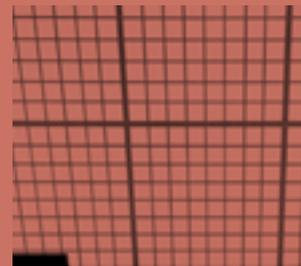
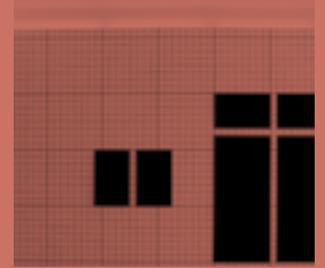
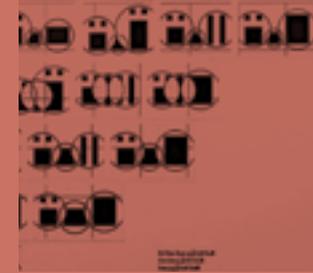


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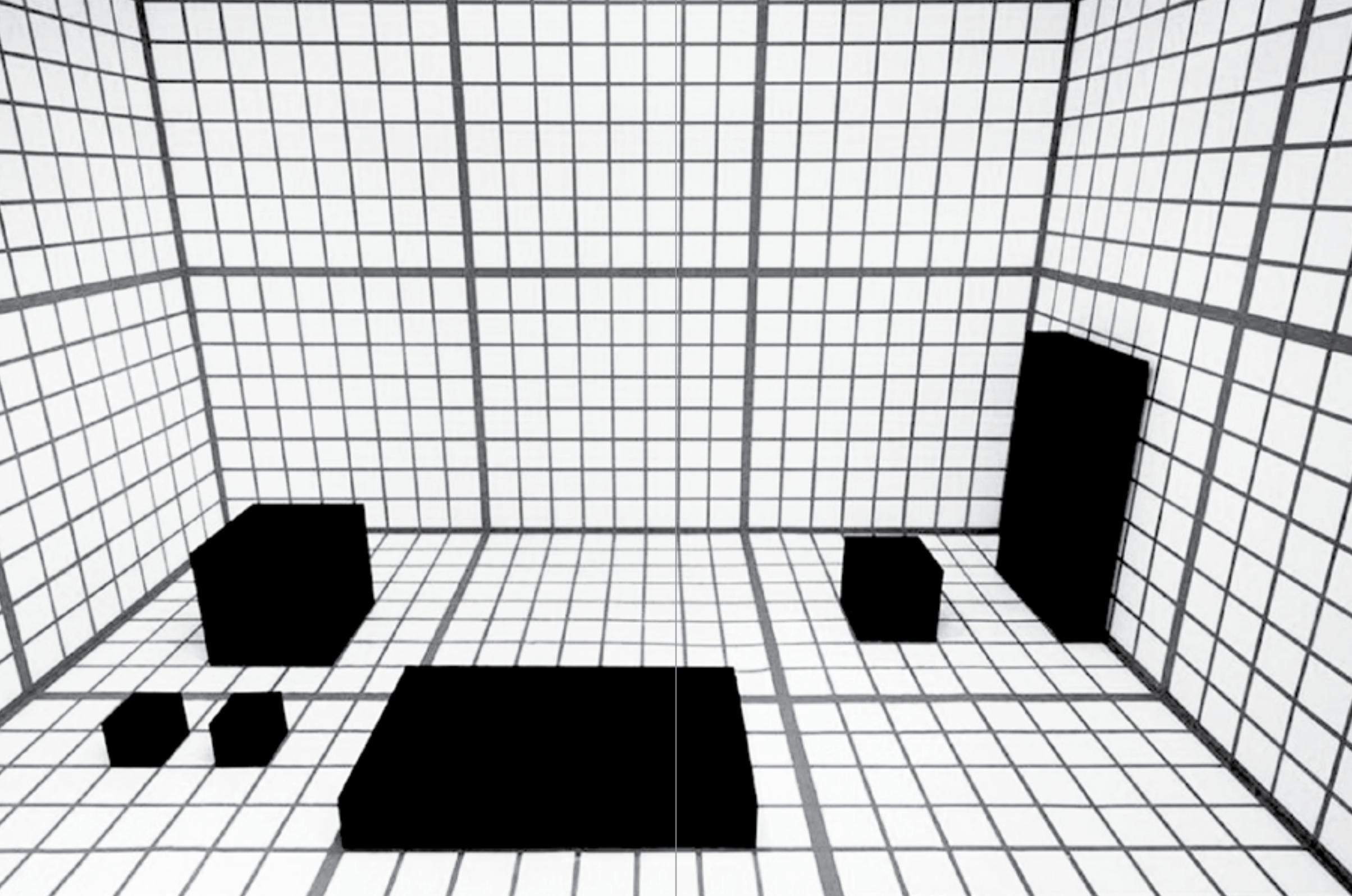


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Leora Lutz

Channa Horwitz:
Departing Toward Touch



1. Muchnic, Suzanne, "The Art of Giving in to a Giver," Los Angeles Times, August 23, 2004, accessed April 2, 2014, <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/aug/23/business/ fi-broad23>.

