the disclosure of contents. Pandora's box.

– The catalogue as *lexicon*, as a type of book from the Enlightenment, in which the work of art is documented as a carrier of meaning within a greater context.

– The catalogue as *travel guide*.

– The catalogue as *newspaper*.

– The catalogue as *schedule*.

– The catalogue as the *exhibition* itself.

During the sixties, a new form of the book emerges with what is called 'the artist's book;' artists opt for the book as a visual means, frequently making use of specific possibilities offered by the book, such as sequence. Unlike the 'object book,' these often became small, low-budget publications in small editions that were distributed to a limited number of places. This type of 'artist's book' has had little influence on typographic design; it hardly even makes use of typography. But many of these artists were later found in museum collections, and this type of book, having come about in the early stages and outside the official context of the art institution, is thus included in the series of museum publications; the same is true of gallery publications. The budget available for the realization of a catalogue is then used for the publication of an artist's book. Sometimes that 'edition' is accompanied by an official catalogue; sometimes it replaces the catalogue.

In addition to the catalogues of solo exhibitions, there are catalogues of group exhibitions and what are called 'theme' exhibitions, or perhaps a subtle mixture of the two. Here is one of the first well-known examples: the catalogue for *dokumenta 1* in Kassel, from 1955. It is a typical example of a group exhibition catalogue, a summary of the work of the participating artists. The design shows influences from Swiss typography but is actually nothing special. Its magical strength and aura stem from its value as documentation of a most important exhibition of modern art.

During the fifties, there also arises the idea of the catalogue as series. Developed on the basis of a single design, it is a solution in which very diverse material is subject to the direction of a graphic designer. A highpoint in modern history was Willem Sandberg's series for the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, followed by a very consistent series by Wim Crouwel for the same museum. A series-like design of a series emphasizes the position of the institution for which it is made; design that responds to the personal oeuvre of the artist, for instance, articulates this but is then less confident. When the design of such a series is of an outstanding quality, it becomes part of the history of design. Or, to put it differently: "how do I classify the catalogues of Sandberg – under Sandberg or under the documentation of the artist?" For the more thematic exhibitions, a new model arose in Germany with the catalogues for the exhibition *Westkunst* and the exhibition *Von Hier Aus*, which took place in 1981 and 1984, respectively. They display an essayistic, encyclopedic structure, a complex of structured information, which makes these books veritable documents of contemporary art.

A new form is the catalogue as a visual account of the exhibition. Whenever changes occur in the way exhibitions are carried out, the catalogue (and particularly its designer) responds to the new impulses. Sometimes I can think cynically: they see the opportunity. To a large degree, this type of catalogue borrows from an idiom developed in magazine design. The photographs often fill both pages and are cropped by the edge; the visitor has become spectator. The catalogue has now finally become "cinematic," to quote El Lissitzky.

It seems to me – seeing the latest crop of catalogues – that a certain weariness can be detected at this point. That weariness has various causes, which can probably be reduced to the explosion of this type of publication and the energy consumed by it; I think that this actually applies to all of the parties involved in the production of the catalogues.

The increase in production was more than the museum could cope with; its staff could scarcely be expanded. With this, the question arises as to whether it makes sense to catalogue for the sake of cataloguing. Exhibiting is done on such an intensive basis that it seems senseless to bring up the same work again and again. The sober response to this would be to reduce the number of exhibitions and thereby the number publications. But since the catalogue has practically become (or deteriorated into) the proof of the exhibition, it is difficult to make changes in the cultural politics of such matters. So much is at stake!

The catalogue has also become the artist's very own proof of identity, which is indexed in value throughout the world according to the level of its issuer, be it museum or gallery.

Moreover, a recent phenomenon is that the typology, as I have described it, of the catalogue forms initiated by various facets of the art business is becoming blurred. Specific forms of the artist's book, the gallery catalogue, the kunsthalle catalogue, the catalogue of the art museum and the catalogue transformed by the publisher into an art book – all of those having been distinct positions until recently – are being combined in terms of content as well as form. This makes it understandable that design, particularly in our country, is acquiring increasingly independent status as truly interesting content begins to disappear – a development which is a source of gloom to everyone but the design freak.

"We should not print that which isn't worth printing," Lothar Baumgarten has written. We should restore typography to its rightful place; the museums should write less but more interestingly about the new visual art, which will be glorious. Then we will immediately make a beautiful book of all this, full of letters and not too many reproductions.

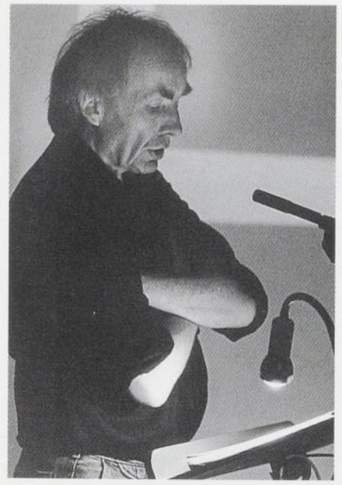
"How are things going in the business of aesthetics?" wonders Paul Valéry in the year 1934. Walter Benjamin quotes him in his famous essay published in 1936, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." "The technical reproduction of the work of art changes art's relationship to the masses," he writes. He also talks about the cult value and the exhibition value of the work of art and describes this cult value as one which historically precedes that of the exhibition of the artwork.

I'm not sure (though who am I to comment on this masterpiece of writing) whether the cult value isn't already strengthened by reproductive and communicative means, since it is not primarily based on the information but employs those means for the good of the industry, to keep the 'business of aesthetics' running smoothly. That business urgently needs the cult value and maintains it artificially by any means.

In this magical realm of forces, the catalogue plays an essential role and is used again and again with absolute expertise, each time assuming a different shape. This is why its design is so fickle.

What remains, however, is the catalogue as souvenir, as the postcard of the exhibition whose artworks are always in transit. As a result, the reproduction takes on an equally trivial character in relation to the authentic work of art.

I visited the exhibition of Ellsworth Kelly at the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris, and several works had a deep effect on me. I was quite certain that they couldn't be reproduced, so I didn't buy the catalogue. I bought it later in a bookstore in Düsseldorf because I knew by then that I would be giving a lecture about the art catalogue. By this I mean to say that when we talk about *art* and *the reproduction of art*, we're talking about two very different things.



Walter Nikkels works in Dordrecht as a typographer. He studied at the Academie van Beeldende Kunsten in Rotterdam, the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich and the Brera Accademia in Milan. He also designs museum catalogues and exhibitions. His designs include the catalogues for the exhibitions Bilderstreit *(Cologne, 1989),* Van Gogh *(Amsterdam, 1990) and* Rietveld *(Utrecht, 1992) and the exhibition architecture for* dokumenta 7 *(Kassel, 1982) and for* Bilderstreit. *He has also co-designed catalogues with the artists Lothar Baumgarten and Rémy Zaugg. Since 1985, he is professor of Entwurf, Buchkunst und Schriftentwicklung (Design, Bookmaking and Typography) at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf.*

Dan Graham, *Untitled (Family in New Highway Restaurant, Jersey City, N.J.; Row of Tract Houses, Bayonne, N.J.)*, 1967; 1966
Kodacolor; c-print
Private collection Cologne

p. 51:
Walker Evans, *New York Lunch Bar*, ca. 1937
Gelatin-silver print
Courtesy Sander Gallery, New York
Copyright Estate of Walker Evans ©

Walker Evans, *Wooden Houses, Boston*, 1930
Gelatin-silver print
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts
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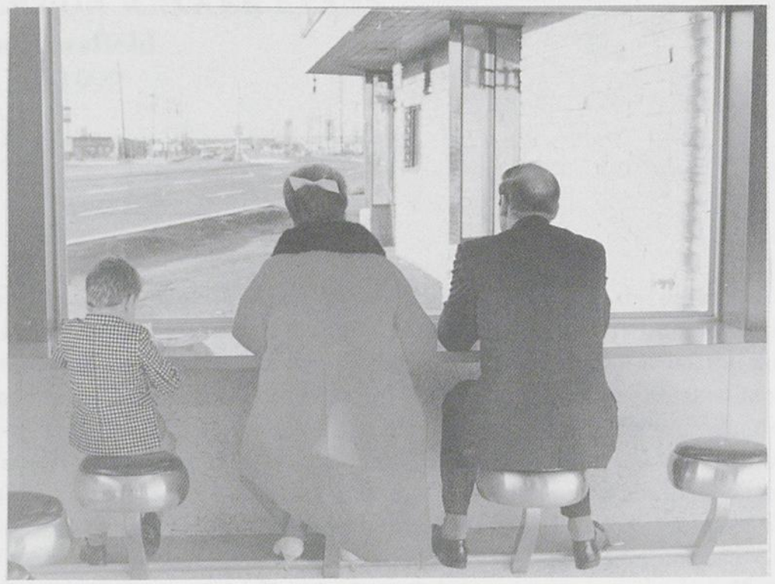


30.08.92 ON WALKER EVANS

Craigie Horsfield

August 30, 1992

Sometimes you walk on glass. And a photograph? A marker to the darkness.

I met Dan Graham for the first time this morning, and there is little authority here but there is sympathy, and this matter of relationship between the artist, the world and the common weal is something more than a preamble; it is of the greatest moment.

Many of Walker Evans's pictures I had previously seen only in reproduction. Dan Graham's were not at all familiar to me and, as far as I know, such an exhibition of photographs has not been shown in Europe. The catalogue text, which some of you may have read, draws parallels between the artists' work. (Jean-François Chevrier writes of melancholy – but melancholy is an affliction of innumerable human hearts.)

As a representative view of Evans, the exhibition is not unorthodox. Most of the work is from the 1930s and '40s, although, in fairness, the accompanying texts acknowledge the significance of the later work. That of the 1950s and '60s is too often seen merely as confirmation. At the time it was the career of an American artist, or, almost of an American photographer, Evans acquiesced.

At the entrance to the exhibition *Walker Evans & Dan Graham* at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen is a picture by Walker Evans, *Millworkers' Houses in Willimantic, Connecticut*, 1931, the curiously symmetrical history of which is noted elsewhere. However, there is an aspect of the picture that has escaped mention perhaps because it seems insignificant. Shown in the exhibition *American Photographs* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1938, of which, as far as I know, there are no installation records, it would appear that it was one of a number similarly presented at the time mounted on board and framed without glass.

The surface of a photograph, the invisible place of a photograph, tangible and constantly deferred, uncompleted and unacknowledged: is the place of its evasion. Yet it was not inevitable that it should become so. At the beginning, photographs declared the surface; the techniques of manufacture were various and in the process of discovery and the models were painting and printmaking, where the surface was clearly articulated. In photography, whether the support was of paper, metal, glass or cloth, the different methods of production each necessitated a degree of manipulation of the surface. Most significantly of all, the idea of the surface was engaged. However, as the convention of the world catalogued and recorded became the principle motive of photography, the presence, the fact of the photograph, became increasingly insignificant, no longer looked at but looked through, as though to a world apart. The photograph at

once gave the reassurance of reality, glimpsed through a window, together with the separation of culture and our own knowledge of mimetic convention. The surface of the photograph remained in fact almost invisible, to touch it was to discover nothing more than the dull and indifferent surface of chemical emulsion. It is as little the world depicted as the surface of glass is the world beyond it. It bore no responsibility, and it gave the impression of being invulnerable through the ease of reproduction. The fact of the photograph was in the authority of its elsewhere, but an elsewhere of illusion bearing no physical relation to the present however the material of its support was effected, as inevitably it was, by time. The perpetual evasion of the photograph is not in the recognition of the intractable space of the world, the inconsolable end of representation, but it is rather its denial, the web of insincerity that ensnares photography in an age which rejects its implication.

The surface of the photograph is a slight thing, but it is the place of its meaning. We do not see through it, neither is it of ourself. Unless we acknowledge this, we are left either with the illusion beyond the glass or the reflection of ourselves in interminable refraction.

It is a condition of the modern world. Dan Graham's fascination with glass, the recurrent motif of his work, marks out this void of separation. Glass and mirror, the glass that reduces the world to indifferent spectacle and the mirror of fractured self. It appears to me that his resolution, in the rearranged pairings of photographs, in the glass and mirrored installations, in the glass and mirror of the video screens, is to reveal, to denounce and to attempt, over and over, to integrate, to reconcile those betrayed by progress, to inhabit a world of separation and dreamlike illusion.

The surface of the photograph can be something else. It can be the place that declares itself, like skin, vulnerable and fugitive. The photograph from the moment it is made is eaten by the very light that gave it birth. By declaring the fact of the surface, the mimetic intention of the photograph is clear, its account of the present manifest in its entropic decline, its illusion bound to the material fact of the phenomenal world. Its image contingent and bearing the responsibility that we share.

The surface is unique and this is so if an image is made again from the negative; it is never the same. The value attached to the reproduction of the photograph marks the modern period's obsession with difference and similarity. The myths of mechanical reproduction offer only further separation from the world, as though there were materials indifferent of time, of the erosion of life. It is the fantasists' symmetrical dream of a life without death and of death without life: The separation of those who dream without waking. Their sciences are order and category and their industry is the serial pattern of production of the chimera progress. As though identicality could survive the innumerable vicissitudes of being. To accept it is to be blind to the evidence that constantly and everywhere confounded the best hope and the worst fear of the age of progress.

Which is not to speak of a vast ferment of difference. In our time the various fetishisms of difference have existed under the guise of liberty. The freedom of our de-

mocracies set against the totalitarian uniformity of the other. It becomes division, its codes rigidly policed to guarantee the right to difference so that societies, once fluent, fragment in demarcation of faction. It is rather to speak of an understanding of the individual, the other and the many: the common space. Although Evans's first work was strongly influenced by European pictures of the 1920s and especially by German photographs, he begins early to make things that are recognizably his own. Mannerisms of framing and cropping become familiar, the depth of field is squeezed and figures take on an emblematic significance. The subjects of which he speaks throughout his life appear for the first time: the 'types,' 'the fellow on the street;' it is the middle America familiar to us from the movies of the time; the world, not as one of the catalogue essays says of Fritz Lang's *M* but of Hollywood Lang, the small man, the man on Main Street. It is so not only in his presence but also in absence, in the buildings, the facades, the interiors and the signs; all speak of a democratic tradition.

This democracy, however flawed it may have appeared to Evans and his contemporaries, was the faith that informed so much of their work. This is something other than the liberal inclination of the photographers of the Farm Security Administration rejected by Evans.

It is rather a sincere faith in the goodness of a communal tradition – the so-called Jeffersonion vision of America and of her peoples. Although today it is a vision rejected, even scorned by many of those who feel themselves outside its reach, who point to the betrayals of the past as proof of its failure, or quote, as proof of its corruption, to those who mouth its verities whilst showing in their actions a cruel disregard for its just, humane and tender aspiration. Nevertheless, to read again the Declaration of Independence is to be moved by the sincerity and the common decency of its authors. It is this sense of decency, modest and tenacious, that illumines American thought even to the present. In their very different times, it is the quality shared by Walker Evans and Dan Graham.

Whatever the vices, private and public, of the founders of the American republic, we should not ignore these matters because they appear tainted by association or have become an overfamiliar litany: the longing they expressed is shared today. Walker Evans may show a people for whom, even in adversity, there appears to be some solace. Whilst Dan Graham, amidst the banal plenty of his time, finds none, his people, lost and confused in the face of the world so seemingly indifferent to them. But however barren the land of America in his pictures, in his gesture there is solidarity and in the space of his park and mall, the places he records and for which he plans, a longing for community, and to European eyes, or maybe I mean only to my eyes, a touchingly naive faith in the generous instinct of his fellows.

But what has this to do with photography? Perhaps nothing. Perhaps everything, if the photograph is to present a field in which we may account and experience a complex and subtle pattern of relations, of which no part is innocent, in which all the actors are vulnerable. In which the material itself is as fugitive as the lives of the makers and through which we may conceive of the world of the other, at once confirm-

ing our singularity and binding us as social beings one to another. The photograph may be a place at once of isolating experience, setting in train memories and allusions known only to ourselves, and, through recognition, through its accounting relation, it may describe the common world in which together we live.

As a young man I opposed, as did others of my generation, what we saw as American hegemony in Europe: political, economic and cultural. My life has been partly shaped by that perception, and I feel a particular poignancy now in speaking about an America of values quite distinct from those I vilified, the relation of the individual and an intense sense of community. I spend time on this because this matter of the community in relation to America has a resonance today when it appears fractured.

If this is not America what else is it? It may as well fragment without that informing dynamic of community that has been the principle of its being. All that would remain would be a land seized from its murdered inhabitants, a land and the various peoples thrown up on its shores, among them the Evanses, the Grahams, the Sekulas and Buchlohs.

Community is the history of America, without it there are the histories of people and place in exile – separated from the imagined past of Asia, Africa or of Europe; and, equally, from their fellows in this new land. It may be that the commonplace of America is in the shared faith of community and aspiration. Perhaps this is why I can speak of American artists where history is so clearly within the expression of community. Perhaps the disillusion of those artists today alienated from that communal America, who express a scuffling rage in their own complicity or ironic indifference or who search for smaller and smaller communities to shelter in, prefigures their ceasing to exist as defined by their place. But I doubt it, in their transgression there is a familiar confirmation, the same romance of teen rebellion: America's heartthrob generation by generation, a fleeting cadence of desire, a torpid thudding of acquiescence. Or maybe not – maybe it is the static, the ethereal noise of tuning across a dial. Dislocation and doubt as the world is turned upside down.

This belonging to a place, the relation to a place and time, now presses upon us in Europe, and not only at the edge but within, in each of our societies, there are the expressions of frustrated longing for identity, for the identity of place and, it may be, of time. We need go no further than a few kilometres from here. Beyond the border, where it has the most direct impact on the lives of people, perhaps of yourselves, certainly people who you will know. A nationalism, once dismissed as a ghost, as something finished, and an aspect of a distant and archaic past. There is a description of our times as being as though a movie were being reeled backwards: the rise again of the Ottoman Empire, the catastrophe of Yugoslavia, the Balkans become once more a land of people dying, of peoples suffering desperate atrocities. But these are no longer stories from far away; they do affect our own lives.

Perhaps I go too far from the evidence of the pictures of Walker Evans and of Dan Graham, and the sensation of the world in which they stand, a risky and uncomfortable place which we too inevitably face. It would be nonsense to claim that this rela-

tion to the phenomenal world, to the world in which we live, has been the dominant practice of art since the Second World War. The conception of representation, of arts acting in the world through an immediate expression of form that might at once stand for and be that world, is broken with the war, lost in the suffering, the myriad indignities, the horrors of that time. It could not resist, and on each side of the Atlantic the death of faith, differently marked, forms a rupture. The accelerated motion of the years between has served only to camouflage the fissured surface of the world until now we see, as though at the edge of darkness, the end of the Enlightment, of belief in our march forward as the past slipped backwards leaving only confirmation of present value and future achievement. The time in which we live is one in which that absolute and complete hold, that certainty of the Enlightenment, can no longer sustain us. There are too often breaks, too many gaps, too many cracks through which we can fall, and if we have no connection with the physical world, with the phenomenal world in which we live; if we have nothing by which we may speak of it, one to another; if there's nothing through which we can create a solidarity of interest; then we are lost.

Talking with Allan Sekula yesterday, he described a curious incident in Poland when he visited for the first time. Amongst a group of passengers getting on to a train he saw the face of his brother. His family had left Central Europe generations before and yet here was the familiar face of a stranger on the train. We walked later to look at the sculptures of John Ahearn, fixed above the street; they are casts made from people in this district. They were not the faces of New York, not the faces he casts from New York, but they were of the faces of Rotterdam.

