AHST 4342-501 (27532) History of Media and New Media Art Spring 2018 Dr. Charissa N. Terranova University of Texas at Dallas Arts & Humanities T-Th 1:00-2:15

Tuesday 02/13/18

Thinking Machines





Comer Collection: Memory: Mystery, Magic and Make-believe

Curator: Anna Fritzel

selections from the Corner Collection honored photographer: Cig Harvey

Memories are unreliable, like dreams and deja vu. They can be hyper-real and surreal at the same time, creating mysterious visions, imagery, and emotions. The photographs in this exhibition speak to memory and the malleable past while connecting the viewer to the present.

Exhibition: February 12 - March 9, 2018 Anna Fritzel Gallery Talk: February 19, 4:30 p.m. Reception: February 27, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Honored Photographer Cig Harvey Lecture: February 27, 7:00 p.m. Location: University Theatre Gallery (Jobby)

Cig Harvey, Scout & The Pomegranate Seeds, 2014, 14x14 inches, photograph on paper

Gallery hours:

For more information, ah.utdallas.edu or call 972-UTD-ARTS. For assistance call 972-883-2982 or Texas Operator 1-800 RELAYTX. UT Dallas is an equal opportunity/affirmative action university.

Next week, 02/20/18:

Margit Rosen, "'They Have All Dreamt of the Machines – and Now the Machines Have Arrived': New Tendencies – Computers and Visual Research, Zagreb, 1968-1969," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 90-111.

This week, 02/13/18

David Bellos, "Georges Perec's Thinking Machines," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 38-50.

Who was Georges Perec and what is his relationship to machines? ... To writing machines?

Did he use computers?

Georges Perec (1936-1982) never used computers and probably had only an elementary understanding of what they were. On the other hand, the *concept* of a thinking machine played a significant role at a key stage in his development as a writer, and provided him with material and a model for some of his most experimental work...

...he remained steadfast in his insistence that creativity was not a gift from elsewhere, and that imagination could be replaced by more reliable tools.

Perec never got beyond Marxism for beginners, but he stuck to a basically left-wing view of the world: writing was work, and like any other industry, it was the product of the *labor* and *machinery*. Such a cast of mind made him particularly open to the literary possibilities of all kinds of machines, including those electronic devices that were just beginning to emerge from research labs.

-- David Bellos, 38



Georges Perec [1936-1982]

- French novelist, filmmaker, essayist
- Born in working-class neighborhood of Paris to Polish Jewish parents; both parents died in connection to WWII; He was adopted by his uncle.
- Oulipo: Ouvroir de littérature potentielle; roughly translated: "workshop of potential literature;" founded 1960; French-speaking writers and mathematicians who seek to create works using constrained writing techniques

How do you make a simple machine using constraints?

What are constraints?

- Constraints are used as a means of triggering ideas and inspiration, most notably Perec's "story-making machine;" using lipograms, palindromes, S+7, etc.
- A lipogram (from Ancient Greek, *leipográmmatos*, "leaving out a letter") is a kind of constrained writing or word game consisting of writing paragraphs or longer works in which a particular letter or group of letters is avoided—usually a common vowel, and frequently *E*, the most common letter in the English language
- A palindrome is a word, phrase, number, or other sequence of characters which reads the same backward as forward, such as *madam* or *racecar*.
- S+7, sometimes called N+7 Replace every noun in a text with the seventh noun after it in a dictionary. For example, "Call me Ishmael. Some years ago..." becomes "Call me islander. Some yeggs ago...". Results will vary depending upon the dictionary used. This technique can also be performed on other lexical classes, such as verbs.







Georges Perec, directly influenced by *Gadsby*, used this lipogrammatic technique for his novel La Disparition (1969), avoiding the same letter "e", which is also the most used letter in French. For its translation into English –A Void by Gilbert Adair- also the letter "e" was omitted. It was translated to other languages like Spanish omitting the "a" (the second most used letter in this language), Romanian, Dutch, Swedish, Turkish and Japanase. In this special and playful literature, the merit of writing omitting a certain letter is not only for authors but also for translators who manage to stick to the rules.

CONSTRAINTS

What does the act of initiating constraints – creating a machine – do to art?

What does it do to the act of making art?

