

ASEM Class Notes : February 15, 2018

I,... Back to the 1ST question poased to all of us in the class.



THE ORDER OF WORDS THE ORDER OF THINGS

DECONSTRUCTION IN CONTEMPORARY ART



by
Walter Kepac

I When art enters into the world in the radically direct way it had from the early 1960s to the mid 1970s it calls into play the attitudes and the concepts which one normally draws upon in dealing with the world. It is not so much that one totally loses sight of the fact that one is dealing with a work of art and not a real life situation; it is that the criteria for judging the appropriateness of our response to the work are to be found to a great extent in our everyday congress with the world. Twentieth century modernist art has always been a self-conscious enterprise in one way or another. Within the decade of the 1960s alone, however, the focus of this self-consciousness shifted significantly: what was once a matter of questioning a given work's status as an art object turned into a question about its status as an object in the world. That is, the art of the "anxious" or problematic art object gave way to an art in which the object was conceived of as a vehicle for investigating and revealing the fundamental *episteme* of the artist/viewer—the assumptions, cognitive habits and network of associations upon which the artist's and viewer's conception of the world is based.

At roughly the same time, certain formal innovations appeared, particularly those initiated by major paradigms of conceptual art (throughout the last half of the 1960s), which effectively rendered the presence of the material object no longer necessary. However, in spite of this phenomenon, referred to in the literature of the day as the "dematerialization of art," much of the best conceptual art did continue to concern itself with and investigate fundamental aspects related to our condition in and knowledge of the world. It can be argued that it was the persistence of such concerns which gave underlying continuity to the move on the part of artists in the late 1960s and 1970s to a diverse array of media and forms, such as, text and language, performance, mixed media installations, etc. Furthermore, it was the move into these new, i.e. non-traditional, media and forms that provided artists with the tools and formal where-with-all to expand and extend their investigations into territories that otherwise would have remained inaccessible. This reciprocal stimulation between formal means and "content" characterizes the most resonant and at the same time most rigorous advanced art of this period. On the one hand, a distinct content gave focus and purpose to

