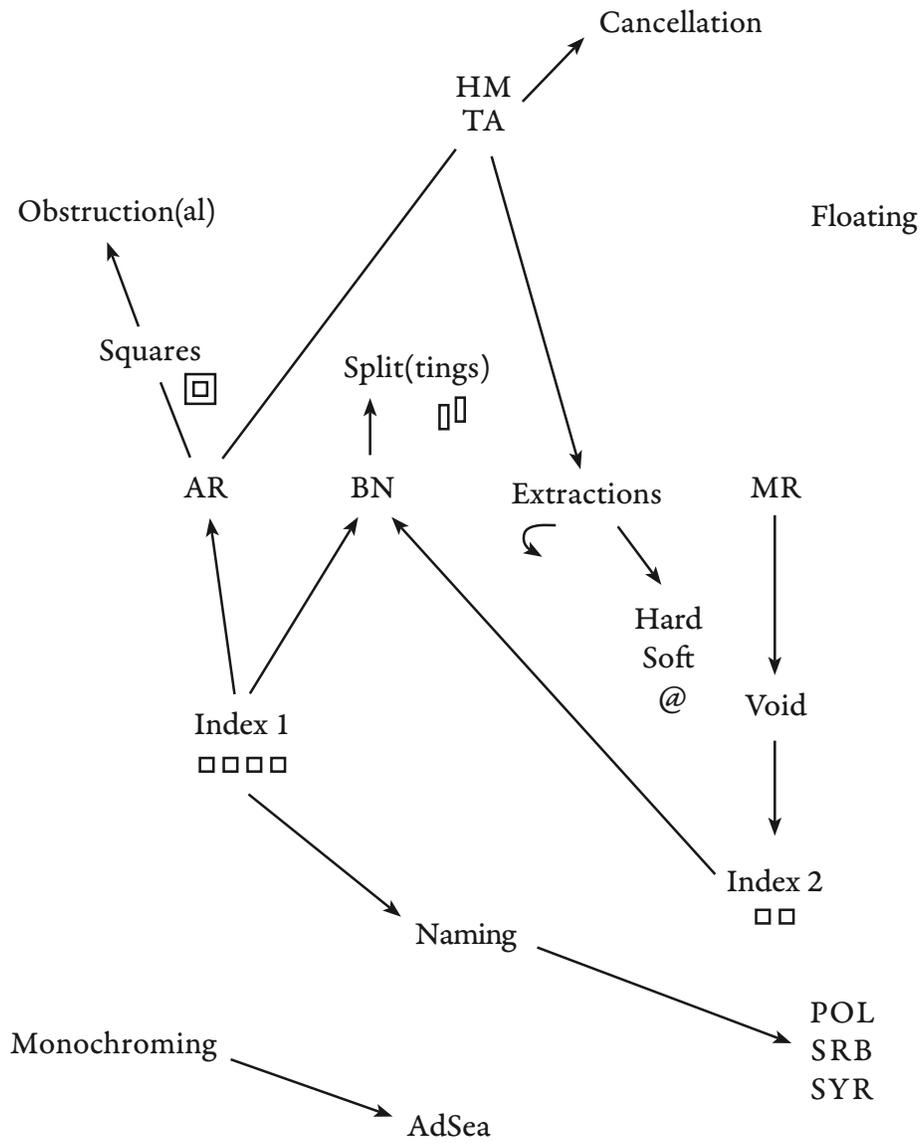
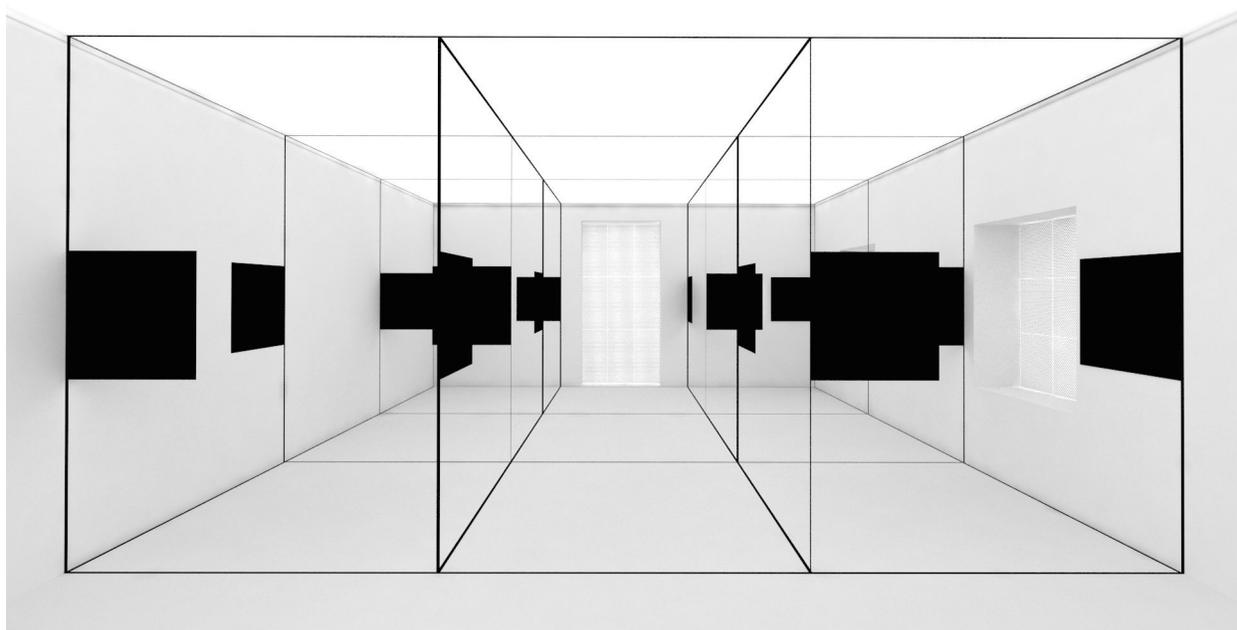