The face on the train, the face of the brother. A most physical, a most intimate relation to place, the face of your mother, your father, their mother and father, your children. The relation of place and perhaps, but only perhaps, of time. There is a passage in Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* where he describes passing a woman in the street whose face catches his attention for a moment, distracting him; he describes a face of an earlier age saying that it was as though there were a corpse floating down the river, floating from the past. Faces, a manner, being, of a time, not only a place but a time. A time in which we alone stand and, if we apprehend it, in which we may act. Too often nationalism and religion have harnessed the intense longing for identity, a place of belonging for people adrift in the mass and the empire of history.

The past floats to us in the pictures of Walker Evans that we see in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen. In Dan Graham's work shown here at Witte de With, I have the disconcerting sensation of things made in my lifetime, (and this is particulary so of the vitrines upstairs), of what I took to be the present having become one with the past, history, already yellowing, already fading. Evans, asked of his feeling in making a picture, replied that it was not nostalgia, not sentiment, but rather the sense of grasping what you see that is passing out of history. This is the physical world's disappearing, its loss in our unknowing, as though what you or I do not hold onto no longer exists, has not existed and is lost to history. This history is the present but always at

the edge of loss. In the catalogue, Jean-François Chevrier describes it as being at the very border of erasure, an erasure imposed by forgetting and the fatality of the banal, normalized sameness.

It exists, however, this fleeting history, this intractable history, this thing both immensely present, that we embody, and absent – the almost elsewhere of memory and apprehension of loss. This history exists, not only in the immediacy of our experience, but in the genealogy of our having been, in the confluence of the coming before and the coming after. This is the turbulent slow history that we embody and its pulse is never the quickening of commodity and exchange.

The signs that came to obsess Evans towards the end of his life trace two very different conceptions of the vernacular: the billboards and shopfronts blazoned with the slogans of advertising and commerce attest to a culture of exchange, of commodity, a seemingly common language, a vernacular, the apparent of the everyday. But they are rarely new; the novelty of their claim for attention, their appeal, their very reason for being is worn and, frequently, discarded. Dusty, tattered and bedraggled, it is possible to conceive of their common language as being very different from that of their freshly painted ambition. It would be the language of use and of repeated action, a vernacular of rite and habit. For Evans, the corrosion is of time; the fascinations, the enticements and entreaties of the signs become shabby with age carrying with them the air of the having been. It is easy to see how he can speak of catching that which is almost past out of history, the neglected, the ill-used 'having been.' Before they turn to dust, or are torn down to be replaced with fresh novelties, they become so familiar that they disappear, indifference preceding their physical destruction, so normal that they slip into a never having been, these various and ordinary marks of a people and a time. In their passing and our forgetting, whole epochs may be desultorily erased. This is the pathos that attaches to the traces of destruction. Even though Evans sometimes appears to be enticed by the voices of a mythic past, nonetheless there is in his work a sense of the necessity of recording, of recognition, as though if it were lost we would lose a part of the ground on which we stand.

This ground of history is at the border of the erasure which is our unknowing: the body and entropy join in our responsibility one to another in the recognition of one human being by another. This responsibility is a form of community that we express from day to day to our fellows, and it is not something which we give up without resistance. The voices of the past and the present, among them the voices of Walker Evans and of Dan Graham, are part of that speaking if we should recognize them, in them is the principle of resisting those things that throughout time and in all places have threatened us.

Evans spoke of a mystery, of an almost mystical aspect of making pictures, unsuited to the times which he described as being pragmatic, as practical. He spoke of feeling that only he could make this picture at this moment. Maybe it was only esoteric mysticism, but it can be read as an account of the most specific experience and an acknowledgement of responsibility before the world. A time and a place in which

we must act. The nature of that action is not solely to be found in a generalized longing for good will, in behaving decently one to another or in showing proper human respect one for another.

In a text from 1977, reprinted in the catalogue *Walker Evans & Dan Graham*, Benjamin Buchloh, writing on Dan Graham, adds a disarming epilogue concerning use value. Buchloh quotes Marx speaking of a spindle and the nature of its use, the effective value of the object, and goes on to talk of the 'use value' of art that he perceived as disappearing. Another age might have described the operations of society in terms of the body, but the mechanical metaphor allows us to conceive of society stripped of difficult, even intractable, relation. A robotic body without responsibility, it is innocent of entropy and incapable of compassion; it knows only effective value. Caught in the cogs of the machine, the analogy is made with artistic activity; and in a familiar fantasy of progress, Buchloh describes the "further processes of development" in which art is used to "cause dialectics" (dialectics here, seemingly, being synonymous with art's effect in reality). His is the moralists' plea for an improving art amidst the "unresisted and unquestioned production of simple trash."

Yet art may be at once useful and useless – a less unyielding ethics in which recognition and transformation, the specific condition of historical context and the functional potential of historical recognition, may all form a part. It is possible to conceive of an art at once useful and useless, at once effective and utterly indifferent, its value precisely in that which is without use, that is: having an ethical value outside use. It is a conception of the good in selfless relation, of our being subject to entropy and standing in empathetic relation to the other, which together are the poles of a moral universe.

Photography with its impoverished theory, its 'poor history,' its latency a result of so much which might inform it being masked and disallowed in the centuries of the modern world. Separated from its possibility, it became emptied and shrunken. Its value largely as record, as part of the cataloguing and ordering of the world, until now, tainted by association, even its apparent evidential quality is derided. Its claim to truth disavowed. Its documentary form dismissed and increasingly marginal. An insubstantial entertainment.

This is the immanence of photography: that which it may become remains denied and distorted. The scientific world which gave it birth, uncomprehending of its possibility until it became merely a mediocre caricature of the world, ubiquitous and banal. A window with the promise of a spectacular life, the illusions of unwaking sleep, intact, always separated from the world, behind glass, without risk, and without fulfilment. Its truth reproduced over and over as order, but without value. The culture which gave photography birth imprisoned it in a cell, condemned always to look out to the world apart or within to the self-reflexive examination of containment and the separation of self without other, that is: the mirror-world. The democracy of its meaning suborned in the democratic age.

That world is breaking and the glass becomes sand again.

Even as documentary, the photograph may be not a catalogue or even a record, but a place of attention to the world. As all that was marginalized and consigned to the darkness beyond the unacknowledged edge of the world threatens, catastrophically, to flood in. The photograph may no longer say "this has been" but "this is". Its relation – to time and to loss – altered in the fact of the present. Existing between light and dark.

In the photograph we may recognize both reality, the contingent reality of recognition, and the difficulty of reality. In it we may discover the trace of time's effect, of entropy, in mimesis and in its material. Like thought itself we may examine closer yet until it breaks into marks on a surface decaying in light. It exists between, in the spaces between us, and decays as thought decays. The photograph may be both of the body, in the representation of a divided reality that insistently and stubbornly reasserts itself, and the ghostly, the disembodied matter of form as representation; the fragile, slight, vulnerable surface of the paper and our perception of it: the recognition of the world in small points, the marks of the surface. The pressing weight of the world, represented at once as monumental image and as evanescent matter. Engagement with history and the present, memory and sensation, continuity and doubt, the physical world and ephemeral representation: these are the dismembered limbs of a body stillborn.

Between history and the present, between thinking and acting, the artist speaks in a relation of highly mediated form and of phenomenal reality. Acting in a world utterly suffused with a history, denied, yet exorbitant behind the mask of progress. The artist in the present filled with doubt. A present which, if acknowledged, may allow the fractured ghost of culture a synthesis that has not existed since long before the Enlightment. The exiled spirit taken into the body rather than floating ungrounded and divided, the body, no longer marching forward, emptied out, bereft, in a world of certainty.

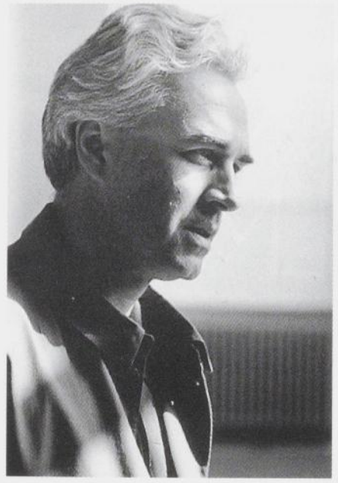
In the crisis of tradition and in the face of evil, I cannot believe that the way to speak is through cruelty, as those artists who seek redemption or exorcise their demons through cruelty and hurt speak. I will stand with healing and not with wounding, with reconciliation and not with transgression. We bear wounds enough for this present, where there is neither the solace nor the absolution of a future without hurt, no consoling end.

In such a place of doubt we must talk. Those who once stood in conflict, who denied each other, excluding their speaking in the name of one art, one practice of making, one correct way of speaking about the world and of relating to the world, must now speak together. I believe that the time and our being here ask of us that we attempt, at least, to find space in which the representation of the world will have a quite different meaning from those of the meretricious. It may simply be recognizing the present and speaking it. We are all of us engaged in this debate; we have no choice. If we deny it, we only imagine that we slip through history; the forces with which we're faced, which

we live amongst, will rule us. We are the creatures then of history rather than being the active embodiment of that history.

Allan Sekula describes photography as this art of details, much derided, which claims to truth and denies truth. From this mess which he would have us clean up, almost from the shards that are left to us, there is an opportunity to remake the world in a way appropriate to our present and not to a sentimental nostalgia for the past.

Representation and mimesis can be seen as the trace of recognition, never outside value, always contingent. We are not innocent and the forms we use are invested with the responsibility that being allows to us, if we cannot accept it everything is loss, and there is finally only despair: we cannot act because we are false; we too carry the inheritance of empire; ours is the history of exploitation and the numberless cruelties visited upon human beings. We each of us bear such marks, these scars, but we live and what matters is how we survive as compassionate beings and how we speak one to another, in pictures or in words, in the shared recognition of our predicament. We bear history and stand one with another.



Craigie Horsfield is an artist working in London. He has shown his work in solo exhibitions at the Cambridge Darkroom (Cambridge, 1988), the Ydessa Hendeles Art Foundation (Toronto, 1990), the I.C.A. (London, 1991), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 1992) and in such group exhibitions as Another Objectivity, *I.C.A. (London et al., 1988),* Photo Kunst, *Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (1989),* De Afstand, *Witte de With (Rotterdam, 1990) and* Lieux Communs, Figures Singulières, *Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1991).*

New Musical Express, Holborn Publishing Group, London, August 22, 1992, front cover

p. 66:
Haim Steinbach, *Untitled, videocase with bucket*, 1992, installation view, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 17 October - 29 November 1992
inset: Haim Steinbach, *Untitled, videocase with bucket*, 1992, (detail) Bas Jan Ader, *I'm too sad to tell you*, 1971

p. 73:
Stephen Prina during his lecture in Witte de With. Behind Prina: W.J.M. Kok, *Maxi-Color (trein)*, 1992 and *Maxi-Color (kerk)*, 1992, exhibition *Voorwerk 3*, 17 October - 29 November 1992

WE REPRESENT OURSELVES TO THE WORLD: INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVITY

Stephen Prina

October 18, 1992

"I have made this letter longer than usual, because I lack the time to make it short."[1]
Blaise Pascal

[*Your Arsenal* by Morrissey is played on a portable tape recorder at the podium while the audience assembles.]

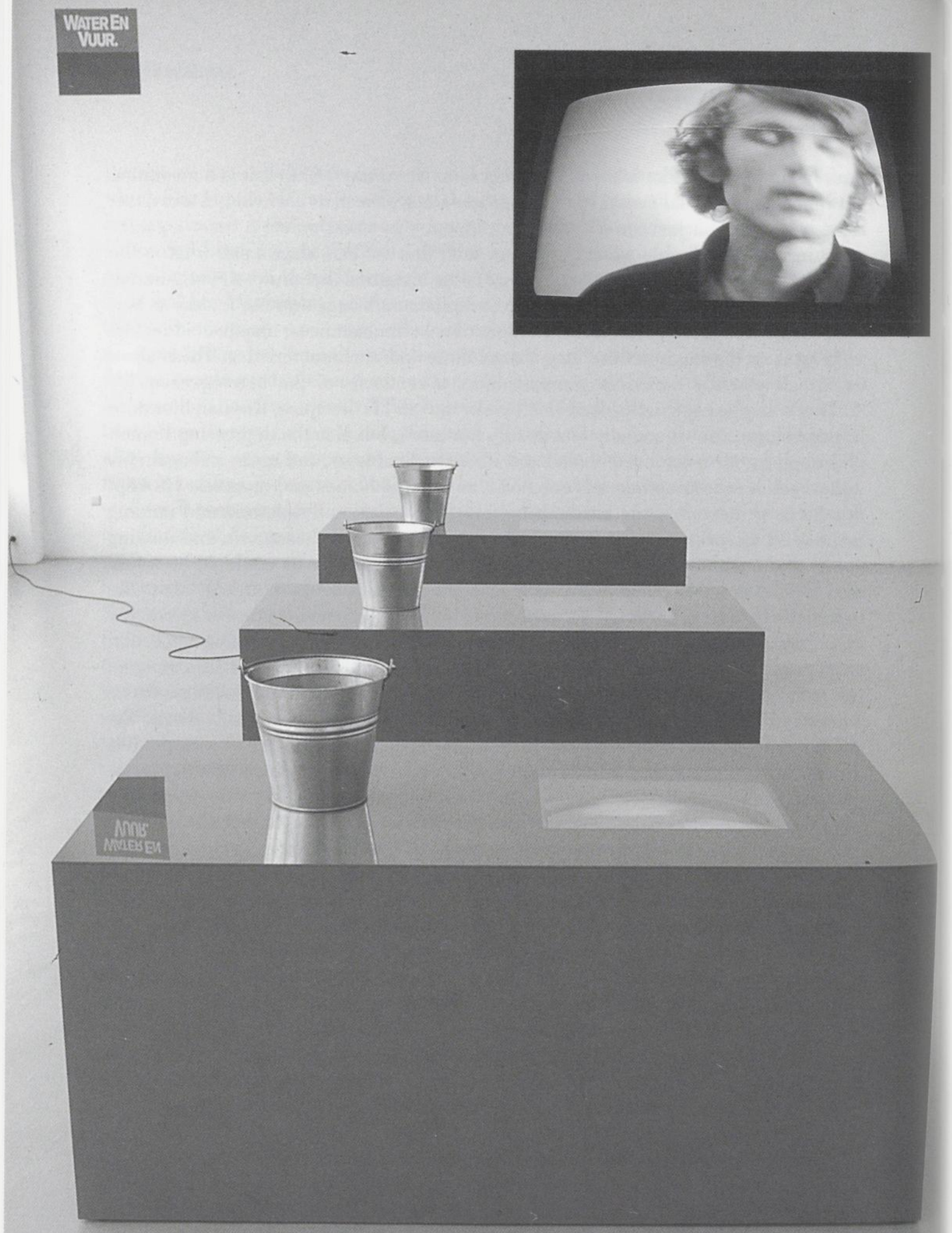
At a public reading at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, held in conjunction with *TV Generations*, a 1986 exhibition, I read a text I had written entitled "The Twenty-Six Inch Experience: Toward a Personal Account of Scale and Other Related Issues," and had published in *TV Guides*,[2] 1985, after which I offered the following postscript: "In the text I have read is a sentence that reads 'The fixed star is riveting, mesmeric.' It contains a typographical error and should read 'The fixed stare is riveting, mesmeric.' ¶Somewhere during the process of publication one of those errors has been produced that does not announce itself as such but rather recedes into and is enveloped by a neutralizing logic. By substituting the word 'star' for 'stare,' or, to be precise, by dropping the 'e' from 'stare,' transforming it into 'star,' a subtle but consequential and fundamental shift has been enacted. A word that retains the reciprocity of the subject/object relation has been surrendered for one that returns the focus to the object of the personality alone. ¶Yet another consequence of this surreptitious edit is that the poetic resonance of linking 'stare' with 'mesmeric' is lost, rewritten out of the text. ¶These details remain important to me. ¶Thank you." Along similar lines, the title of this lecture, when published, was listed as "We Represent Ourselves to the World: Institutional Narrative." Due in large part to "The way we make art today," to borrow a phrase from John Baldessari, when I telephoned the title "We Represent Ourselves to the World: Institutional Narrativity" in to Witte de With, 'narrativity' was transcribed as 'narrative.' And so, a state, condition or quality of being was replaced by an object. I cite this transformation not as an indictment but as an example of a productive interface between a cultural institution and one of its subjects. It could be argued that this is precisely what the cultural institution performs: acts that transform a state, condition or quality of being into an object, from active to passive state; a meaning elusive in life is accomplished in death. I would prefer, however, to cite this transformational instance as an example of an institution exerting its produc-

tive capabilities, demonstrating its will to narrate. The invitation to deliver a lecture at Witte de With issued from a discussion I had with Chris Dercon concerning the programming and policy decisions he faced after having developed a two-year program here and having accepted the invitation to remain on staff beyond his initial two-year commitment. What to do? How to continue? What has been left to be done? To accept this invitation is to allow myself to be subjected, i.e. rendered a subject, in the ongoing narrative production of this agency. Much territory has been covered since Raymond Bellour theorized the preoccupation of film with exhibition space in the first lecture of this series. A litany of proper names ensues: Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Jean-François Chevrier, Francesco Pellizzi, Jeff Wall, a repeat appearance by Raymond Bellour, Marianne Brouwer, Ludger Gerdes, Remo Guidieri, Kasper König, Alexandre Melo, John Miller, Bart Verschaffel, Rodrigo Naves, Sônia Salzstein-Goldberg, Catherine David, Guy Brett, Walter Nikkels, Craigie Horsfield, all past lecturers and/or panel participants, Stephen Prina, not in the present, an impossible space, but in the process of moving from a potential future to an expended past, and, plotting into the future, Ludger Gerdes, Jeff Wall, Jean-François Chevrier, three instances of returning participation, as well as Martin Kreyssig, thus constituting an international, intellectual pater/materfamilias. This internationalism is shot through with a decidedly positivist universalism, one founded on the English language, for when critical discourse occurs at Witte de With, it is most assured to happen under this enveloping language, at least as far as the two published volumes of lectures would lead one to believe.[3] How does this decision encourage us, its willing subjects, to think the world? (Under the rubric "new world order," perhaps?) I offer this insight more as an observation than a condemnation, and by which I may express a reservation by way of a qualification. I come here today not to "deconstruct" the program of Witte de With; if that were the case, my competence should be questioned. My aim is at a wider apprehension of a systematic, and, for example, I am always suspicious of the official invitation to "please, be our guest to come and deconstruct our gallery/museum." I should like to think that my approach is of a different order of experience, as well, in that what is at stake here is not so much what I think of this cultural institution, but what this cultural institution thinks of me, or, slouching toward precision, thinks in me, demands of me, anticipates and provides for me. But I've already slipped an unexamined assumption through under the veil of nature, so to speak. When I ask, "How does this decision encourage us, its willing subjects, to think the world?" who is "us"? May I presume this solidarity? The title of this lecture is meant to provoke inquiry concerning this collapse. In "We Represent Ourselves to the World," who is "we" and "ourselves" and who is "the world?" Are the distinctions drawn resolute or is there a reciprocity of effect, what amounts to a systematic necessity? Who is the audience for Witte de With? Is it singular or plural? For instance, you come together today to constitute the lecture series audience, the one to which Chris Dercon makes a poetic appeal, ironically enough, given the subject matter of the exhibition upstairs,[4] with the following passage from the introduc-

