

A HOUSE OF LEAVES

AN EXHIBITION IN THREE MOVEMENTS AND AN EPILOGUE

FIRST MOVEMENT | 21.09.2012 - 10.11.2012

An exhibition with works by Horst Ademeit, Ida Applebroog, Phyllida Barlow, Nina Beier, Louise Bourgeois, Bettina Buck, Miriam Cahn, Keith Coventry, Tony Cragg, Enrico David, Matthew Day Jackson, Shannon Ebner, Thomas Houseago, Bethan Huws, Chosil Kil, Martin Kippenberger, John Latham, Alvin Lucier, Marie Lund, Benoît Maire, Victor Man, Kris Martin, Eddie Peake, Man Ray, Steve Reich, Pietro Roccasalva, Wilhelm Sasnal, Rebecca Warren, Lawrence Weiner.

SECOND MOVEMENT | 16.11.2012 - 12.01.2013

An exhibition with works by Sara Barker, Phyllida Barlow, Nina Beier, Karla Black, Carol Bove, Ben Cain, Varda Caivano, Luis Camnitzer, Marieta Chirulescu, Keith Coventry, Tony Cragg, Jason Dodge, Alex Dordoy, Nikolas Gambaroff, Gary Hume, Ian Law, George Henry Longly, Marie Lund, Benoît Maire, Victor Man, Kris Martin, Katy Moran, Anselm Reyle, Manuela Ribadeneira, Gerhard Richter, Pietro Roccasalva, David Schutter, Adam Thompson, Lesley Vance, Gary Webb, Lawrence Weiner and Alison Wilding.

THIRD MOVEMENT | 18.01.2013 - 16.02.2013

An exhibition with works by Danai Anesiadou, Ida Applebroog, Jonathan Binet, Katinka Bock, Trisha Brown, John Cage, Ben Cain, Luis Camnitzer, Martin Creed, Jason Dodge, Morton Feldman, Ryan Gander and Mario Garcia Torres, Laura Gannon, Dora Garcia, David Gorton, Jeppe Hein, Neil Heyde, Pierre Huyghe, Chosil Kil, Lina Lapelyte, Marie Lund, Bruce McLean, Benoît Maire, Babette Mangolte, Kris Martin, Jonathan Monk, Paul Mount, Roman Ondak, Marlo Pascual, Falke Pisano, Manuela Ribadeneira, Pietro Roccasalva, Lorna Simpson, Hans Bellmer, Simon Starling, Adam Thompson, and Lawrence Weiner, etc.

EPILOGUE | 21.02.2013 - 23.02.2013

An exhibition with works by Jason Dodge, Dora Garcia, Marie Lund, Benoît Maire, Kris Martin, Manuela Ribadeneira, Pietro Roccasalva, Adam Thompson, Lawrence Weiner, etc.

This exhibition, *A House of Leaves*, is conceived by Vincent Honoré, director and curator of DRAF. It is curated and produced by Vincent Honoré and Benedict Goodwin, Nicoletta Lambertucci and Sandra Pusterhofer, assisted by Marina La Verghetta, Anna Peres, Rosemarie Merchant and Sairandhri Raut.

The founder, the board of trustees and the director of the Foundation would like to thank the artists for their trust and commitment, and everyone who participated in the opening of our new space.



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MOUSSE

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NOTES ON THE MUSEUM AS SCHOOL (SECOND MOVEMENT)

¹GERHARD RICHTER

This exhibition, *A House of Leaves*, self-organizes internally: its curatorial methodology is derived from the study of three major artworks structuring the exhibition itself, and the gallery where these artworks are successively displayed. The exhibition is conceived as a symphony in three movements plus an epilogue. The first movement, structured around a sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, looked at hybrid forms, from fragmented figures to abstraction. An abstract painting by Gerhard Richter now introduces the second movement, an exploration of abstraction, minimalism and performance. In early 2013, a performance by Pierre Huyghe will take us into the third movement, in which performance, rhythm, and volume are investigated. *A House of Leaves* will end with an epilogue, a final movement towards the void; the exhibition space will be emptied, exposing its architecture and volume, to reveal the museum's long-term works, special commissions and interventions that have been embedded into the material structure of the building.