SD (@DDL/NY, 2016)



# Karin Schneider Situational Diagram



*Situational Diagram* is an exhibition at Dominique Lévy, New York, by Brazil-born, New York-based artist and filmmaker Karin Schneider. The exhibition is accompanied by a series of readings and gatherings and a critical companion edited by Schneider and gallery director Begum Yasar. The publication features contributions by Sabu Kohso, Jaleh Mansoor, Jean-Luc Nancy, Simon O'Sullivan, Anne Querrien, Abrahão de Oliveira Santos, Valentin Schaepelynck, Schneider, Aliza Shvarts, Yasar, and Tirdad Zolghadr.

*Situational Diagram* takes as its point of departure a series of monochrome paintings structured in reference to the artistic practices of Barnett Newman, Ad Reinhardt, and Mark Rothko as they developed after World War II. These paintings are made with Mars Black pigment, mixed variously with Cobalt Blue, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red, and Phthalo Emerald. Schneider also blends derivatives of petroleum and coal (two primary energy sources) with the black pigment.

16 black monochrome paintings are installed on the gallery's second floor in a "trisected square" steel architectural structure, built in reference to the black-on-black squares that characterize Reinhardt's paintings. Paintings from this group can only be acquired by collectors with the agreement that another artist will at some point alter the canvas by painting over its surface. The name of the other artist is not to be revealed to the buyer prior to acquisition. Also on the second floor is a 16 mm film of the Adriatic Sea projected from a wood and Plexiglas "transparent partition." An *Extraction* features the silhouette of the female figure *extracted* as a form from Matisse's *Nu Bleu III* (1952), rendered in black neoprene and placed on the gallery floor.

On the gallery's third floor visitors will find two *Splits*, works referencing Newman's *Onement I* (1948) and *Stations of the Cross* (1958–66), and a large *Void* work referencing a painting at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, TX. The third floor also presents *Index*, a series of paintings cataloguing the exhibition's various blacks; a *Cancellation* work that simultaneously combines and annuls two

artistic styles and their corresponding sets of values (in this case, those of Reinhardt and Tarsila do Amaral) within one painting; and an *Extraction* from Tarsila's *Abaporu* (1928) (this form rendered in black steel).

An advertisement for the exhibition placed in *Artforum* features an image associated with a current geopolitical crisis—a gesture that asserts connections between vastly different but nevertheless interconnected contexts. A copy of the magazine occupies the second gallery of the third floor together with three *Naming* paintings.

Each artwork in the exhibition is to be sold accompanied with specific purchase agreements, which are structured in a way that aims to generate an economic model to support collaborators involved in various aspects of the work.

*Situational Diagram* is an exercise that detours from a politics of aesthetics associated with prevailing modes of authorship, viewership, and dissemination. It creates opportunities for multifaceted encounters with artworks. The ways in which the works confront various political, economic, and environmental issues are only detectable through a slowed-down perception of the exhibition. The gallery space can thus function as a political device, proposing a *diagrammatic* relationship between artist, artwork, and viewer. In this model, diverse forms of engagement can be established in relation to the artistic use of materials, time, space, and the exigencies of our time.

Karin Schneider is a Brazil-born and New York-based artist and filmmaker. In 1997, Schneider founded Union Gaucha Productions (UGP) with Nicolás Guagnini, an artist-run, experimental film company that carries out interdisciplinary collaborations with practitioners from different fields. From 2005 to 2008, she was a founding member of Orchard, a cooperatively organized exhibition and social space in New York's Lower East Side. In 2010, Schneider cofounded Cage, a space that facilitates new kinds of social interactions. Her most recent body of work is *Situational Diagram*, which she first presented as a text at the Centre Culturel International de Cerisy, France, in 2015.