tion in *The Lectures - 1990*: "Witte de With is like a shore that the waves of the sea of art lap against, and on that shore stimulating events take place, not only exhibitions, but also readings and debates." Without question, there is an overlap between the audience for exhibitions and the audience for lectures; it would be difficult for the lecture audience to avoid the exhibitions altogether, given that the one is physically inscribed within the other. What is the motor for differentiation in this political dynamic of inclusion/exclusion? Am I a certified, if unlikely, member of the Witte de With audience? I have seen a disproportionately large number of the exhibitions here, while, in Los Angeles, there are cultural institutions I have not visited, let alone followed. Although I have not collected the necessary demographic research to reach definitive conclusions – I am not a sociologist – I could say that the fact we are gathered here together is not fortuitous. I offer the following passage by Edward Said: "At a recent MLA [Modern Language Association] convention, I stopped by the exhibit of a major university press and remarked to the amiable sales representative on duty that there seemed to be no limit to the number of highly specialized books of advanced literary criticism his press put out. 'Who reads these books?' I asked, implying of course that however brilliant and important most of them were they were difficult to read and therefore could not have a wide audience – or at least an audience wide enough to justify regular publication during a time of economic crisis. The answer I received made sense, assuming I was told the truth. People who write specialized, advanced (i.e., New New) criticism faithfully read each other's books. Thus each such book could be assured of, but wasn't necessarily always getting, sales of around three thousand copies, 'all things being equal.' The last qualification struck me as ambiguous at best, but it needn't detain us here. The point was that a nice little audience had been built and could be routinely mined by this press; certainly, on a much larger scale, publishers of cookbooks and exercise manuals apply a related principle as they churn out what may seem like a very long series of unnecessary books, even if an expanding crowd of avid food and exercise aficionados is not quite the same thing as a steadily attentive and earnest crowd of three thousand critics reading each other."[5] Drawing on two more "exhibits" from the dossier: "John. The idea of him arouses in me a range of emotions, a mountain range of feelings, of highs and lows, a violent, lusty landscape, which can be quite uncontrollable. The one thing one cannot control is lust. But it is what we most often control, or are controlling most of the time, or are most controlled by. I don't want to think of him, he is not on the map right now. He is not on my course, and I have not plotted him there. Isn't it odd, the two significant meanings of plot – one having to do with a conspiracy, the other with a story. Perhaps all stories are conspiracies. But there, my paranoia is showing. I am happy to be alone."[6] And, "Gozzi maintained that there can be but thirty-six tragic situations. Schiller took great pains to find more, but he was unable to find even so many as Gozzi." – Goethe... ¶Now, to this declared fact that there are no more than thirty-six dramatic[7] situations, is attached a singular corollary, the discovery that there are in life but thirty-six emotions. A maximum of thirty-six emotions – and

therein we have all the savor of existence; there we have the unceasing ebb and flow which fills human history like tides of the sea; which is, indeed, the very substance of history, since it is the substance of humanity itself, in the shades of African forests as Unter den Linden or beneath the electric lights of the Boulevards; as it was in the ages of man's hand-to-hand struggle with the wild beasts of wood and mountain, and as it will be, indubitably, in the most infinitely distant future, since it is with these thirty-six emotions – no more – that we color, nay, we comprehend, cosmic mechanism, and since it is from them that our theogonies and our metaphysics are, and ever will be, constructed; all our dear and fanciful 'beyonds'; – thirty-six situations, thirty-six emotions, and no more... ¶Two hundred of the examples cited have been taken from other literary genres akin to the dramatic: romance, epic, history – and from reality. For this investigation can and should be pursued in human nature, by which I mean in politics, in courts of justice, in daily life. Amid these explorations the present study will soon seem but an introduction to a marvelous, an inexhaustible stream, – the Stream of Existence, where meet momentarily, in their primordial unity, history, mystic poetry, moralist (and amoralist) writings, humor, psychology, law, epic, romance, fable, myth, proverb and prophecy."[8] A crucial term has been left behind. When breaking down "We Represent Ourselves to the World," the operative word – represent – remains, retaining all the connotations of a perpetual motion machine in that it pre-exists you, is concomitant with your actions, and it will continue long after your actions are of consequence. Since I consider all cultural work to be, whether consciously or not, work on and of representation, a reflection on the mechanism is necessary. "...Time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence."[9] It becomes insufficient to speak of representation, mimesis, as if analyzing a disembodied, autonomous specimen, exclusive of contingencies. This is not to denigrate the relative autonomy of the act of representation – systemic autonomy is not a product of modernism I wish to jettison – but rather to negotiate through and across these contingencies. The process of negotiation, of mediation, is pivotal, for it is through this process that the organization of discrete acts of representation is witnessed. It is the will to narrate, using processes of emplotment, that enact this organization. Narrativization has been described as being"... the organization of signifiers so as to display transformations whereby subjects, actions, and sanctions install modalities of 'history' in the form of a story. The term refers to the ways in which that which cannot be directly stated – an axiological projection, for example – is nevertheless manifested as a narrative answer. Includes the effects of the reader's pragmatic response, which is to not engage in the act of semantic contention against the narrated. The reduction of meanings to stories."[10] The will to narrate has three features: 1) transform the chronicle of events into a historical narrative, 2) achieve self-determination and self-definition through the act of narration, 3) locate and describe, narrate into existence, an audience as narrative receiver, and, by extension, give form to a conception of the world. Plot, or, more comprehensively, emplotment, is the operative agent. Again, "Plot is mediating in at least three ways. ¶First, it is a mediation between the individual events or incidents and a story taken as a whole....A story, too, must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organize them into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the 'thought' of this story. In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession. ¶Furthermore, emplotment brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results ....¶Plot is mediating in a third way, that of its temporal characteristics. These allow us to call plot, by means of generalization, a synthesis of the heterogeneous."[11]

"...That's why he especially loved Dostoevsky and all his disciples, Russian literature in general, because it actually is a deadly literature, but also the depressing French philosophers. He most loved to read and study medical texts, and again and again his walks took him to hospitals and sanatoria, to nursing homes and morgues. He kept this habit to the very end. Although he feared hospitals and sanatoria and nursing homes and morgues, he always went into these hospitals and sanatoria and nursing homes and morgues. And if he didn't go to a hospital because he couldn't, he would read articles or books about sick people and diseases, and books or articles about the terminally ill if he didn't have the opportunity to go to a sanatorium for the terminally ill, or read articles and books about old people if he couldn't visit a nursing home, and articles and books about the dead if he hadn't had the opportunity to visit a morgue. Naturally we want to have a practical relationship with the things that fascinate us, he once said, that is above all a relationship with the sick and the terminally ill and the old and the dead, because a theoretical relationship isn't enough, but for long periods we depend on a theoretical relationship, just as we often depend on a theoretical relationship as far as music is concerned, so Wertheimer, I thought. He was fascinated with people in their unhappiness, not with people themselves but with their unhappiness, and he found it wherever there were people, I thought, he was addicted to people because he was addicted to unhappiness. Man is unhappiness, he said over and over, I thought, only an idiot would claim otherwise. To be born is to be unhappy, he said, and as long as we live we reproduce this unhappiness, only death puts an end to it. That doesn't mean that we are only unhappy, our unhappiness is the precondition for the fact that we can also be happy, only through the detour of unhappiness can we be happy, he said, I thought. My parents have never shown me anything but unhappiness, he said, that's the truth, I thought, and yet they were always happy, so he couldn't say that his parents had been unhappy people, just as he couldn't say they'd been happy, just as he couldn't say of himself he'd been a happy person or an unhappy one, because all people are simultaneously unhappy and happy, and sometimes unhappiness is greater in them than happiness and vice versa. But the fact remains that people are more unhappy than happy, he said, I thought. He was an *aphorism writer*, there are countless aphorisms of his, I thought, one can assume he destroyed them, *I write aphorisms*, he said over and over, I thought, that is a minor art of the intellectual asthma from which certain people, above all in France, have lived



and still live, so-called half philosophers for nurses' night tables, I could also say calendar philosophers for everybody and anybody, whose sayings eventually find their way onto the walls of every dentist's waiting room; the so-called depressing ones are, like the so-called cheerful ones, equally disgusting. But I haven't been able to get rid of my habit of writing aphorisms, in the end I'm afraid I will have written millions of them, he said, I thought, and I'd be well advised to start destroying them since I don't plan to have the walls of every dentist's office and church papered with them one day, as they are now with Goethe, Lichtenberg and comrades, he said, I thought. Since I wasn't born to be a philosopher I turned myself into an aphorist, not entirely unconsciously I must say, turned myself into one of those disgusting tagalongs of philosophy who exist by the thousands, he said, I thought. To produce a huge effect with tiny ideas and deceive mankind, he said, I thought. In reality I'm nothing other than one of those aphorizing public menaces who, in their boundless unscrupulousness and impudence, tag along behind philosophers like horseflies behind a horse, he said, I thought. If we stop drinking we die of thirst, if we stop eating we starve to death, he said, such pearls of wisdom are what all these aphorisms amount to in the end, that is unless they're by Novalis, but even Novalis talked a lot of nonsense, so Wertheimer, I thought. In the desert we thirst for water, that's about what Pascal's maxim says, he said, I thought. If we look at things squarely the only thing left from the greatest philosophical enterprises is a pitiful aphoristic aftertaste, he said, no matter what the philosophy, no matter what the philosopher, everything falls to bits when we set to work with all our faculties and that means with all our mental instruments, he said, I thought. All this time I've been talking about the human sciences and don't even know what these human sciences are, don't have the slightest clue, he said, I thought, been talking about philosophy and don't have a clue about philosophy, been talking about existence and don't have a clue about it, he said. Our starting point is always that we don't know anything about anything and don't even have a clue about it, he said, I thought. Immediately after setting to work on something we choke on the huge amount of information that's available in all fields, that's the truth, he said, I thought. And although we know that, we continue to set to work on our so-called human-science problems, to attempt the impossible: *to create a human-science product, a product of the intellect. That's madness!* he said, I thought. Fundamentally we are capable of everything, equally fundamentally we fail at everything, he said, I thought. Our great philosophers, our greatest poets, shrivel down to a single successful sentence, he said, I thought, that's the truth, often we remember only a so-called philosophical hue, he said, I thought. We study a monumental work, for example Kant's work, and in time it shrivels down to Kant's little East Prussian head and to a thoroughly amorphous world of night and fog, which winds up in the same state of helplessness as all the others, he said, I thought. He wanted it to be a monumental world and only a single ridiculous detail is left, he said, I thought, that's how it always is. In the end the so-called great minds wind up in a state where we can only feel pity for their ridiculousness, their pitifulness. Even Shakespeare shrivels down to something

ridiculous for us in a clearheaded moment, he said, I thought. For a long time now the gods appear to us only in the heads on our beer steins, he said, I thought. Only a stupid person is amazed, he said, I thought. The so-called intellectual consumes himself in what he considers pathbreaking work and in the end has only succeeded in making himself ridiculous, whether he's called Schopenhauer or Nietzsche, it doesn't matter, even if he was Kleist or Voltaire we still see a pitiful being who has misused his head and finally driven himself into nonsense. Who's been rolled over and passed over by history. We've locked up the great thinkers in our bookcases, from which they keep staring at us, sentenced to eternal ridicule, he said, I thought. Day and night I hear the chatter of the great thinkers we've locked up in our bookcases, these ridiculous intellectual giants as shrunken heads behind glass, he said, I thought. All these people have sinned against nature, he said, they've committed first-degree murders *of the intellect*, that's why they've been punished and stuck in our bookcases for eternity. For they're choking to death in our bookcases, that's the truth. Our libraries are so to speak prisons where we've locked up our intellectual giants, naturally Kant has been put in solitary confinement, like Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, like Pascal, like Voltaire, like Montaigne, all the real giants have been put in solitary confinement, all the others in mass confinement, but everyone for ever and ever, my friend, for all time and unto eternity, that's the truth. And should one of these first-degree criminals of the intellect attempt to flee, break loose, he is immediately ridiculed and finished off, so to speak, that's the truth. Mankind knows how to protect itself against all these so-called intellectual giants, he said, I thought. The mind, wherever it makes its claims felt, is finished off and locked up and of course immediately branded as mindless, he said, I thought while looking up at the restaurant ceiling. But everything we say is nonsense, he said, I thought, no matter what we say it is nonsense and our entire life is a single piece of nonsense. I understood that early on, I'd barely started to think for myself and I already understood that, we speak only nonsense, everything we say is nonsense, but everything that is said to us is also nonsense, like everything that is said at all, in this world only nonsense has been said until now and, he said, only nonsense has actually and naturally been written, the writings we possess are only nonsense because they can only be nonsense, as history proves, he said, I thought. In the end *I fled into the notion of the aphorist*, he said, and when asked my profession I actually once responded, so Wertheimer said, that I was an *aphorist*. But people didn't understand what I meant, as usual, when I say something they don't understand it, for what I say doesn't mean that I said what I said, he said, I thought. I say something, he said, I thought, and I'm saying something completely different, thus I've spent my entire life in misunderstandings, in nothing but misunderstandings, he said, I thought. We are, to put it precisely, born into misunderstanding and never escape this condition of misunderstanding as long as we live, we can squirm and twist as much as we like, it doesn't help. But everyone can see this, he said, I thought, for everyone says something repeatedly and is misunderstood, this is the only point where everybody understands everybody else, he said, I thought. One misunderstanding casts us

into the world of misunderstanding, which we must put up with as a world composed solely of misunderstandings and which we depart from with a single great misunderstanding, for death is the greatest misunderstanding of all, so Wertheimer, I thought. Wertheimer's parents were small people, Wertheimer himself was bigger than his parents, I thougt...."[12] I have cited this lengthy excerpt for two purposes. First, to demonstrate a circulatory transaction. From my vantage point of receiver and actant, a Viennese-inflected German text is imported to the USA, it is translated into English and published, it is apprehended by me, commandeered into the service of illustration, exported and re-presented through an act of displacement – Vienna to Rotterdam via Los Angeles – to realize an imperfect cycle. Second, to demonstrate the unassailable effect that a method of address, its narrativity, has upon the material it forms. This may be read as resistance to the conquest of content over form that is dominant at all levels of cultural life, if current modes of reception are used as a calibration. Immediately before or, as an act of reframing, as a preface to this lecture, I played a portion of Morrissey's latest CD, *Your Arsenal*. I do not deny the entertainment factor of this episode, but it is also an item culled from my dossier of exhibits. As a reflection on interpretive skills I offer two readings: "Which brings us bang up to date. Morrissey's currently decided to elucidate for those who missed the point in the past, flirtatiously of course... The third solo LP, *Your Arsenal*, sports not one but two nationalistically pointed songs. ¶'We'll Let You Know' is ostensibly a love song to football hooligans, casting them as 'the last truly British people you'll ever know,' which wouldn't be that irritating if you didn't realise that a significant percentage of them are also NF or BNP affiliated. ¶But the crowning glory is 'The National Front disco' whose title bothered me personally for weeks before I heard it. It's a sad tale of a bootboy who's lost his friends and whose mother has given up on him because he's gone to the National Front disco (he's joined the NF?). Still, the last three lines have an ominous ring to them: 'You want the day/To come sooner/When you've settled a score' (by 'day,' he possibly means that one when England will be for the English again)."[13] And, "*Your Arsenal* revolves around paradoxes – pop being used as a political tool and emotional escape, people finding a good time in repugnant company – and these paradoxes are acutely examined in 'The National Front disco.' Following the Wildean dictum that 'the only real vice is shallowness,' Morrissey risks the anger of people who want to pretend that the kids are always alright or that fascism has no attraction. But 'disco' is a tribute to the out-of-step, the insular, the misunderstood more than a paean to right-wing ideology. Describing the blind, naive enthusiasm of a lost-cause kid whose social activities freak out his family and friends, Morrissey utters NF slogans and parental exasperation in devious counterpoint. He juggles different moral views with extraordinary complexity. The vocals swoon while the band goes anthemic. It's a remarkable combination of push-pull emotions. By now, the National Front's time has passed and it may be looked upon as a lunatic political phase – sort of like adolescence. As usual, Morrissey prolongs the intensity of such brief passion. He turns the titlephrase into a melismatic reverie even more compelling than the thrashing

guitars he sings over. 'Where is my boy? Oh, I've lost my boy. He's going to the National aaahhh hh!' ¶The song works, despite your handiest objections, because that 'aaahhhh haa' is so disarmingly sexual; it's the sound of the singer finding his elusive obsession in a troubling, dumb place. The chorus parrots racist politics in a way that's less clear-cut, less satisfying, than such British pop landmarks as the Specials' *Racist Friend* and the Housemartins' *Johannesburg*, but Morrissey's deliberately wack exaltation of an abhorrent ideology breaks through to a complex, disturbing truth about how pop fans cut their consciences to fit the rock and roll fashion. You can hear the drama of one lover submitting to another's ego when Morrissey murmurs the NF party line 'England for the English.' This needs to be listened to carefully, ironically (although it can also be heard as painfully oblivious to the NF's bigotry). To hear it plain is to fall for the same propagandistic trap that clamped down on Britain's skinheads and left them paralyzed, Thatchered."[14] These diacritically opposed readings are not included to reinforce the crypto-fascist tendency disguised as liberal democracy that proclaims "everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion," but to establish a critical field across which the aforementioned conquest of content over form is being staged, which, in turn, leads to a difficult discussion. Two abused terms are indispensable to this discussion. Running the risk of overdetermination by their very utterance, they are "politically correct" and "multicultural." To use these terms unreflectively or transparently, in a word uncritically, would be in itself problematic since they have been employed often by opposing factions to contrary aims. With "politically correct" and, by implication, "politically incorrect," what is at stake is propriety and the proprietary; proper, acceptable, conventional or mandated behavior on one hand, territorial ownership on the other. With Morrissey, for instance, Dele Fadele, of *The New Musical Express*, repudiates the use of improper, taboo subject matter: The National Front. No conceivable treatment could recuperate this topic as the stuff of critical debate. The rejection is expeditious. The realm of the critical, I infer, is the property of and is controlled by others, with its assortment of sanctioned topics, methods and approaches. As for the multicultural, it is important to differentiate theory from practice, conception from reception, at least as is possible on the formal plane of analysis. The recognition of diverse forms of cultural work is important, as is the recognition of gender and class as intrinsic to any cultural/aesthetic assessment. When cultural specificity is maintained through the essays of individual cultural producers into arenas of presentation and/or exhibition, a heterogeneous field emerges that demands that narratives be written that can accommodate a proliferation of difference. Unfortunately, all too often the way in which the "multicultural" is made manifest, giving credibility to the use of "multicultura*lism*," a term I have attempted, until now, to avoid, is through its institutionalization. Mandates that regulate the make-up of Boards of Trustees, exhibition and educational programming, etc. often lead to and encourage, ironically enough, homogeneity and neutralization: consensous culture. Is the only recourse to aspire to the conditions of mass media? The xenophobic drive that makes certain issues or subjects, the issues and subjects, or