²PROCESS

The constant substitution of artworks over the course of the exhibition gradually alters the overall context and evolves naturally from one movement into the next. Since the exhibition is in a constant state of flux, it is never the same and never whole; it is impossible to experience entirely, in all its sequences, but must be virtually (re)composed and completed by visitors. The exhibition thus functions on several planes simultaneously: real, virtual, and fictional. Like the house in the novel by Mark Z. Danielewski from which the exhibition borrows its title, the museum hosting such an exhibition becomes a productive medium in its own right, involving visitors in the (co)production of an artistic situation: the exhibition as deferred action and mental space.

³INTENTION

Ideally, a museum is a site where thoughts and visions are formed and transformed, culture disassembled and the contemporary redesigned. Our aim at DRAF is to promote exhibitions not as pre-established formulas or didactic presentations of items, but as prototypes and experiences. From the start (2008), we have conceived DRAF as a forum for discussion and a structure acting beyond the confines of an exhibition space, a generative site that will establish and support an informal cultural community in a unique context.

⁴MOUSEION

More than a collection of artifacts, a museum should be defined as a collective narrative, a cognitive theatre that must be continually examined and confirmed through a variety of individual positions.

A SILENT SCORE (THIRD MOVEMENT)

SILENT SCORE by Pierre Huyghe opens the third and final movement of *A House of Leaves*, the inaugural exhibition in our new building. This dense and multi-layered project has enabled us to introduce and develop the major motifs in our programme. Conceived as a process that would last six months, the exhibition has been structured as a symphony in three movements and an epilogue, each section deriving from the close study of a single key work. The first of these, *Echo VIII*, a late sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, from 2007, cast in bronze from her jumper, defined the First Movement, in being part body, part abstraction. The Second Movement began with *Fuji*, an abstract painting by Gerhard Richter, from 1996, which, like many of the artist's abstract works, was realized through the performative process of erasure. *Silent Score*, which introduces the Third Movement, is a transcribed performance piece by Pierre Huyghe, originally performed in 1997, and based on a live recording of John Cage's *4'33"*, otherwise known as *Silence*. After the Third Movement, an Epilogue will move the exhibition towards the void, emptying the gallery space to explore its architecture and volume. This movement will not develop from a single artwork; rather, it will gradually reveal the long-term works – special commissions and interventions – inscribed in the building itself.

THIS PROJECT was planned as a continuous dissolve, the exhibition self-organizing internally, proceeding mostly from the artworks and the building themselves. In constant flux, never the same and never entire, composed and completed by its visitors: the museum as deferred action and imaginary space. Our museum is intended to be a productive medium in its own right. By opening with an exhibition structured as a metonymic chain – from body to abstraction, abstraction to performance, performance to volume, volume to site – we hoped to accentuate different aspects of our project for the museum: as structure and collection; as academy; as stage; and lastly, as site.

WITH THE THIRD MOVEMENT, we are now looking at the museum as a stage. The exhibition assumes a musical state of mind, inspired by the rhythms, choreographies, sequences and repetitions of the artworks, which are like musical instruments (after John Cage) for an institution whose main duty is to dance (after Paul Holdengräber). Not a museum as temple, supermarket, mass media outlet, fun park, or forum: but a museum as a score – free, uncertain, non-productive, and fictive – outside ordinary rules.

After all, the word “museum” finds its origin in the Greek word “mouseion”, a temple dedicated to the muses, whose activities were akin to those of a university or philosophical academy, an institute for studies and a community of scholars and thinkers. The pre-modern form of the museum was a space for musing, a space for the production and exchange of ideas.

⁵AGAINST INTERPRETATION

A work of art encountered as a work of art is an experience, not a statement or an answer to a question. Art is not only about something: it is something. A work of art is a thing in the world, not just a text or a commentary on the world... (...) Which is to say that the knowledge we gain through art is an experience of the form or style of knowing something, rather than knowledge of something (like a fact or a moral judgement in itself).¹ If we consider an artwork not solely as an object but as an experience, we might also consider the gallery as a hybrid space in permanent reconfiguration: all at once a gallery, an auditorium, a screening room, and a performance space. Here all hierarchies are rejected, and a conversation is as important as a six-month display. *A House of Leaves* can then become a house of signs and the museum a mode of representation. In this space, everything is exhibition and any exhibition is an experience. Together we create a powerhouse for the creation, redeployment, and dissemination of our collective knowledge.

