

The Redistribution of the Sensible- Exhibition Statement

The exhibition can be divided into two parts that will direct this statement and analysis: I. The concept of the installation itself. This includes the location of art works, the reformulation of the space and the movement of the viewer through the space. II. The artworks themselves in the context of the underlying themes of the show.

Exhibition Installation.

Art Galleries, Alternative Spaces and Museums are a sampling of micro-contextual environments where experiments with aesthetic materials, in as much as they call to the senses, can be organized and arranged in provocative ways. The enclosed space of the white cube then becomes its own distribution of the sensible, especially as its clean geometric forms challenge the way that art works can live.

Keeping this in mind, this exhibition/installation follows two trajectories. First, imagine a stone thrown into a quiet pool of water. The concentric waves that result follow a centrifugal pattern beginning from where the stone falls moving to the outer edges of the pool. This exhibition follows a similar pattern and begins in the inner room, with the works of Kristen Cunningham, Pash Buzari, Mathew Antezzo and Jordan Wolfson, and finishes with the large floating sculpture of Tomas Saraceno and the text work of Liam Gillick, both of which are located at an extreme curve of the gallery where the piece interfaces through a glass wall with the outside. There are two works who themselves are wholly outside, but both relate to works on the inside. Eric Anglès Open Edition 5, 2004 is the partner to the work Open Edition 3, 2004 found in the gallery, and some of the appendages of Tomas Saraceno do break through the membrane of glass that encircles the gallery and become attached to trees located in the courtyard, tangential to the gallery space. All the other works fall in the middle. The inner room concerns, as we will see later, works that deal with issues of the insensible, the psychic, the paranormal, and the fetishistic, while the latter works deal with the production of new forms of communities based on difference. As one leaves the inner room through its opening, or aperture, one will notice to his right and left, a circumlinear wall that mimics the gallery plan, as well as three perpendicular walls that radiate from it and follow the trajectory of the lighting system on the ceiling. These three walls are covered with works that deal with the two other important themes of the show: firstly, how the immaterial and insensible become the material of the senses and the brain, and secondly, the role played by the history of apparatus as it emerges out of the history of art, photography, cinema and new media in the production of new forms of observation, art making and in the end subjectivity. That these new forms of observation redistribute the sensible according to their own logics, and sample the world of the sensible and insensible differentially, produces networks of meaning that are radically different from each other. For instance, photography samples space, or as we see in the works of Degas, can radically alter the way we understand the center of the picture in relation to the edges. Degas was the first to break the spell of the center, and many of his works expand beyond the edges of the canvas. Cinema, on the other hand, samples space in relation to movement. As such, the early experiments in cinema brought a new dynamic character to the distribution of sensible, littering the visual landscape with many new forms of dynamic images, dynamic images that later became assembled in radical new ways because of their being edited into streams of information that integrated collage and disrupted narrativity.

Keeping this in mind, a second architectural intervention was made that altered the gallery space and changed the kinesthetic (the pattern of the body movements in space) logic of the show. A 3.8-meter by 3.0-meter wall was constructed to divide the space in two, and is left open at both ends. On the right, as you face the wall from the front, is an opening just large enough for a head to fit through and on the left is an aperture large enough for a body to move through. This wall functions to distribute the kinesthetic logic in two fundamentally different ways that recount the history of art's dialectic interface with the optic and the haptic. The viewer is restricted to simply looking passively from a distance in one case, his head incarcerated in a modernist stockade, and in the other case, the body is free to move and explore, perception is enacted. The wall also has another function: it becomes a display surface for the two projections in the show. On one side is Jan Mancuska's work Inner Shadow, 2006 and on the other is Eric Anglès' work Open Edition 3, 2005. The wall becomes a skin almost translucent in which a double projection is displayed.

The second trajectory of the exhibition concerns the distribution of the textual works that form the intellectual foundation upon which the other works might be interpreted (I say 'might be interpreted' as it is only one of many interpretations). The Body as Brain newspaper installed along the length of the main wall of the front room contains two texts that are important in this regard. One, by Olafur Eliasson, makes the point that art and culture cannot be separated from the world at large and that the museum must be the place for this mediation to take place. But, for the museum to be truly radical, it must show the methods and expose the apparatus of cultural production beyond its normal function of being a vessel for the display of art work. A museum becomes truly radical when it is self-reflexive and recursive. The other text,