Constraints and Modernism 1910-1950



Mondrian became aware that 1.) in plastic art reality can be expressed only through the equilibrium of dynamic movements of form and color and 2.) pure means afford the most effective way of attaining this. He advocated in painting the following: the balance of unequal opposites, achieved through the right angle, and the simplification of color to the primary hues plus black and white.

GRID

Mondrian, Composition with Red, Blue, Black, Yellow, and Gray, 1921



Piet Mondrian, Evening, 1908



Mondrian, The Blooming Apple Tree, 1912



Mondrian, Sea in Starlight, 1914



Mondrian, Tableau No. 2 with red, blue, black and gray , 1923



Mondrian, Trafalgar, 1939

Mondrian, New York 1, 1941



Mondrian, Broadway Boogie Woogie, 1942

Mondrian, Victory Boogie Woogie, 1944

"The truly modern artist sees the metropolis as abstract life given form: it is closer to him than nature and it will more easily stir aesthetic emotions in him."



Le Corbusier Unité d'habitation, Marseilles, France, 1946-52 City in the Sky Unité d'Habitation, Nantes-Rezé, 1955 Unité d'Habitation, Berlin, 1958 Unité d'Habitation, Briey, 1963 Unité d'Habitation, Ferminy, 1965











Gerrit Rietveld, Red-Blue Chair, 1917-18





Gerrit Rietvelt, Side Table for Schröder House, 1924



Gerrit Rietveld, Schröder House, Utrecht, 1924







Theo Van Doesburg, Composition VIII (The Cow), 1918



Theo Van Doesburg, Composition VIII (The Cow), 1918



Theo Van Doesburg, Contra-Construction Project Axonometric, 1923

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's "Telephone Paintings" 1922







Moholy-Nagy, Construction in Enamel 3 (EM 3), 1922 Porcelain enamel on steel



Art by Telephone, Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1969

On the LP the Museum's director, Jan van der Marck, interviews, by long-distance telephone, artists Siah Armajani, Richard Artschwager, John Baldessari, Iain Baxter, Mel Bochner, George Brecht, Jack Burnham, James Lee Byars, Robert H. Cumming, Francoise Dallegret, Jan Dibbets, John Giorno, Robert Grosvenor, Hans Haacke, Richard Hamilton, Dick Higgins, Davi Det Hompson, Robert Huot, Alani Jacquet, Ed Kienholz, Joseph Kosuth, Les Levine, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Guenther Uecker, Stan Van Der Beek, Bernar Venet, Frank Lincoln Viner, Wolf Vostell, William Wegman, and William T. Wiley, each discussing with van der Marck how to execute an artwork for inclusion in the show to be fabricated by in Chicago strictly by the artist's verbal instructions.

Constraints and Minimalism 1959-1975


Painting between Surface and Object

Frank Stella, Green Gate, 1958





Frank Stella, Marriage of Reason and Squalor, 1959



Frank Stella, Marriage of Reason and Squalor, 1959



Frank Stella, Die Fahne Hoch! 1959

121.5 in × 73.0 in



Frank Stella, Gezira (Black Series), 1960

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Richard Serra, Verb List Compilation: Actions to Relate to Oneself, 1967-68



Richard Serra, Serra Throwing Lead, 1969



Richard Serra, Sign Board Prop, 1969



Richard Serra, Corner Prop, 1970

Constraints and Conceptualism 1965-present



Installation of work by BMPT at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1967 Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni



Installation of work by BMPT at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1967



Olivier Mosset, Zero Degree Painting, One of over 200 identical paintings, 1966-1974

Roland Barthes, Writing Degree Zero, 1953



Niele Toroni's metric square brush strokes of oil on canvas



Niele Toroni – Imprints of a No. 50 Paintbrush Repeated at Regular Intervals of 30 cm., 1968



Michel Parmentier, Painting No. 10, 1965



Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, Within and Beyond the Frame, 1973

Daniel Buren, Poster, (1 of 200 in Paris), 1968





Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, Within and Beyond the Frame, 1973



Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, Within and Beyond the Frame, 1973





Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, To Transgress, 1976



Daniel Buren, Exhibition of an Exhibition, A Piece in 7 Pictures, 1972



Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir of Painting-Sculpture, 1971



Daniel Buren, Eyes of the Storm, 2000-2005



What does the act of initiating constraints – creating a machine – do to art?