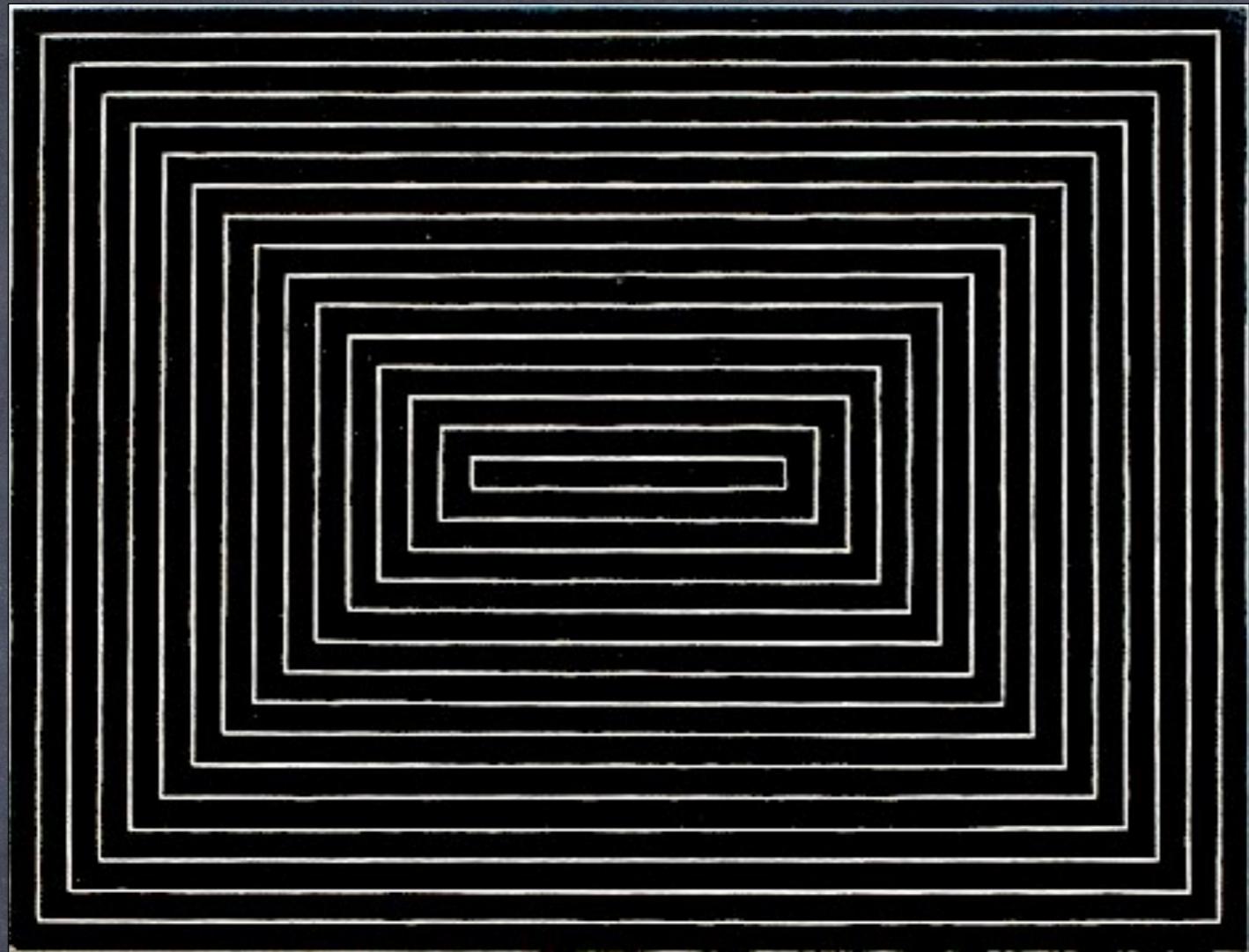


Above: Robert Longo; *Men In The City (Larry)*; 1983; litho 72 x 36. Photo: Evelyn Aimis Fine Art. Left: Richard Serra; *Sight Point*; 1971-75.

The radical innovations of the 1960s and 1970s had in effect transformed modernism: they altered its terms, direction and nature in a fundamental way, showing it to have evolved into something quite different than what it started as. So much so, that one could say the late modernist practice drastically exceeded the parameters of modern theory. Indeed, there was considerable resistance on the part of many to the commonly accepted versions of modernism to absorb this new direction, or to accept or even acknowledge its consequences. A good deal of this reluctance can be traced to the tendency within modernism to define art as an essentially self-reflexive concept or mode of discourse. That is to say, modernism was above all primarily concerned with the need to distinguish art from other forms of discourse and "work of art" from ordinary "things." In his updating of modernism, Clement Greenberg insisted on interpreting the radical formal developments from Cezanne and Cubism onwards in terms of attempting to purify art of all elements or references that were extraneous to that which

Walter Kepac.

"The Order of Words The Order of Things: Deconstruction in Contemporary Art" *C Magazine* { Fall 1984 }: 42.



Frank Stella From Black Series II { 1967 }

I always get into arguments with people who want to retain the old values in painting. The **humanistic values** that they always **find on the canvas**. If you pin them down, **they always end up asserting that there is something there besides the paint on the canvas**.



Anne Truitt:

Threshold – Work from the 1970s at Mathew Marks Gallery

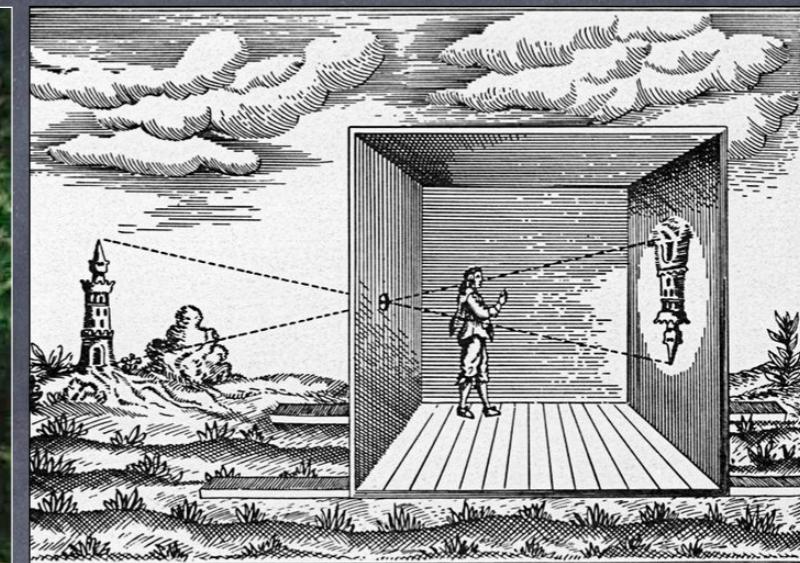
I thought that the impetus for a work of art had its origin in the material . . . This approach was of no use to me whatever when it came to these I saw in my head . . . I would just make a reversal, turn and move from the inside out.