by Francisco Varela, a well known neuro-phenomenologist, concerns the way the world becomes the mind. Through an in-depth analysis of Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl's ideas of protension (judgments made in the future which are accompanied by affect, emotion and retention) and the history of memory, as well as ideas from Heidegger, Varela develops an idea of a notion of transparency which is linked to the automatic way we do things. The apparatus of mind and attention can break that transparency. The carpenter misses the nail and hits his thumb, ouch, the transparency is broken and he can stop and assess his/her handicraft. Each apparatus can create a break in the transparency of being. The world's and the body's habits commingle. But, according to Varela, it is the affective tone and its effect on the distributed synchronous neural impulses that set the brain/mind into a state of readiness that are linked to this transparency. He references Leopold and Logothetis' (1996) idea of a readiness-potential as evidence of the neurobiological correlate-understanding that this is not a reductive stance, but instead is an understanding that these biological facts are apparatus that allow for the interdigitation and interaction with a world made up of natural and culturally diverse flows. Together these two texts, one on the need for understanding art in its interdisciplinary context and the other on the need to understand the brain/mind and world as one co-extensive ontologic entity, are emanating from the same spirit. The distribution of the sensible as it is organized in the world through cultural and political economies and as it is reformulated and literalized within the museum context are one in the same thing, in the end affecting the brain/mind and subject of the visitor. The museum therefore could be, if it chose, a place through which radical ideas and methods could be explored, and from which ideas could enter culture, and then, as a result, have important implications for the brains/minds of not only its constituents but society as a whole. Eric Anglès' work is important in this respect by what it does not allow. In his project, Open Edition 3, he has removed all the signs and verbal display normally found on a city street. In doing so, the world becomes an uncanny and unhomelike world to inhabit. Liam Gillick's Greenrooms, Bars and Communes finishes off the distribution of linguistic references that inhabit the space. His is the last work in the show and thusly forms a back drop for the exhibition. Unlike Eliasson, Gillick does not believe the production of radical gestures needed for changes in meaning can be instigated in the institutional hallways and byways of mainstream culture (the museum) and its political interface, but rather in the radical spaces of the disenfranchised, the intoxicated, and the staged. For it is through cooperation, inebriated poetics and self recursive analysis that we act out the means of our resistance from homogeneity.

Art Works.

I would like to follow the map that has been reproduced and made available for the viewer by the gallery.

Inner Chamber:

All the works in this chamber, as described above, deal with the way artists, using their own materials, apparatus, histories, spaces, methods and performances, investigate things non-present, immaterial, insensible and so forth. Artists are uniquely qualified to operate in this terrain.

1. Krysten Cunningham, Shaman Stick, 2006.

As the title implies this is an artwork that functions to conjure up and mediate between spirits. Krysten has mentioned that this is a singing stick that captures the unseen vibrations and allows them to resonate together. In this context, the stick is orchestrating the non-entities emanating from the objects in this room. The work is perched on the floor, and seems to defy the physical forces that usually organize reality. How does it stand upright? The feathers that sit on its top and the colored yarn that is woven tightly around the curved, rough surface of the stick give it the magical qualities. In the context of an art exhibition, this work is re-contextualized from its normal function as a religious, ceremonial artifact into a work of sculpture operating in the history of three dimensional objects. In this context, it functions to enlighten the viewer as to the early origins of three dimensional works of art, like those found, for instance, at Upper Paleolithic sites, in which such an object would have played a role in religious ceremonies. Artworks have the potential to invoke the historical unconscious and part of their power is related to this ancient past.

2. Jordan Wolfson, The Fool #1, 2007

Tarot cards are usually considered, like astrology, as part of the realm of the psychic. Like Rorschach Ink Blots, they call upon the interpreter's imagination and reflect upon, to a greater or lesser extent, the interpersonal dynamics present at the reading. The Fool, in Tarot, is the artist, the creator who is oblivious to life. He is naive, innocent and idealistic, who approaches his future with a willingness to explore the unknown. The Fool is also the clown in Shakespearean Drama who, through his own methods and devices for knowing the truth, attempts (although usually unsuccessfully) to inform the king of his impending tragedy and the reasons for it. He unveils the truth and is the instrument of that truth. In this photographic work, a huge fore-grounded hand holds the card so that the real suns rays radiate upon its surface in line with those of the drawn suns rays. Through this imagery, the work is an interpretation of the creation myth with God in this case playing the role of the artist.

3. Mathew Antezzo, Composition 2 #1(frosting), 2007.

Two works of art occur simultaneously in two different places in the gallery. The idea of concurrence, as existing in two places at the same time, and moment speaks to a form of immateriality. Light becomes a kind of messenger penetrating the wall that separates the pieces as it reorients the trajectory of the image-eye axis from straight-on to ninety degrees. In the inner room, the work acts as a specter or ghost of desire instantiated as it is in the lusciousness of swirling chocolate frosting which also could be the curvilinear motion that a paint brush traces. Here, the folded line becomes a molecular model for the structure of the insensible itself, caught as it is in the photograph's frozen moment. In the main space of the gallery the picture becomes part of a network of images that display the nature of intensive, folded, multiplicitous temporality.

