Thinking again and supposing. Trajectory of an exhibition

Sarah Greig+ Thérèse Mastroiacovo

Michèle Thériault

For commentary on the works and issues raised in the exhibition as well as suggested readings, please consult Ways of Thinking on the Gallery's website.

These texts accompany the exhibition

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Sarah Greig + Thérèse Mastroiacovo

Curator
Michèle Thériault

September 7 – October 29, 2022

Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery

The curator wrote three commentaries to which the two artists responded.

I

UNWINDING A BALL

Michèle Thériault

Let's begin with a ball of thread or wool (expandable, with a capacity for absorption and retention) that we agree will never be completely unwound. I think about working with you in this way: an ongoing process in time, toward the site of the exhibition as a kind of stopover marked by new and other relationalities. It seems as a good place to start as any—rather than the exhibition as endpoint—a dense ball, which unwinds but also responds to actions of pulling and tugging, with pauses here and there. We have known each other for a long time marked by infrequent encounters, collaborations, and conversations. This exchange in words and sentences, interrupted by in-person encounters, discussions, document sharing, readings, emails, and text messages is a way or a process for you and me to reflect on and inquire into the mechanisms of working together, circulating thoughts, relationality, and giving materiality to a common project that we have named: *Thinking again and supposing. Trajectory of an exhibition*.

This project of working together has been developing quietly and surreptitiously: a long and continual process of accreting, editing, rethinking, and re-forming interposed, over the years, by a series of exhibitionary and performative manifestations.

How do I think again with you? A temporal consideration is at the heart of your work. For Thérèse, it is taking what is there—documentation of works by other artists, all conceptualists, book references—and re-presenting it, re-framing it by way, mainly, of the gesture of drawing. For Sarah, it is locating a context, and letting or enabling the passage of time to determine the form of the work within it or off of it. Of necessity, there is redistribution of the present—what is there, was there, is *here now*: the drawings making up the series *Art Now* (TM), the images resulting from *Picture Transitions* (SG). And *this now* is slowly moving toward *the now* of an (this) exhibition, for a moment. Slow and measured absorption of historical referents, and spatial and social context, is a way toward a form of recirculation. Context is an agent of change, whether it be an empty office space (*Picture Transition (Corner Office)* — SG) or the appropriation of another artist's work (*Following Following Piece* — TM); or the very context for the claims of actuality (books and articles that provide the parameters for the art of today, *Art Now* — TM); and, of course, the place of exhibition itself, with which the above intersect and negotiate (this gallery, the Fonderie Darling, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin). You both wrangle with history (ies): Thérèse has engaged with specific works of the conceptual canon and, through drawing, its very dense heritage; while Sarah has also engaged with drawing but manifested as photography and, in the last few years specifically, the analogic process of the pinhole camera an early form of photographic reproduction. Underlying the nature of your processes is a stance (literally a way of standing or being placed) fully embraced in relation to artmaking in our time, to what is the outcome of a practice, to how a practice is given form and what motivates its realization. You tussle and

spar with the apparatus of art, while considering and proposing ways of inhabiting it that entertain an open and sustained conversation with it, according to different frequencies.

This way of defining process and stance suggests circumscription on my part. However, I rather see the above as a series of open statements that may enable the process of thinking again, for myself, a curator who has worked in the space of the gallery—the one you are inhabiting—over many years with a particular attention to context, the conditions of display, and the discourse of the exhibition. At this point in time, the layers of succeeding exhibitions, of works, of layout and display strategies are thick and dense—possibly a thick, heavy ball of wool, starting to unravel. The references that emanate from the porous layers inflect my relationship with your works. You both mention the interval, working in the interval. This how your projects present themselves to me: working off, and with that dense layer.

Working on the other side of each other

Let us use the term *conversation* and the comment you made in an exchange with me in which Sarah characterized the nature of your working relationship in terms of *working on the other side of each other* as a way to enter into your shared life as two artists who, on this occasion, are presenting alongside each other as well as together. These two terms suggest, simultaneously, a dynamic based on the circulation of ideas *and* on distancing.

UNWINDING A BALL

Sarah Greig and
Thérèse Mastroiacovo

We both work in a form of conceptual drawing, a kind of process drawing: drawing as doing, as recording, in the present and over time, and to focus on the methods and intentions of artworks—the doing of it more than the end result. *Working on the other side of each other*, we share an ongoing conversation about the ways, attributes, and directions of artisthood, a kind of idealism, which we encourage and protect in each other. Sometimes this view doesn't match up to the circumstances deemed real in life, but we are willing to accept its precariousness, because this is also a necessity.