What does it do to the act of making art?

P.A.L.F. [automatic production of French] literature] is of interest as the first explicitly mechanical device entertained by Perec for the production of literary texts, and also as a symptom of the '60's fascination with the potential of the signifier to subvert, overturn, and generally wreak havoc with meaning and authorial intention.

-- Bellos, 40

Constraints and the Reshaping of Authorship



Retinal Art versus Anti-Retinal <u>Art</u>



Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) player 1911 Duchamp, Portrait of chess



Readymade

Duchamp wanted, he said, "to put art back in the service of the mind."

Duchamp, Bicycle Wheel, 1913





INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF MODERN ART ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS 09th INFTY REGT ARMORY, NEW YORK CITY FEBRUARY 15th TO MARCH 15th 1913 AMERICAN & FOREIGN ART.

AMONG THE GUESTS WILL BE - INGRES, DELACROIX, DEGAS, CÉZANNE, REDON, RENOIR, MONET, SEURAT, VAN GOGH, HODLER, SLEVOGT, JOHN, PRYDE, SICKERT, MAILIOL, BRANCUSI, LEHMBRIICK, BERNARD, MAILSE, MANET, SIGNAC, LAMIREC, CONDER, DENIS, RUSSELL, DUFY, BRAQUE, HERBIN, GLEIZES, SOUZA-CARDOZO, ZAK, DU CHAMP-VILLON, GAUGUIN, ARCHIPENKO, BOURDELLE, C. DE SEGONZAC,

LEXINGTON AVE .- 25th ST.

Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912





Eliot Elisofon, Marcel Duchamp Walking down Stairs mimicking Nude Descending a Staircase, 1952



Gerhard Richter, Ema (Nude Descending a Staircase), 1992



Readymade

Duchamp wanted, he said, "to put art back in the service of the mind."

Duchamp, Bicycle Wheel, 1913



It is "a joke about the meter (3.2 ft)," Duchamp glibly noted about this piece, but his premise for it reads like a theorem: "If a straight horizontal thread one meter long falls from a height of one meter onto a horizontal plane twisting as it pleases[it] creates a new image of the unit of length."

Duchamp, Three Standard Stoppages, 1913-14





Readymade

How is Duchcamp's readymade a constraint?

Duchamp, Fountain, 1917


Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917



John Baldessari, The Back of All the Trucks While Driving from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, 1963





ECON - O - WASH 14 TH AND HIGHLAND NATIONAL CITY CALIF.

LOOKING EAST ON 4TH AND C CHULA VISTA, CALIF.

John Baldessari, National City Series, 1966-68

QUALITY MATERIAL ---

CAREFUL INSPECTION ---

GOOD WORKMANSHIP.

ALL COMBINED IN AN EFFORT TO GIVE YOU A PERFECT PAINTING.

John Baldessari, Quality Material, 1966-68 TERMS MOST USEFUL IN DESCRIBING CREATIVE WORKS OF ART:

GIVE VISION ENJOY DIRECTION CHARM FLAVOR INFLUENCE A NEW SLANT INTEREST FORCE DELIGHT UNIQUENESS AROUSE PERMANENCE COMMUNICATE INSPIRATION CULTIVATE A GLOW NURTURE PLAN INTELLIGENTLY MOTIVATION ENCHANTMENT DETACH TRANSFER BLEND CHALLENGE ENLIGHTEN ELEVATE INVIGORATE SATIATE ENTHRALL IMPROVE TAKE SERIOUSLY PRECISE CARE VALUE FLAGRANCE OUT OF THE ORDINARY

DISCIPLINE DELICATE COMMAND ATTENTION EXALT DEVELOP SATISFY BEAUTIFY IDENTIFY INSPIRE ORIGINATE CREATE ASSOCIATE CHERISH ALTER REVISE CRITICIZE IMPRESS IMPART

John Baldessari, Terms Most Useful in Describing Creative Works of Art, 1966-68 What role do algorithms play in Georges Perec's practice? ... In his unique take on writing machines?

