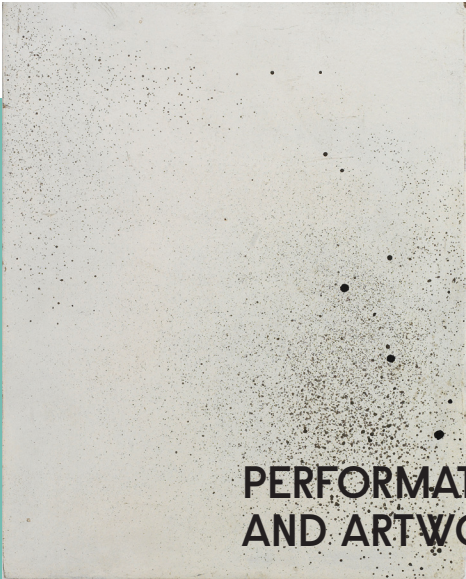


PERFORMING SURFACES



PERFORMATIVITY
AND ARTWORK

#ØI

INTRODUCTION

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Performing Surfaces investigates conceptual and formalistic approaches towards the performative aspect of artistic production through a selection of sculptural paintings by four London-based artists and the format of the exhibition itself. Two events, to be held in the exhibition space, will act as an extension to the show, while a research desk located at the gallery will operate as a platform for the production of three publications in response to the artworks and the events, providing alternative readings on the exhibition.

Performing Surfaces brings together works that assume and embody the performative character of the artistic gesture, being the outcome of an

ongoing development of actions between the object and the subject. The exhibition extends the concept of performativity, a term much associated with performance art emerging in the 60s, in order to reflect on the bodily processes that shape the material, as well as the formal and conceptual nature of the artwork.

Following that, a certain notion of performativity can be used here as a key to unravel the common thread that runs from artistic conception to the viewer's interpretation: an understanding of the creation of meaning through the relations that emerge within the artwork itself and between the artwork and the viewer.

PERFORMATIVITY AND ARTWORK

Performativity and Artwork is the first publication in a series of three, produced as part of Performing Surfaces. This publication contains a selection of references, proposing an introductory reading of the exhibition through the dynamics raised by the relationship between performative artistic attitudes and the artwork as an object.

“THE CONTEMPORARY ARTIST
DOESN'T JUST PRODUCE AND PRESENT
OBJECTS OR IMAGES; HE PRODUCES
PRODUCTION ITSELF, PRESENTATION
ITSELF... IMAGES AND IDEAS OF
THESE THAT ARE AT THE SAME (LIKE
IT OR NOT) ETHICAL POSITIONS.
LIKE ANY WORKER TODAY, THE ART-
ISTS' JOB IS ALSO TO TALK AND
MOVE, PUTTING WORDS, IMAGES,
AND HIS OWN BODY INTO CIRCUL-
LATION. MORE THAN ANYTHING, HE
MAKES MOMENTUM.” *01

“EVEN THE MONA LISA, EVEN
VELÁSQUEZ'S MENINAS, CAN BEEN
SEEN NOT AS TIMELESS STATIC
FORMS BUT AS FRAGMENTS OF A
GESTURE OR AS FRAMES OF A LOST
FILM, SOLELY WITHIN WHICH
WOULD THEY REGAIN THEIR TRUE
MEANING.” *02

“EVERY WORK [...] IS IN REALITY
THE RESULT OF A SOMETIMES SUB-
STANTIAL NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS.
OF INTERFERENCES. THE GREAT
BEAUTY OF A WORK LIES WITHOUT
DOUBT IN THE FACT THAT ALL THE
INTERACTIONS THAT HAVE BROUGHT
IT ABOUT REMAIN VISIBLE IN THE
FINISHED PIECE, MAKING IT DELI-
GATE AND OPEN WITHOUT UPSET-
TING ITS BALANCE.” *03

“THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY GIVES ONE DEFINITION OF “TRANSITIVE” AS “EX-PRESSING AN ACTION WHICH PASSES OVER TO AN OBJECT.” I CAN’T THINK OF NO BETTER TERM TO CAPTURE THE STATUS OF OBJECTS WITHIN NETWORKS - WHICH ARE DEFINED BY THEIR CIRCULATION FROM PLACE TO PLACE AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT TRANSLATION INTO NEW CONTEXT - THAN THIS NOTION OF PASSAGE.” *Ø4

“TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF THE PERFORMATIVE IN THIS WAY MEANS TO FOCUS NOT ONLY ON WHAT AN ART-WORK INTENDS TO DO, BUT ALSO ON ITS UNINTENDED AND UNREFLECTED EFFECTS. THE PERFORMATIVE EMPHASIZES AN ARTWORK’S CONSTITUTIVE EFFECT ON PRECISELY THOSE CONDITIONS INTO WHICH IT IS EMBEDDED AND BY WHICH IT EXISTS [...] VIA THE CONCEPT OF PERFORMATIVITY ONE CAN EXPLAIN HOW AN ARTWORK CO-CONSTITUTES SOCIAL REALITY IN ITS MOST FUNDAMENTAL PARAMETERS (FOR EXAMPLE, THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FORM TAKEN BY THE CATEGORY OF THE COMMODITY).” *Ø5

SOURCES

- * Ø1 John Kelsey, *Rich Text: Selected Writings for Art*, eds: Daniel Birnbaum and Isabelle Graw, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 68.
- * Ø2 Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History, the destruction of experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1993), 139.
- * Ø3 Daniel Buren, “Dekonstruktionen,” Daniel Buren. *Erscheinen, Scheinen, Verschwinden*, (Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Richter, Düsseldorf, 1996), 106 in Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art, the meaning of art’s performativity*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Michael Turnbull. (Zürich: JRP|Ringier Kunstverlag AG, and Les presses du réel, 2010), 72.
- * Ø4 David Joselit, “Painting Besides Itself.” *October*, 130 (2009): 128.
- * Ø5 Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art, the meaning of art’s performativity*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Michael Turnbull (Zürich: JRP|Ringier Kunstverlag AG, and Les presses du réel, 2010), 151.
- COVER Noit - *One Second Drawing, 1970*, Ink on paint and board, 32.5 x 24.7 | Courtesy of John Latham Estate and Lisson Gallery.