3RD FLOOR

1 Split	S (BN/ONMI)
1 Split	S (BN/SOC8)
1 Void	V (MR/RC#1473)
1 Extraction	E (TA/AP)
1 Cancellation	AR (BP) + TA (AP)
Index 1	4 paintings
Index 2	2 paintings
1 Floating	F (FN/WTP)
3 Namings	N (POL) / N (SYR) / N (SRB)
1 Situation	E (@)

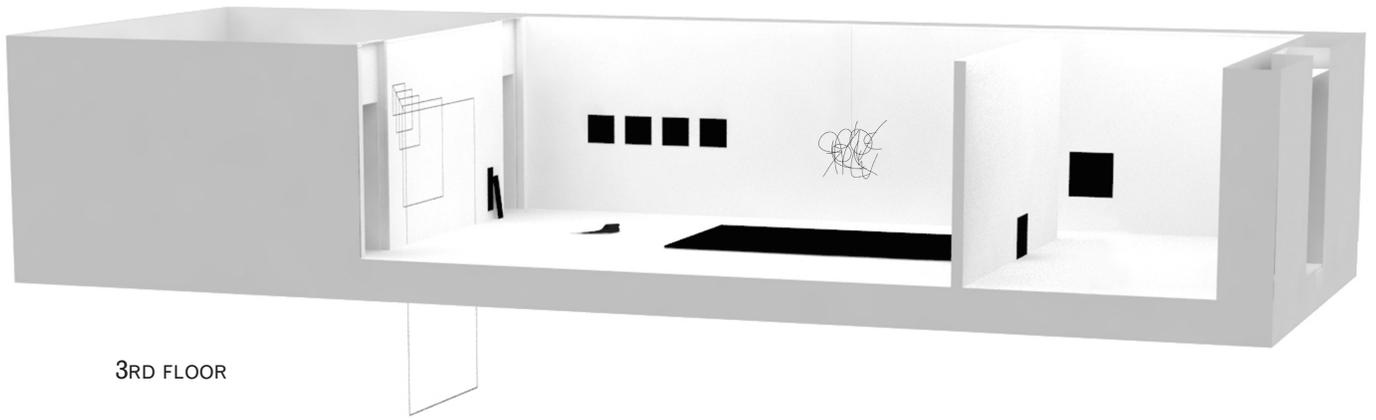
2ND FLOOR

16 Obstructional(s)	(O) paintings
1 Monochroming	M (AdSea/16 mm, 1:00 min)
1 Extraction	E (HM/NB III-I)

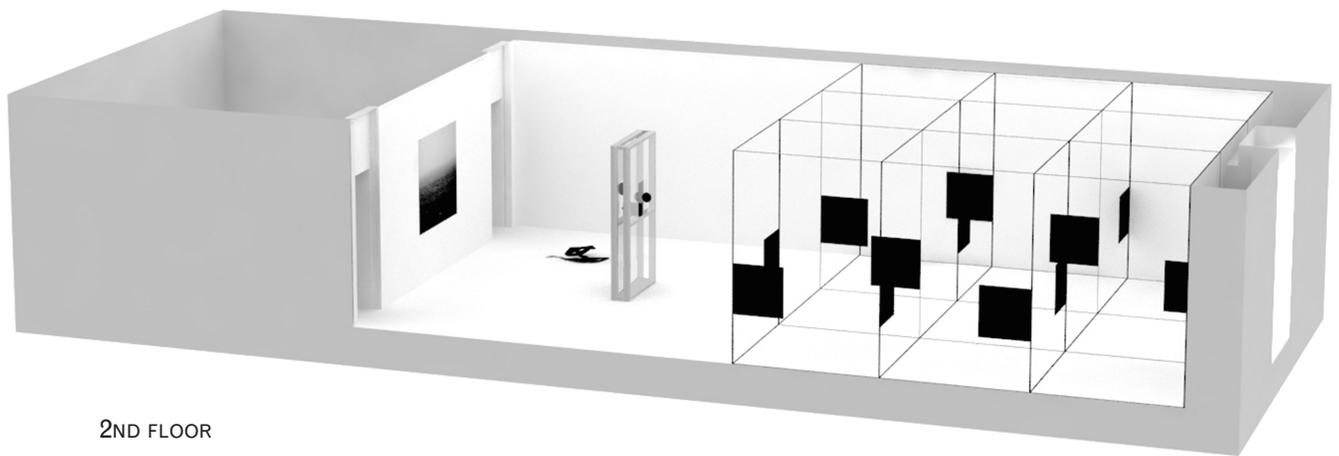
BOTH FLOORS

1 Wall Drawing	WD#SD (@DL/NY, 2016)
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AdSea:	Adriatic Sea
AP:	<i>Abaporu</i> (1928)
AR:	Ad Reinhardt
BN:	Barnett Newman
BP:	Black Paintings
E (@):	Digital Extraction
FN:	Friedrich Nietzsche
HM:	Henri Matisse
MR:	Mark Rothko
NB III-I:	<i>Nu Bleu I-III</i> (1952)
ONMI:	<i>Onement, I</i> (1948)
POL:	Poland
RC:	Rothko Chapel
SOC8:	<i>Stations of the Cross, Eighth Station</i> (1964)
SRB:	Serbia
SYR:	Syria
TA:	Tarsila do Amaral
TP:	Transparent Partition
WD:	Wall Drawing
WTP:	Will to Power