We spend our time in study and are privileged to teach and to be always around people making things. This builds a foundation in all sorts of ways, the most significant of which is that we are able to pursue art making for its own end. We work toward agency within artistic practice, for self-sufficiency, which leads to greater autonomy for art production. And to confront neoliberal conditions and the structural moves that cause more precarity for artists. It's important that art does not lose its social function, to be measured just in economized terms, which benefits only a few and dismantles social and artistic cohesion.

Art as voluntary activity, as an elective vocation—we choose it with sincerity, embracing it on our own terms, in our own way. There are many ways to be an artist, or at least there should be. To offer alternatives is to serve a part-to-whole relationship, from small alteration to larger transformation. This is all part of a process of collective dreaming.

II

INTERVAL

Michèle Thériault

Working in the interval is a temporal and a spatial characteristic, as well as a conceptual condition, that you ascribe to your work and your working method. Indeed, it seems to be an existential condition as well: being in the interval. You both position yourselves on the sidelines, uncomfortable with the shifted social role of the artist and his/her/their intense professionalization over the last thirty years, uneasy with the emphasis given to the distribution apparatus over the work. It is interesting that information technology and social media experience aim to erase the interval, to render us, at the very least, unaware of it so as to make our experience seamless and efficacious, to make the interval uninhabitable.

An interval is an interruption, a moment of pause, of suspension, a space between points, objects, or events but also a series of repeated actions and rests, as in an athletic workout. An interval creates an in-between space, a suspended time or a passing one, that lies between there and here, then and now. To be in the interval is to contend with the limits and field(s) s that constitute it. It is also a space and time for reconsideration, rethinking, and redirecting. Your work would then situate itself at this juncture, in process or in its finished state or in the state at which it is made public: an interval between cycles of work-labour and "works," between other drawings,

processes, other transitions. Between the beginning of a new process and the resumption of one, or its closure.

Thérèse references existing conceptual artworks in that interval, namely a performance by Vito Acconci (*Following Piece*, 1969) and literature analyzing or reporting on the art of our (or its) time, in your ongoing/unfinished *Art Now* series. The covers of books or catalogues on the subject are reproduced by way of drawing in graphite: some entirely, others only partially, rendering a segment of the title. In our exhibition, two drawing installations—*ism reimagined after intersec* and *ON NOW? CONTEMPLA-* (both 2022)—reference two recent books, published in 2019 and 2020, respectively, through a drawn rendering of a portion of each title.[1] In the interval, the books, as markers of the problematization of contemporaneity in art, are redistributed within the layers and breadths of two sets of drawings (and in an infinity of repeated gestures). While obliquely weaving in the subject of intersectionality and Black feminism, and that of host and guest or the tensions between hostility and hospitality, it is more a form of transmission, in the gesture(s) of drawing within the collective effort attending the framework of intersectionality; and drawing as an act of contemplation. The drawings are placed on two long display units positioned across the space at an oblique angle from each other: one is a large, solid platform approximately seven metres long; and the other, a succession of wood sheets raised on trestles, is approximately twelve metres long. The two units—sculptural presences—create corridors of viewing/reading for visitors that may result in an experience that does not reach

1. The two books are: Jennifer C. Nash, ed., *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019); and Federica Bueti, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, and Elena Agudio, eds., *Whose Land Have I Lit on Now? Contemplations on the Notions of Hostipitality* (Berlin: Archive Books/ SAVVY Books, 2020).

completion, that is continually in the process of elucidation and anchoring. In the interval, the works referenced are not quite copied, or are copied not to reproduce but, rather, to unhinge and interrupt the narrative, recasting the frame.

