

In Manners of Matter, Manifestation.

A given rise in volume of theory and text publication, alternative and museum contexts, the pre-eminence of the curator, etc., has reached speeds and proportions which would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. Despite the recent waning of the market, these changes will remain for the most part, leaving their indelible mark intact.

One of the by products of this new infrastructure is an extreme of feedback to the artist. Today an artist would have to work hard to live in isolation and naivete. These amounts of increased feedback and variability may develop an abnormal level of self-consciousness in some artists and a cynicism in others.

At least in all cases it provides artists with

More so amongst younger artists than older, this phenomenon's steady increase has left some indelible symptoms. The first being an expanded repertoire of tropes, the extreme taxonomies of genre, philosophical theory, choices in strategy, and variable historical tack, and a full supply of self-consciousness.

The second, being the net result of the first turns out too be a conservatism in curatorial and critical methods. Where the perpetuation of the stock categorizations of genre, method, and premise are structured in dualisms where installation is pitted against object/artifact/piece, conceptual art as against the visio-sensory and perceptual or formal, the straight against the ironic/critical/cynical, the handmade against the manufactured, appropriated, etc.

This loss of the ability to regard works of art singularly and specifically in a neutral terms vernacular acts also as an amnesia to the open debatable histories of art that one may acknowledge or avoid, challenge, etc.

INFLATABLE BALLAST (the extremities of material posture)

The Aztecs devoted themselves to art & torture simultaneously, treating human sacrifice and flower arrangement with similar reverence.- 1.)

Plato's famous tiered ontological construction based in the existence of archetypal essences of every class of object as the foundation of its premise, is partially thrown up in the air by a passage in his last and lesser known Philibus where he suggests building a natural and absolute aesthetics upon the specificity of pure tone, or the isomorphic proportions and conditions of surface which are the product of a set of relations in and of itself.

- 2.) This is a contradiction and for me a dualism which is applicable at this very moment in art.

Every one familiar with the components of conceptual art realizes the importance and dependence it has upon the documentation aspect that it carries with it. With its premise and meaning located in ideas, usually either the work is never seen by an audience, is conjured up by pictures and drawings installed in an exhibition space, or hovers one of many ways within an artifact or context which is exhibited directly.

Plato's archetypal essence/identity is separate yet coexisting in the subject, in the way that most conceptual art locates its ideas via the vehicle of some artifact or cueing method we are given. The supposedly pure, visio-sensory art, that conveyed by a formal grammar, or even empirical or material grammar, presents itself as being a direct un-ideational method to convey meaning/experience.

We shouldn't need to be reminded that both of these premises are dependent upon tradition reinforced by text and context. Therefor as premises they can be shattered easily. We could show that the ontology of formal interpretation is conceptual, or we could show that the ontology of the cognitive or ideational is formally based as in its emergence from phoneme, morpheme, syntax, and grammar etc. - the formalities of structuralism. None the less we hold onto this dualism because it is useful, like the discrimination we hold to between black and white, and that of color. Listen to Dennis Oppenheim speaking in an interview with Allana Heis, "

He is trying to point out that what he really is doing has only to do with the procedures of forms acting on each other.

One can see this as an extended line of thinking which begins with Raymond

Roussel passes through Picabia, Duchamp, Tinguely, Cage, The Post minimalists and Earth Works art.

Listen to Duchamp, Juan Gris, Cezzane, etc.

Gerald Edelman has shown that our percepts of the idea and our percepts of the sensory are the same thing.- 3.) That the apparatus of the brain that apprehends an idea is the same as the one that apprehends the seeing of an object for instance. Bergson has shown long ago that the only difference here is of the external input from the object, that the virtual memory and the object of it meet to manifest it in a perception. Here the live quality to the experience results from a resonance occurring between the accurate resolution and lucidity of the objects sketches which the virtual memories enter. Donald Kuspits demands for conceptual art requiring a haptic or tactile responsibility is I believe derived from these same perceptual issues.

So an artist can sit back and look at an idea and toss it about like a piece of clay in his mind, but could also be said to have required learning before fully experinecing a Van Gogh painting and require the meaning through an assembly of thoughts, sensation, asesement, and knowledge.