2 , . . . Again, examples of the representationalist , & , the Anne Truit - Frank Stella metaphysics

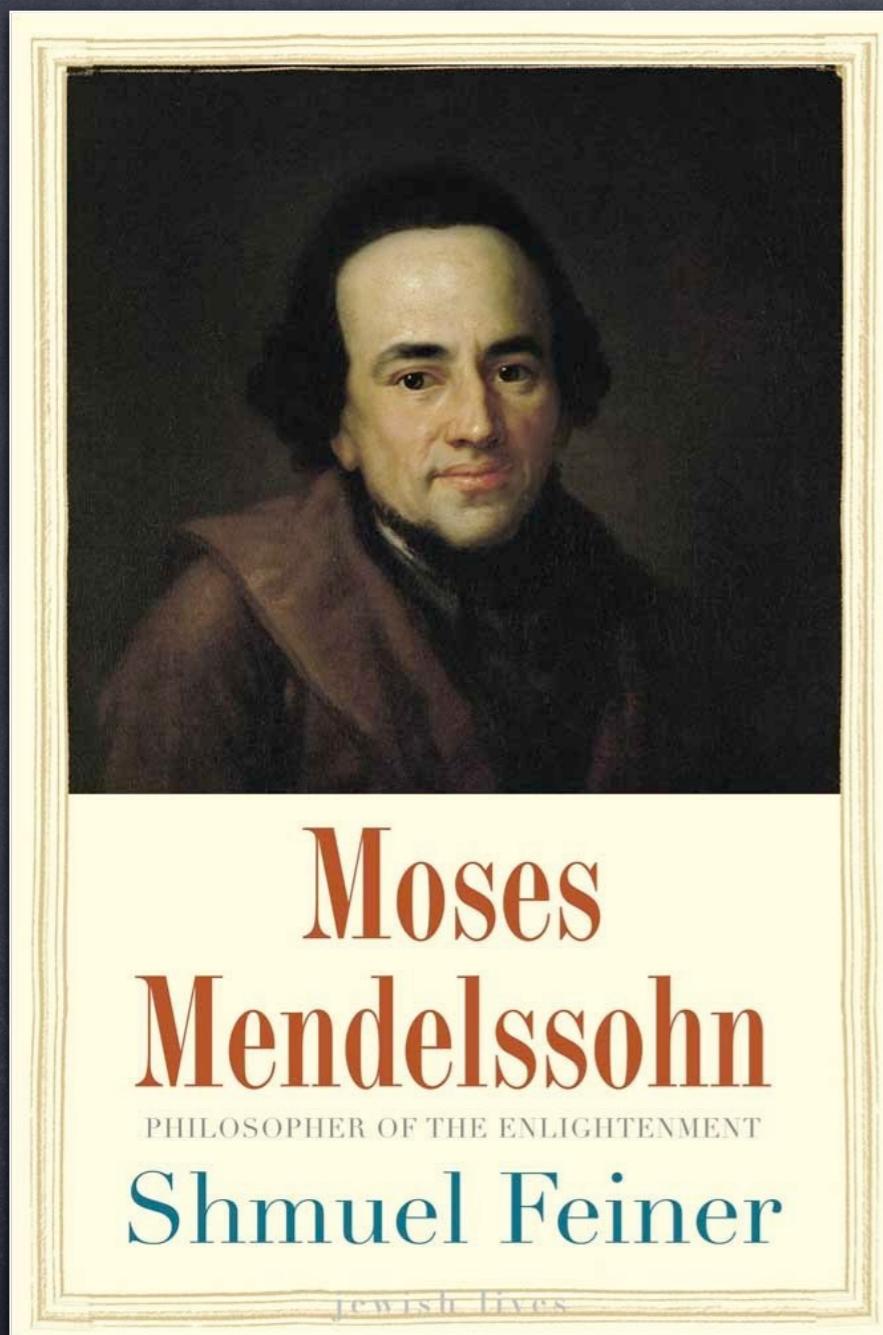




Interior Image of a Pinhole Camera



Athanasius Kircher
The Great Art of Light and Shadow 1646



Moses Mendelssohn . Rhapsody; Philosophical Writings . 1757

Each individual representation stands in a twofold relation. It is related, at once, to the matter before