4. Pash Buzari, On the Passage of an Innate Political Moment in Time, 2006.

This work consists of sound and video. The video consists of a triangle of light which is projected on a wall in the latter part of the day. In between the sun and the wall is a tree which, through the movement of its leaves in the wind, creates an effect of dappled light. Three speakers mounted at the top of the opposite wall broadcast a sound track of the recorded activity of the city street. The interface of the two creates a work that is about the imagination in the context of the everyday. Looming behind the surface of the effects of light on objects is a shadow, and that shadow is the real virtuality of possibilities. The shadow, which is another theme that runs through the show, is usually what we don't pay attention to, it is the other dark side. In this context the shadow is fore-grounded and it is the piece. We look into the shadow of swirling and intermittent shapes to find recognizable percepts where only the dynamic condition of the world is found.

Outer Chambers

5. Olafur Eliasson, Body as Brain, Newspaper

This work was part of a larger project that Eliasson did at the Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland. The newspaper was used as wallpaper in the museum and was installed according to a specific code inscribed as a series of 9 boxes in the middle of the lower part of the paper. For the current installation, a reading table was made and the newspaper installed underneath a piece of Plexiglas. What is significant is the two texts reproduced, as this work operates as one of the intellectual anchors for the exhibition. The content of the text is explained above.

6. Mathew Antezzo, Composition 2 #2 (frosting), 2007

This work has already been described above.

7. Jordan Wolfson, Helen Keller, 2007

Two important trajectories of this exhibition are embodied in this work. Helen Keller became blind and deaf after a bout of either encephalitis or meningitis at the age of 19 months. Through the special relationship with her teacher, Anne Sullivan, she was able to learn to read and write in Braille. Her story was the subject of many books and films, the most famous being *The Miracle Worker* (William Gibson, 1957). In the work shown here, we see the black and white portrait of Helen that has been rephotographed by the artist. What makes this work special is the fact that the artist shot the image a flash, the reflection of which appears above Helen's skull in the area of the frontal lobe. The flash looks like a specter, a spirit, the flash of understanding or a memory of the way the work was made. The flash as an apparatus is foregrounded in the image, it takes center stage. Thus, the sensorium and the history of its lack of memory are tethered to the blinding effect of the apparatus as it inscribes itself as an obstruction to seeing the portrait of Helen.

8. Nora Schultz, Watch Tower 1, 2007.

This sculpture contains a found booklet from the 1980's that deals with the attempt to gain control over the economic-political system of that time by analyzing 'the dollar inflation and the collapse of the US Dollar'. The handwritten and copied booklet was fixed on a plate of stainless steel that was then folded with another plate into a watchtower structure like the architectural space from which, for instance, guards overlooking the Berlin Wall could watch possible attempts to escape East Germany. Usually, there is a large flood light on top of such a tower, and the guards manipulate the light to cast its rays into the darkest corners. A watchtower can also function as a place from which to see into the future before it arrives as the eyes are long distance prognosticators. Schultz's tower is a piece of folded metal in which the text that belongs to it is folded in random ways so that the linear text is transformed into a folded one, and unlikely touchings occur, causing the information to be connected in strange ways. Words not close to each other in linear time all of sudden are juxtaposed. These words are freed from the tyranny of analogue reading. We are reminded of the folded and multiplicitous time of hypertext, where layers of meaning exist just behind the surface of the computer screen lingering somewhere on the Internet, ready to be called. All information is existing at all times, in all spaces, simultaneously. This effect is further accentuated by the use of stainless steel which creates virtual reflections of the text.

9. Eric Anglès, Open Edition, 3, 2004

Eric's work deals with a Situationist strategy of the *derivé* and the formation of a new urban kinaesthesiology. Photographs of New York City streets are altered by removing all traces of signs that normally delineate the urban space and help direct our attention and movements. We are left blind in the urban jungle, left to face it unaided. This renegotiation of the urban space becomes a creative act. Here the artist attempts to control his own destiny. French philosopher Michel Foucault distinguishes between the Disciplinary Society and the Society of Control: Individuals in a Disciplinary Society are controlled by a network of signs and symbol, like road signs and signs directing one to the toilets, that are distributed in their collective visual landscape. In the Society of Control, however, these networks have become more complex and metaphysical, and like branding, have become internalized, forming their unconscious habits from without. Anglès' work is therefore a form of insurrection from the tyranny of these systems of signs. As an artist, he wants to control his own space in which he is free to move without these infringements.

