

FOREWORD

KRISTINE STILES

Łukasz Guzek and Małgorzata Kaźmierczak conceived of this special edition of *Art and Documentation* after learning about the research and articles authored by graduate students in "Art & Text: Conceptual Art," a graduate seminar I taught in the spring of 2011 at Duke University in North Carolina, USA. The seminar examined the history and theory of Conceptual Art from the early 1960s to the present, with special attention to global conceptualisms and the role of language in visual art. Eleven students participated in the seminar and eight contributed to this special issue. *Art and Documentation* presents the essays in a loose historical order, from the oldest work partially conceived in 1969 by the German artist Wolf Vostell, to the most recent work by the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson realized in 2009.

Erin Hanas focuses on Vostell's travelling installation *Fluxus Zug* (1981) to theorize his project as simultaneously an alternative academy (a concept based in his 1969 description of his "ideal academy"), a mobile museum (*Fluxus Zug*), and a conceptual approach to the archive as nomadic and calling attention to the flux of history and the manipulation of knowledge.

Examining what he calls the "deferred language of Vito Acconci," John Stadler performs a close reading of Acconci's untitled poem, "What will be" (1969), in the context of Acconci's transition from his activity as a poet to conceptual and performance art, and his creation of what Stadler theorizes as an example of Acconci's "index of indexes [whose] meta-indexical nature was governed by time."

The Brazilian artist Artur Barrio began making conceptual *situations* in 1969, the title he gave to his actions with *Bloody Bundles*. These works included confronting the unsuspecting public with cloth bundles of rotting meat, bones, and blood that he left in public sites, as a commentary on the Brazilian dictatorship's atrocities and disappeared citizens. Camila Maroja examines these works in the context of trauma and hiddenness.

Jasmina Tumbas looks at the Hungarian artist Endre Tót's conceptual sedition, manifest in the sign of "0," or zero, signifying the degradation of a life under State Socialism, and in his sardonic "TÓTaLJOYS," conceptual works realized principally in text, photography, and mail

art. World War II laid the foundation for Tót's work, art whose incipient birth dates from Mátyás Rákosi's repressive regime [1949-1956] and the Hungarian revolution, and matured during the grin cut by Communism under János Kádár [1956 to 1988], who lost Tót to West Germany in 1978 where he continued to be glad.

Vincenzo Agnetti also worked with the concept of "zero," or what he called "zeroing" strategies, a proposal to rethink how language and science inform and contribute to viewers' automatic responses to art and technology. Laura Moure Cecchini examines Agnetti's "poetics of zeroing" and how the Italian artist altered ordinary machines and appliances, and used the zero in texts, in order to disrupt and expose the ideological constructs intrinsic to the violence of industrial alienation and its affect in art.

Amanda Suhey explores the work of Guillermo Núñez following the Chilean *coup d'état* in 1973 when Núñez shifted from painting and sculpture to conceptual strategies in his serigraphy series *Libertad Condicional* (1975). Deploying photographs and texts from official documents, Núñez commented on psychological and physical torture, including his own arrest in 1974, subsequent political imprisonment in three prison camps and torture centers and exile to France in 1975.

Kency Cornejo unpacks the conceptual structure and historical context of the Costa Rican artist Habacuc Guillermo Vargas' *Exposition #1*, the notorious installation he created in Nicaragua in 2007, during which he chained a homeless street dog to the gallery wall and putatively left it there to starve to death. Cornejo minutely dissects the iconography of the complex work and the media frenzy that had millions throughout the world calling for the artist's death or criminal prosecution, while ignoring the conceptual foundations that the artist established for the work when he wrote in dog food on the gallery wall: "eres lo que lees" [you are what you read].

Finally, Jung E. Choi considers the phenomenological and conceptual approach to color in Olafur Eliasson's *Your Atmospheric Colour Atlas* (2009) and how, through color, the artist challenges conventional conceptions of space in order for viewers to discover the perceptual "thickness of the field-of-presence between space, time, and body."

On behalf of these scholars and myself, I would like to thank Łukasz Guzek and Małgorzata Kaźmierczak for the opportunity to published these articles in *Art and Documentation*.

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- Jasmina Tumbas (PhD 2013), Assistant Professor in the Department of Visual Studies State University of New York in Buffalo.