The interval in Sarah's work, arises out of place and context, making subject matter and outcome highly contingent and undetermined. *Picture Transition (Corner Office)* (2011) took place in an unused office in a building undergoing renovation. The structure that you developed filled the office space and transformed it into a tool for making an image. The current work grouped under the title *Thinking again and supposing* is developed from the remnants of a previous project, *Picture Transition (Display Camera)* (Fonderie Darling, 2013–16), in which display cabinets found on the site were fitted with camera obscuras that obliquely recorded the space and activities of the Fonderie, where any number of residents are working at the same time and in which exhibitions, openings, visits, and events happen regularly. Later, however, as the public realized what the cameras were, they began to experience them as all-seeing, and as objects to contemplate, recording everything (even though that was not possible because of their long exposure). Here, at the Ellen, a process is initiated through these cameras, and its outcome (of images) occurs in a space *beside* or *on the side*—in this gallery but also in your studio or in the processing lab, no longer tethered to the social context of the Fonderie or to the time of your residency there. In our exhibition, the pinhole cameras are unbuilt, deconstructed, to enter into another indeterminate process. Your material exists in a kind of suspended status, or interval, enabling speculative outcomes in the form of new drawings/photographs.

In a sense, both of you labour at a form of repetition that recasts, refashions, and reassigns materials or processes that are historical. There is a dispersion and fragmenting of history, of the work referenced and "rendered" in drawing (in Thérèse's case) and of a historical photographic process—the pinhole—in drawing manifested as photography (in Sarah's).

Thérèse's sustained, extensive drawing and marking with the hand, and Sarah's building and disassembling of display cameras and her making of large prints, may be associated with the skilled labour of "craft" but concurrently the process, throughout its course, produces work that queries the status of the image in the interstices of the ambiguous, immaterial status of digital production. Thérèse's intense labouring to render *ism reimagined after intersec* and *ON NOW? CONTEMPLA-*, and Sarah's long, extended process of "waiting" for the context and process of production to determine the outcome, are each highly invested in the production process; but, rather than appearing anachronistic, both of these processes comprise methodology as art making. Proposed as such, your works investigate the very apparatus of art making, and deflect and confound an experience which might otherwise be focused solely on the object.

Vincent Bonin, in his two-part exhibition *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant/Actors, Networks, Theories* (2013 and 2014), addresses a deferred process, one that is produced by the interval between the passage of French theory in translation, and its assimilation and resurgence into Anglo-American artistic contexts and practices[2]—from an original language and cultural context to a different one. You both have practices that inscribe themselves within conceptualism. Yours are not deferred phenomena but raise the question of what it means today, particularly in Quebec, to practice in the wake of conceptual art. You are conceptualists not for the mediums you use—drawing and photography complicated by sculptural considerations and video—but in how they are used, in the performative processes and, particularly, in the temporality involved. In your work, the "time of the work" is communicated (making) and the "work of time" explored. Long, drawn-out performative processes of making or series of short, repeated actions have marked conceptual practices in various ways; one can think of Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969), John Latham's *One Second Drawing* series (1970s), Tehching Hsieh's *One Year Performances* (1980–86), or Lee Lozano's *Decide to Boycott Women* (1971), which ended up lasting her whole life. This mode of operating, in the 1960s and '70s, dissolved boundaries, fractured the focus on the material object, repositioned the realm of art making, and engaged with institutions and viewers in new ways.

How does an artist work as a conceptualist today, in a manner that renews the critical distance that the artists of those times opened up? Certainly, all of those strategies, stances, ways of making, and effects have been well absorbed by the art institutions of today and the ubiquitous art event, which practice soft autocritique as yet another form of marketable visitor experience in their complicated relationships with artists, curators, and the economic demands of their funding structures. Moreover, curators have over the last thirty years, in the manner of Harald Szeeman, become dominant figures and power brokers tethering artists to that dynamic and thereby, at times, muffling and redirecting their voices. (To be fair, they have also contributed to ensuring and maintaining certain artists' presence in exhibition and institutional circuits, and transforming both, along the way, into entrepreneurs.)[3] I suspect

2. Vincent Bonin, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant/Actors, Networks, Theories*, exhibition publication (Montreal: Dazibao and Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2018). Bonin's exhibition was presented at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, 2013; and at Dazibao, Montreal, 2014.

3. See the discussion on New Institutionalism and the role of the curator in the second chapter ("On New Institutionalism") in James Voorhies, *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form since 1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 71–138.

that the interval is a refuge for you, as artists who are forthrightly uncomfortable with the conditions and consequences of the current artmaking/distribution/curatorial structure. More importantly, this refuge is a place of stealth—of some invisibility, as well—where you can act and work with minimal interference and noise, maintaining that critical distance to mine, discreetly and methodically revisiting the methods and legacies of conceptualism through sustained processes that come to be in response to current visual culture. Standing before your work, I ask myself: what I am looking at? What status do these images have? How am I experiencing them, where does authorship lie—all questions that nourish a discourse of inquiry into the nature of art making, its distribution, and public relationship. The obliqueness of your practices produces an ambiguity that turns away from outrightly claiming, affirming, naming, and revealing. In a way, you operate a discreet form of queering of the system in place through your reluctance toward, if not refusal, of the prevailing conditions and demands of the art world, and the performative probing that accompanies it.