the celebration of one disenfranchised group to the vilification of another gives pause for reconsideration. Perhaps this zealous fixation on the center and all things positioned centrally needs to be re-examined, turned inside out. "I have so far been explaining our symposium in terms of what had better be called a masculist centralism. By pointing attention to a feminist marginality, I have been attempting, not to win the center for ourselves, but to point at the irreducibility of the margin in all explanations. That would be not merely reverse but displace the distinction between margin and center. But in effect such pure innocence (pushing all guilt to the margins) is not possible, and, paradoxically, would put the very law of displacement and the irreducibility of the margin into question. The only way I can hope to suggest how the center itself is marginal is by not remaining outside in the margin and pointing my accusing finger at the center. I might do it rather by implicating myself in that center and sensing what politics make it marginal. Since one's vote is at the limit for oneself, the deconstructivist can use herself (assuming one is at one's own disposal) as a shuttle between the center (inside) and the margin (outside) and thus narrate a displacement."[15] In an essay written in 1970, Daniel Buren also narrates a displacement. When he equates Duchamp's urinal with Cézanne's apples, he articulates the similarity of the two projects. "The 'apple' is received inside the canvas, the 'urinal' inside the museum."[16] By so doing, the argument leads him to invert the paradigm of the ready-made. The museum is no longer the given, neutral device that bestows value, in positivist efficiency, on all within its walls. The point of view shifts from focussing on a central object, the urinal for example, to assuming a central position that readjusts the focus on the seemingly negligible frame of the museum. A force has been redirected, a trajectory is initiated, a displacement narrated. "The *avant-garde* don't think of changing the apparatus, because they fancy that they have at their disposal an apparatus which will serve up whatever they freely invent, transforming itself spontaneously to match their ideas. But they are not in fact free inventors; the apparatus goes on fulfilling its function with or without them; the theatres play every night; the papers come out so many times a day; and they absorb what they need; and all they need is a given amount of stuff."[17] [18] "...By emptying the concept of institution of one of its primordial components (that of instituting, in the sense of founding, creating, breaking with an old order and creating a new one), sociology has finally come to identify the institution with the status quo."[19] So, if we align ourselves with the Brechtian model, where does that leave us? Change the apparatus. But what constitutes change? Where and by what means? Does the work of Buren qualify? Is acting on the apparatus, considering the material of the institution, the frame, a "given amount of stuff," necessary and sufficient? One could state without risk of rebuke that work done on the institution forms a genre. Is there room for maintaining differences within the genre? In the exhibition *A Museum Looks at Itself; Mapping Past and Present at the Parrish Art Museum, 1897-1992*, staged this summer in Southampton, Long Island, New York, curator Donna De Salvo produced an archeological dig of sorts, unearthing remnants of museological practice, tracing its geneology, collecting his-

tory, exhibition technique, shifts in statements of purpose, etc. A certain degree of irony obtained in that, not so long ago, these enterprises of decoding were the province of artists, for example, Broodthaers, Kosuth, et al.; now the museum produces its own demystification. This absorption is inevitable and could have been predicted. No need to be sorry. But, what myths are perpetuated by the legacy of working in a site-specific manner? If it is relied upon to produce the appropriate result, what happens to the innappropiate axis of the matrix? Does this paradigm rely on a naturalism of the site, a version of a comforting realism? And how is a space for the spectator narrated into this scheme? What type of spectator is it? Art & Language responds, "Do we have to choose: on the one hand the voice of the assumed consensus of adequately sensitive, adequately informed, spectators; on the other the seductive rhetoric of those enchanted with the idea of the avant-garde – and of themselves as its propitious audience? What of paintings which presuppose a marginalized spectator, a disenchanted spectator, a paranoid spectator? Where and how are they to hang, and through what forms of activity is their meaning to be recovered? In what world which is possibly a world of art is the marginalized, disenchanted and paranoid spectator allowed to be *both* competent *and* representative?"[20] I would propose the paradigm of the system specific, a way of working that analyzes and employs the procedural structures that inhabit a site, with the full recognition that these structures can be displaced, aligned with other discourses and practices, be wrested from their context so their full potential may be explored, or not. In whose interest is it to protect context, as though it were a sovereign state? Perhaps it is time to reinstate "instituting" back into "institution." To return to the source, at least in part, Chris Dercon and Stefaan Decostere have stated in an introduction to a project entitled *The New Museum*, "moreover it is programming in itself which is more and more on display, taking over the primary role once reserved for the works of art."[21] Yes, and then some.

[1] *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, second edition, Oxford University Press, Amen House, London, 1955, p.374.
[2] Barbara Kruger, ed., *TV Guides, A collection of thoughts about television*, The Kuklapolitan Press, New York, 1985, p.26.
[3] *Witte de With - The Lectures 1990*, Rotterdam, 1991 and *Witte de With - The Lectures 1991*, Rotterdam, 1992.
[4] *'no rocks allowed.'*, Haim Steinbach, guest curator, Witte de With, October 17 - November 29, 1992.
[5] Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," 1982, published in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster, Bay Press, Seattle, 1983, pp.137-138.
[6] Lynne Tillman, *Cast in Doubt*, Poseidon Press (Simon & Schuster Inc.), New York, 1992, pp.180-181.
[7] I have replaced the word 'tragic,' used in quotation, with 'dramatic.' Those familiar with Goethe know that for him – one of the 'classic' Germans – the two terms were synonymous in the passage.
[8] Georges Polti, *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, trans. Lucille Ray, The Writer, Inc., Boston, 1977, title page, pp.9 and 11.
[9] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, The University of Chicago Press, 1984, p.52.
[10] Sande Cohen, *Historical Culture: On the Recoding of an Academic Discipline*, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986, p.330.

[11] Paul Ricouer, ibid., pp.65-66.
[12] Thomas Bernhard, *The Loser*, trans. Jack Dawson, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1991, pp.62-69. Originally published in German as *Der Untergeher* by Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1983.
[13] Dele Fadele, "Caucasian Rut," *New Musical Express*, London, August 22, 1992, p.13.
[14] Armond White, "Anglocentric," *The Village Voice*, New York, p.70.
[15] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds*, Methuen, New York, 1987, p.107.
[16] Daniel Buren, "Standpoints," *Five Texts*, The John Weber Gallery, New York, The Jack Wendler Gallery, London, 1973, p.37.
[17] "The intellectuals, however, are completely dependent on the apparatus, both socially and economically; it is the only channel for the realization of their work. The output of writers, composers and critics comes more and more to resemble raw material. The finished article is produced by apparatus."
[18] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans., Stephen Willet, Eyre and Methuen, London, 1964.
[19] René Lourau, *L'Analyse institutionelle*, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1970, p.137, cited in Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p.xv.
[20] Charles Harrison (Art & Language), "Thoughts in the black museum," in *L'exposition imaginaire: The art of exhibiting in the eighties/De kunst van het tentoonstellen in de jaren tachtig*, eds. Evelyn Beer and Riet de Leeuw, trans. G. Bennington... et.al., 's-Gravenhage: SDU Uitgeverij; Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, 1989, p.82.
[21] Dirk van Weelden, "The New Museum," in *L'Exposition imaginaire: The art of exhibiting in the eighties/De kunst van het tentoonstellen in de jaren tachtig*, eds. Evelyn Beer and Riet de Leeuw, trans. G. Bennington... et.al., 's-Gravenhage: SDU Uitgeverij; Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, 1989, p.226.

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Film stills from Martin Kreyssig's unfinished film *Square Dance - The human figure in recent sculpture.*

from chapter 1 'Neighbourhood'
John Ahearn
Veronica and Her Mother, 1988

Rigoberto Torres
Shorty Working in the C & R Statuary Corporation, 1985

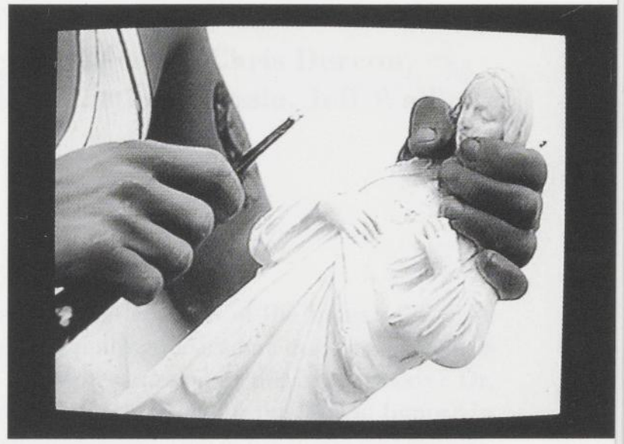
from chapter 2 'Figure/Model'
Thomas Schütte
Alain Colas, 1989

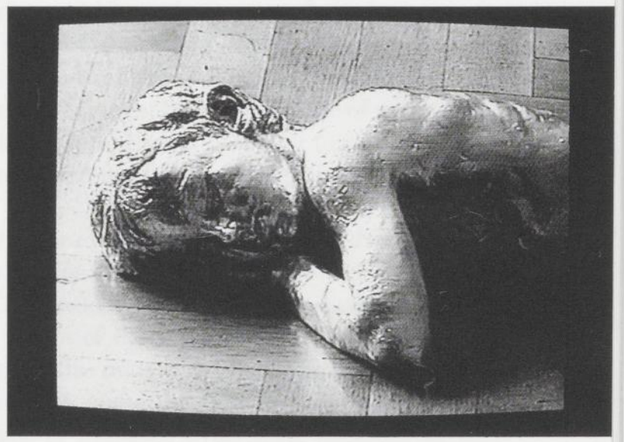
from chapter 3 'Configuration in Space'
Pia Stadtbäumer
Ohne Titel, 1992

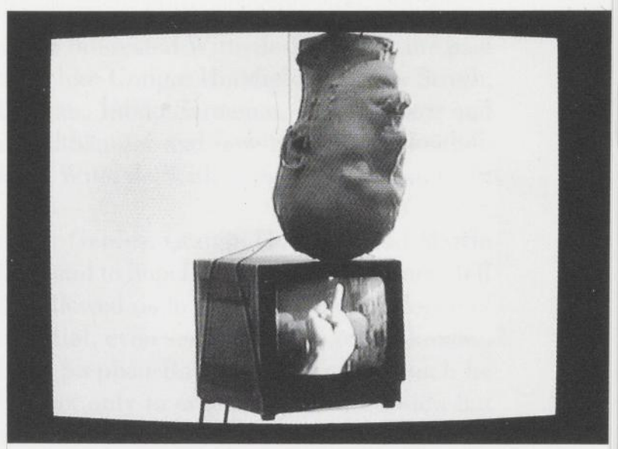
from chapter 4 'Friends'
Stephan Balkenhol
Grosses Paar, 1988

from chapter 5 'The Ethical Space'
Bruce Nauman
Perfect Balance, 1989

p.81:
Ken Lum, *Untitled (Ed)*, 1984
Plexiglass and photograph
Witte de With, Rotterdam, 8 December 1990 - 20 January 1991







THE BODY IS THE PRESENT

Stephan Balkenhol, Jean-François Chevrier, Chris Dercon, Craigie Horsfield, Ludger Gerdes, Martin Kreyssig, Jeff Wall

December 13, 1992

– Chris Dercon: Today's discussion is about the depiction of the human figure in contemporary art, and I would like to begin by putting forth some questions. What is the so-called interest of artists today in the representation of the human body? Or, should we ask what is the so-called interest of artists today for the human figure? In other words, is there a difference between the representation of the figure and the representation of the body? Is such an interest viable and necessary? And what is it based on? To quote a recent article by Vincent Labaume in the French art magazine *art press*, "Are there periods in time without bodies? And, in particular, are there periods of art without bodies?" And Labaume continues, "Instead maybe of revamping the debate around the resurgence of the body, would it not be better to underline the remarkable permanent questioning of it and the remarkable permanence of that question?"

I would like to add that if such an interest or even the permanence of this question is expressed by artists today in various media and in various ways, in which one should or could we be most interested? Or should we speak about something else all together? Instead of speaking about the image of the body or the figure, should we speak rather about the body or the figure of the image? Indeed, should we instead speak about the status of the image today? To quote the late French cinema critic Serge Daney: "Nothing happens anymore to humans; everything happens to the image."

These are some of the questions which have interested Witte de With over the past two years when it showed the work of artists like Craigie Horsfield, Thomas Struth, Ken Lum, Maria-Anna Dewes, Brandt Junceau, Julião Sarmento, John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres, Philip Akkerman, Pia Stadtbäumer and now Stephan Balkenhol. Given the titles of several recent exhibitions, Witte de With is probably not alone in addressing these questions.

We invited Jean-François Chevrier, Ludger Gerdes, Craigie Horsfield and Martin Kreyssig to answer these and other questions and to hopefully provoke new ones. Jeff Wall, who unfortunately could not be here, allowed us to reprint in the catalogue of the exhibition of Stephan Balkenhol an essential, even seminal, essay on Balkenhol. The text of Wall, "An outline of a context for Stephan Balkenhol's Work," which he conceived in 1988, inspired Witte de With not only to organize this discussion but also to show some of the artists we show. I would therefore like to initiate today's dis-

cussion by briefly quoting Jeff Wall:

> It seems as if Stephan Balkenhol's sculpture has developed in a process of reaction against the orthodoxies of radical modernist plastic art. The double triumph of the aesthetic of the utterly fragmented form and its obverse, the militantly unified structure, a triumph which characterizes the art of the past twenty years, creates today the situation in which a sculptor might turn toward that problematic object which is always both unified and fragmented: the human body. In the work of Beuys above all, or of Kounellis, of Anselmo, indeed of arte povera in general, the regime of the fragmentary has been fully legitimated. This fragment, be it a shard of plaster cast, a bit of sausage, or a bundle of twigs, exists as a meaningful symbol only in a context of historical and social reflection on the fate of art and its pretensions. The history of the catastrophes of our epoch, that history which arte povera recognized as having invalidated modern culture's earlier claims to universal truth, gave to its startling assemblages of objects the sense of power which comes from an act of scrupulous renunciation. This renunciation – of claims to any overarching authority in culture – was the prelude to a new experimentalism which excited the art of the 1960s and 1970s, and created the perspective of a new plastic language, open, tentative and incomplete by nature, and so filled with vistas of possibility and hope...
>
> Both major positions exclude representation as an aim of sculpture. With few exceptions, the mimetic aspects of art are replaced with the organic creation of plastic symbolic situations, as in Beuys or Kounellis, or with non-objective systematics, as with Donald Judd. The evolution of these tendencies in fact depends on the act of exclusion of the mimetic function from sculpture and its replacement with new, experimental directions.
>
> Along with the mimetic function, however, there disappears something very ancient and very immediate: the potential for a spontaneous form of recognition of meaning. The image of the human body remains the most directly comprehensible emblem....
>
> (Jeff Wall, "An Outline of a Context for Stephan Balkenhol's Work," published in 1988 in German in: *Stephan Balkenhol*, Kunsthalle Basel, Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, Kunsthalle Nürnberg).

After each of the participants has given a short statement, we will start the discussion. The first statement is filmic: it is a video-film by Martin Kreyssig. In his documentary films on art, Kreyssig tries to trace with his camera the origins of important artworks or where important art movements and questions on art are raised. In his most recent film, *Square Dance - The human figure in recent sculpture.*, which is unfinished, Kreyssig intended to research moments of the figuration of the human body, or should I say of the human figure?

– Jean-François Chevrier: I will speak of the human figure, which is not the human body. Indeed, there is a big difference between the two. I am principally interested in the human figure insofar it is traditionally centered on the face. The face connects the figure with the sign; it gives the figure an expressive visibility which can rival the signifying value of the sign. Therefore, I will speak about the figure and the sign – but without forgetting that when we speak of the figure we do not only speak of the human figure.

The human figure is not the body, and the human figure is not the only figure. What interests me in sculpture is a kind of embodiment of the figure, which is neither a representation of the body, nor any attempt at the artistic translation of a bodily fragmentation opposed to the totalizing nature of representation. The figure results from an act of isolation. This process is first of all semantic: if we can speak of a figure it is because there is an act of isolation. And this isolation then allows for further articulation, or what is called configuration, which means putting several figures together.

Let's look at some pictures. First, a few photographs by the painter Josef Albers: portraits of colleagues, artist friends, and relatives, which were made around 1930. They are photomontages, dealing with the different profiles of the face and also with the modulation of values in the recorded light, and then in the photographic print. This photographic exploration helped Albers to define his painting; the perceptual effects which he goes on to exploit in the play of interacting colors are already being experimented with in the photomontage works. Later, Albers made his famous series *Homages to the Square*. These works are obviously not 'figurative.' Nonetheless, one commonly speaks of geometric figures, and it must not be forgotten that behind the figure, in the etymology of pictorial language since the Renaissance, there is the face. Indeed, Albers declared: "I would like to see my colors remain, as much as possible, a 'face' – their own image such as it was attained, uniquely, and consciously I believe, in the frescoes of Pompeii." This association between the face and color was also a way for Albers to insist, beyond all formalism, on the psychological dimension of his work, as it appears so clearly in the photographic portraits. I mention Albers to demonstrate that there is no contradiction between the portrait, photomontage, and non-figurative painting.

In reality, the opposite of the figure is not what is called non-figurative art; it is defiguration. Defiguration is the opposite of the human figure, its destruction. It means the breaking of the face as the symbol of the human individual, that is to say, as an indivisible totality resistant to death. Take for example the very famous *Target with Four Faces* by Jasper Johns (1955), with its plaster casts of faces cut off below the eyes. It is not abstract, it is 'figurative.' But what do we see here? The face, repeated four times, but only partially. We don't see the eyes, the eyes which could look towards you. We see only fragments. And why? Because of the target. What you understand here is that the fragmentation of the face goes along with the abstraction produced by the sign. And this is all the more true when the sign is so concrete, when the sign really takes the upper hand, when it becomes the focus of the painting.

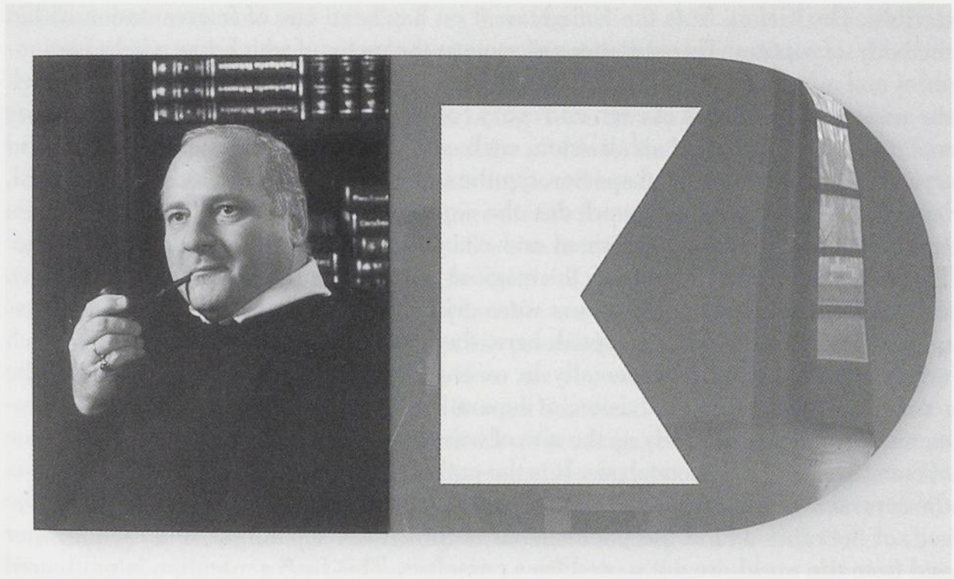
We have now come to a further point, the abstraction of the face through the sign, as opposed to the concrete figure. Michelangelo Pistoletto gave a very nice response to this kind of work when he presented the smiling face of Jasper Johns as one of the *Oggetti in meno* (Minus Objects). He found the image in a magazine and had it enlarged, but they did not find any photographic paper large enough, so in the end he had two pieces, two Minus Objects, one of which is the face and the other, the ears on both sides. And of course, in the middle of second piece, where the face was, you have just the empty white space.

To illustrate more precisely this problem of the face, the human figure, and the sign, I would like to make a strong contrast between a poster which was reproduced in a book by Jean Epstein called *Bonjour Cinéma*, from 1921, and a photograph by Walker Evans from the series of *Subway Portraits* taken around 1940, and published much later in the book *Many Are Called* in 1966. What is interesting here is that in both you have exactly the same structure: the face, cut out from the body, white on a very dark background. The difference is that the face in Epstein's book is completely abstract, it is just a type, the stereotypical face of the actor (well known or not), absorbed by the structure of the signs; while in the portrait by Walker Evans, you have the strength of the face (even an anonymous face), which is more forceful than the sign. In *Bonjour Cinéma*, the face is just a part of the typographical construction of the page; it is absorbed by the sign, absorbed by the typography. It does not resist, it is isolated, but articulated with the signs. And this articulation empties the face. In *Many Are Called* you also have an articulation, but it is just the opposite, the articulation emphasizes the strength of the face. If the signs disappear, as often occurs, you have only the face, still isolated, and you see it as a mask.

