

[*Silver Monochrome*], 2011, placed next to the polka-dot works, the dot is not mirrored but raised, like a bubble coming to the surface.) The feeling here is not of satire or deconstruction; rather, the surprises—the reflections, the plants—are gentle, almost humorous. Even the book covers, austere and imageless, are shown to be more than perfectly neutral rectangles: They are turned inside out, punctured, given dimension and (a limited amount of) color. These works create a pleasing feeling of hovering between meanings, between their tight construction and the loose associations they provoke. Another book-cover collage shows frames from Saul Bass's opening credits for *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955). Is a golden arm equivalent to an arm?

—Emily Hall

Beryl Korot

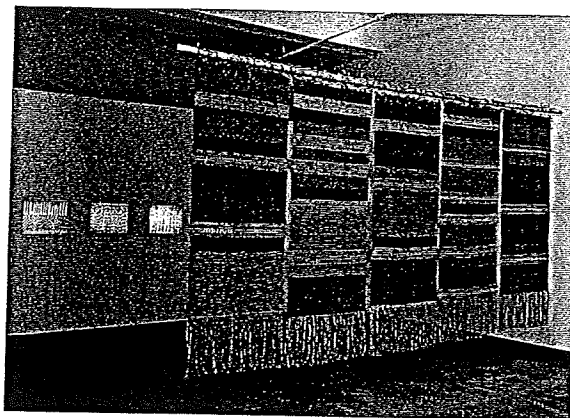
BITFORMS GALLERY

Nearly forty years ago, Beryl Korot began a long-term, ongoing affair with three seemingly unrelated media: textile, print, and video. At the time, she was an editor of the seminal *Radical Software*, a magazine that she cofounded, and was involved with producing some of the first multichannel video installations, such as *Dachau*, 1974.

In her 1978 essay "Video and the Loom," Korot notes the homology among television's interlaced signal, the loom's systematic encoding of pattern or image into cloth, and the way in which language is printed: All happen line by line. Likening woven elements to linguistic components—individual letters and words—has formed the basis for her art. Poetry, too, has played a prominent role. (Perhaps Guattari was right when he argued that "poetry should be prescribed like vitamins": "Careful now," he wrote, "you'd feel better if you took some poetry.") For 2008's *Florence*, one of three works in Korot's recent show at bitforms gallery, she isolates words from various writings by Florence Nightingale, allowing them to approximate a concrete poem insofar as they take on an object-ness unrelated to their role in generating meaning or sense.

The main event at bitforms was the video installation *Text and Commentary*, 1976–77. Originally exhibited at Leo Castelli in 1977, the work was inspired by the legacy of the Jacquard loom and its impact on Charles Babbage's punch card, which in turn led to the invention of the computer. Five monitors embedded in a freestanding wall display passing scenes of Korot weaving textiles on a loom, ranging from isolated close-ups of hands tying strings on a bar and feet pressing pedals to overhead views that reveal warp and weft. Throughout the thirty-three-minute loop, the screens turn on and off; the mesmerizing tempo (and pounding of the wooden beater on the thread) mimics the loom's repetitive motion. The installation also includes materials that deconstruct, reiterate, and reify the videos' production: a score of pictographic and temporal notations breaking down the work shot by shot (more or less instructions for re-creating the piece), five pencil drawings of the weavings with dimensions that approximate the 3:4 ratio of the monitors, and the five black, white, and gray woven textiles suspended from the ceiling.

An amalgamation of various genres—post-Minimalism, Process art, Pattern and Decoration—*Text and Commentary* has not yet been considered a key Conceptual work, though it should be, given its capacious reflection on the limits and capabilities of language and seriality. Of course, text and textiles have long been entwined. As Korot recently wrote, "Text (textus) and weave (texto) share the same Latin root. Text is a tissue or fabric woven of many threads. It is a web, texture, structure, a thought, something that can be built, raveled, and unraveled." Throughout the piece, the camera's address to the loom in various



Beryl Korot, *Text and Commentary* (detail), 1976–77, five-channel black-and-white video (30 minutes), weavings, drawings. Installation View.

shots—from documenting the process of weaving to the transition of pattern—builds a frame for a poem of sorts, transitioning from verbal to nonverbal communication (or from sense to abstraction) as it unfolds across the channels.