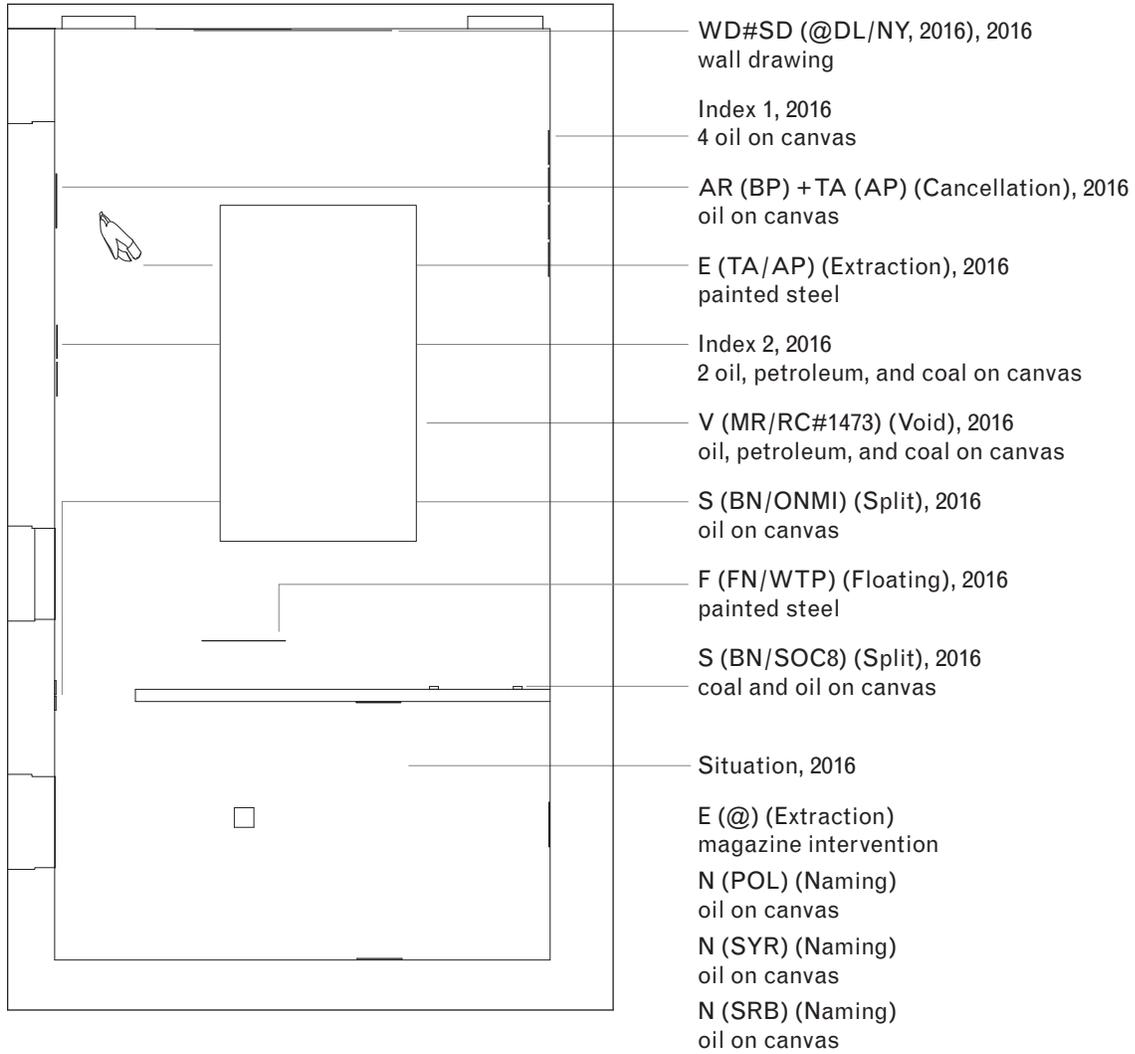


3RD FLOOR

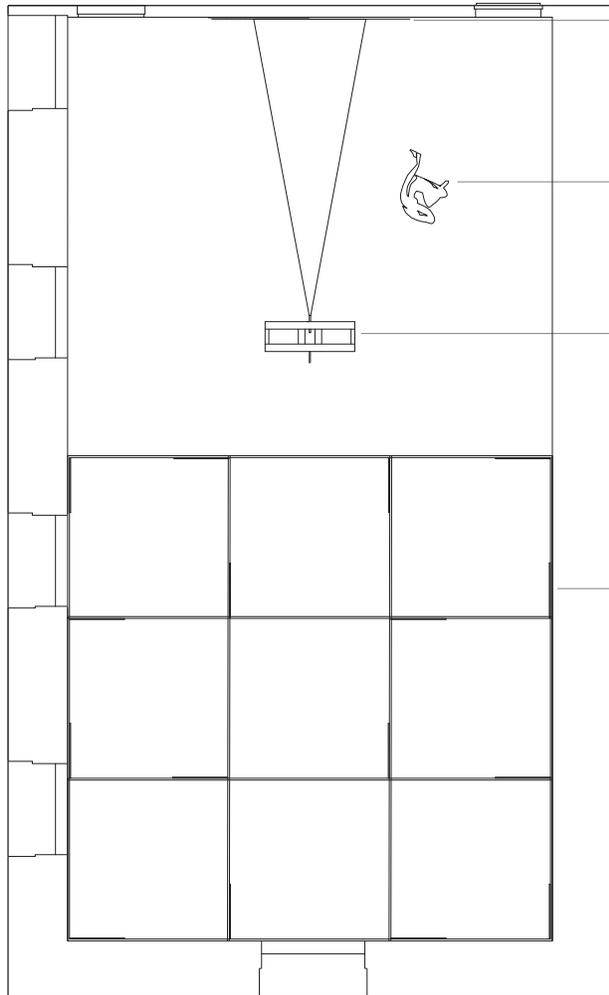


2ND FLOOR

### 3RD FLOOR



2ND FLOOR



WD#SD (@DL/NY, 2016), 2016  
wall drawing

E (HM/NB III-I) (Extraction), 2016  
neoprene

Situation, 2016

TP (Transparent Partition)

M (AdSea/16 mm, 1:00 min) (Monochroming)

E (@) (Extraction)  
magazine intervention, displaced to a different room

(O) paintings, 2016  
16 oil on canvas, attached to steel trisected square

## C for Cancellation = AR (BP) + TA (AP)

/kansə'lāSH(ə)n/

Cancellation is defined as the act of causing something to end, or to no longer produce a certain effect. Cancellation proposes a redistribution of forces that act within a painting so as to simultaneously combine and annul two artistic programs within one painting. This is an act of painting that articulates the signified as form. Painting becomes an exploration of “purport-forms” (purport as the thought in itself) that considers individual languages/artistic programs and their specific styles as typologies.

Negation was the signature mode of operation of Ad Reinhardt's (AR) black paintings (BP), produced between 1953 and 1967. Phrases such as “art of painting vs. art of color,” “the dark of absolute freedom,” “black is negation,” and “striving for nothing” can be found throughout *Art as Art*, a collection of selected writings by AR.<sup>1</sup> The artist conceived of and produced his black paintings as embodiments of the ultimate possibility in painting. His strategy of “what is not” was one of the main characteristics of his “timeless paintings.”

In 1928, Tarsila do Amaral's (TA) painting *Abaporu* (AP) (which means “the man that eats people” in Tupi-Guarani)—whose composition features a man, the sun, and a cactus—inspired Oswald de Andrade (TA's husband at the time) to write the *Anthropophagic Manifesto* and subsequently create the Anthropophagic Movement, intended to “swallow” European culture and turn it into something specifically Brazilian. The metaphor of cultural cannibalism was used by Andrade to react against European colonialism and Brazil's subsequent cultural and economic dependence on Europe. TA described the subject of the painting as “a monstrous solitary figure, enormous feet, sitting on a green plain, the hand supporting the featherweight minuscule head, in front a cactus exploding in an absurd flower.”<sup>2</sup> The style of AP can be traced back to the French modernists, especially Fernand Léger, who taught Tarsila in Paris in 1924. However, this image is somehow a spew, a reaction against her European education.

Cancellation is an impure notion. The end of painting is confronted with the beginning of a new model of thought—Anthropophagia—and vice versa. It produces a bodily effect that belongs to the space of the neither/nor—a model of suspension. The viewer has to move their body around the Cancellation to be able to perceive all the images that are configured in this particular Situational Diagram (SD).

Index 1 is the palette of colors used in Cancellation (see I for Index).