2. Shannon Utrnowski, "King Tut run extended at LACMA," The Graphic (Pepperdine University Press: November 10, 2005), accessed April 5, 2014, <http://graphic.pepperdine.edu/ane/2005/2005-11-10-kingtut.htm>. In 1978 Treasures of Tutankhamen gleaned attendance exceeding one million. The 2005 exhibition generated some 850,000 ticket sales; at \$15 per person, the total estimated monetary intake amounts to \$12,750,000.

4. Solway Jones Gallery, press release for Channa Horwitz: Language Series, November 7, 2005, accessed October 21, 2013, <http://solwayjonesgallery.com/pr/horwitz%20PR%2011-05.pdf>.

3. Channa Horwitz began making system-driven minimalist and conceptual work in 1964. The main thesis looks closely at three series: Sonakinatography, Language, and Orange Grid. I closely analyze how her visual aesthetic departs from the minimalist historical hierarchy by allowing others to perform and touch her art, while applying theoretical context. Horwitz passed away on April 29, 2013. Her work was posthumously included in the Venice Biennale (2013) and the Whitney Biennial (2014). To date, there are no theoretical or historical writings on her work.

5. Channa Horwitz, interview on Collection of Style (COS) website, 2011, accessed September 12, 2013, http://www.cosstores.com/gb/Things/Channa_Horwitz. "COS: Channa, why is the number eight so special to you? Channa Horwitz: I wanted to use a grid to show time. Aesthetically I liked a grid of eight more than a grid of five or ten. Once I chose the number eight, I kept it as part of my language."

TYPOGRAPHY

In 2004 the board of trustees for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) approved renovation plans for the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM)¹. In late 2005 LACMA's spectacle exhibition *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* grossed the second largest attendance in the museum's history²—testimony to the mass interest in figurative and anthropologically oriented exhibitions popular at civic art institutions. Meanwhile, as a response to these and other changes affecting the local art scene, independently owned galleries interested in exhibiting contemporary work by established as well as emerging artists began opening alternative spaces. Galleries started cropping up near LACMA after the formation of the Miracle Mile Art Walk, which attracted smaller but dedicated crowds interested in art of the contemporary moment. Since 2003 Solway Jones Gallery had been located at its street-level commercial space, where it featured drawings by Merce Cunningham, Hanne Wilke, and Robert Smithson at its inaugural exhibition. On November 19, 2005, the gallery opened a solo exhibition of an under-recognized minimalist conceptual artist named Channa Horwitz.³

The exhibition *Channa Horwitz: Language Series* (fig. 1) featured geometric drawings conceptualized in 1964 but shown here for the first time. The *Language* work was conceived at a time when Horwitz had reached a fork in the road with her art practice. Up to that point she was a skilled and practicing artist adept at traditional and figurative drawing, painting, and sculpture. Ready to move on, she devised a conceptually driven system for making minimal, geometric drawings, which, the gallery noted in its press release, was tapping into "the essence of minimalism in her search within conceptual art."⁴ Horwitz's work fits in with minimalism, which is known for using rules, numerical systems, or specified criteria for generating drawings or pared-down, geometric forms. Through devising a rigorous system of questioning, Horwitz generated a vocabulary that she considered a part of her visual language.⁵ Her desire to blur genre binaries situates Horwitz in a dynamic place that separates and simultaneously conjoins, filling a gap between historical minimalism and its present counterparts.

Upon entering the gallery, the viewer at first may question whether this "language" is a one-to-one exchange with a known alphabet. At close inspection, each drawing has its own unique sequence of squares, rectangles, and/or circles in a variety of architectural combinations. Because Horwitz's *Language* is not actual letters, the word *character* is used here, which is a term borrowed from both traditional typography and geometry. Describing the individual characters has its challenges but also metaphorically aligns with the illegibility of

the *Language Series*, implying that the visual supersedes articulation. When words are written, the line is a point of departure, a beginning to structurally make the “body” of the letters. In *Language Series* the point is laid down, but then the line grows in enormity to form solid, black, abstract blocks that Horwitz places on her signature orange grid foundation. Describing the work is also testimony to the system—impossible to picture how it looks in the mind by reading, it must be seen to fully comprehend.

For example, character number 5 is composed of three narrow rectangles with an accompanying small square situated in the lower left. Character number 11 features a progression of three squares, graduating from small to medium to large. Character number 16 comprises a small square; a horizontal, stocky rectangle; and a vertical, somewhat taller rectangle topped by two perpendicular mini-squares. One is challenged to take the entirety of the work into consideration when delving into deciphering what the work is “about.”