The mask is a very important model of the face in twentieth-century art. And when the mask is connected with death, we come back to the individual living being and its resistance to death. The mask, therefore, can be seen as a death mask, but it is also a mask against death. This motif of the mask recalls a key idea of twentieth-century theater: the grotesque. When you have the mask, you also have the grotesque. This association is established in the tradition of modern theater running from Gordon Craig to Meyerhold. You also have it in cinema, with filmmakers like Eisenstein and even Vertov, and you have it everywhere in photography.

I will show a few more pictures by Walker Evans to remind you that he was the photographer of signs. He was not against them; his problem was just to use them, without being overwhelmed by them. He wanted to integrate the figure into the signs, among the signs, but as a strong presence. And when he photographed signs, he photographed several kinds of signs: most are commercial and vernacular, but, especially in his interior scenes, he also photographed symbolic and even religious objects, which he treated as transcendent signs (without, however, forgetting their vernacular character).

Now we will look at a piece by Ken Lum from 1984, which was exhibited at Witte de With three years ago. What is interesting here is the balance between the isolated



individual face and the pseudo-commercial sign: it is a balance of forces, and also of weight. You can see the tension between the two things. Ken Lum is someone who really understands the problem of the conflict or tension between the human figure, the face, and the sign, the logotype. So it is a conflict between two types, the human type and the logotype (which is a commercial type).

And then, to finish, we will look at another artist, Jean-Luc Moulène, who was also exhibited at Witte de With two years ago, in *De Afstand* (Distance). I have chosen four pictures to show that the isolated figure is not only a human figure; it can be any object, such a plant, a car, or even the figure of a bird in a poster advertising cat food. The square in the beginning of my talk, in Albers' work, was really a figure, it is a geometrical figure. Here, with Moulène, we go much further. These kinds of works are dealing with the figure on both the representational level and the level of discourse. The work is about just that, the integration of the two levels. And it is also about the disjunction of each image from the other, and a disjunction within the image, because you have a type and a slight transformation of this type. So each picture is a type, but also a type which is doubly transformed, in itself and by its juxtaposition with other pictures. One step further, and we would be back to montage, but this time as a configuration, connecting not only isolated, fragmented elements, but also heterogeneous figures.

– Craigie Horsfield: I shall speak of an empirical cosmology, the world that bumps up against us, bumps up against our bodies, of a world that is at once consoling and

terrible. The history from the Enlightment on has been one of fragmentation within the body, of rupture. The operations of society, the motor of which was a belief in progress and a utopian end, were shaped through categorization, through order, through the naming and analysis of each and every constituent part. The form of this ordering was through division and subdivision, each category, each species of knowledge and term, broken into further subspecies, families, generic groups codified and separated. In the name of universal knowledge the world was dismembered, the body taken apart. Modernity merely confirmed and elaborated the vast catalogue of the world. The body was divided from itself, the magical power of the promised utopia held sway, and whilst the benefits of progress were evident this impossible paradox was sustained. The body of which we speak here, the body that has been the subject of such very wide debate in art, especially in recent times, is the anatomical detritus, the remains of this history of division, of separation. It is the commodified body of commercial exchange, the body as the site of transgressive expression. The body at once of commerce and psychoanalysis. It is the pathological body, the body of science. It is the several and various separations of capitalism, the separation and alienation of the self, of the other and of the phenomenal world. In our separation, one from another and from the world, we are parted from ourselves. This final separation is prefigured in the break of thinking from acting and doing. As the benefits of progress are revealed as largely illusory and bought at too great a price and as the belief in the utopian vision of enlightened and rational thought fades, the world is revealed, apparent without the optimistic mask of evolution. Beneath the operations of cultural ideologies, of commerce and commodity, of the accelerated exchanges of modern life, may be discovered the incredibly slow pulse of everyday life, little different generation from generation. It is in this world of abandoned faith, of the ruin of ideology when confronted with the apparent chaos, confusion and the fragmentation of certainty, that many look for a secure point and turn to nationalism and fundamentalist religions. The appearance is of a return to the past, but it is not so. We return only to the present. The difficulty of this present is clear, clear to all of us, but to learn how to live in it, it is necessary to pay most rigorous attention. Simply, in a time of security, of stability, of reassurance – perhaps the Europe of the forty years following the Second World War – it was possible to conceive art as purely self-reflective, echoing the many separations I've already listed. In the security of the theoretical, the ideological, and the coherent, if flawed, social structures of most western society, all was contained. Yes, of course there was a space for opposition, there was a space for dissidence, but all of it in turn confirming the omnipotence, the allknowingness of the modern world. With the collapse of faith it is no longer possible; the cosmology of our present cannot be abstracted, distanced and alienated from the phenomenal world. It must be of the body, of the ground, in time of crisis we must test ourself against that which is apparent and art may exist in the relation of those who are now released into a full apprehension of the terror of the phenomenal world without intercession, without something coming between, without a ringmaster, without a shaman. It's the world which

we look out upon now and its why I say I do not believe that such discussions, the debate which we're now engaged upon, are a game. When Jean-François Chevrier speaks about these matters of life and death, this is no exaggeration, we see in the landscape of our time just such choices being made by our fellows, our brothers and sisters, and it's very close to home. One of the problems that I find, and I hope to have illuminated in this discussion now, is this supposed break between the figure and the body. As I understand figuration, the figure stands for, stands away from, stands apart from us. The body is the material of which we're made; the figure is that which stands for. It seems to me already to describe the nature of alienation. This is the one thing of which I'm certain, that history, slow, implacable and turbulent is at a point of vast and mysterious revolution and its meanings are presently opaque to us. We, its children and its substance, if we are to survive, if we are to resist death, must work to understand the relation that we have at once to each other and the phenomenal world. It is within this history that the debates in which we are engaged take place. Together and separately, over a period of time our apprehensions may become more clear, but it is not, even now, sufficient; it is not enough to describe the landscape we survey as the topography of chaos, the inevitable fragmentation of ideology and belief. Good or bad, it is the place which, in the lifetime of each of us here, will be the only place we have and it is our responsibility to speak of it. In this we have few choices. We may resign, denying our complicity, or we may embrace our common struggle so that together we may speak this world and in that speaking find ourself and others in the present. No longer separated, no longer apart. This is the body of thinking and acting that in recognition of self with others and with the phenomenal world we may conceive of the body without separation. I would argue that photography may engage with these questions. When we speak of the body and figuration we have to consider it not only as this clay of which we're made but also as this very complex web of relationships that construct ourselves, the other, society, the phenomenal world. In other words, that conception of the body that existed, we may suppose, in an archaic period, which was of unity, in which all from the lowest serf to the king and the god above him, could exist within an idea of the body that was only later fragmented, dismembered, cut and torn apart. Now, whether the intention is to discover how we may put it back together I don't know, I don't have an answer, but I do know this is a debate and a very necessary debate in which we're all engaged, though we may express it rather differently, and the details, the matter of mimesis, the way we represent the world, the way we speak of the world, the way we confront the world, I hope can begin to emerge from precisely this kind of discussion.

– Ludger Gerdes: I feel slightly uncomfortable talking about the role of the figurative in art because I'm personally much more interested in the question of art or the nature of art. Therefore, I think the theme of the figure in art can only be discussed and judged in a broader perspective that is about art in general. As far as I understand, the theme of this discussion is the human figure in art. I do not see much reason for

figures in art. The figure in art mostly serves to do something, to articulate meaning, to demonstrate something, to tell something, to express something and so on. I don't like this kind of service because I believe art should not serve anything. Art should be useless, not useful. I have the impression that figures in art serve to be accepted by certain people whose taste does not have anything to do with a developed modern approach to art. Figures serve to get acceptance and applause from the wrong side. I believe that art should not be normal, never. It should be the contrary. It should be, to use a term of Theodor Adorno, *"fremd"* (strange). And taste, in regard to art, should be *Fremden freundlich*; it should like and accept strangeness. Acceptance of strangeness, nothing commonly shared or commonly practiced, should be done in art and it should be honored as art. The principle, the commonly shared and practiced rule, of modern societies is functionalism. Anything works in a functional relationship, which is okay. But all functional approaches in societal systems reduce actions and experiences in terms of the specific functionalism in question. In scientific, political, technical, economic, medical, entertaining, therapeutic ways or otherwise, all functionalized systems can only do and see, what they can because of their specific tools. I believe art can be specific by not being functional, by not serving anything. Because when art is meaningful or understandable it again just serves a systematized way of functioning, especially if it's figurative.

Art can be a kind of resistance to the separations of the overall functionalism in modern societies; it can demand questions about the status quo of all the things and all the actions which work everywhere, every day, in modern societies. Art cannot be functional because there are no contexts in which art is used for something. Art doesn't work as a cognitive, moral, political, technical, economic tool. Art is art, and everything else is everything else! Therefore, I think art should be strange to any concept of meaning because meaning is just another functionalism. Art is, I think, specific not through making meaning or serving as a tool to articulate meaning; art can be strange to the process of making meaning, and then it can help people to make experiences which question the overall practiced approach of using meaning to understand and fulfill functions and so on. Then art can make people ask questions about the status quo of the things and actions they live with.

Art can be specific through a specific form of aesthetic experience. This experience is a process of reflection or, as Immanuel Kant said two hundred years ago, "of the reflecting power of judgement." This, I think, is still the best idea about autonomous art. This experience needs nonnormal things like artworks, nonnormal approaches and actions. Therefore, I don't like normality, meaning or understandableness in art. Because it does not give any strong aesthetic experience, the normal just leads to reinforce the normal. But everything normal is simply societal and should never be honored as something stabile or as something that couldn't be different. By being questionable, art can help people to experience something other than what already exists. So the work of an artist should be questionable, not understandable, not interpretative, not meaningful, not normal. I've the impression that fig-

ures in art are just too normal to be strong enough to make an experience of strangeness possible. From my point of view on art, artworks need a form which cannot be used in a normal way, which cannot be understood in the usual processes of reading and creating meaning.

– CD: I would like to ask Ludger Gerdes a question. In your introduction you yourself asked yourself whether figuration could be strange. And I would like to ask you that question again: Can we use figuration in the way that you understand art to be? Can art be abnormal, strange, questionable? Secondly, looking very superficially, we have seen today many images of bodies, of human figures, some of which you could call questionable, for instance, those we have seen by Bruce Nauman. I would like to ask you whether figuration should then be completely excluded or can it be used?

– LG: Of course it can be used; it is just a question of how it is going to be used. My point of view is probably more or less formalistic. And of course I know artworks which include figures and fulfill my expectations for art. But honestly, I don't believe that most of the things I have seen in these pictures today do, because from my point of view they are not really strange.

– CD: You say that the images of Bruce Nauman or Walker Evans, to name two very different artists, are not really strange. What then do you mean by strange?

– LG: Strange is something that resists normal processes of understanding. And I think that all these things we have just seen are quite understandable; they are normal approaches.

– JFC: I would just like to point out that Walker Evans is probably one of the least understood artists. So though the work may be understandable, it has not been understood. What do you make of such a contradiction?

– LG: With regard to artworks, I'm not interested in understanding. Maybe he, or any other artist, has been misunderstood. It depends if an artist wanted the content of his work to be understood. But personally I am not interested in understanding in art.

– CD: Craigie Horsfield, if I understood you well, you don't want to make a difference between the body and the figure; you also expressed the idea that the body is the present.

– CH: Yes, I would like to have a rather more precise definition of the distinction between the body and the figure. I have some perception of what I believe the words figure and figuration intend, but perhaps Jean-François Chevrier could be more precise.

– JFC: It was interesting when you said that the figure stands for, stands away from, and stands apart from us, and that the body is what we are made of. This is a key point, and I think it is absolutely clear that the figure is about the nature of alienation. And we could even quote Jacques Lacan in *Le stade du miroir*. It starts with that, we need that alienation. That alienation is the way we find our first definition of ourselves.

– CD: Craigie Horsfield, you pointedly used the word body to express the whole idea of the present, but you did not say that the figure is the present. I would like to ask you what you mean by that. And secondly, is that presentness then strange enough to be art as Ludger Gerdes defines it?

– CH: I think that your understanding of what I intended is absolutely correct. As a result of this alienation, which Jean-François Chevrier was just describing as being implicit in the operation of the figure and this point is rather more than semantics, as I hope will become quite clear – the figure, the emphasis, places our understanding, I would argue, outside time; it becomes timeless; it ceases to have that direct identification with the present. It is not the present, whereas the body can only exist in the present. Earlier on during his introduction, Chris Dercon quoted Vincent Labaume as asking if the body only existed in certain times. I think that is indeed total nonsense. Quite clearly, the body is as permanent as it is until we die and then it ceases to be very permanent at all. To respond to the second part of your question, yes, I'm willing to agree with Ludger Gerdes. I think, on the whole, that I am certainly willing to accept that the present is a strange place which I don't really understand, but I'd like to.

– JFC: I am very disturbed by the kind of strangeness in art that escapes alienation in a kind of formalistic aestheticisation of the incomprehensible experience.

– LG: I don't want to escape alienation. I can't because I don't understand the term alienation. I mean something very different. For me, art is a possibility which enables people to have an experience which they cannot have by their normal usage of actions or ways of understanding. And this leads us to a situation where people can experience their possibilities, their capabilities, and their powers which are not used in a normal, societal, preformed way. That is the idea of strangeness, nothing else. There are no political or psychoanalytical implications of alienation whatsoever. It is a very simple process which I think should be taken very seriously because it gives specificity to art. And all good art, at least all good art of modern times, is an example of this. Something which is, on a formal level, purely strange to all the practical, semantical, symbolical uses and ways of actions that people have. And it makes it possible for people to experience something completely different. Therefore, it is societally very important.

– CH: Am I to understand you that you're speaking of this idea of art being a strangeness as you say, being the unfamiliar, rather as though habit, familiarity, shielded us from the world, that it distorted the world, that it was what you call normal; and that one of the functions of art is to cut through that, to disorientate, to, in making strange, bring us to a kind of clearsightedness. Is that the kind of conception you mean? What is the result of this experience of strangeness, of this familiarity? is there a result or is the sensation itself enough?

– LG: No, the sensation itself is not enough. It's something which has been described two hundred years ago and which is referred to as the aesthetic experience. This does not tend to establish a new clearness. I think the conclusion can't be that art, in contrast to the problems and lack of clarity of the world, should help people with new answers or solutions, because I believe art can't. The problems of the world have to be solved in very different realms, in all the different realms which I mentioned as the functional realms in modern societies. I think it is a big utopian failure that art once believed it could solve these societal problems. It cannot. But what it can do is give people a specific experience, including a specific experience of themselves, by using their capacities, which can help them, at least, to imagine something which is different from the things that exist. And that is a lot.

– CD: And in that sense you have a problem with the idea of figuration because you see figuration as a kind of blockage, a barricade, to taking on and continuing these tasks.

– LG: I don't have so much of a problem with figuration; in the history of art you have thousands of examples of fantastic artworks which deal with figures.

– CD: How would you say that the current use of the figure, of the body, whether it be in the work of Francis Bacon, Bruce Nauman or Jeff Wall, is different from those bodies we have seen in art since the fifteenth century? What is the difference?

– LG: Bruce Nauman is a good example because I think that his figurative works are not really good art because they act as a shock effect on a psychological level. I think that the problem of these works is that they don't go further beyond this point. They don't really encourage people to think in a specific, new or strange way, or even to feel or to act. It's more or less about entering a situation where you find an installation which is emotionally shocking because somebody is screaming, or hanging from the wall, or repeating one sentence for hours. But you can't stand it to be in there for five minutes; and beyond this point of being more or less shocked from it on an emotional level, there is not very much more; at least, I never heard of anything more. I really have my doubts whether this is a solution for what art can do.

– CD: Jean-François Chevrier, you had two problems with what's going on in this interest of artists for the figure or the body; you spoke about *'défiguration,'* defiguration, breaking up the face, as you literally said, as the symbol of the human being, of the individual. Would you then agree with Ludger Gerdes that there is indeed a difference between the way the body and/or figure has been and is depicted, whether in painting, sculpture, photography, cinema, or video and that even the current representations of the body do not really guarantee anymore a return to a body, the body of the image such as Walker Evans expressed it?

– JFC: I must say that I'm very interested in people who try to let the world be. I have always been very touched by this attitude in art, and that is why I must say I find the idea of strangeness very difficult; it is as difficult as the idea of art. Art is a way of looking at the world; and I'm very interested in looking at the world, which is why I'm so interested in photography and cinema. It is so important to let things be. For me, the world is at its height of strangeness when it is deprived of our projections, of our will to transform it, to alter it.

– CD: Then you do agree quite a bit with Ludger Gerdes because it seems that the way Mike Kelley or artists like Paul McCarthy or even Marlene Dumas approach the body or the human figure is a way of not letting the world be.

– JFC: No, I think that the work of Mike Kelley, for example, really deals with things that society introduced into the world, but he takes them as they are and for what they are. He uses the dolls for what they are. Of course they are introduced, of course they are artifacts; but I think he really uses them and places them and looks at them for what they are now, substitutes. And of course they are full of projections and defigurations, but he takes them as figures, as isolated items, and then he connects them.

– CH: I agree entirely with Jean-François Chevrier about the defiguration in the work of Mike Kelley, but I resist when he attempts to recuperate Kelley's reputation vis-à-vis his description of defiguration by saying that Kelley reconfigures it, as though he sometimes goes to the brink and then pulls back. I think that is total nonsense. I think that Mike Kelley is wholly complicit, and I think he is properly seen as a fine exemplar of your defiguration, of the breaking of the individual resisting death. I think that in this respect art is not directly useful indeed, and in some circumstances I would say it is properly useless; but I am quite clear that it is part of our resistance to death.

– JFC: I don't think I would be so interested in his work if there were only that dimension without rearticulation. I remember the last time I visited his studio; the studio was a virtual montage. I am so interested in the idea of montage because montage comes from fragmentation; you can't have montage if you don't have fragmentation. You use fragmentation to make another whole, a more complex whole. But also, as you know, in Russian cinema, in for example, Vertov or Eisenstein, there is montage, but the material of montage is really made out of a very precise look at the world; they deal with facts, with images as facts.

– CD: Jean-François Chevrier, you said that the real opposition to the figure is defiguration, not the non figurative. And yet you slowly seem to recuperate the whole idea of defiguration within the idea of figuration. Could you explain to us this strange contradiction?

– JFC: No, because I think that in the heritage of modern art we have very precious ideas like that of the grotesque. This is a very strong idea that is closely connected to the realistic impulse in art. Think of Meyerhold, of Eisenstein using Meyerhold. The grotesque, which comes from decoration, has, since the Renaissance, been connected to an impulse towards realism. I have no problem if defiguration is transformed into the grotesque, if it is really elaborated as a grotesque aesthetic. I do have a problem with defiguration for its own sake, as a kind of childish impulse.

– CD: Would you then call the work of Marlene Dumas a work of the grotesque? Is her defiguration a form of the grotesque? And would you then call the bodies that we see so often in the Dutch staged photography an example of defiguration as you understand it?

– JFC: I think that there is no real, strong articulation in Marlene Dumas's work, so there cannot be any grotesque. The grotesque supposes a strong articulation and even a strong decorative articulation because the grotesque is a definition which comes from decoration. And I don't find that in her work even if I like certain paintings. I am not against her work, but I think it doesn't have the kind of articulation that I'm interested in. As for staged photography, for me, it is just new pictorialism. It just deals with quotes, quotes of paintings, the body quoted as something, and I am not interested in that.

– CD: Ludger Gerdes, would you agree with that? You said to me a couple of months ago that the work of Marlene Dumas, her figures and the way she uses them, is very interesting. Would you call the way she uses figures strange enough? And if so, is the kind of strangeness she implies a kind of defiguration for you?

