

talks @ apex

january 12: richard sieburth on  
stéphane mallarmé

january 19: craig dworkin  
on haroldo de campos

january 26: kenneth goldsmith and  
guests

## double space

curated by a.s.bessa

january 6 - february 5, 2000

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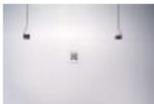
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l. a. angelmaker  
devon dikeou  
kenneth goldsmith  
jorge pardo  
alain resnais  
alain robbe-grillet  
fred sandback  
carolee schneemann  
lily van der stokker

reproduction of cover photo from "jealousy" by  
alain robbe-grillet @grove-atlantic press

many thanks to isabelle merly, harouth bezdjian  
and seth mcbride

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i.s. angelmaker, 1998. "text: thill, robert. m.v. looks for a piece of the art world, flash art (international) 30, no. 194 (may-june 1997): p. 50. read by james traub." round installation and framed magazine.



devon dikeou, 1993 (on going). "strong tendencies, strange developments, the innocents beguiled," from the adventures of tom Sawyer. 6'x8'



kenneth goldsmith, (with clem paulsen) "fidget-applet" 1998



jorge pardo, 1994. "ten people, ten books." cloth cover book with velum architecture and pedestal.

departing from hemingway's claim that writing is architecture not interior decoration, and on the way trying to prove him wrong as to the second part of that statement.) think of the case of robbe-grillet's jealousy whose architecture seems disarmingly plain—simple forms for multiple purposes (paragraphs made of sentences that repeat on and on, blocks of text arranged in different combinations). the same can be said of the architecture in jealousy: square spaces for multiple purposes (a colonial construction formed by rooms of regular shapes, rectangles combined in different patterns). in its original (jealousie) the title is already doubled as it refers both to jealousy and to venetian blinds. the narrator inhabits these spaces like a ghost, for he is equivocal to the hypotenuse of a triangle whose existence we only suspect and which is never confirmed. (the two other characters in this theorem, a... and franck, are quite well defined, whereas the narrator's existence is only suggested but never really spelled out). the novel is composed of right angles, and the narrator, a diagonal to these angles, is still to be deduced from the given measurements. this narrator, such a fascinating concept, is in a way a stand-in for both the writer and the reader, facing a situation that unfolds independently of his will. like an edgar allan poe character, he seems to have been walled up alive, caught between the interstices of this space. what he sees and can't prevent from happening is often happening in another room, which he can only glimpse through the blinds of a window. like this narrator, the reader is also walled in between the pages of the book—what one reads and can't prevent from happening is happening in another space, which one can only glimpse between the lines. the window's blinds parallel the lines of text on the book's page: one reads (through the blinds/lines) the narrator's account of his reading through the blinds. it is thus that robbe-grillet acknowledges the circular nature of reading (this circularity one only presumes, for it is only experienced as a segment of an arc: the narrator is reading a situation, the reader is reading the narrator reading a situation, etc). and how strange this book's wordplay: sun-blinds and blindness, jealousies and jealousy. and what's more, everything around seems to exist solely to end up in this book: the sun goes up and down in its repetitive motions, casting geometrical shadows around the house, and even the banana plantation expands further the organizing principle of the text. if only chaos were this well organized. there will be, how-

ever, an element to mess up this geometry: the centipede smashed on the wall by franck, in a scene exhaustively analyzed from several perspectives, is a stain at the center of robbe-grillet's rigid design (its interior decoration) and compromises the cleanliness of the overall plan. the stain is the macula in one's realm of vision, a smear on the windowpane, the area that becomes most visible; it indicates that between one's perception and the object being observed there is a screen. the stain points to the artificial nature of the spectacle, bringing one's attention back to the surface of the page; the brechtian ver-fremdungseffekt. the stain upsets (interrupts the course of reading) and at the same time provides an opportunity to release stress (by making one aware of the materiality of the page). the page is our most abstract invention, a window onto a virtual space (the lines of text working as a sun-blind that filters the light [the brightness of the blank page, the supremacy of the white, is perhaps too harsh for one to endure, and without these lines one would plunge into the void]). in "pay attention motherfucker!" bruce nauman addresses the problem of the page-as-screen with such bluntness as to lead one to wonder what is so infuriating about it. in nauman's artwork the text reads backwards, conveying again the idea that the reader is caught in an in-between space, walled up, arrested by language. works such as nauman's and robbe-grillet's are unsettling because they make evident this effect in art that we take for natural and translate as an emotion. in these works simplicity is deceiving and fiction is built up upon this deceit. after all, what the eye apprehends on the page is but a series of signs repeated in different combinations. hence a new theory is made necessary—one that would account for the mediation between these doubled spaces, a sort of string theory of writing. it would go something like this: on this page, picture a grid over which these words (letters, basically) aggregate, each letter a string curlicue-ing according to its own nature. thus this theory of space/time would comprehend not only three dimensions, or seven as is now proposed, but twenty-six: each string, a letter, driving the eye's attention in a different direction, and the endless combinations of these strings producing an infinity of things (words). the mind scans the fabric of the text as if following a thread, a line, a sentence. from left to right, from top to bottom, bridging gaps between the letters, between the words, be-



alain resnais, 1956. "toute la mémoire du monde." black and white documentary, 26 minutes.



fred sandback, 1998. "untitled," painted yarn.



carolee schneemann, 1966. "parts of a body house (guerilla gut room)," ink drawing on paper 20"x26"



lily van der stokker, 1994. "curlicue," acrylic paint on wall.