⁶PROGRAMMES 2008 – 2011 – 2012

In 2008, we started to invite external curators with our programme *The Curators' Series*. In 2011, we launched *Fig.*, a programme which explores how knowledge can be co-produced and shared through an innovative format of talks, conferences, research projects, and book presentations. Within this flexible format, which can vary from an event to a temporary installation to a radio programme, *Fig.* aims to trigger new questions and alternative models by considering knowledge not as transmission of information, but as a performative co-production. Now, in 2012, we are opening our *Studio*: a laboratory, workshop, theatre, school, meeting room, and library, where we can meet, discuss, co-produce ideas, and examine works. This space, like a salon, is private, but from time to time will host public activities and discussions.

⁷LUIS CAMNITZER

On leaving the building, please read the façade.

A MUSEUM OF LEAVES (FIRST MOVEMENT)

OUR NEW BUILDING – a former furniture factory built between 1870 and 1890 – reminds us that a museum is a production site, a site that not only presents and describes an existing context, but generates new contexts, a site where artists, curators, critics and other stakeholders can produce, share, discuss, act and interact, where visitors are co-producers, and where the machinery of exhibitions produces prototypes, experiences, catalysts for thought. Here thoughts are formed and visions transformed, culture is disassembled, and the contemporary redesigned. The dimensions of such a museum, in a state of permanent reconfiguration and hybridization, are impossible to measure, far greater than its actual floor plan or elevation, being at any one time a gallery, a laboratory, a studio, a workshop, an academy, a theater, a fiction.

SINCE 2008, at our temporary headquarters in Fitzrovia, DRAF has produced group and solo exhibitions, established a Curator Series, and hosted a programme of discussions and performances. Knowing that we would eventually be moving into a bigger space in Mornington Crescent, we viewed this incubation period as an opportunity to interrogate our model of what a contemporary art museum should be. From the start we conceived DRAF as a forum for discussion and a structure acting beyond the confines of an exhibition space. Our initial goal was to generate a unique context by establishing and supporting an informal cultural community, and this polyphony is something we intend to extend to the new building.

“MUSEUMS ARE HOUSES FULL OF THOUGHTS,” according to Marcel Proust. DRAF can be such a house, rich in sensibilities, styles, and voices. Already this museum speaks many languages and tells multiple narratives in numerous ways. The library-cum-meeting room will serve as a cultural platform for a parallel programme of talks and screenings. Caroline Achaintre created a tapestry and Ruth Beale designed the furniture for this room. The Labs are invitations to researchers, critics or curators. We offer a space/office in which to work in our building, with the possibility of testing new ideas. Each participant is independent from DRAF. These and other aspects of our proposal for a museum will continue to adapt to the heterogeneous and constantly changing needs and visions of contemporary art. Our programmes include Study, focused case-studies of works from the collection, in which a single artwork is shown on its own and studied in depth, everything from its technique to its position in contemporary art debates.

COLLECTION

ONE OF THE COMMON DEFINITIONS of a museum is that it owns a collection. However, although the artworks in a collection may be possessed, this possession can only be imperfect. In fact, from a legal perspective, the artist is always the holder of the copyright over his/her work. This imperfection of the museum's ownership needs to be fully acknowledged in order to determine an appropriate and ethical position towards a collection.

DRAF IS RESPONSIBLE for the David Roberts Collection. As a team, we decided to approach the collection by considering each work as a system constituted by its specific histories, its trajectories, and by the discourses and narratives that it provokes/generates. A work in the collection is then constituted by an archive, a physical object and/or its index (certificate or instructions) and by the possible virtual texts or discussions it generates. We are then responsible for a number of these systems. Our duty is to make sure they are physically and intellectually safe. This responsibility lasts for a certain duration. We may, eventually, pass on this responsibility for one or many of these systems or for the entire collection.