A final video on view, *Yellow Water Taxi*, 2003, depicts five ferries slowly moving back and forth against a marine-blue grid. Built with scans of linen textiles, Photoshop manipulation, and footage rendered with *After Effects*, the humble video resonates with *Text and Commentary* and *Florence* through its emphasis of patterns and process. Korot made the work in the wake of 9/11, after observing taxis ferrying passengers on the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York. With no text, or any kind of language, it also has rhythm—and it too could resemble a poem.

—Lauren O'Neill-Butler

"Notations: The Cage Effect Today"

HUNTER COLLEGE/TIMES SQUARE GALLERY

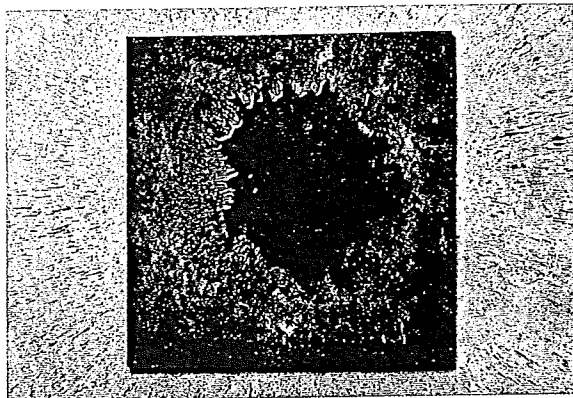
No study of composer John Cage's legacy would be complete without acknowledging his own influences and frequent collaborations. In the case of visual-art practices, his work with Robert Rauschenberg looms largest. Indeed, in Hunter College's exhibition "Notations: The Cage Effect Today," organized by Joachim Pissarro with the help of an international group of curators (Bibi Calderaro, Julio Grinblatt, and Michelle Yun), Rauschenberg is a silent but dominant partner in the proceedings.

Cage credited Rauschenberg, whom he met in New York in 1951 and worked with at Black Mountain College and beyond, with opening up a space of apparent emptiness in art and revealing it to be, in fact, full of diverse activity and experience. At the time of their meeting, Rauschenberg was exploring what seemed to be the ultimate "anti-art" provocation—the monochromatic canvas. Cage was intrigued with the way in which the resultant *White Paintings*, 1951, seemed to enhance the experience of typically overlooked events, calling them "airports for the lights, shadows, and particles," and attributed his famous 1952 "silent" composition, *4'33"*, to Rauschenberg's challenge of empty openness. Just as there was no emptiness in the *White Paintings*, Cage argued, there was also no silence in life.

Between this circuit of silences pregnant with sound and emptiness full of incident, the artists in "Notations" continually return to Cage by way of Rauschenberg. The exhibition's spare, refined installation rewarded sharp attention and patience, as many works would be overlooked in

nearly any other context. Matthew Deleget's *Monochrome (Sleeper Cells)*, 2007, consists of three reflective panels coated nearly to their edges with white paint the same color as the gallery walls. Such a work might elicit a shrug elsewhere (as no doubt many monochromes sometimes do), but the discursive field of "Cage/Rauschenberg" demands subtler perception. Deleget's paintings amplify shadows, and their color and appearance vary according to light conditions. Additionally, the roughly applied perimeter of paint appears like the slapdash coats thrown up to cover graffiti on city walls.

The earliest of the twenty-eight works on display, William Anastasi's *Sink*, 1963, responds to the exploration of duration in Rauschenberg's 1953 *Dirt Painting (For John Cage)* (which was not on view here). *Sink* is a floor-bound square sheet of steel that emphasizes the mutability of any process of creation and display: The work rusts as it ages—water is poured on it regularly—just as the packed earth of *Dirt Painting* blossomed sprouts and later molded over the years. Rivane Neuenschwander's installation *O trabalho dos dias* (Day's Work), 1998, literalizes Cage's argument that Rauschenberg's monochromes are screens for everyday experience. Adhesive vinyl sheets line the walls and floor of a room. The squares were previously white, but Neuenschwander swept the dust and debris from her home onto them; as the viewer walks through the space, the sheets continue to accumulate residue, functioning like giant flytraps. These are truly airports for particles, predominantly bodily ones such as skin and hair (which also brings to mind Cage's tale of visiting an anechoic—an echoless, insulated, and therefore soundproof—chamber, in which he heard the high pitch of his nervous system and the low drone of his blood pumping). There will be no silence, no emptiness in the world, so long as there is the body.