10. Jan Mancuska, Inner Shadow, 2006

This work was made in the following way: he projected a light through a chair that resulted in a shadow. The shadow was traced and then fabricated in wood to become the sculpture that is attached to the wall. The chair on the wall is flat and is the physical representation of a kind of fourth-dimensional space as the product of a three dimensional object. This goes back to Poincaré's notion of the 4th dimension which so interested Marcel Duchamp, affecting his notion of retinal art and that which characterized art made for the brain/mind which could only be experienced in the 4th dimension. But Jan's work is also about apparatus. The light from the projector forms the simulated shadow of the chair which is projected on the floor in front of the wall where the wooden sculpture is. The affect is that the chair appears to have something to do with the shadow on the floor. It does and it doesn't. The video projects onto the floor an image of a shadow where a shadow might occur. Here, however, is a fake shadow, a shadow drawn with the help of a computer animation program. He has produced a simulation of the shadow. The shadow, which usually plays the background role and which usually accentuates the lines and forms of the primary fore-grounded object, has become the image itself projected as a video. But, if one looks at that projection on the floor, one realizes three things that are important to the work and to the show: 1. the the projection is not keystoned. It is not a perfect square but more like a trapezoid. 2. the projection follows the base of the wall and is the right angle projection of the wall itself. 3. the projection subtly vibrates the shadow, which all of a sudden jumps and respires; it becomes alive. This simulated shadow is, for the viewer, real.

11. Krysten Cunningham, Black 6-eye, 2007

This work has some similarities to M.C. Escher's Stars, 1948. Escher's work depicts a beveled wireframe of 3 compound octahedra floating in space and two chameleons contained within. It is part of a generalized group of figures called 'magic cubes,' the most famous being the Rubik's cube. Black 6-eye generates another mythology concerning the routes of abstraction in which squares and polyhedron had mystical characteristics which they shared with mathematics as well. It is linked to the history of artists investigating the 4th dimension, like Duchamp, the Russian constructivists, and the Futurists, who were trying to escape the tyranny of one-point perspective. Black 6-eye is an investigation of the endless blackness of space in the solar system. It concerns the complicated geometric configuration of black holes in which time and space are connected and curved. The yarn used to make the work hearkens back to Frei Otto's experiments with yarn in the production of new forms of architectural space.

12. Yudi Noor, Taxi (wall installation), 2007

Taxi is a performative sculpture, part of which will be used in a 'ghosting' to be performed on May 24th in the gallery. The secret history of modernism can be found in its early fascination with the mystical and magical forces thought to inhabit spaces at the end of the 20th century. In some ways, photography's fascination with documenting spirits, cinema's early exploration of the phantasms of altered reality, and, as we have already mentioned, artists' research into the fourth dimension, were all part of modernism's underbelly that still lingers today. Diedrich Diederichsen's recent research into the roots of minimalism as a result of experimentation with drugs in the sixties is another example of artists attempting to find answers not to the sensible but to the immaterial forces that negotiate the real. Yudi Noor works at the margins of the real and unreal and uses minimalism as a way to get in between objects and object-relations.

13. Erik Smith, Perfect is My Death Word, 2007

This work is shown as video-taped documentation of the work 'Perfect is My Death Word' performed at De Appel in Amsterdam. The performance/video is a recreation of the James Lee Byars sound work of the same name. The original work was produced by Byars at the Neues Museum Weserberg, Bremen in 1995 and exists as an edition on CD of 20 minutes of silence after which he simply says the sentence 'Perfect is my death word'. For this project, Erik Smith asked a few black metal bands to recreate this live by inserting the sentence into one of their original songs. A performance by a special guest band will be held in the gallery on May 24th.

14. Liam Gillick, Greenrooms, Bars and Communes, 2007

This work was already mentioned above in reference to the textual reading of the show.

15. Tomas Saraceno, Air-Port-City, 2007

This ongoing project has been inspired by the floating cities of Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys' New Babylon. This project is part Utopian Vision, part Sustainable Architecture, part Fantasy. It hovers at the extinction of orthogonal forces as it floats in the immediate spaces of the gallery, extending its tentacles to the far reaches of the space and creating obstructions, but at the same time proposing a metaphor for a space without boundaries or borders. Perhaps the balloons are the ommatidia of a large collective eye that builds vision from the assemblage of the multiplicity of monads (individual entities with individual perceptions that together create a larger, complex entity and vision). At a more metaphysical level, together they could form an invisible space of emerging subjectivities and refer to the weightlessness of consciousness, itself supported by others in an infinite, non-ending, emerging being-ness.

16. Artist Zines, Newspapers and print works created by Eric Anglès, Nora Schultz and Erik Smith.

17. Eric Anglès, Open Edition, 5, 2005

Situated at the outskirts of the gallery-territory, this work is the first object that meets the visitor. This newspaper work is part of a continuing project in which the artist first finds free newspapers distributed at various locations in the streets of New York City and then removes all the text from them leaving them bone white. They are then returned to a similar distribution apparatus and shown as a reconstituted, found artwork. Visitors to the gallery can either take one from the dispenser or sign up to be part of a free subscription service administrated by the artist.