it as its object {of which it is a picture or copy} and . . . to the thinking subject {of which it constitutes a determination}. As a determination of the soul, many a representation can have something pleasant about it although, as a picture of the object, it is accompanied by disapproval and a feeling of repugnance.

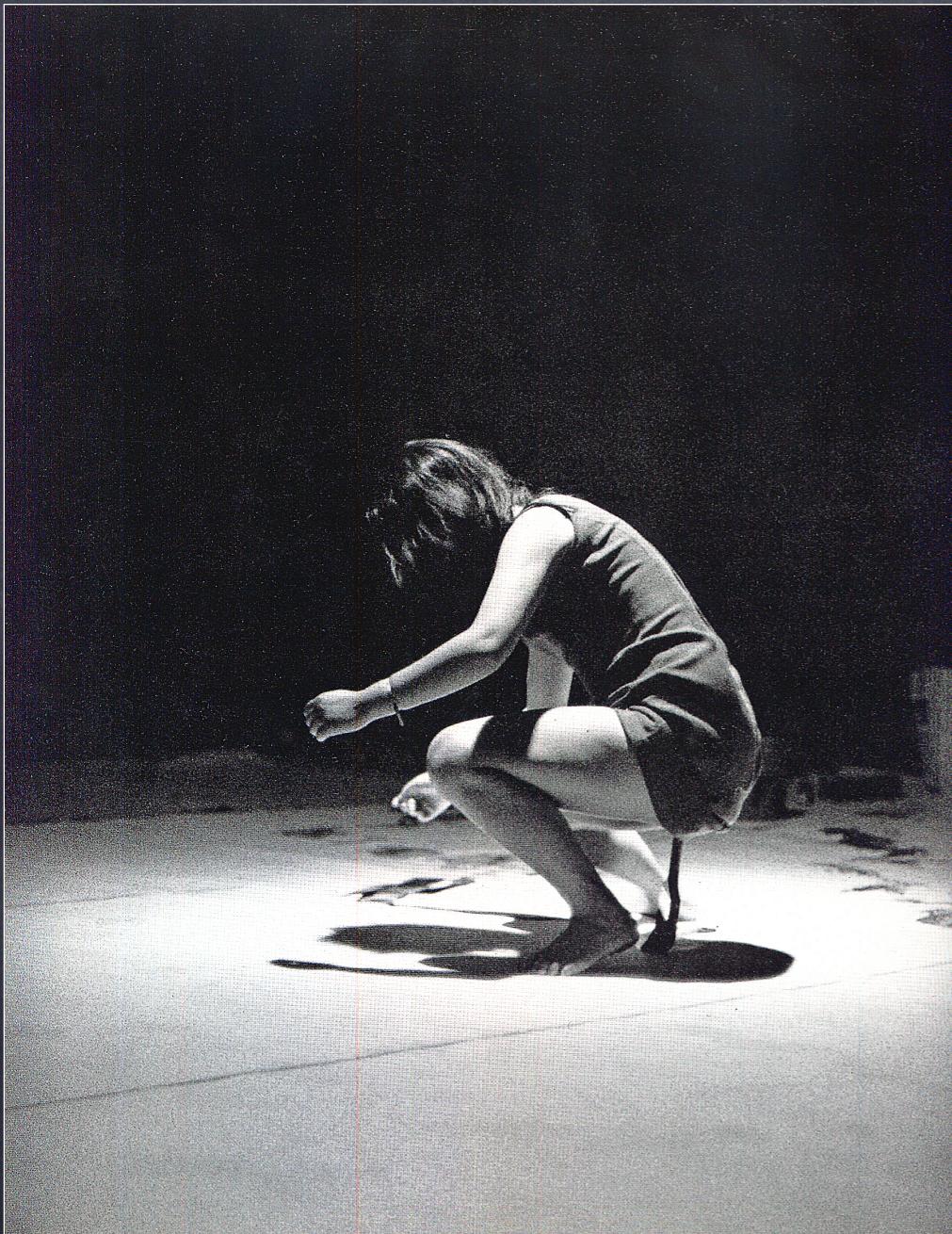
“Main Principles”; Philosophical Writings . . .