INTERVAL

Sarah Greig

Michèle, you have noticed that my materials exist in a suspended status and ask: what is the status? It may be useful to begin, here, with some thoughts on how my writing relates to my images, which I think speak to this question. Generally, I don't make images first and describe them later, with words. I make them together, building one into the other. *Into* is the key word here, which takes a bit of pruning—and it's not just about

making it fit. Pruning solidifies and, between text and image, or between drawing and photography, minimal means must then serve multiple ends. This has the effect of loosening the tie to rigid definitions of form and structure, in one way, and of grounding, in another.

After my residency at the Fonderie Darling (2013–16), I removed the cameras from the display cases, and they returned to their original state. If changed in some way, the intervention left no permanent mark: a work made in place and then taken from it, the thing that remains, an ambiguous object. Drained of that which keeps it suspended, buffered, held in position. The situation, a kind of backing that simply pulls off. As it is in drawing, the support makes visible the line. Institutions are like this too, how they offer assurances and make things seen. But we, as artists, know this differently for ourselves: the potentials of what we can make against the limits of the container. And this work, from this condition, this moment, a passage, a form in relation is now freestanding. A mark that stays still as everything else changes. Applied later to a different background, it becomes a register, a handle.

At the Ellen, the cameras go through a process of unbuilding. They are laid open to reveal their inner workings. Drawings describe their function, map out their actions. These are drawn directly on them, and also through them. A dotted line marks the point of view but also draws through it. The enclosed photographic chamber is cut open, which lets in light. As a result, their structure is reorganized and they become a kind of template. These are used to create new photographs, camera-less photography, for which there is no negative. The same image again is impossible. A changed point of view is implied, since replacing them would result in another configuration.

INTERVAL

Thérèse Mastroiacovo

In my work in citational practice, of which *Following Following Piece (Montreal: July 8, 2008 to June 2, 2010)* is a part, I draw the reproduction of documentation of artworks, which shifts the relationship from the original artwork to that of the reproduction. To redraw the photographic representation of an artwork is to reconsider the image document itself, as well as to look at any cultural subtexts to which the representation may refer.

Following Following Piece (Montreal: July 8, 2008 to June 2, 2010) is a drawing project that references Vito Acconci's *Following Piece*, from 1969. In my work, I follow his: I find documentation of his *Following Piece* in print, each instance thereof recontextualizing his work into a different critical or theoretical framework, and then redraw the entire page as laid out, including images, texts, and page numbers. As his work circulates, it is continually reactivated, so open that it allows any new idea from the last fifty years to claim it as its history. I try to record an expanded view, which makes other things come to focus—the experience of a durational performance, drawing as recording, and the mechanics of the apparatus (es) that support and carry the privileged few—general enough, pale enough, pliable enough as if to apply to all.

Like *Following Following Piece (Montreal: July 8, 2008 to June 2, 2010)*, *Art Now (2005 to present)* can assume any aesthetic, any sensibility, any time, any place: it signals only difference, like a comma. In the beginning, the work was pure idea but, as it progressed, it became also an experience. It shifts from concurrent time to an interrogation of a system that fuels the consumption of artworks. In *Following Following Piece (Montreal: July 8, 2008 to June 2, 2010)*, I explored how an

artwork is redefined and perpetuated as mediation develops; and, in *Art Now (2005 to present)*, how artworks in general are simply absorbed within it. Trying to keep in step with the machine that turns over art, and for so long, has been challenging; certainly, it would be easier to make something different. The work's longevity exists, in part, because of my own insistence on the creative potential of the present tense and its ability to actually forge alternative paths. As much as it is a critique of an insatiable need for progress at all costs, it is also a return to art as inherent potential.

III

OF AN EXHIBITION

Michèle Thériault

What does it mean to exhibit and display your work when it is located in the interval? Can it be the place where process comes to rest, is suspended, where display now negotiates another relationship with space and viewing experience, within a set period of time, to then be reactivated or renewed in the future? Exhibitions and programming can also be developed in the interval so as to create discursive, spatial, and visual resonances and nodes over time.

