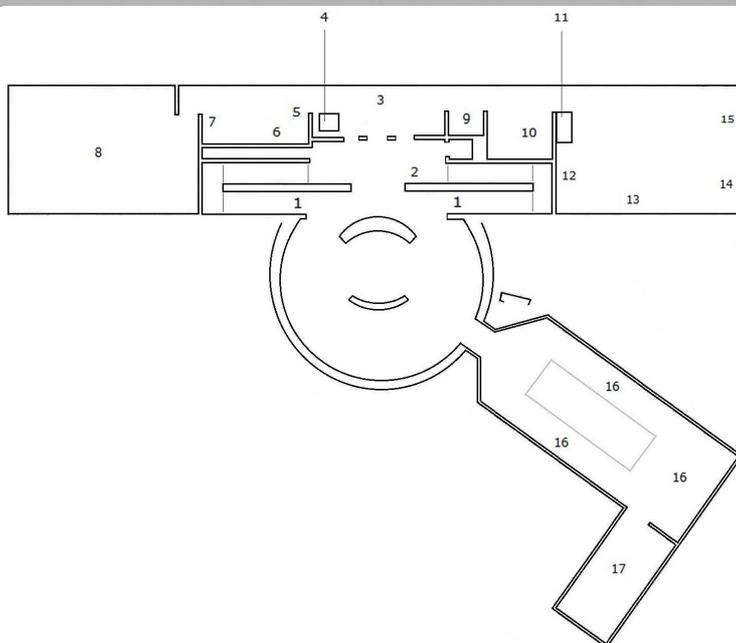


FORMAS BREVES, OUTRAS, 25



- 5 Alejandro Cesarco. *Footnote #5*
- 6 Helen Mirra. *Rearranged Incidents, 3*
- 7 Ewa Partum. *Active Poetry, Poem by Ewa*

Alejandro Cesarco

Montevideo, Uruguay, 1975; lives and works in New York, USA

Footnote #5, 2008

Vinyl wall text

Dimensions variable. Edition of 5

Loan from the artist and Murray Guy Gallery, New York (US)

'*To me, this has always been the heart of the mystery, the mystery of the heart: the way people talk about loving things, which things and why.' Alejandro Cesarco's *Footnote #5* (2008) inscribes itself directly onto the wall that functions here as support for the above phrase. The text, however, to which the footnote refers is absent — despite the note's attachment to an asterisk. This undeniable link associates the note to a larger (con)text, i.e. one to be imagined by the reader. Contrary to an 'endnote', a 'footnote' violently interrupts the flow of reading. The use of footnotes in literary works may be considered in itself an artistic strategy and literary device. However, while Cesarco's work follows in the legacy of conceptual art, many of his text-based installations and videos are strongly influenced by literature.

FORMAS BREVES, OUTRAS, 25

Helen Mirra

Rochester, USA, 1970; lives and works in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

***Rearranged incidents, 3*, 2005**

Ink and milk painting on cotton

1,6 x 200 cm

Collection Frac Lorraine

Rearranged incidents, 3, presents itself as a straight line of dyed fabric bands. Tinted in hues of muted green and sky blue, these cotton bands are connected to one another by use of wire triangles that interrupt the line's continuity. On closer inspection, one discerns a typewritten black text on its surface. Sections are created; a chain of words is interspersed with commas, numbers and spaces. A linear reading of the text requires displacement of the viewer, following the line which is pinned to the wall. These rearranged textual fragments constitute part of an index, created by Mirra from John Dewey's *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920).

An index offers segmented reading, by making one's way through a book, in an attempt to find its precise point of reference. In its very nature, an index is above all associative. Associations are sparked not only from reading the text, but also from reading the line formally. Its colours and soft texture may — at times — evoke the line of the horizon. At other times, the work references a palpable film strip, drenched in colour (the cotton bands feature the width of a 16 mm film). One may think of strips or cuts pasted together in an editing process; bits and pieces brought together to form a poem or narrative (as if saved from Dewey's waste paper basket). In addition, the work points self-referentially to Mirra's own practice, i.e. her 16 mm films. Mirra thus seems to reconstruct Dewey's writing, by pointing to its inherent poetical stance. In Helen Mirra's book *Cloud, the, 3*, (2007) the complete index offers itself to the reader and follows her previous two poetry-based artist books *Names and Poems* and *Alow* (1999). For Mirra, literature and writing seems to reference a 'found' inspiration, one that one stumbles upon while on a journey.

Mirra's poetic text, read in the exhibition's space, invites a rereading of Dewey's writing. According to Dewey, 'description when it occurs is but a part of a circuitous method of pointing or denoting; index to a starting-point and road which if taken may lead to a direct and ineffable presence'.

FORMAS BREVES, OUTRAS, 25

Ewa Partum

Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Poland, 1945; lives and works in Berlin, Germany

***Active Poetry, Poem by Ewa*, 1971/73**

8mm film transferred to DVD

5'43"

Collection Frac Lorraine

In her early performances, Ewa Partum disperses letters taken from printed text in various public spaces. In *Active Poetry, Poem by Ewa* (1971/73) Partum scatters letters around branches; she tosses them down a hillside into the wind, and from the shore into the sea. Since the 1970s, the artist further explores her interest in 'poetry as art' (the title of her diploma thesis) or 'conceptual poetry' in works such as *Bureau of Poetry* (1971) — held in the apartment of her first husband, the poet Andrzej Partum — in which she disperses the 32 letters of the Polish alphabet. Easily acquired at the time by the artist, the white cardboard letters were mass-produced by the socialist state for propaganda usage. In her performance *Active Poetry* (1971) which took place in a pedestrian arcade, Partum strews the letters originating from a one-page extract taken from James Joyce's *Ulysses* onto the floor. In both works, the letters are moved and transported through the shoes of gallery visitors or passers-by.

In this way, Partum transforms literary works into her meta-poetry, including texts by Goethe, Proust, Camus and Kafka. For Partum 'an act of thought is an act of art.' The artist's large series of poems include her lip imprints (with red lipstick), in which she introduces text, such as the phrase: 'My touch is the touch of a woman.' In her mail art pieces from this time, Partum corresponded with artists from the West, inviting them to exhibitions which she organized in her gallery, Adres.

Her provocative performances or photomontages staged in public spaces, in which she appears naked in various locations e. g. in front of Warsaw's communist parliament, attests for a growing concern in social and political issues. Ewa Partum's early conceptual and feminist work may thus be described as an act of poetic resistance.