. . . Hence every representation, at least in relation to the subject, as an affirmative predicate of the thinking entity, must have something about it that we like. For even the picture of the deficiency of the object, just like the expression of discontent with it, are not deficiencies on the part of the thinking entity, but rather affirmative and actual determinations of it . . . considered as a representation, . . .

Moses Mendelssohn {6 September 1729 – 4 January 1786}

3 , . . . Riccardo Manzotti ' s challenge to th representationist & the Anne Truit - Frank Stella metaphysics





Shigeko Kubota. Vagina Painting. 1965

Parks: Ah. What you're saying is that what we see is dependent on what's out there.

Manzotti: Right. And we can predict what we're going to see. Staring at an intense color, the eye experiences something called chromatic fatigue. It becomes briefly blind to that color. So when it turns to look elsewhere, for a few seconds it does not pick up the color it's blind to. Turning to white after looking at red, you see the cyan in the white. Then white takes over again.

Parks: So I'm seeing something that's really there.

Parks: You mean, essentially, that we are objects, and objects "take place," rather than act.

Manzotti: We are part of the physical world, hence objects. What else could we be — immaterial souls? As for identity, we are what we are because we are identical with a portion of the world that has come together over the years in a certain way. The traditional separation of subject and object that underpins all standard thinking on consciousness and identity lies at the heart of our troubles as individuals and as a society.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vq3Jdm5WJHs>

4 , . . . ASEM CLASS LIST OF BASIC CONDITIONS FEB. 15TH / B



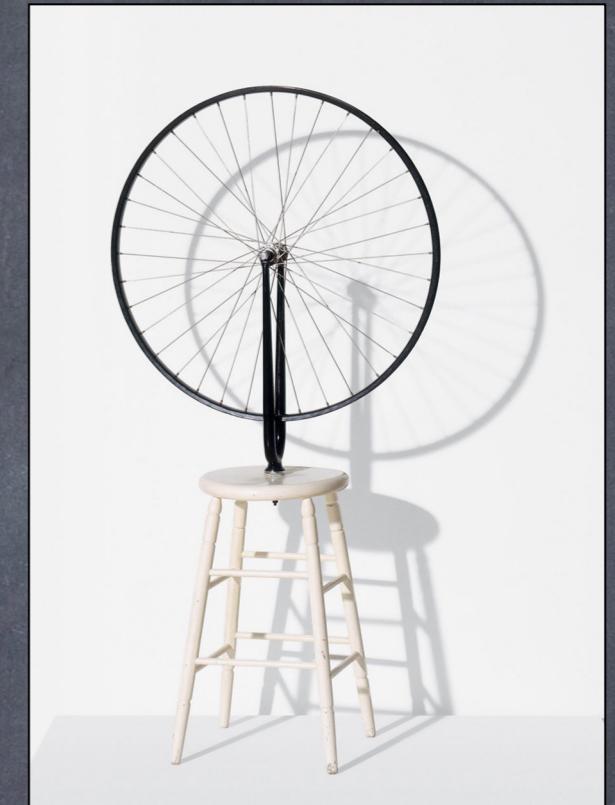
— BODY / BODIES	= PEOPLE ? CARS ? PAINTING ? CHAIRS ? ART+... n
— DIFFERENT / DIFFERENCES	= PEOPLE ? CARS ? PAINTING ? CHAIRS ? ART+... n
— ELEMENT / ELEMENTS	= PEOPLE ? CARS ? PAINTING ? CHAIRS ? ART+... n
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— SET / SETS	= PEOPLE ? CARS ? PAINTING ? CHAIRS ? ART+... n



John Constable. Water, Meadows Near Salisbury. 1829



Gerhard Richter. 4096 Farben. 1974



Marcel Duchamp ReadyMade. 1913

Question : what / where is the difference, . . . ?