William Anastasi,
Sink, 1963, rusted
steel, water, 20 x
20 x 1/2". From
"Notations: The Cage
Effect Today."

The sense of the artwork as a screen for bodies that Cage took from Rauschenberg—for example, in the first Happening, which Cage staged at Black Mountain in 1952, the White Paintings oscillated between acting as paintings and operating as screens for slides or films—also recurred throughout "Notations." Perhaps its most direct expression could be found in David Lamelas's *Limit of a Projection 1*, 1967, consisting of a darkened room with a single white spotlight projected onto the floor. The cone of light the beam demarcates is an invitation for viewers to perform, to countervail the perfect geometry of the circle with the gangly reality of their bodies, to enter into the work and collapse art into life. For as Cage proclaimed, "Art's obscured the difference between art and life. . . . Where there's a history of organization (art), introduce disorder."

—Eva Díaz

Seth Kim-Cohen

AUDIO VISUAL ARTS

KILL "KILL YOUR IDOLS." YEAH YEAH YEAHS, LIARS, BLACK DICE: WHATEVER. TRULY RADICAL ANTI-ROCK. LIKE A CINDER BLOCK FROM THE 10TH STORY WINDOW. GROOVES. SLASHING GUITARS. FED UP SAMPLERS. TAKE DOWN THE CORPORATACRACY. ANY GENDER, AGE, RACE, PROFICIENCY. Seth Kim-Cohen's classified ad, headed POST-POSTPUNK, NEW NO WAVE, defines its territory in strident but slippery terms, adopting a defiant pose while leaving room for interpretation. Originally posted in the "Musicians" section of Craigslist, then displayed outside Audio Visual Arts for the duration of Kim-Cohen's "social-situational project" "Tomorrow Is the Question? Is the Question!," the listing is one of several offering free rehearsal space to players for whom its proposition strikes a chord.

Kim-Cohen, a former member of the bands Number One Cup and the Fire Show, and the author of *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art* (2009), pitched his altruistic gesture as a way of acting as midwife to new kinds of music by first describing them verbally, imagining new subgenres into being through the power of suggestion. The tiny gallery was equipped only with microphones, amplifiers, speakers, and a drum kit; everything else was left to the musicians, who were each granted two-and-a-half-hour slots. What they did with this time, and whether or not they attempted to realize the artist's fanciful characterizations, was left entirely up to them. The organizer remained absent throughout, though the sessions were recorded with a vinyl release in mind.

When I stopped by, "post-postpunk" was in the process of being invented by a drummer/keyboardist, a guitarist, and a singer, none of whom once took a break to speak or crack a smile. It was unclear whether this was a band, or even if the three young men had met each other prior to setup. The beat was slow but shifting, the other instrumentation a wash of fuzzy strumming and electronic burbles. The warbling vocals, which mixed real and invented language in (very approximately) the vein of Cocteau Twins' Elizabeth Fraser, were easily the most striking ingredient. After half an hour or so, the anonymous trio was joined by an affable bass player, who introduced himself around, seeming to assume that I, the sole spectator, was another musician awaiting my turn.

Something about this encounter felt emblematic of the show as a whole; it was at once collegial and awkward, a real-world mistake framed by a semifictitious context. By emptying the gallery of what the press release refers to as "yesterday's answers" in the form of completed artifacts, "Tomorrow Is the Question?" (the title is borrowed from a 1959 album by Ornette Coleman) transformed the ordinary room into an arena for trial and error that positioned improvisational performance as an allegory for experimental thinking in general. Kim-Cohen's ads—others in the sequence cite FREAKTRONICA/DUB FOLK/TRIP BOP, LONG-ATTENTION-SPAN-MUSIC-FOR-SHORT-ATTENTION-SPAN-TIMES, and KRAUT-SOUL!—hew close enough to existing categories to ensure ready communication, but just far enough to allow for entertainingly divergent readings. These are directions that begin from fixed points



Seth Kim-Cohen,
KRAUT-SOUL!, 2012.
Performance view,
March 31, 2012.