When looking at context in this way as it relates to judgement and perceptual assesement one sees that in looking at a "conceptual" work - one isn't supposed to entirely "look" at a conceptual work - one sees that the meaning one is after depends upon the context one regards it by. We construct this context of regarding the work by the way of cues which come from the work itself or which comes from information we cull from other sources. In a work by Tom Freidman for example, the gallerist shows us descriptions about each work, in one we read that the balls which make it up have all been stolen from various stores by the artist. The works bouyancy is dependent upon the constructed interpretaion this fact gives to it, it breathes it with life. So too, would be a photograph by Cris Burden of himself firing a pistol at a passing jet plane. The intended meaning of the piece arises when it is assumed to have happened. Works by fluxus artists and many artists at the present time operate with the amiguity of the event such as these two examples describe held in a never never land where it is never revealed. In works such as these the grammer of conceptual art being digested by the artist and assumed to be by the viewer is manifested rhetorically to achieve the desired meaning(s). A recent example would be a work exhibited at Postmasters

gallery by an artist who left a note on the wall describing a work which consisted of convincing another artist to give his installation to the artist for his own use in the exhibit. Left on the floor of the gallery was a pile of various materials which ambiguously were supposedly the destroyed work from the original artist now exhibited as a work by the appropriating artist. A piece such as this which is impossible to know of in terms of truth or intentionality brings up issues of authorship and the premises of perception.

Not long ago I saw in an exhibition, a monochrome Gerhard Richter painting hung a few feet away from an Ad Reinhardt "black" painting. This to me became somewhat of an inspiring moment. There next to each other were two medium sized canvases both done in oil paint, both monochrome and nearly black, both pictureless paintings. Yet in one sense these paintings couldn't have been further from each other in their completely extreme and opposing approaches.

The Reinhardt, an example of how far a painting can go and remain so entirely without any interdependence with concept or becoming a reductive "object," or merely being an empiricism of materials, entirely premised as a strict visual experience, this type of painting goes as far as a painting can go without becoming something else, fulfilling Reinhardt's stated dictum's of no brush strokes and no factory surface, "no color," yet colors, and, subjectless yet objectless.

The Richter, when looked at quickly might have been by the same artist. Also nearly black, a dark and cold grey actually, and evenly textured as if painted by a method used in some hotel lobby - but not feeling mechanically produced. It was clearly a painting, but somehow it didn't expect being looked at. By the mechanical nature of the textures, the distancing effects of the stoic gray and indifferent eggshell luster this painting wishes to be regarded through its idea or perhaps better stated, its thoughts about questioning originality and judging experience, the premise of painting, and of artifice. Most artists are versed with his conceptually plural strategy (a way of working which may prove itself in time through the dissolution of its conceptual aspect) his work being at several distinct "genres" of painting simultaneously, Painting like this is as far as one can take the medium and reduce, deduce, thinking and "idea" without spilling into a primacy conveyed

by sensory seeing or experiencing through the visualized procedures firmly<sup>N</sup> established by the tradition of painting.

The Reindhardt, visuality without cognitive signification, the Richter, signification and concept evidenced.

But these paintings were not alone, they were component parts along with wall texts and other monochromes in an installation artwork by Sophie Calle. In it, representative paintings by various noted "monochrome" painters were installed together with wall texts describing the perceptions of their work along with descriptive accounts of "blind" subjects on what they are "seeing" in their minds eye so to speak.

This parenthetical use of artworks in the midst of other artworks may not be an entirely new idea but this level of complexity in terms of what it assumes as understood in the viewer and artist would have been unthinkable just 20 years ago.

Having this degree of flexibility and freedom is of course a good thing, it opens new niches for art, but getting swept up in it may leave high and dry the possibilities of maintaining the singular and direct perceptual experience in art. It may have a negative effect in that it leads one away from specificity and the vernacular of experience in art.

For instance, what about the invigorating and promising account given by Tony Smith immersed in the experience of a night drive over freshly paved and unlit interstate highway that seems to have inspired little in the way of art making. 4.)

Intercontextual constancy, interpretation, and generalization, *PREMISE SEEING*

When we interpret an art work we use the same language games that Ludwig Wittgenstein used as his main thesis in Philosophy. Of course when it is used with art it involves visual language and not solely verbal.

Visual Art is usually assumed to dwell in the perceptual realm more than in the cognitive or linguistic realm. Philosophers rarely - but always at least once in their career - address the issues of perception.

Re-Casting the Net of Wittgenstein.