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1 Ad Reinhardt, *Art as Art*, ed. Barbara Rose (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

2 Aracy Amaral, *Tarsila: Sua Obra e Seu Tempo* (São Paulo: Tenenge, 1986), 104.

E for Extraction = E (TA/AP) / E (HM/NB III-I) / E (@)  
/ik'strakSH(ə)n/

The word extraction comes from Latin, *extrahere* (ex-tract). It is described as the action of taking out something, of separating from. An Extraction has to do with the impression of being thrown on the floor, which implies a gesture that encapsulates an unknown result. It also refers to a certain genealogical lineage. An Extraction in this SD extracts certain images: in particular, forms of nude figures from the walls of art history. Its forms of “language/speech” diagrammatize another “form/function” articulation from its previous historical sign. A meta-language that redistributes its form of expression, its substance, and its form of content. One that escapes and separates (signifier/signified) from its previous existence.

It is not a question of extracting a singular image/material, but placing these extractions in a state of flux and continuous variation. Their final forms can have infinite variations. A hard extraction finds its historical anchor in “diálogo fantasmático” with Katarzyna Kobro (*Spatial Composition 9*, 1933). A soft extraction dialogues with Lygia Clark (*Trepantes*, 1964). E (TA/AP) is the extraction of the figure out of Tarsila do Amaral's (TA) *Abaporu* (AP). E (HM/NB III-I) are variously extractions of the figures from Henri Matisse's (HM) three 1952 *Nu Bleu* (NB) cutouts.

A digital extraction, E (@), scans collective media outlets around the world to extract a sign-image. E (@) has a liquid quality. The key is to have a digital extraction in the exhibition that can sometimes be activated, and sometimes be deactivated—for instance an image of a person at a refugee camp taken from a news agency, reprinted in an art magazine. This is included in SD (@DL/NY, 2016) as part of a Situation. The magazine can sometimes be open to that page and can at other times be closed.

The work/concept “extraction” is not the object per se. The object becomes the result of different “ways of interacting” with the concept. It is another logic of production (materially and conceptually).

## I for Index = Index 1 and Index 2

/'in.deks/

In the Cambridge Dictionary, an *index* as noun is defined as an alphabetical list, such as one printed at the back of a book showing the pages on which a name or term appears. It can also be a number that shows the value of something by comparing it to something else whose value is known. As a verb, it refers to the act of making a list of references (an index) for a book, or arranging information in an index.

This term has different meanings for different writers. For Charles Pierce, an index extends beyond language. It means something that points to something else—such as smoke, which can be an index for fire. Indexes are signs linked to objects by an actual or real connection. For Ferdinand de Saussure, an index is a modality that connects signifier to signified (for instance: a pain, a phone ringing, a clock, a photograph, handwriting, etc.). For Roland Barthes, an index in a narrative can integrate diffuse information. For Barthes, indexes function as *indicators*: “personality traits concerning the characters, information with regard to their identity, notations of ‘atmosphere,’ and so on.”<sup>1</sup> They imply metaphoric *relata* (in terms of being). However, according to Barthes, one cannot reduce functions to actions (verbs) because “there are actions with indicial value.”<sup>2</sup>

In SD (@DL/NY, 2016), Index refers to the color-coding of an A-to-Z Glossary of black monochromes. Each color used in the Glossary exists in the form of a single 18 × 18 inch painting. So far, the Glossary has two indexes: Index 1 corresponds to four combinations of Mars Black, mixed variously with Cobalt Blue, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red, and Phthalo Emerald; Index 2 corresponds to two combinations of Mars Black mixed with turpentine, coal, and a derivative of petroleum. The indexes’ numbers indicate their order of appearance in the Glossary.

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1 Roland Barthes, *Introduction to Poetics (Theory and History of Literature)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 44.

2 Roland Barthes, “An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,” *New Literary History* 6.2: 1975, 247.

## M for Monochroming

*/ˈmɑː.nə.kroʊmɪŋ/*

*Monochrome* as an adjective is defined as “using a single color.” As an artwork, the monochrome is developed or executed in black or white, or in varying tones of only one color. *Monochrome* could also refer to something boring.

The Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris published an online learning resource, “Le Monochrome,” written in 2011–12 by Marie-José Rodriguez. This dossier questions the reasons why artists, in different times throughout history, have reduced their palette to paint in a single color. Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko, Yves Klein, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Ryman, Pierre Soulages, Piero Manzoni, Roman Opalka, Ellsworth Kelly, and others are presented, mapping the history of the monochrome in the twentieth century.

For Louis Hjelmslev, any word can be transformed into a verb. *Word* and *verb* are not necessarily different—they merely mark different functionalities of the same concept. A verb is a word converted into a process, an action in time. Hjelmslev also defines a verb as a conjunction of propositions. Varying degrees of accents or addendums on the same syllabic base are forms of declension/declination of the expression. Expression (as in content) operates under the logic of a nexus. Hjelmslev calls this plane of possible expressions “modulation.” Modulation corresponds, then, to the verbal characteristics of an expression, and verbal characteristics in turn correspond to modulation of content.

*Monochroming* does not exist in any dictionary as a verb. Monochroming started in 2005; it is the act of reducing the experience of color to minimum relations. Reducing color allows for the creation of complex diagrammatic relations that are not necessarily determined by fixed operations, but by infinite modulations.