...Perec was approached by the Humanities Computing Center of the French National Research Council, which wanted a writer to experiment with an algorithm as a writing device – presumably as part of a broader program to bring computing and the arts into more fruitful cooperation. To judge by the tone of the letter he wrote about the project to his German translator Eugen Helmle, Perec seems to have learned from this commission what an algorithm and flowchcart was [Bellos, 42]:

It consists of a certain number of propositions that can take either a yes or no for an answer, each answer having certain consquences. The concatenation of causes and effects and the choice of answers are represented by arrows that are the only syntactic connectors between the propositions. In brief it is a tree structure, a network, a labyrinth, and the "reader" chooses one route among all the possible routes, the totality of possible routes being presented SIMULTANEOUSLY on the flow-chart. [Perec, 43]

What then became of Perec's algorithm?



having carefully weighed the pros and cons you gird up your loins and make up your mind to go and see your head of department to ask for a raise so you go to see your head of department let us assume to keep things simple—for we must do our best to keep things simple—that his name is mr xavier that's to say mister or rather mr x so you go to see mr x it's one or t'other either mr x is at his desk or mr x is not at his desk so all you can do is stand in the corridor waiting for him to come back or come in but let us suppose not that he never comes in that case there would be but one solution to go back to your own desk and wait for the afternoon or the morrow to launch your campaign afresh but as is often the case that he takes his time in which case all you can really do instead of walking up and down in the corridor is to go and see your colleague ms y whom we shall henceforth call ms wye to give a touch of human warmth to our schematic demonstration¹⁰



What aesthetic does the algorithm yield in Perec's work?

Could we envision an algorithmic aesthetics?



Manfred Mohr, Cubic Limit, film, 1974 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4M28FEJFF8



Sol LeWitt, Variations of Incomplete Open Cubes, 1974

Born in Germany in 1938, NY-based artist Manfred Mohr began his career as an action painter influenced by jazz and Abstract Expressionism.





Manfred Mohr, Bild 12/366, Tempera/Leinwand, 1966

Manfred Mohr, Zeichnung A, Ink and paper, 1967



Manfred Mohr, P-155-bb, 1974

Using the combinatorics of the elements of a cube which have been broken down into minute particles of lines, Mohr accomplishes a type of storyboard for an abstract animation. As a two-dimensional surface, however, it plots a gradual intensification of the lines in the center. The reduction of the title to character combinations reflects Mohr's interest in aesthetic and semiotic questions and results, as opposed to the production of art-works in the traditional sense. What counts for Mohr is not the single graph, or line, but the complete ensemble of statistical relationships that manifest themselves in a series of aesthetic constructions and structures. (Media Art Net)



In Cubic Limit, Manfred Mohr introduced the cube into his work as a "fixed system with which signs are generated. In the first part of this work phase (1972-76), an alphabet of signs is created from the twelve lines of a cube. In some works, statistics and rotation are used in the algorithm to generate signs. In others, combinatorial, logical and additive operators generate the global and local structures of the images." (Ed Shanken)



In 1953, Sol Lewitt (1928-2007) moved to New York City, where he studied at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School (now SVA/School of Visual Arts) and worked for Seventeen Magazine, making paste-ups, mechanicals and Photostats. He was then hired as a graphic designer in IM Pei's architecture firm.

Letter to a Boy

If you find it difficult to write letters that will keep the boys writing read on



Sol LeWitt, Seventeen magazine illustration, February 1955



Sol LeWitt, Untitled, 1966



Sol LeWitt, Serial Project No. 1 ABCD, 1966





Sol Lewitt, Variations of Incomplete Open Cubes , 1974 Wood sculptures with white paint (122 pieces) Each piece: 20.3 cm square 8" square Framed photographs and drawings (131 pieces), Each piece: 66 x 35.6 cm 26 x 14" Base: 30.5 x 304.8 x 548.6 cm 12 x 120 x 216" Each of the 122 sculptural forms is derived by subtracting one or more of the lines or edges from the cube's basic unitary form. An idea is systematically translated and deployed into a variety of media and scales to become, in LeWitt's words, "a machine that makes the art." (Ed Shanken)

Aesthetics of Algorithms and Aesthetics of Tedium

How do ideas of tedium, technocracy, and bureaucracy relate back to Georges Perec's work as a writer?





Jonathan Schipper, The Slow Inevitable Death of Muscle, 2009