Let's look at the book *Unfinished After*—the "performance document," as you call it, Thérèse—which is densely filled with drawings of book covers that constitute your open-ended process/work *Art Now (2005 to present)*. It is displayed on a bench as, at once, object, documentation, and experience. If you

draw to "perform the present tense," then "incompleteness is perpetual," as you write—or jointly write, Sarah having cowritten the wraparound cover text with you. Close by, drawings in the book's two foldouts are displayed "unfinished," in their deliberately arrested completeness. The book is *in* the exhibition, its status ambiguous: a document-object that is performing, and one which, in its making and its existence, now "extend[s] the moment of now" and "let[s] it multiply," such that "the present state of former potentials is able to accumulate into volume." This text, within which drawing, and drawings, are contained but which also meshes with it/them, ends with a call for "a reflection, an *Unfinished After*." Herein is situated the basis upon which this exhibition rests, *unfinishedness*: "the evidence of an end … which cannot be overlooked and must be deferred."[1]

With that in mind, I'd like to relate your exhibition to a series of works, projects, and exhibitions that took place at the gallery over the years, that were part of a process of return, reappearance, and reconfiguration in our programming, which gave them a filiation that ran contrary to the view of programming as a managed succession of self-contained projects within thematic silos. This filiation discreetly opened up a self-reflective dialogue: on the one hand, within the history of exhibitions at the gallery and, on the other, within those practices, the works produced, and the release of their performative potential in the shifting contexts of exhibitions and time.

The first is Silvia Kolbowski's *Nothing and Everything*,[2] which brought together two important works by this American artist: *an inadequate history of conceptual art* (1998–99) and

1. All quotes from front and back cover texts in Thérèse Mastroiacovo, *Unfinished After*, artist book (Berlin: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH, 2019). Published following Mastroiacovo's exhibition *Sharing Location*, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, October 9—November 1, 2015.

2. Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, January 30—March 7, 2009. Curated by Michèle Thériault.

After Hiroshima Mon Amour (2008), the latter presented with *A Film Will Be Shown Without the Sound,* Hiroshima mon amour*, 1959 (director Alain Resnais; script: Marguerite Duras)* (2006). This wider project mined the interval by way of two works that examined, in the creation of a "meta-historical space,"[3] the resurgence (in the 1990s) of conceptual art and the meshing of past and present in Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour*. Recast in the *here and now*, these works make us reconsider the *then and there*, and how it extends, transforms, and is transformed by the present.[4] Another occurrence is Martin Beck's exhibition *the particular way in which a thing exists,* [5] which featured works realized between 2002 and 2012 that explored shifts in perspectives originating in late modernism and their impact on contemporary culture. *About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe* (2007) was a twelve-minute tracking shot of the installation and deinstallation of the historic modular exhibition system Structube, designed by George Nelson in 1948.

A few years later in 2013, *an inadequate history* and *About the Relative Size of Things* reappeared, in a different form, in the exhibition *Anarchism without Adjectives: On the Work of Christopher D'Arcangelo, 1975–1979*,[6] which attempted to circumscribe this artist's radical performative practice that left no material traces and existed, by that point, only through

3. Rosalyn Deutsche, "Inadequacy," in *Silvia Kolbowski: Nothing and Everything*, Michèle Thériault, ed. (Montreal: Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, 2009), 21. First published in *Silvia Kolbowski: Inadequate … Like … Power* (Vienna: Secession; Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004).

4. Michèle Thériault, "Models of Intervention: A discussion between Michèle Thériault and Silvia Kolbowski," in *Silvia Kolbowski: Nothing and Everything*, Michèle Thériault, ed. (Montreal: Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, 2009), 41.

5. Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, November 16, 2012—January 26, 2013. Curated by Michèle Thériault.

6. Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, September 4—October 26, 2013. Curated by Dean Inkster and Sébastien Pluot, in collaboration with Michèle Thériault.

an archive. The curators Dean Inkster, Sébastien Pluot, and myself opened up the space to contemporary artists whose projects investigated the social and political conditions of art, its mediation and modes of distribution, and the contingencies of historical memory. Here, the above-mentioned works by Kolbowski and Beck were reintroduced under a different form. Initially exhibited as a video projection and installation, in which sound and image were placed spatially apart, *an inadequate history* was now presented in a compact "educational" format on a flat screen, meshing spoken narrative with image. Martin Beck's video installation was somewhat pulled apart and rematerialized in the loan, setup, and reuse, by artist Rainer Oldendorf, of the actual Structube structure, which the artist had fabricated for his video.