– LG: I am interested in Marlene Dumas's work because she is quite different from other artists. A lot of contemporary artists try to make work of a growing complexity, not of a growing simplicity. And the experience of her work, which includes representation as well as pure painterly things, is stronger for me than that of a lot of other contemporary eighties paintings which I have seen.

– CD: Martin Kreyssig, although you show disfigured and fragmented bodies like the work of Louise Bourgeois and Bruce Nauman in your film, it is striking that you concentrate a lot on the face. You also use a fantastic allegory with the fragment from *Jules et Jim* by François Truffaut. Can you explain why you concentrate so much on the face? It is as if you consider it most important, which seems to connect the way you described the figuration of the body to the way Jean-François Chevrier describes it.

– MK: The question was, before I made this film, is a human figure a sculpture? I see a very clear difference between sculptures and photographs. They have nothing to do with each other because they come from completely different histories and work on different moments. But do human figures as sculptures deny further questions? Are they the beginning of a regression of restorative moments without any rational impetus? As Ludger Gerdes said, what has to be asked is if I see myself am I able to ask further questions? or am I just looking at myself or laughing with myself with nothing else, no thoughts, just figures. That was my question for making this kind of film because I still believe that a lot of people see this kind of art and immediately run out of thoughts. And if we start now to come back to a kind of art which is connected to television or photographs, which represent people, or to Mike Kelley, or to other art which is more connected to lifestyle than to sculpture or art, I think it is a completely wrong way to rethink our rational failure.

– JFC: I think it is a big mistake to consider television and photography in the same light. And I would like to cite Serge Daney who said that television, advertising, and the media society are increasingly obsessed by the image. He said that what is important is the visual. By the visual he meant the ability to look and to make combinations, differences. And I think that photography is one of the best ways of looking and of making differences. There is a huge difference between a photograph by Jean-Luc Moulène – who is a very difficult artist because his work is mainly about differences in looking; it is very subtle and very precise, and that is what photography is and should be about – and this kind of mediaworld of images. I think Daney's distinction is very important here. And this is why Dutch staged photography, for example, is so bad; it is just about image, there is nothing visual in it.

– MK: I just wanted to separate sculpture and paintings from portraits in photography. Television might be a separate discussion.

– CD: But we did not see any paintings in your film.

– MK: No, I threw out every painting. Yes, there were wonderful examples like Bruce Nauman's drawings called *Face* or *Double Face*. But I tried to concentrate on the three-dimensional because I did not want, in reproducing a sculpture in a two-

dimensional medium, to come too close to the reference of two-dimensionality in two-dimensional photography. I didn't want to have this connection.

– CD: But isn't the great strength of the representation of the body and the figure today that it is covered by so many media in so many ways? It is fascinating to see that there are paintings, sculptures and photographs made that do function, and I think we should not try to separate them.

– JFC: I think Craigie Horsfield could speak very well about the painterly quality in photography because that is what his work is so deeply about, in such an interesting way; it is a way of dealing with photography, a way of embodying the photographical image and the human figure. And I think it is pictorial because it uses pictorial procedures like the wonderful game of tonal values in Albers's work; no photographer could do such a thing.

– CD: What did you miss in the film of Martin Kreyssig?

– JFC: It was about sculpture and the body, but I think we should not consider sculpture as the only way to deal with the body. I emphasize the human figure because I think we should deal with the body through the human figure, through this isolation of the human figure. Because it is with the human figure that we can deal with abstraction.

– MK: In photography human figures are received as pictorial things, while sculpture has nothing to do with pictorial things, sculptures are things in themselves.

– JFC: I don't agree with that. I think it is a kind of hypostasis of the physical object, the three-dimensional object, which is a big problem. I am not against the object, but I am against the hypostasis of the object as something real against the image as something less real. I think an image can be as real as an object.

Stephan Balkenhol is invited to join the panel when Jean-François Chevrier has to leave the discussion.

– CD: I would like to ask Stephan Balkenhol a very specific question. What did you think about the problem, which Jean-François Chevrier brought up, of the real enemy of the figure being not the non figurative but defiguration? And by defiguration I think that Jean-François Chevrier meant the fragmentation of the human body and of the symbol of the human being as an individual.

– CH: But it was more than that, he was arguing that in the body of the artwork itself, and he gave the example of Walker Evans and the film posters, that in the one, the

face remains the sign of humanity and dominates the signs around it; however in the film posters, the face is wholly absorbed into the sign, into the empire of signs, and is destroyed and therefore can no longer resist death.

– Stephan Balkenhol: Certainly a figure, a face, works like a sign, and it works very easily. I think what Ludger Gerdes criticizes is that the figure is very simple to absorb and it has been misused for propaganda and other things in the history of art. Look at the monuments made in the nineteenth century for example. I think artists reached a point when they decided that working figuratively could not work any more as a language for making art. But my opinion is that it has to do with conventions, and therefore, I do not agree with Ludger Gerdes who says that it should not be normal. You must always ask what is normal and you must always look at what you think is normal and ask if you really see what you see. I don't think it is so. If you look at the monuments outside, a hundred years ago you saw in every park Amor and Psyche and *Adelstandbilder*. And nowadays in parks you have modern sculptures by Richard Serra, etc. But that can be normal, too, if you are used to this kind of art. There are always reactions to the status quo, so I don't think that that kind of normalcy is interesting.

– CD: Do you see the current interest of yourself and other artists who use the figure as a questioning of the status of the body or of the status of the image? We live in fact in an unstable time with unstable images, and Jean-François Chevrier made a very important distinction between the image and the visual, which he got from the cinema critic Serge Daney. Do you feel that this is maybe an explanation? Are we perhaps talking less about the image of the body or the figure and more about the body or the figure of the image as such?

– SB: For me, it is not so much a problem of body and figure. I think it has do to with liveliness. I do not make shapes of bodies; bodies are alive like us, and we live. But if you make a cast of plaster, nothing is more dead than a cast of a living body. I work with a material, wood, which is already a sculpture before I begin. When I make the image of a human figure, I know that it doesn't work if it remains just a sculpted piece of wood. There is something that makes it more alive, or perhaps the person who looks at it makes it alive in his mind and uses it for something. And I don't agree with Ludger Gerdes that art can no longer work when it has a function. Every artwork has to do with language; you use a language, and this language has to be a medium for understanding, but of course every artist has to decide on his own grammar. So it is always new and you always have to refer to conventions otherwise there is no understanding possible. But of course, you have to question these conventions.

– Question from the public: When you talk about conventions in art, do you consider yourself a reactionary artist when you use figuration?

– SB: No, it has nothing to do with that. Ever since man's existence he has made figurative art. People try to be aware of themselves by making figurative art and I believe it will always be this way. Of course there are different kinds of figurative possibilities, this includes perhaps also photography and other media, but I think it has nothing to do with the conservative or reactionary. If you look at figurative art, you will see that each period is completely contradictory to the one before.

– CH: A lot of this discussion has been about the figure and the body, defiguration, configuration, hypostasis – all very important and interesting matters. But I noticed that Stephan Balkenhol, when speaking of the reception of his figures, described this giving life into them, that the audience in a sense make them live again, or make them what they will. Behind all this it is possible that these things, the sculptures, the movies, the photographs, actually take on a life; that they actually matter as more than just structures of language and sign; that they are something which actually affects one's life very directly. And we can lose sight in this kind of debate of just how human their impact is and how they affect the way we live. And don't say that they are useful or useless, that is not important now. So they may be strange, they may be normal, but to some extent these things affect and change our lives. They communicate. They are part of our speaking one to another. And that action is one that we, separately perhaps, find significant. And when you speak of convention, it has been the convention of the twentieth century that the sign of the avant-garde should be in its form. We easily recognize it. We know what the new thing is; it is very clear, it has just that acceptable degree of strangeness, unfamiliarity. We feel, yes, that is the new thing and it matters. It is appropriate; we care about it now. What is there left? The convention that we use of our language, certainly in English, is very little different than it was a hundred years ago. What I'm saying is that we are actually expressing ideas which are appropriate to today in a form which is, by your definition of this avant-gardist convention, extremely old-fashioned. But of course we may express the most complex and prescient ideas with it, that is, ideas that are appropriate to our time. It isn't that the message that these old words are carrying is the message of twenty years ago, or ten years ago, not even of yesterday; it is a message, which is appropriate, good or bad, to today. In the same way, in the sculptures that Stephan makes and the photographs that I make, we may use all kinds of language which are open to us, but the meaning is most specifically about the present. Of course that makes it difficult because we're used to looking for avant-gardist signs. With the loss of progress, we lose the avant-garde. What we do face is a world in which we are forced back on meaning, on subject, on content as the new thing, and that is more difficult, more problematic. If it were clear, we would have had a conversation where I gave you a formula and you contested it.

– LG: I said what I said in an abstract way, but after seeing the exhibition of Stephan Balkenhol today, I see a certain danger. As a German, I feel the danger because in

Germany there is a tendency for art that creates a new *gemütlichkeit* (coziness). And that should not happen.

– CH: I am very happy to hear a German artist saying so, especially one who has said that art is useless and doesn't have to deal with such matters. In the light of the current state of Europe, I am very nervous of the position of Germany. And I see German artists as being wholly complicit with that. And I think the history out of which they come and out of which they make work, not universally but in large part – as is very well exemplified in the catalogue that accompanies the exhibition of Stephan Balkenhol, a decent debate between decent people – is one of a sharing within a tradition which cannot be separated from the way that Germany acts now. They are the same people, and I am very wary of nationalism.

– CD: Are you now talking about what you read in the catalogue of Stephan Balkenhol in the conversations between Balkenhol and Ulrich Rückriem and Thomas Schütte, or do you experience it when you look at the works?

– CH: We have to be very careful how we understand this relationship. I like the work that Stephan Balkenhol shows, and I have a great deal of admiration for him. But I have also to be aware of what I perceive as the culture which he grows out of. And as good a person as he may be and as strong as his sculpture is, I am sorry, unlike Ludger Gerdes, I do not make a distinction. I don't think the line is absolutely clear, but we must be very conscious of the fact that these objects that we're showing and reading don't float about in some abstract world that is nice and safe, the art world, maybe they did, but I am not even sure if that was so, but they certainly don't now.

– CD: Does that mean then, Stephan Balkenhol, when we see what is going on throughout Europe, and within Germany in particular, that we, as people who are interested in art, have to take a responsible stance and that we should feel obliged to translate that responsibility into other, less conventional, forms?

– SB: I do agree with Ludger Gerdes that there are dangers because there are a lot of misunderstandings, what he called applause from the wrong side. A lot of people think they understand the work I do; they think that it is nice and wonderful because they can see that it is handmade and not abstract. I don't want to change my art because there are some people who misunderstand it. I try to make my thing as clear as possible. I cannot do more. I do not think that political art is the only way to change a political situation. If you try to make really good sculpture, it is always kind of political.

– MK: Even abstract art has always been misunderstood because it was not discussed.

– CD: Ludger Gerdes, when you drew a very specific connection between this discussion and the exhibition of Stephan Balkenhol, you said that we have to be very careful with everything that is happening in Germany today and then you referred to the *gemütlichkeit* which you find expressed in the work of Balkenhol; I would like to ask you, do we have to take up arms, do we have to take a critical stance? and if so, is strangeness a sufficient weapon?

– LG: I think that this is not a discussion about political issues. There is even a discussion in Germany right now about whether people from a certain side should take up arms in Germany's current situation. But I think this is not the point. The point I would like to make is that I see a very valuable process in modernity that should be accepted and enforced. This means that since the eighteenth century, modern art has had the potential to become an autonomous realm in society. Now I see tendencies that threaten this autonomy of art. So I think our task should be to care about this status of autonomy. What you are referring to is, I think, a more political thing. And if the status of autonomy is still given, I think artists should be careful with it and not give it away too easily by making art that is too cozy or too understandable. Of course, I know that people like Stephan Balkenhol have good intentions with their work, but how can a certain work be used in a certain situation? In Germany, there are discussions going on now about the art of the German Democratic Republic, which from my point of view is highly conservative, stupid, bad and kitschy. One should be aware, at least in Germany of letting these forces get too strong. There are great artists who have dealt with figures. Martin Kreyssig said that when he sees figures he often runs out of thoughts. This is something I experience very often. The formulation of an artwork as a figurative work deals already so much with signs that the experience of the work is dominated by the reading or re-reading of signs and not by a process of specific experience that has to do with the form of the artwork. In the extreme this can lead to a form of *gemütlichkeit*, which is just a reinforcement of habits that people always had.

– CH: First of all, the claim of the autonomy of art is one of those very comforting fantasies from the middle part of this century which we cannot possibly still hold on to. It's getting to the point of being dangerous to make such a claim, though there are many who hypocritically do so whilst reaping the rewards. On the matter of the kitschiness of East German art, we have to face other problems; are we still to suppose that West German art is so free, so open, so natural? And in comparison, that the old East German art is so bad, so controlled, exactly the opposite? Of course not. With Stephan Balkenhol's work, of course, there are quite clearly problems in the basic idea of working in wood with naturalistic figures, for example, the whole tradition from Johann Hamann and Johann Gottfried von Herder, the early German romantic philosophers, and the tradition that comes up to the twentieth century and its associations with the folk and the land etc. These are clear and I am sure that Stephan Balkenhol must be aware of them. But equally, I cannot see that his work is more false,

more blighted, more dishonest than those artists who claim autonomy for what they make. Of course not, and Stephan Balkenhol is at least honest. We know this is in Germany; should we make wonderful abstract gestures that pretend to have no connection with this? Of course not. It's becoming indefensible to hear German artists claim that the great achievement of modern art was its autonomy. So we deny responsibility.

– LG: What do you mean by we deny responsibility?

– CH: We say that as artists, our actions in the studio, in the face of our audience, don't carry the responsibility of our place, of who we are, of what we were born of, of history, and that we are somehow separated from the past when we utterly embody it. Of course we can attempt to be truthful, but we cannot escape it.

– SB: I would like to make two remarks. Ludger Gerdes, you said that you don't want art that functions. But it does function. If you do something – you are an artist too, you make art – it has a function. If you make a painting just for beauty's sake, it always has a function, otherwise you wouldn't do it, it would be boring. You have to have a motivation, and so it has to have a function. The other point is about autonomy. What I understood from your explanation of strangeness is that you mean a kind of autonomy that is just a poor, incomprehensible thing that is only concerned with itself. I think that the aim of autonomy is not to make art which just turns in on itself. Art has always to do with man and mankind, thinking, history and philosophy and that is what I think mimesis should be. What I try to do with my sculptures has nothing to do with representing something.

– LG: I am not sure I understand Craigie Horsfield because I would never doubt that someone should feel responsible for his societal situation or that he should act politically. But I think it is a fact that since the eighteenth century, modern societies have established institutions that are autonomous, which means that they are not directed by anything else. It is possible in modern societies, as an artist, to make decisions by yourself that don't refer to purposes which are given from anywhere outside. And this has brought about a very important thing, namely the process of publicity, of publicness, and I think art is one of the most dominant areas of publicness where people in a society can communicate in one or the other way about all the things in question, in their life, in their situation. But I think that the area of art where free communication, purposeless, communication, can be made and not dominated by anything else still has to be kept. Therefore, I still believe in this concept of autonomy, which I think can be shown to exist, and that even today it is useless to dominate this area with political or ethical thoughts or whatever. Of course it is important to be politically and ethically aware, but that is different from making art. And art should keep the idea of purposelessness, which does not mean that art doesn't have to do anything with

humans, of course, art is made by human beings and it comes out of their human situations, but it has the specificity of not being instrumental to certain purposes that can be conceptualized.

– CD: Here I would like to ask you whether figuration can play an important role in the visual arts, like it does in the photography, as we have seen, of Walker Evans and in cinema.

– LG: Of course figuration can play a role. I just see a certain danger because figurative work very often tends not to provoke, not to stimulate thoughts, because it uses a certain set of signs. And people are used to reading these signs. If figurative works are dominated by this semantic or symbolic approach, the aesthetic experience does not question anymore; it is just a kind of re-reading of what has been already said.

– CD: In his speech Jean-François Chevrier tried to clarify the idea of the sign and the face, and I think that is also happening in the work of Craigie Horsfield because he invests so much in the face. I see it also in how Martin Kreyssig could not keep his camera off of faces. If there is a conclusion to be drawn today, it is that maybe when we see figuration, as Martin Kreyssig said, it is possible that we lose thoughts and that we don't have anymore thoughts whatsoever. But, it seems to me that faces and trying to give names to faces, and the loss of faces and names and therefore the loss of images, are central to the interest of artists today for figurative depiction. I would like to ask Craigie Horsfield, since he deals with this very specifically in his work, to give a last shot at that.

– CH: I think that Ludger Gerdes's statement was entirely exemplary of the kind of separations of which I spoke at the start. He finds himself able to see these compartments as separated and somehow not sharing responsibility for one another, even within the same person. I don't doubt his sincerity for a moment, but it is something that I find extremely difficult to comprehend, excepting in a strategic sense, as a form of tactics, to avoid facing the responsibilities of which we spoke. I am distressed that we believe that we can still sustain such an argument here, now. And when Stephan Balkenhol spoke of mimesis I think he echoed the belief that the whole matter of mimesis is not a matter of reproduction or recreation; it involves the whole of this history, it involves this knowing. All of it is a part of our making. And it is not a matter of compartments or separations where this is the act of art and this is the act of life, but somehow the one is not with the other. If we are to discuss mimesis it can only be as this which interpenetrates every part of our understanding, every part of our experience. Otherwise it is for nothing, it is a logo, a sign which is one of those signs of disfiguration. And why the face? When we look at a face, we attempt to read something from it, even if somebody has some theoretically neutral expression. It is rather like how Bresson in his movies has his actors in theory expressionless while letting the

mise-en-scène somehow describe how they are feeling. We know that even the minutest shift, even a shift of the light, gives expression to the face. A face is never expressionless. None of Stephan Balkenhols sculptures are expressionless; there's maybe a look of melancholy, maybe a look of joy, but I cannot see one of them without that. When I speak to someone of course I read his face; that is not something which is suddenly going to stop in the modern or the coming age. We read every minute detail on somebody's face, and of course we will go on doing that.

Addendum

My contribution to the symposium was to have been about the distinction between the body and the figure, the corporeal and the figurative. I wanted to say that, by the middle of the 1960s, we could see the emergence of a phenomenon which could not really be called 'the figurative' anymore. In the theatre, most strikingly in the production by Peter Brook of Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* in 1964, actors gave form to a deep rage. This was concentrated on repressive aspects of culture and history, but it also fixed on the forms of the arts themselves. Audiences were placed in a guilty person's position in front of incriminating spectacles, and the boundaries between the performance and actual interpersonal relations were softened. Performance and body art brought forward the notion that the raging and suffering body of the artist could erase all boundaries, at least for an instant, resulting in a radically intensified aesthetic experience at the moment of reflux, when the spectator realized, with some relief, that the work of art was still the ordering principle of whatever situation they had found themselves in. This raging body seems to me to have been an expression of sublimity and of a failed transfiguration of society. It is a penumbral, spectral phenomenon, directed at a consciousness of the symbolic centrality of death and failure in the Western culture. I would have shown some slides of performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Marat/Sade*, by Joseph Beuys, and by Chris Burden.