EVERY TIME AN ARTWORK is acquired the whole collection's dynamic changes. In fact, the whole reacts to the parts, as each time a new acquisition is made, the entire collection expands with new possibilities of existence. This is an intrinsic quality of a collection: in order for it to be alive, it needs to always be activated and reconsidered; it is always in the stage of 'becoming'.²

LIKE TWO SEPARATE BODIES that nourish each other, the museum and the collection are in a state of constant exchange. Together they form a complex system able to create an experience of fragmented histories, and to generate a multi-layered perception of what can be encountered in an art context.

AS A PRIVATE COLLECTION, the David Roberts Collection does not have to aim at a specific unity (geographical, thematic, medium, stylistic) other than its own. Coming from a single collector, it does not have to respond to any conceptual or social obligation: it is free to explore, to dare, to make mistakes. It is conceived as an evolving body and as a research collection: an open and flexible archive of forms and concepts.

IN ITALO CALVINO'S NOVEL *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, reading and researching are never-ending processes. They are dramatic games denouncing any univocal understanding of reality. Calvino analyses the structure of research and its failure to reach

THE TITLE OF THE EXHIBITION inaugurating our new premises, *A Houses of Leaves*, references a work by American novelist Mark Z. Danielewski in which different storylines, told in different intertwine. The story centres around a house that keeps changing, a house that resists measurement because its interior gradually becomes larger than its exterior.

THIS EXHIBITION has been conceived as a process lasting six months, a symphony structured in three movements and an epilogue, each deriving from the study of a single key work that defines the whole movement: *Echo VIII*, a sculpture by Louise Bourgeois (First Movement); *Fuji*, an abstract painting by Gerhard Richter (Second Movement); and *Silent Score*, a performance by Pierre Huyghe (Third Movement). The Epilogue moves towards the void, emptying the exhibition space to explore the architecture and volume of the space and reveal the long-term works – special commissions and interventions inscribed in the building itself. Each division will also highlight a different aspect of our project for a museum: the museum as structure in the first movement, as school in the second, as stage in the third, and as site in the final movement.

RATHER THAN BEING STRUCTURED around an external theme selected by the curator and “illustrated” with artworks, the exhibition self-organizes internally, the process coming mostly from the artworks and the building themselves. The substitution of works over the course of the exhibition will gradually alter the overall context and evolve naturally from one movement into the next like a dissolve in a movie. Since it will be in a constant state of flux, the exhibition is never the same and never entire, but is always virtually composed and completed by visitors: the museum as a deferred action and a mental space. Our museum, like the house in the novel, is a productive medium in its own right. It creates its own function. But who are its authors?

THIS IMMEASURABLE MUSEUM we are creating abandons the authoritarian voice. Many individuals directly or indirectly participate in its creation. By reading this text, you have entered this museum of leaves we have yet to define, and are now contributing to A House of Leaves, a co-author of this narrative, a player of this game, a character of this fiction, a performer in this symphony.

Vincent Honoré

a perfect and fulfilled conclusion. The viewer in our space will be like the reader in and of Calvino's book. The notion of the unfinished, the structure of a process that repeats itself endlessly, are echoed in both the museum we want to develop, and in our understanding of a collection.

STUDY

THE FIRST STUDY FOCUSED on *Senza Titolo (Dopo la strage degli innocenti, Anonimo, verso 1400)* by Victor Man was led by Sandra Pusterhofer. It launched a new programme at DRAF of case-studies of works from the collection. Each involves a single work, displayed on its own in a gallery. The second study, conducted by Nicoletta Lambertucci, was dedicated to *Machine Gun and Figure* by artist Carol Bove. The third study is based on Bruce McLean's *Pose Work for Plinths, 1971* conceived by Sandra Pusterhofer. The work is studied in depth: from its techniques, origin and history to its position in the artist's practice and contemporary debates. *The Study* is made available in a booklet.

AN ARTWORK IS A SYSTEM that cannot be reduced only to an object or an index (certificate, instructions, etc.). It also includes the histories (material and conceptual), the trajectories (physical or virtual) and the narratives (past or to come) generated by the artwork: this is what this programme will research.