More recently, the gallery re-presented a ten-day performance by PME-ART, *Adventures can be found anywhere, même dans la répétition* initially staged in 2014 under the title *Adventures can be found anywhere, même dans la mélancolie*.[7] In this edition, co-produced with the Festival TransAmériques, the book which is the focus of the collective performance of rereading, rewriting, and annotating is no longer Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet* but Susan Sontag's *Reborn: Journals and Notebooks 1947–1963*.

In this series of interconnected occurrences, there is a dense nexus of relationships that points to the mutability of artworks, and of their contexts of presentation and modes of display—as well as a filtering of the past into the present

7. PME-ART, *Adventures can be found anywhere, même dans la mélancolie*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, 2014; and *Adventures can be found anywhere, même dans la répétition*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, June 1–9, 2022 (co-produced and co-presented with Festival TransAmériques).

and the present into the past, both in the new context of presentation but also within an institution's programming. In these intervals and reappearances, we can experience shifts in meaning and in how it is produced, which underline how practices and works actually live in time and are transformed. And this is where conceptual art comes in—in its legacy, which dislodged artworks from their stillness as autonomous objects and opened them up to intersecting with a broad network of interrelated spheres, subjectivities, materialities, and immaterialities, claiming for them a generative "unfinishedness."

OF AN EXHIBITION

Sarah Greig

Two projects in reflected versions of each other: *Picture Transition (Corner Office)* (2011) and *Picture Transition (Display Camera)* (2013-16). One looks in at itself and the other looks outward at things. A simple reversal, a work turned inside out. The works at the Ellen too, are another kind of reversal, a mirror that reflects back, a process that keeps opening.

I made *Picture Transition (Corner Office)* in an office space in a building slated for renovation, which is why I could afford to work there and why I had to eventually leave. In this space, I made a drawing of a drawing. To begin, a drawing reduced to its principal components, manifest in one single gesture, subject, method, mark, and frame. A sculpture fills a temporary office space, so full that it was like being inside a camera. It sits in direct contact with the drawing surface, collapsing the distance between the thing being drawn and the surface it's drawn upon. From windows on two sides,

the sculpture, made of UV-filtering Plexiglas, exposes some parts of the paper and shields others—a drawing made with sunlight. The frame is the sculpture reconfigured, protecting it now from drawing further.

A rather complicated procedure to create very minimal drawing. But the image! Unexpectedly still in the centre, unlike the periphery, which is unstable, an uncertain colour made from two tones superimposed, and extremely reflective, dramatically changing colour under varied lighting conditions. And all this to say (and I relay it here because it doesn't exist elsewhere) that the intention of the work was that it stand as a self-sufficient, whole shape rather than as a relational element. It was the production still, a photograph of the work in progress, that revealed it as a site work, bringing to view the method and, at the same time, showing the place of business and administration that surrounds it. Implicit in the photograph is my own life as an artist, doing what I can with what I have. The place where the work was made, an empty office space as temporary artist studio, the container determining the shape of what it includes. Here, circumstance becomes form. A reflection upon its own making that shows that it is itself a construction. Inevitably, it reveals another reality—my own—the inside workings of the image, a more real reality than that which an image alone could offer.

Its reflection, *Picture Transition (Display Camera)*, I made in another temporary studio space, during a three-year artist residency. At the Fonderie Darling, studios are a particular kind of space: a blend between private workspace and public engagement. Providing this privileged view on artistic production to others is, in large part, how the Fonderie supports its artists, a place of work that is also a place of display. During my residency, I created photographs with a set of display cases found on site, which I transformed into pinhole cameras. The work begins by being only: a display camera, the same size and shape as the area of display, filling it up entirely. Simply, it records in long exposures, depending on the conditions

(often weeks). And since something must be in place for half the time to register in the photograph, there are many things present but not visible. Each photograph is entirely full of people but, because the exposures are so long, only the still things register. The people disappear and the event comes into focus. Occupying the activities around artistic production, the work relies on the conditions of its location. It looks out toward participatory, collaborative, and collective modes of action, a fundamental part of the content and structure of the Fonderie's activity. As a work, it doesn't establish the limits of its own specificity. It simply brings forth, makes appear. Waiting is the time of exposure and development, as in the old way of photography, the time between taking the picture and seeing the photograph. The clips and bits of tape that hold the photo paper in position inside the camera reveal its construction, the method of the image becoming through process.