The traditionalistic alternative of this threshold-phenomenon, this body escaping the regimes of art and figuration, would have to be what has always been called 'the figure.' This is the human body as it has acquiesced historically to its incorporation within any and every 'regime of representation'. The figure, in my view, is that which invites its own evanescence, its vaporization or spiritualization by artistic techniques and decorum. The figure is constituted by a metamorphosis, in which a human appearance is transformed into a cipher in a hypothetical space, one regulated by all the rules, and controlled by all the traditions, of art. I see this acquiescence in transfiguration as an expression of afterlife, of survival, and so of hope. This aspect is maybe most brilliantly reflected in the most grotesque characters, to have been absorbed into pictorial space-monsters, unhappy characters, men of ill will, solitary people, idiots, puppets, dolls, golems. I would have said that traditional art, and modern art too, had understood the rage of the body and had not tried to calm it, but to see it at liberty

in the open future of the double surfaces of paintings, sculptures and photographs. And I would have concluded by saying that, since the 60s, art has extended itself by the coming closer to the threshold of rage, and of approaching the body which breaks its grasp. I would have shown some pictures by Degas, Bellmer, Kitaj, Wols and Buñuel. But, I couldn't because of the fierce winter storm which kept me from leaving New York for Rotterdam that day.

Jeff Wall, January 15, 1993.

Stephan Balkenhol is an artist living and working in Karlsruhe and Meisenthal. His works were shown in solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle (Basel, 1988), Staatliche Kunsthalle (Baden Baden, 1989) and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Royal Hospital Kllmainham (Dublin, 1991) and in group exhibitions as Münster Skulpturen Projekte *(1987),* Possible Worlds, Sculpture from Europe, *Serpentine Gallery/I.C.A. (London, 1990),* Post Human, *FAE Musée d'Art Contemporain (Lausanne, 1992) and* Qui, Quoi, Ou?, *ARC (Paris, 1992).*

Jean-François Chevrier is a critic and curator living in Paris. He teaches history of contemporary art at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris, and is a contributing editor to Galeries Magazine. *The exhibitions and catalogues that he has co-curated and co-edited include* Matter of Facts *(Nantes et al., 1988),* Une autre objectivité/Another Objectivity *(London et al., 1988),* Photo Kunst *(Stuttgart, 1989) and* Lieux Communs, Figures Singulières *(Paris, 1991). He has also co-curated the recent exhibition* Walker Evans & Dan Graham *(Rotterdam et al., 1992).*

Ludger Gerdes is an artist and writer working in Düsseldorf. He has participated in many public sculpture exhibitions, including Münster Skulpturen Projekte *(1987). He has written essential essays on art in public spaces, including "Some Remarks" (1983), "On the Trialectic of Place, Art and Public" (1984), and "Notes" (1987), which were published in* Ludger Gerdes, Essays *(Saint-Étienne, 1988). His most recent publication is* Relation *(Lyon and Cologne, 1992). He has written on such artists as Stephan Balkenhol, Thomas Schütte and Fons Haagmans.*

Craigie Horsfield is an artist working in London. He has shown his work in solo exhibitions at the Cambridge Darkroom (Cambridge, 1988), the Ydessa Hendeles Art Foundation (Toronto, 1990), the I.C.A. (London, 1991), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 1992) and in such group exhibitions as Another Objectivity, *I.C.A. (London et al., 1988),* Photo Kunst, *Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (1989), De Afstand, Witte de With (Rotterdam, 1990) and* Lieux Communs, Figures Singulières, *Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1991).*

Martin Kreyssig is a filmmaker based in Hamburg. His documentary films on art include Das Figur-Grund Problem in der Architektur des Barock (für dich allein bleibt nur das Grab) *(1985-86), about a sculpture by Reinhard Mucha;* Zur Konjugation von 'fallen' *(1990), on an exhibition by Harald Klingelhöller;* Tomatensalat *(1991), on an exhibition by Thomas Schütte;* The interior is always more difficult *(1992), on an exhibition by Richard Deacon and* Le soleil a la taille d'un pied humain *(1993), on the exhibition* Le Diaphane, *curated by Denys Zacharopoulos.*

Jeff Wall is an artist and critic living and working in Vancouver. He is a professor at the department of fine arts at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. His exhibitions include Les Magiciens de la Terre *(Paris, 1989); the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 1985);* documenta 7 *(Kassel, 1982) and* Westkunst-Heute *(Cologne, 1981). He is the author of essays on Stephan Balkenhol, Dan Graham, Rodney Graham, Ken Lum, Gerhard Richter and Ian Wallace.*

Different stages in the development of a new alphabet for the Walt Disney concert hall in Los Angeles.

p. 108:
Cover of Zone 6, called *Incorporations*. The cover lettertype is a new form created by the averaging of other forms.

p. 111:
Cover of a catalogue of Robin Collyer, designed by Bruce Mau.

p. 113:
Bruce Mau during his lecture in Witte de With. Behind Mau: different stages of the transformation of the word 'Zone', showing the in between phases.

BEYOND TYPOGRAPHY

Bruce Mau

February 7, 1993

"The deluge of design that colors our lives, our print, and video screens is synchronous with the spirit of our time. No less than drugs and pollution, and all the fads and 'isms' that have plagued our communities, the big brush of graffiti, for example, has been blanketing our cities from Basel to Brooklyn. Much of graphic design today is a grim reminder of this overwhelming presence. The qualities which evoke this bevy of depressing images are a collage of confusion and chaos, swaying between high tech and low art, and wrapped in a cloak of arrogance: squiggles, pixels, doodles, dingbats, ziggurats; boudoir colors: turquoise, peach, pea green, and lavender; corny woodcuts on moody browns and russets; Art Deco ripoffs, high gloss finishes, sleazy textures; tiny color photos surrounded by acres of white space; indecipherable, zany typography with miles of leading; texts in all caps (despite indisputable proof that lowercase letters are more readable); omnipresent, decorative letterspaced caps; visually annotated typography and revivalist caps and small caps; pseudo – Dada and Futuristic collages; and whatever 'special effects' a computer makes possible. These *inspirational decorations* are, apparently, convenient stand-ins for real ideas and genuine skills. And all this is a reflection, less of the substance, than of the spirit of graffiti – less of the style than of the quality." This quotation is from an as yet unpublished book by Paul Rand excerpted in the *AIGA Journal of Graphic Design* under the headline "Confusion and Chaos: The Seduction of Contemporary Graphic Design." Paul Rand, for those of you unaware of his achievements, was art director of *Esquire* magazine, a pioneer of corporate design responsible for the IBM corporate identity, among others, and professor in the graphic design graduate program at Yale University for over three decades. What we are subjected to in this article is a rant against the "trendiness of the young and inexperienced," Rand's rather pathetic longing for a modernism that exists now only in memory. And not a very accurate memory it seems. What Rand has failed to understand is that there has been a fundamental paradigm shift. A shift that can be traced to the latter part of the nineteenth century with the development of the new sciences of thermodynamics and evolution (sciences of change). Rand simply will not accept that his solution is not the solution, that form, like life itself, continues to undergo a process of constant change. He fails to realize that his position is in fact proof that his theory of form is unable to accommodate transformation and novelty. Had Rand not been working so hard earlier in his career, he might have noticed that others around him, people like Robert Motherwell, as

director of the Documents of Modern Art series published by Wittenborn, and ironically designed by Rand; Gyorgy Kepes, through his work on the Vision and Value series; John Cage, as editor of *Possibilities*, also a Rand design; and László Moholy-Nagy, as an educator, artist and author, had begun to develop a new understanding of form and scale based on work that was then emerging from the scientific community.

In the journal *Transformation*, published in 1950, just a couple of years after Rand had published his book *Thoughts on Design*, there is an essay by S.I. Hayakawa called "Modern Art and Twentieth Century Man" where he quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds and states:

> 'All these have unalterable and fixed foundations in nature!' There is then but one Beauty for all time and one Truth. The 'universal order' has been there since the Creation, and it is there whether the artist discovers it or not.
> Such a theory of Truth, Beauty, and Order is, of course, radically at variance with both current artistic theory and current philosophy of science. There is, according to the modern scientific view, no more order to be found in the universe than we put there by ordering our observations and abstractions and generalizations into systems.
> For example, Newtonian physics is the ordering of an enormous number of observations about the universe, arranged into a coherent system. When that system was found to be deficient in certain fundamental respects, a still more general system, the physics of Einstein, was evolved, which made possible the inclusion of those observations which could not be fitted into the Newtonian system. Similarly, data that cannot be ordered in terms of algebra may be ordered in terms of the differential calculus. Data that cannot be ordered in a two-valued logic are given an order by a probability logic.
> In philosophy of science, we are rapidly discovering in innumerable ways that the 'order of the universe' is not something given us from outside, but something created by ourselves, by means of the ordering and arranging of our symbolic constructs at all levels of abstraction into more or less coherent systems.
> In other words, there is no one Truth with 'unalterable and fixed foundations in nature,' nor is there only one Beauty, dictating 'but one great mode of painting.'
> Every way of abstracting produces its own kind of truth, which, in the hands of one who orders his abstractions well, results in its own kind of beauty.

That Rand missed these subtle markings seems unfortunate, but to have missed May '68, the Vietnam War, Kent State, the Chicago Seven, Buckminster Fuller, Quentin Fiore, Marshall McLuhan, and the seventies and eighties seems truly incredible. What is equally surprising is that Rand now fails to recognize his own bastard children. To have singled out graffiti as the source of the problem is deeply ironic; the techniques of name branding employed by disaffected youth has more in common with the IBM design program than Rand would care to admit. If there is anyone we

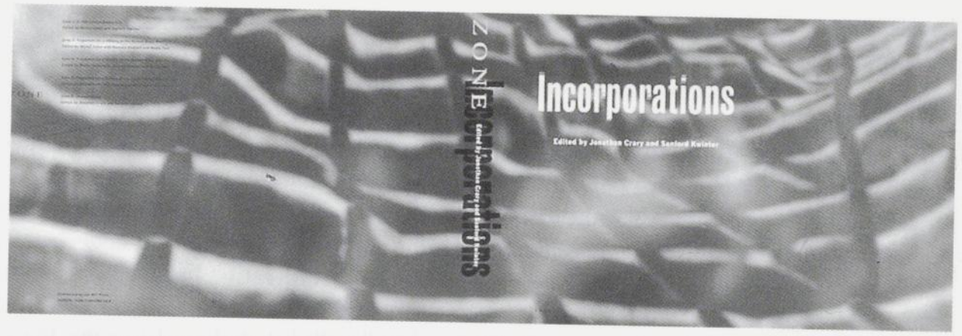
have to thank for the proliferation of outlaw marks, it is Paul Rand and his corporate colleagues.

That I differ with Rand comes as no surprise to me or to those who know my work, but on re-reading Rand's essay I was shocked to realize that in many respects I agree with him. Although Rand is unable to clearly articulate the nature of the problem, the symptoms he describes have concerned me for some time.

Why does the work that Rand dismisses fail? Most contemporary graphic design consists of what I would term surface perturbation. It disrupts the space between the surface and the reader and increases the noise to signal ratio. Increasing noise, decreasing signal. This in itself would not constitute failure, but it usually means the designer is resorting to a poor representation of 'radical' rather than doing the hard work of real innovation. Increasing obscurity, decreasing legibility, turning readers into viewers. If any of you have seen the most recent issue of *Semiotexte* on architecture, you will understand precisely what I mean. Second, these same designers too willingly accept their 2-D existence as if this were somehow possible. They fail to explore the deep structural space beneath the surface of their work or to enrich their work with temporal periodicities. Finally, this work fails because for several decades designers, Paul Rand among them, have been the lap dogs of capital: willing to enslave or exploit anyone or anything in order to explore the narrow band of creativity they too readily, and with too few exceptions, call their work.

In an attempt to address these problems I have been working for several years in a different way, by attacking from two perspectives. The first is in the way that we define our practice, that is, on a very basic level what it is that we do. What are the first principles of a critical design practice. The maxims that govern my work are: including an editorial component; collaborators not clients; inside not outside; function first; independence; a selfish approach to time; don't design things, do things; and readers not viewers. The second line of attack has been in developing a new, more supple understanding of form.

We are moving away from a representational mode to a new relationship with our subject: that of the model. That is, rather than being about something, our work becomes that thing. We're moving away from solving *the* problem or finding *the* solution to evolving systems and strategies that incorporate feedback. We are attempting to understand fundamentally the problem of scale. We are beginning to explore the potential of frequencies that are subliminal or intuitional, beneath the threshold of conscious perception. We are trying to understand our work as being constituted in a multidimensional, dynamical space of invention. We see our work as momentarily stable but as emerging from moments of instability. We are exploring the possibilities of creating incredible complexity with minimal difference. We are looking for new, higher orders of organization and attempting to cast off the grid and its regulator lines. We are attempting to set ourselves free from the singularity, to surf the transformation, to move freely, to become unstable, to drift. To use a Buckminster Fullerism, our work seems to be a verb.



I've been working with Zone since 1985. At Zone we produce a journal that explores ideas in contemporary culture, a series of books of philosophy texts, and a new series of editions called *Swerve*. For the journal, which is called *Zone*, we wanted to address the notion of incorporation. We did this by developing a grid that deviates from what is normally used in graphic design. So for *Zone* 6, called *Incorporations*, we made a diagram of what that problem is about: systems and subsystems and supersystems, in other words, seeing all of life as incorporated in one way or another into some other system, so that the notion of discrete bodies becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. Any entity cannot be sustained without a constant flux of energy through it, so the idea of running an experiment that is discrete, without accommodating a flux of energy through the body that makes that experiment stable, becomes untenable. We moved away from the concept of regulator lines and grid formats to a much more organic and fluid model.

The model has a number of different components. The cover is no longer just the outside; it penetrates the book, and it folds in on itself. We call it the envelope. Its subject is scale, time and incorporation. The type on the cover is a new form created by an averaging of other forms. One of the ideas that ran through the whole process of the collaboration was the idea of attractor basins. It is an idea that comes out of catastrophy theory. And what it actually is, is if you throw something into a bowl, gravity will pull it down into the bottom. What path that object takes, according to how it is thrown into the bowl, is determined by the actual force, the gravity, and the combination of the bowl shape. So what we did on the typography for the cover was actually create a series of attractor basins for each letter and use different fonts for different colors. The form that you end up with is not any one form but the gravitational effect of all the forms superimposed on one another.

In this book, we departed from a convention that we had been using where each essay was treated in more or less the same way, with a fixed text area. We moved instead to understanding each particular essay as a singularity, extracted from a transformation.

In other words, we created a kind of animation of spaces, moving from maximums

to minimums. We determined the maximum area that we would have on a page and a typical minimum, and we modelled that from the smallest to the largest through a curved transformation. By extracting then slices of the animation, each essay was assigned one of these text areas. What we discovered was that there were incredible stages in between what we would define as good design. I would have corrected a lot of the inconsistencies that emerge from this kind of process, but we found out that as we incorporated these things we learned about a different kind of beauty that incorporated in-between stages. So each essay has its own text area that is slightly different from all the other ones. This results in a really slow movement in the book that is impossible to decipher because we shuffled the deck as it were.

Another idea we used actually comes from Karlheinz Stockhausen's notion of kleinfarben melody. That is, making compositions using a difference in timbre and not in pitch. So we tried to do work keeping the pitch constant and the timbre changed. In Stockhausen's work it meant that he would make compositions using one note played by a number of different instruments. The same note would have the same pitch on all the instruments, but an entirely different sound, a sound color, which is a tone color. So, our use of a subtle variation in image color is a result of that. We tried to find the boundary of subtle innovation or intervention. The other thing that we began to understand about the possibilities of this work was that we could include periodicities that were both very short, meaning that events could take place in short time scales, and very long.

In *Incorporations* we moved away from what we had been doing before, where on each page we would put the word 'Zone' to identify the volume. We decided to use a different technique where we kept its position stationary but ran the typography through a series of transformations, discovering in the process these in-between phases. We gave the computer two different typefaces and told it to draw all the intermediate steps. It created all the forms in the middle, which were really surprising because they were unpredictable and a little on the crude side. But what was beautiful about it was that you could tell the computer to make a hundred of them, or two hundred, and the transformation would be imperceptible from one to the next. So when you look in the book, you don't really see the difference, but we have 350 original typefaces.

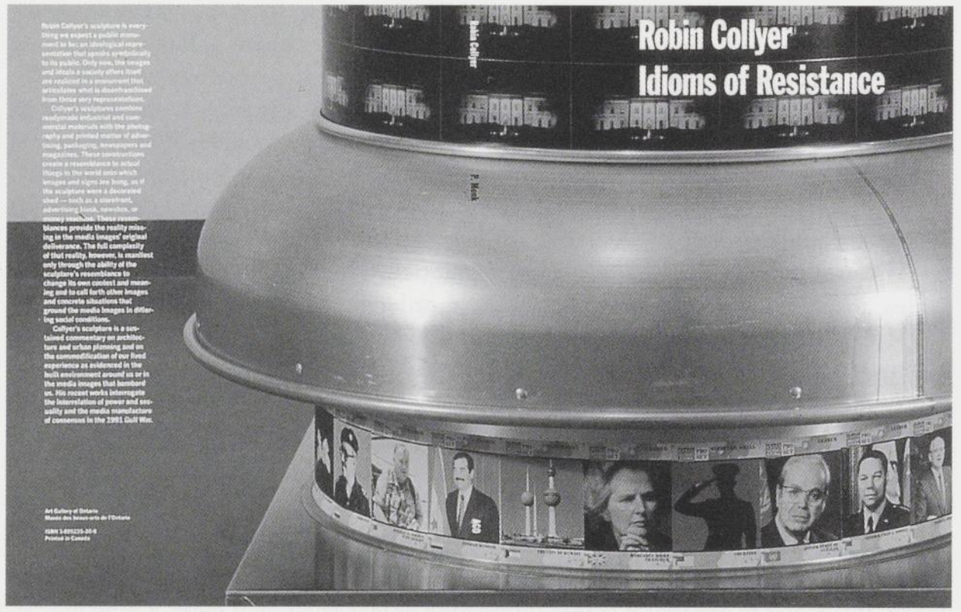
What this showed us is that our work, like all formal results, is in fact about stable instabilities; it is only momentarily formed. And as long as there is a kind of energy flux through those forms, they maintain their position. It is like when you put a book on a shelf. It has the potential to fall to the ground, being held there only as long as the force of gravity is in check by the force of the shelf. As soon as you remove the shelf, the book moves again to another singularity; it falls down, lands on the floor, and once again is caught in a stable form. What we discovered was that there is an incredible diversity of form that lies between all the things that we thought were stable and normal. This knowledge allowed us an incredible freedom.

War in the Age of Intelligent Machines, our first project for *Swerve editions*, explores

the worst quality printing of the world. The idea was to make the publication really cheap and to use that freedom to allow us to do things that otherwise would have been out of the question. At Zone we had created a series of books, *Zone books*, by established philosophers like Henri Bergson, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, where it became more and more difficult to insert new 'inventions.' And even though their work is a kind of outlaw line, in the way that they think, it became increasingly difficult to think about putting somebody like Manuel Delanda into that process – partly because of the costs of the books and partly because of the weight of the contributors. So, we started *Swerve editions* in order to be able to produce these publications cheaply and with some flexibility. Even though the quality of the printing isn't really great, there is something liberating about it. One of the things that I'd like to move away from is a definition of quality that has to do with production values.

We are presently working on a project in Los Angeles for the Walt Disney concert hall that Frank Gehry is designing. Our assignment was to design all the typography that goes in the building – from the street signs to the seats. What we developed was a process of parallel editing. We were to do something that would not mimic the architecture, would not be derivative of it, but which would be really sympathetic, while running a parallel track to what Gehry was doing. After we struggled trying to make signs from a more traditional approach, we decided to go back to what we really know, which is print. We arrived at a point in the development process where we weren't getting the right results with existing typefaces, so we started to use the same technique that we were working on for *Zone*. What this technique does is to map one form over another. By using this mapping technique, it finds correlates between the two forms and then it maps one onto the other with subtle changes. The problems occur when there are no correlates, when the computer cannot really 'understand' what the other object is about. We started to make alphabets by telling the computer to breed one font with another, and you can actually tell it to take certain percentages. In the results we saw a sympathy with the forms that Gehry was generating. We took parts of the forms we were looking for and held on to them and graphed them onto other forms. Eventually, we ended up with a new font. What was exciting about working with the Gehry office was that they believed that the project should not be understood as one event, but that it should be understood as an ongoing, evolving process of exploration. Their idea was to embed in the project as much subtlety as possible so that the first time people would see things, they would discover a subtle consistency in everything.