N for Naming = N (POL) / N (SYR) / N (SRB)  
/nām/

Naming comes from the noun *name*: a word or set of words by which a person, animal, place, or thing is known, addressed, or referred to. As a verb, name can be used to mean “to mention, to appoint, to identify, to specify a place or time.” Words are signs. When a word is spoken, a sense of time is incorporated into its system. Some components come (temporally) earlier and some later. In every language, the formation of syllables presupposes rules governing each linguistic structure. There is no natural course or sense of inevitability when it comes to learning different languages. In the act of naming, we demarcate boundaries, insert histories, and create possible analogies and chains of meaning. The meaning of any named thing can thus be socially motivated by desire, interests, networks, etc.

Words are like fingers pointing in a certain direction in that they immediately eliminate all other possibilities. However, fixed names (which form categories, associations, and meta-meanings) can change with time and within usage. The shapes of sounds (letters) became material for art in Cubism in service of the artists' rejection of representation, in Constructivism as propaganda for the Revolution, in Dadaism as typographical revolution, in Pop as an embrace of the society of consumption dictated by propaganda, and in Conceptualism as a negation of art as phenomenon.

Naming in the monochrome Glossary indicates paintings that feature words. As a concept, naming has an open meaning, more or less associated with the multiple semiotic chains words can evoke when reader becomes writer.

## O for Obstruction(al)

/əb'strækSH(ə)n, äb'strækSH(ə)n/

Obstructional is the adjective for obstruction. An obstruction can be a block, an obstacle, an impediment, an occupation. In law, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, obstruction refers to the obstruction of justice, the act of preventing the police or courts of law from doing their job and functioning correctly.

During a seminar organized by Columbia Law School in 2015, Étienne Balibar presented a paper on Michel Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France, *Penal Theories and Institutions* (1971–1972). He had François Ewald as an interlocutor. At the end of the seminar, Balibar said: "You don't have a juridical system that is 100% normalized; otherwise, it would not be political." Effectively, normalized systems are not political. Ewald gave a brilliant response, presenting a structural reading of Foucault's lectures and describing how power is constituted by the State. He named this power *repression*. Repression is conceived as discontinuous, emerging when the state apparatus (composed of the military and judiciary systems) is mobilized. Tools and tactics are always used by the military to exercise subjectivation on people and to identify the enemy. Meanwhile, the justice system makes its subjects dependent on the sentence. Any theatricalization of subjects operates on a strategic level, not to create order, but to produce a new form of power.

Any possible decodification of these multiple levels of entanglement requires the exposure of the anatomy of the apparatus (*dispositif*). The posterior effects of such a process, if any, can create oblique forms of inventions and possible transformations of life. According to Jean Oury, François Tosquelles thought of occupation not only as a social and political reality, but also as a psychic structure. For Oury and Tosquelles, the search for true freedom needed to go through a form of psychic "disoccupation."

This body of work is comprised of Obstruction(al) paintings ((O) paintings). Each painting presents one possible two-color combination from the four deep shades of black, totaling 16 paintings. Each square painting measures 30 × 30 inches. Each square painting has a painted square at its center measuring 16 × 16 inches. They have black frames and are displayed at intervals within a steel trisected square structure. Each painting can be acquired by a buyer provided that the buyer agrees to the future obstruction of the painting by another artist, without disclosure of the artist's name prior to the acquisition. Each painting creates a specific economy.

The color combinations in the (O) paintings provoke a rupture in our desire to normalize perception into a sustainable order. The smaller squares float in a space that is neither the pictorial plane nor our retina. As a form of rupture, they obstruct our perceptual logic.

## S for Split(ing) = S (BN/ONM1), S (BN/SOC8) /split/

To split means to divide into two or more parts. Dividing and sharing something (especially resources or responsibilities) is a matter of issuing new shares (of stock) to existing shareholders in proportion to their current holdings.

Subjectivity—which, for Foucault, is a culturally and historically constructed form—should not exhaust our capacity to conceive of new understandings of the self. Foucault refuses notions of the subject as a condition of experience (as in Existentialism and Phenomenology) or as a Transcendental Consciousness.

Foucault's injunction to “get rid of the subject itself”<sup>1</sup> may open new paths for modes of being.