The work in this exhibition grouped under the title *Thinking again and supposing*, explore an opposite condition of space, a kind of indeterminacy. A graphic score, an interpretation by a group of musicians, an unrepeatable performance. Considered together, these three iterations of *Picture Transitions* reveal each other, having constituent elements separated by space. But they are not separable, not really. Each work creates a marker along a greater trajectory, relating to an interval containing neither of its endpoints. The tangible, an escort to the intangible, the line directly drawn into formlessness. Image where distillation meets dissolution, reduction as it meets expansion. Boiled down to its essence and made into concentrate, then opened up again and put back into solution. And the image becomes this thing previously absent, formless, invisible, immaterial.

OF AN EXHIBITION

Thérèse Mastroiacovo

This is the third time the perpetually evolving *Art Now (2005 to present)* drawing project has been exhibited at the Ellen Gallery.[1] More than reappearance, the idea of return is the work's driving force—a force I match in drawing, which acts as resistance. *Art Now (2005 to present)* is reassigned in this exhibition: it turns away from the limits and contradictions imposed by a model, taking root in another form, now, as it extends to include an *after*. In the bookwork, *Unfinished After* (2019), the line unfolds in two places—unhurried moments of continued relation and dialogue. Some of these same drawings also appear in this exhibition.[2] They mark the beginning of a shift in direction and focus, from an ongoing line to a volume of incompleteness.

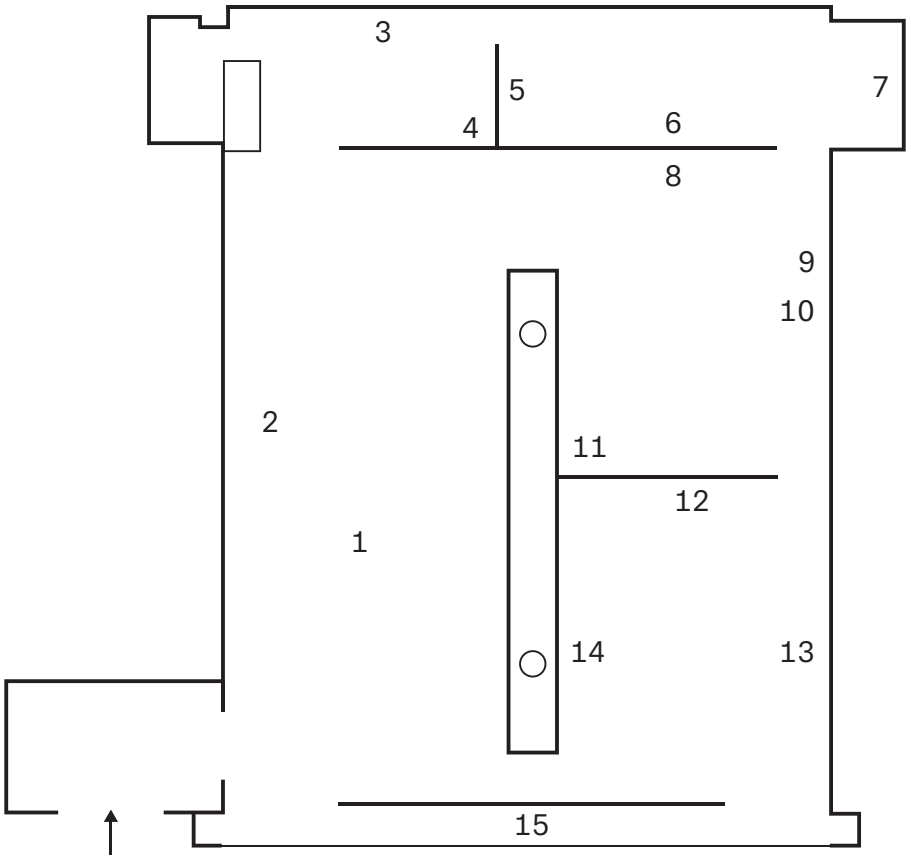
From the first foldout, a set of drawings: *Value; Art; Politics-Criticism*, *Meaning and Interpretation After Postmodernism*, *After Theory*, *Institutional Critique and After*. All of them unfinished (although I realized this only after I made them). In each and for different reasons, without really understanding why, I felt the need to stop at a point just before the drawing reached a sense of completion. In one drawing after another, I left different visible spaces empty, as if some small-yet-integral thing is left missing. Considering them now in retrospect, I appreciate how these spaces allow a place for potential, how they defer closure. The second foldout includes another set of drawings, which explore the idea of an unfinished after more directly. What remains important, what is unfinished and needs further participation, discussion, or action? How does something endure? Time itself does not include the quality of resonance. Time simply exists as a frame, organizing and comforting through measure. When does something extend beyond its intention? How do we include it in our time?