The last time I was here, Chris Dercon gave me an open letter for the friends of Witte de With, which basically asked 'why are we publishing all this?;' it makes it so difficult to run an art center and to do the things we want to do because it adds a financial and administrative burden to any project. You can no longer simply do an exhibition; you also have to do a catalogue. For my own practice this had such a resonance, partly because I have been designing catalogues for the Art Gallery of Ontario, that it came to a point where I was really beginning to wonder why we are doing all these things. After I got this letter from Chris Dercon, I went home and I had a meet-



ing with Robin Collyer where I gave him the letter, which really kickstarted our design of his catalogue into an entirely new direction. I told him that I wanted to make it as vulgar as possible, partly because Collyer, as an artist, incorporates things from contemporary culture in a way that is really unusual and unique. For example, on the cover of this catalogue there is a kind of ventilation hood that has baseball cards which were put out during the Gulf War with the faces of Norman Schwarzkopf, Margaret Thatcher and Saddam Hussein on it and pictures of the White House wrapped around them.

I don't know how it is in Holland, but in Canada the institutions are very touchy about cropping photographs. They don't like for artworks to not be shown in their entirety. But as a result, all the works look the same, sitting like objects in a big space. Typically I would have edited some images away, but for Collyer's catalogue we didn't; we put them all in. It explains the work better, and it resonates with the industrial catalogues that he is interested in. We just incorporated as much of him as possible.

We are presently working on a book on the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). I can't give it away, but Rem Koolhaas and I wrote a text that outlines what we are trying to do:

> The impossibility' of the book as a classical object is not only given by the ever expanding nature of its contents (modes, sketches, working drawings, 'artworks',

computer generated images, realized buildings), an equally differentiated assemblage of texts, ever increasing influences of different cultures – Japan, Germany, the United States, France – and the sometimes contradictory movements within the work itself that a conventional typography would have to straddle. In the case of an architectural production that recognizes no limits, it is inconceivable to pretend that this mass of information could be 'caught' in a single, systematic typography. For the book to realize its potential we must instead create a dynamic relationship between its form and its declared subject. Any effort to 'represent' the work of OMA would suffer the lifelessness of separation. The book must adopt the strategies and techniques deployed by OMA in order that it be 'of' OMA, not 'about' OMA. The typography must abandon claims of control it cannot sustain in the face of the expansiveness of the material, and explore the new freedoms latent in the abandoned pretensions.

Questions from the audience:

What do you mean by vulgarity? What do you consider vulgar?
I would say a kind of unrefined and poorly considered action. A lot of work is produced, this is not to say that it is less interesting or less good, that lacks a kind of consideration. For instance, *Stern* magazine is brilliantly vulgar because they produce fantastic things in one week.

But what is the effect? In the beginning you presented an interesting opposition between visibility and legibility, and you stressed the fact that you want to work with the reader, that you want your work to be read.
In my experience a lot of reality gets filtered out of certain venues. And the art gallery is probably one of the most filtered venues around. I don't want to filter out anything. I don't want to allow anything to escape as a possible event. Designers don't really like vulgar things because they are sort of inherently abrasive to the notion of refinement, of planning, and of developing a scheme. In that way my work is doing a fairly substantial shift because for a long time we worked to get what we wanted. And now I realize that in that process you leave out lots of things because you are unable to incorporate them. This means that you end up with a really standard reading of things. And if you look at the way that artworks, books and catalogues are so often presented, it is so consistent because there are conventions of how it has to be. And I think that it alienates a lot of people because they think that they don't like it. I think it has something to do with the catalogue because it is one of the basic things we privilege above other things. For me, the answer to your question is that it's not that one thing is better than the other, but that in certain circumstances certain things get privileged.

So you think we should go for something else?
Well I think we shouldn't be afraid to incorporate entirely different strategies. One of

the things in Chris Dercon's letter that was so on the mark was that this really is a knee-jerk reaction. People do an exhibition, and then they do a catalogue. And the catalogues are entirely conventional. They have to have images, the images should be of artworks and the images must be clear and of the right color. It's really crazy because they don't come close to the quality of the work.

Certain things that we're doing would not be happening without other things that are going on in our culture. For example, certain developments in film find their way into what we're doing. But at the same time, one of the things we're trying to reconcile is the idea that forms themselves are not fixed but that they're part of transformations and perceptible as singularities. A given typeface, especially with our current techniques, no longer has to stabilize around a given outline. The thing becomes so different and fluid that it actually begins to live in time and to explore the kind of temporal conditions of its existence. So it's really moving away from a structural stability of a formal device or solution to recognizing that in fact you have a momentary stability that is kept there by a confluence of forces. The thing that kept it there was the vast expense of creating new ones, especially in the earlier part of this century, so it was the force of economy that pushed the thing into stability. Now that those forces are being released, this thing is free to slide down the hill, and you don't know what you're going to get.

Bruce Mau is a designer based in Toronto. He designs the Zone series of books and is creating the publication typography for the Getty Foundation in Los Angeles and for the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburg as well as the typography and signposting for the Walt Disney concert hall in Los Angeles, designed by Frank Gehry. He also works as the creative director of I.D. magazine *and as an editor with the New York based publisher* Swerve Editions. *Mau has taught and lectured on graphic design and architecture.*

WITTE DE WITH: THE EXHIBITIONS 1992

Antoni Muntadas
C.E.E.-Project
February - December
A temporary installation in the entrance hall of Witte de With, of a carpet representing the C.E.E. flag, in which in each of the twelve stars a coin from one of the respective member countries is reproduced. This work was shown simultaneously in other art institutions and public buildings in each of the C.E.E. countries.

Hélio Oiticica
February 22 - April 26
The first retrospective of Hélio Oiticica, curated by Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo and Lygia Pape. The exhibition included publications, documentation and video programs on and by the artist.

Philip Akkerman
Zelfportretten (Self-portraits)
May 16 - July 12
The first exhibition of all of Philip Akkerman's self-portraits: 450 painted, dating from 1981 until 1992, and 676 drawn, dating from 1984 until 1992. The exhibition included a video program and documentation on and by the artist.

Walker Evans & Dan Graham
August 29 - October 11
Curated by Jean-François Chevrier and Chris Dercon.
Photographs (1965-1991) by Dan Graham were shown in Witte de With, while the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen showed photographs (1928-1968) by Walker Evans. Publications and documentation from and on both artists were shown in Witte de With. Video programs by and on Dan Graham were shown in a reconstruction of his 'Interior Design for Space Showing Videotapes' (1986).

Voorwerk 3
October 17 - November 29
Each year Witte de With introduces the work of four artists. This exhibition included works by W.J.M. Kok, Roman Signer, Pia Stadtbäumer and Koen Theys.

no rocks allowed
October 17 - November 29
Curated by Haim Steinbach.
Every year Witte de With invites an artist to curate an exhibition. Following the theme of water, Haim Steinbach selected objects, videotapes, films and texts by Bas Jan Ader, Marcel Broodthaers, James Joyce, Joseph Kosuth, Cas Oorthuys, Klaus Rinke, Gerry Schum, Shelley Silver, J.J. Slauerhoff, Haim Steinbach, the Van Toer family, G. Lee Thompson and Lawrence Weiner.

Stephan Balkenhol
December 12 - January 24, 1993
An exhibition of sculptures and reliefs made between 1982 and 1992.

Collaborations between Witte de With and other institutions

'Negen'
The exhibition 'Negen' (Nine) opened at Witte de With in April 1990 and was shown in a different version in the Provinciaal Museum voor Aktuele Kunst in Hasselt from January 17 until March 17, 1992.

Hermann Pitz
The exhibition 'Panorama MCMXCI' opened at Witte de With in April 1991 and was shown in another version at the Castello di Rivara near Turin in April 1992. At the occasion of this exhibition, an Italian/English edition of the catalogue 'Panorama MCMXCI(I)' was published.

Antoni Muntadas
'C.E.E.-Project'
This project was done in collaboration with the Kunststichting Kanaal in Kortrijk. Identical versions of the work were shown simultaneously in the Fundação de Serralves, Porto; the Federacion Espagnola de Municipios y Provincios (Edge '92), Madrid; Broadgate (Edge '92), London; the Museum voor Sierkunst, Ghent; and the Städelschule, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Kunste, Frankfurt.

Hélio Oiticica
The retrospective exhibition of Hélio Oiticica, which opened at Witte de With in February 1992, was done in collaboration with the Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro and the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris (June 9 - August 23, 1992).
The exhibition was also shown at the Fundação Antoni Tapies, Barcelona (October 1 - December 8, 1992); the Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (January 20 - March 20, 1993) and will be shown at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (October 31, 1993 - February 20, 1994) and the Guggenheim SoHo, New York (January - April, 1995).

Philip Akkerman
The catalogue 'Philip Akkerman, Zelfportretten/Self-portraits' was published in collaboration with Meulenhoff Uitgeverij, Amsterdam.

Walker Evans & Dan Graham
The exhibition 'Walker Evans & Dan Graham' was organized in collaboration with the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam (August 29 - October 11, 1992); Les Musées de Marseille, Musée Cantini, Marseille (November 6, 1992 - January 10, 1993); the Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster (February 14 - March 28, 1993) and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (December 17, 1993 - March 17, 1994).

Stephan Balkenhol
The catalogue 'Stephan Balkenhol, Über Menschen und Skulpturen (about men and sculpture)' was published in collaboration with Edition Cantz, Stuttgart.

Catalogues and editions published by Witte de With

1990
Guillaume Bijl, 'Für Garderobe keine Haftung,' edition
750 copies
box containing 18 postcards, a metal row of pegs, and a small plate inscribed, 'Für Garderobe keine Haftung'
size: 22 × 31 × 5 cm

John Knight, 'Some Works,' catalogue, Dutch/English and French/English
1000 copies
texts: Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Anne Rorimer
size: 27,5 × 31,5 cm; 47 pages, 21 color and 4 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with le Nouveau Musée, Villeurbanne.

John Knight, 'Charting Rotterdam,' edition
1000 copies
box with 25 color postcards on the postwar urban planning of Rotterdam
size: 10,5 × 15 cm
In collaboration with the Rotterdam Arts Council, Architecture Department.

Julio Galán, catalogue, Dutch/English
750 copies
text: Francesco Pellizzi
size: 22 × 27,5 cm; 40 pages, 12 color and 6 black-and-white photographs

Guillermo Kuitca, catalogue, Dutch/English (German supplement)
750 copies
text: Rina Carvajal
size: 22 × 27,5 cm; 32 pages, 12 color and 12 black-and-white photographs

'De Afstand' (Distance), catalogue, Dutch/English (French supplement)
1000 copies
text: Jean-François Chevrier
size: 25 × 30 cm; 32 pages, 4 color and 4 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with Uitgeverij 010-publishers, Rotterdam.

'Voorwerk 1,' edition
500 copies
box containing multiples by Doriana Chiarini, Aernout Mik, Fiona Rae and Kay Rosen
various sizes, mixed media
box size: 22 × 32 × 4 cm

Jiri Georg Dokoupil, 'Die zehn Künstler an die ich am 3. Mai 1990 um 19.00 Uhr gedacht habe.' ('The ten artists which came to my mind at 7 p.m. on May 3, 1990.'), catalogue, Dutch/English
750 copies
text: Jiri Georg Dokoupil
size: 22 × 27,5 cm, 32 pages, 19 color photographs

Ken Lum, catalogue, English/Dutch (German supplement)
750 copies
texts: Linda S. Boersma, Ken Lum, Jeff Wall
size: 28 × 21,5 cm; 84 pages, 20 color and 12 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg.

Ken Lum, 'Melly Shum Hates Her Job,' edition/billboard project
100 copies
silkscreen
size: 3.30 × 2.37 meters

1991
'Cézanne (Enquête),' catalogue, Dutch/French
600 copies
text: Jean-Pierre Criqui
size: 14,8 × 21 cm; 100 pages, 18 color and 10 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with Imschoot Uitgevers, Ghent.

'Negen,' catalogue, Dutch/English and Italian/English
1500 copies
texts: Jan van Adrichem, Linda S. Boersma, Lynne Cooke, Piet de Jonge
size: 22 × 27,5 cm; 72 pages, 18 color and 16 black-and-white photographs
Supplement 1992, Dutch/English
text: Chris Dercon, Gosse Oosterhof
size: 22 × 27,5 cm; 12 pages, 8 color and 1 black-and-white photographs

'Witte de With - The Lectures - 1990,' book, English
1500 copies
texts: Raymond Bellour, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Francesco Pellizzi, Jean-François Chevrier, Jeff Wall
size: 15 × 21 cm; 88 pages, 11 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with Imschoot Uitgevers, Ghent.

Hermann Pitz, 'Panorama MCMXCI,' catalogue, German/Dutch
1600 copies
texts: Chris Dercon, Friedrich Meschede, Hermann Pitz
size: 12 × 26 cm; 112 pages, 14 color, 26 black-and-white photographs and 30 drawings by Dutch artist John Wouda
Co-published with Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, and Kunstverein Braunschweig.

Hermann Pitz, 'Geneaologie der Werke,' edition
75 copies
silkscreen
size: 88 × 124 cm
Co-production with Produzenten Galerie, Hamburg.

Jessica Stockholder, catalogue, English/Dutch
1600 copies
designed by Jessica Stockholder
texts: John Miller, Jessica Stockholder
size: 23,5 × 31,5 cm; 47 pages, 35 color and 10 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago.

Jessica Stockholder, edition
65 signed copies
catalogue (see above) wrapped in silk-screened wallpaper
size: 23,5 × 31,5 cm

Saint Clair Cemin, catalogue, English/Dutch
600 copies
text: Saint Clair Cemin
size: 22,5 × 28,2 cm; 32 pages, 11 color pictures

Henk Visch, 'Facts and Rumours,' catalogue, Dutch/English
750 copies
texts: Henk Visch, Robin Winters
size: 19 × 24 cm; 64 pages, 21 color and 17 black-and-white photographs

Henk Visch, edition
100 signed and numbered copies
silkscreen
size: 16.5 × 21.5 cm

'Voorwerk 2,' edition
350 copies
box containing multiples by Maria Anna Dewes, Brandt Junceau, Rob Kaptein and Guido Schmid
various sizes, mixed media
box size: 21 × 32 × 4 cm

Michael Byron, catalogue, Dutch/English
750 copies
texts: Holland Cotter, Karel Schampers
size: 22.5 × 26.5 cm, 56 pages, 15 color and 5 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Michael Byron, edition
60 signed and numbered copies
silk-screened text, 'Faith, however it manifests itself, is so naive, but so absolutely essential,' on the front and back covers of the above catalogue
size: 22.5 × 26.5 cm

Julião Sarmento, catalogue, Dutch/English
750 copies
texts: Chris Dercon, Leonor Nazaré
size: 22.5 × 26.5 cm; 64 pages, 15 color and 4 black-and-white photographs

Julião Sarmento, edition
60 signed and numbered copies
photographical montage silk-screened with the text 'Correia Papelaria Lembro Balbina' and mounted on the front cover of the above catalogue
size: 22.5 × 26.5 cm

John Ahearn & Rigoberto Torres 'South Bronx Hall of Fame,' catalogue, English, 4000 copies; English/Dutch, 750 copies
texts: Richard Goldstein, Michael Ventura, Marilyn A. Zeitlin
size: 22,5 × 28 cm; 111 pages, 27 color and 92 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

John Ahearn & Rigoberto Torres 'Cool Project,' flyer, Dutch
7500 copies
text: Roland Groenenboom, Barbera van Kooij
size: 8,5 × 16,5 cm; 16 pages, 27 black-and-white photographs

1992
Hélio Oiticica, catalogue, English/Dutch, 2000 copies; French/Portuguese, 2000 copies; Castilian/Catallan, 1000 copies
texts: Hélio Oiticica, Guy Brett, Haroldo de Campos, Catherine David, Waly Salomão
size: 22 × 27 cm; 280 pages, 87 color and 111 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with the Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro and the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris.

Hélio Oiticica, 'Seja Marginal, Seja Herói,' 1968, edition, replica 1992
50 copies
silk-screened banner
size: 115 × 96 cm
Produced by the Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro.

Hélio Oiticica, Parangolé, Capa 21 'Xoxoba' for Nininha of Mangueira, 1968, edition, replica 1991
20 copies
cotton cape
size: 90 × 100 cm
Produced by the Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro.

Philip Akkerman 'Zelfportretten/Self-portraits,' catalogue, Dutch/English
650 copies
texts: Philip Akkerman, Jan van Adrichem, Bert Jansen, Johan Polak and Bart Verschaffel
size: 16 × 23 cm; 148 pages, 100 color photographs

Witte de With - The Lectures - 1991, English
650 copies
texts: Raymond Bellour, Marianne Brouwer, Ludger Gerdes, Remo Guidieri, Kasper König, Alexandre Melo, John Miller, Bart Verschaffel
size: 15 × 21 cm; 112 pages, 16 black-and-white photographs

Walker Evans & Dan Graham, catalogue, French/English/German/Dutch
3500 copies
texts: Jean-François Chevrier, Allan Sekula, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh
size: 22 × 27 cm, 235 pages, 40 color and 44 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with Les Musées de Marseille, Marseille; Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

'Voorwerk 3,' edition
350 copies
box containing multiples by W.J.M. Kok, Roman Signer, Pia Stadtbäumer, Koen Theys
various sizes, mixed media
box size: 21 × 31 cm

Haim Steinbach, 'ijskoude douche (no rocks allowed.),' catalogue, Dutch/English
500 copies
designed by Haim Steinbach
text: Chris Dercon
size: 21,2 × 25 cm; 72 pages, 4 color and 83 black-and-white photographs

Stephan Balkenhol, 'Über Menschen und Skulpturen' (about men and sculpture), catalogue, German/English
1500 copies
texts: Stephan Balkenhol, James Lingwood, Ulrich Rückriem, Thomas Schütte, Jeff Wall
size: 17,5 × 24,4 cm, 112 pages, 16 color and 50 black-and-white photographs
Co-published with Edition Cantz, Stuttgart.

Semipermanent works in and around Witte de With

John Knight, 'Charting Rotterdam, Rotterdam in kaart,' 1990
25 postcards
Ken Lum, 'Melly Shum Hates Her Job,' 1990
billboard on the corner of Boomgaardsstraat/Witte de Withstraat
Hermann Pitz, 'Arbeit für Rotterdam,' 1991
photo installation in the stairwell of Witte de With
Maria Anna Dewes, 'Augen,' 1991
sculpture in one of the exhibition spaces of Witte de With
John Ahearn/Rigoberto Torres, Cool Project, 1991
'Ed de Meijer, Nelly Alegria, Koenrjbiharnie Firipersad;' 'Natoucha Verkerk, Patricia Nijhoff, Lisa Kolet;' 'Mario Boeyen en Antonio Dias'
sculpture-portraits in different locations in the neighborhood of Witte de With
Hélio Oiticica, 'Bolide Lata 1, Apropriacão 2 'Consumitivó', 1966
reconstruction on the roof of the rear building of Witte de With
Philip Akkerman, 'Zelfportret,' 1992
painted self-portrait on a wall of the stairwell of Witte de With
Stephan Balkenhol, 'Freistehende Relieffigur,' 1992
sculpture on the exterior of the stairwell window in Witte de With
Michelangelo Pistoletto, 'Autoritratto di stelle,' 1973-93
photograph on the interior of the stairwell window in Witte de With

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