In *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Judith Butler writes:

For Foucault ... the body is produced as an object of regulation, and for regulation to augment itself, the body is *proliferated* as an object of regulation. This proliferation both marks off Foucault's theory [of subjectivity] from Hegel's and constitutes the site of potential resistance to regulation. The possibility of this resistance is derived from what is *unforeseeable* in proliferation. But to understand how a regulatory regime could produce effects which are not only unforeseeable but constitute resistance, it seems that we must return to the question of stubborn attachments and, more precisely, to the place of that attachment in the subversion of the law.<sup>2</sup>

Splitting refers to Barnett Newman's zip paintings (ZP). S (BN/SOC8) corresponds to his *Stations of the Cross* (1958–66). Lawrence Alloway writes of the *Stations*: “Although Newman's *Stations* have no obligatory arrangement ... they need to be adjacent, so that repetitions and cross-references can perform identifying and expressive roles. Flexible as the paintings are, their spatial unity, as a group, is essential to their meaning.” He continues, “The fact that he used oil paint and three different synthetic media reveals his awareness of the function of color in the series, not only in its relational aspects but as a physical property. Different blacks occur from one painting to another and, sometimes, within one painting.”<sup>3</sup>

Butler's remarks on gender and subjectivity introduce a split into the supposedly unified subject of historical Feminism: the Woman. For her, sex and gender are cultural constructs. Gender, then, becomes performative. In Butler's work, the object/subject dichotomy (and the ideology that comes with it), as well as the traditional gender binary (man/woman), are exposed as artificial and hegemonic. The practice of troubling solidified categories can be seen as a performative exercise.

Splitting is an ongoing conversation with Newman's work. In his paintings, each zip is treated differently. Each work is singular. Splits do not exist as one unit after they are exhibited. They can only be partially acquired and experienced (a single buyer can only acquire one Split of a pair). They can form pairs, but only of two paintings from different Splits. They don't exist as a series, either. They occur in different moments in time, and in different materials. Each time a new Split is produced, new configurations can be created.

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1 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 117.

2 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 59–60.

3 Lawrence Alloway, *Barnett Newman: The Stations of the Cross, Iema sabachthani* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), 15.

## V for Void = MR (RC#1473)

/void/

Void relates to the Latin word *vacāre* (to be empty, vacant, or unoccupied). It can be used as an adjective, noun, or verb. *Voidable* is the adjectival form, and *voidness* is the derivative as a noun. As an adjective, it means not valid or legally binding, or useless. As a noun, it means completely empty, or emptiness caused by the loss of something. As a verb, it can be used to mean to discharge, or something that is not valid.

Robert Smithson's 1966 article on Ad Reinhardt, published in *Arts Magazine* Vol. II, compares Reinhardt's "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1952) with George Kubler's seminal book, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on The History of Things* (1962). For Smithson, "The workings of biology and technology belong not in the domain of art, but to the 'useful' time of organic (active) duration, which is unconscious and mortal. Art mirrors the 'actuality' that Kubler and Reinhardt are exploring. What is actual is apart from the continuous 'actions' between birth and death. Action is not the motive of a Reinhardt painting. Whenever 'action' does persist, it is unavailable or useless. In art, action is always becoming inertia, but this inertia has no ground to settle on except the mind, which is as empty as actual time."<sup>1</sup>

In 1946, lifelong anarchist Barnett Newman titled a painting *Pagan Void*. Two years later, he started working in a signature style that he would use until the end of his life: the zips. Newman said, "[The] zip does not divide my paintings. I feel it does the exact opposite. It does not cut the format in half or in whatever parts ... It creates a totality."<sup>2</sup>

Between 1964 and 1967, Mark Rothko painted 14 paintings for a non-denominational Chapel in Houston, TX. After several conversations with Philip Johnson, Rothko decided that the Chapel would be octagonal. Void = MR (RC#1473), which measures 180 × 105 inches, takes its structure from the single painting installed on the south wall of the Chapel. The interior rectangle of this single panel is painted black.

In a 1959 interview, Rothko said, "Sometime in the Twenties I guess, I lost faith in the idea of progress and reform. So did all my friends. Perhaps we were disillusioned because everything seemed so frozen and hopeless during the Coolidge and Hoover era. But I am still an anarchist. What else?"<sup>3</sup> For Kubler, "Style is like a rainbow. It is a phenomenon of perception governed by the coincidence of certain physical conditions ... Whenever we think we can grasp it, as in the work of an individual painter, it dissolves into the farther perspectives of the work of that painter's predecessors or his followers, and it multiplies even in the painter's single works ..."<sup>4</sup>

The consumption of art relies on the existence of signature styles. Style has the function of transforming single "useless" repetitive actions into objects of common desire. The artist's voice becomes recognizable if certain recurring tropes can be identified in their work, or if one idea becomes a series, or if some structure and/or system justifies her/his/their/its production. What if there were no system but situations and formal dialogues demarcating diagrammatic motivations? This is the logic of voiding: invalidating unity, negating existential and mystical experiences of unification, and moving toward situations that connect different realities to reveal the silent atomic guilt of a monochromatic generation encapsulated in coal and petroleum.

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1 Robert Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space," *Arts Magazine* Vol. II, November 1966.

2 Barnett Newman, *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 306.

3 Mark Rothko, *Writings on Art: Mark Rothko*, ed. Miguel Lopez-Remiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 132.

4 George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 129.