And the long drawings; a view from up close, they are made in proximity. Imagining the possibility of incorporating intersec-tionality (thank you, Black feminism) into all (systems and theories) -isms. The full expanse of it only begins to acknowledge the accumulation of collective effort. A continued contempla-tion, interrupted by moments of uncertainty, eventually it evens out and charges on. There is more work still to do.

1. The first time the *Art Now (2005 to present)* drawings were presented at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery was in 2012, in the exhibition *Interactions*, curated by Mélanie Rainville. The second was in 2014, in *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant/ Actors, Networks, Theories*, curated by Vincent Bonin. In this second exhibition, I presented two different groupings of ten drawings, in the same location as the previous exhibition. And at the midway point, I replaced the drawings again, a complete changeover during a single exhibition.

2. Two drawings from *Art Now*, titled *Unfinished After* (2012), were included in the exhibition publication, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant/ Actors, Networks, Theories* (Montreal: Dazibao and Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2018), even though they were not shown in the exhibition. However, they will be shown in this exhibition: *Thinking again and supposing. Trajectory of an exhibition*.

Exhibition Floor Plan



List of Works

1. Thérèse Mastroiacovo
ON NOW? CONTEMPLA-, 2022
Drawing, graphite on paper and wood fibre base
Courtesy of the artist

2. Thérèse Mastroiacovo
ism reimagined after intersec, 2022
Drawings, graphite on paper, wood and trestles
Courtesy of the artist

3. Thérèse Mastroiacovo
Unfinished After, 2019
Book, 126 pages, 60 black and white plates and bench
Courtesy of the artist

4. Thérèse Mastroiacovo
Art Now (It's darker than an hour ago. It's darker than ago, 2005), 2013
From the series *Art Now (2005 to present)*, 2005—
2 drawings, graphite on paper
Courtesy of the artist

5. Thérèse Mastroiacovo
Art Now, Unfinished After, 2013
From the series *Art Now (2005 to present)*, 2005—
3 drawings, graphite on paper
Courtesy of the artist

6. Thérèse Mastroiacovo
Art Now, Unfinished After, 2015
From the series *Art Now (2005 to present)*, 2005—
4 drawings, graphite on paper
Courtesy of the artist

7. Sarah Greig
Working Studies for an Unfixed Form, 2022
Drawings, graphite on paper
Courtesy of the artist

8. Sarah Greig
Study for Graphic Score, 2022
Drawings, graphite on paper
Courtesy of the artist

9. Sarah Greig
Tall View Former Display Camera, 2016, 2022
Contact print from paper negative, silver gelatin print
Courtesy of the artist

10. Sarah Greig
Test Tall View Former Display Camera, 2016, 2022
Contact print from paper negative, silver gelatin print
Courtesy of the artist

11. Sarah Greig
Picture Transition, 2013—
Davey board, book cloth, tape, tin, clips, paper negative silver gelatin prints
Courtesy of the artist

12. Sarah Greig
Long View Study, 2022
From the series *Shadows of an Unfixed Form*, 2022
4 paper negatives, silver gelatin prints
Courtesy of the artist

13. Sarah Greig
Long View Former Display Camera, 2016, 2022
Contact print from paper negative, silver gelatin print
Courtesy of the artist

14. Sarah Greig
Short View Study, 2022
From the series *Shadows of an Unfixed Form*, 2022
2 paper negatives, silver gelatin prints
Courtesy of the artist

15. Sarah Greig
Test Camera Study, 2022
From the series *Shadows of an Unfixed Form*, 2022
Paper negative, silver gelatin print
Courtesy of the artist

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