To the right of the gallery entrance, viewers see three small renditions of the *Language Series* in frames. Moving on, visitors next encounter *Language I*, and then a large canvas titled *Circle and Square Negative* on a small wall parallel to the front entrance; then *Language II* and *Language III*. Each *Language* piece comprises twenty-one eleven-inch character drawings assembled directly on the walls, and totaling approximately sixty-eight inches wide and sixty inches tall. Beginning at the top left corner, the span consists of six drawings, followed by a row of five drawings, then a row of four drawings, and so on—three, two, one. The configuration of the assemblages leaves a staggered negative space to the right of the entire frame, similar to a concrete poem. Much like concrete poets who take letters and words and begin building them on the page, Horwitz takes the *Language* characters and builds them on the picture plane, offering the concept of language to be deciphered and interpreted. Like writing, *Language* is silent; the viewing effect is like reading to oneself.

The assemblages are adhered directly to the wall so that they can be read left-to-right and top-to-bottom like pages of text in a Western-configured book. But the large scale defies the notion of a handheld book, and the gingerly adhered leaves deny the viewer the touch of turning pages; instead, they are meant to be “read” as they appear—as an artwork in a gallery setting. Assembled to be viewed only one way, they create a singular experience bound by formalities.

When letters are arranged together they form words, which in turn can be lined up to create sentences, and sentences can be arranged into paragraphs, and so on. From the joining, meanings become apparent. As philosopher Michel Foucault notes in *The Order of*

6. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Science*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1970), 35.

7. Roland Barthes, “The Structuralist Activity,” in *The Structuralists from Marx to Lévi-Strauss*, trans. Richard Howard. (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1972), 149.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Heiner Bastian, Cy Twombly Comments, in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, 2nd ed., ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 35.

Things, “There are virtues placed on individual letters that draw toward each other or keep them apart, exactly as the marks found in nature that repel or attract one another.”⁶ In the *Language Series*, language becomes blurred and slips into illegibility. Yet communication prevails—just not in a form that is verbal or that “says” anything specific. It is this abstract unspecificity that allows Horwitz’s *Language Series* to be in the vein of structuralist logic, while inhabiting a tangible and visceral place where language is read as objects for engagement and perception.

The structuralist goal is to make objects the activity of a realized structure—or, as described by Roland Barthes in *The Structuralist Activity*, “the controlled succession of a certain number of mental operations.”⁷ During its making, the structure becomes a simulacrum of the object, making known/apparent that which is lacking in the object. “The simulacrum is intellect added to the object, and this addition has an anthropological value, in that it is man himself, his history, his situation,” Barthes posits.⁸ In other words, objects retain a level of recognition based on history or one’s personal experience. He continues that a structural person “takes the real, decomposes it, then recomposes it.”⁹ The simulacrum is not a mere copy, just as Horwitz’s *Language Series* is not an alphabet. Instead, it is an altered representation of language that signals viewers toward broader implications that affect how they engage with the work. Viewers must turn to Horwitz’s title in order to begin to glean the concepts shrouded in the work: *Language*.

Written language is the marked territory from which interpretation, definitions, and understanding can be documented in order to create an archive of thought that constitutes relationships with other things. Curator and collector Heiner Bastian muses, “We break [language] and it still remains, speaking within us with the immanence of all things.”¹⁰ The title is a metonymy of what it portrays, thus abstracting the very thing that the title proclaims it to be. It is the doubling of language: language is abstract, *Language* is abstract.

IDEOGRAPH

Six years after the *Language Series* was presented in Los Angeles, a different iteration was installed at Anant & Zoo Gallery in Berlin for a 2011 exhibition titled *What Would Happen if I . . .* Although visually just as illegible and untouchable as the original *Language Series* works on paper (1964/2005), the installation included a groundbreaking mural. The mural complicates the gallery space, rendering it a specific temporary site—a place immersed in Horwitz’s visual language, its symbolism, and its implications.

The mural, titled *Language Series #3*, was integrated into the space (fig. 2), creating a paradoxical relationship between itself/the



Figure 1.

Channa Horwitz, *Language I*,
1964/2005; plaka on paper; 68 x
60 in.; courtesy of François
Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles,
2013; © The Estate of Channa
Horwitz.

11. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Paris: Les presses du réel, 2002), 24.

12. Serge Daney, *Persévérance* (Paris: P.O.L. Editions, 1992), 38.

13. Carl Andre, in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, 2nd ed., ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 147.

14. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 57.

15. James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 2nd ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 231.

site and the viewer because, as Nicolas Bourriaud expresses in *Relational Aesthetics*, art summons the viewer “to dialogue with it.”¹¹ No longer merely a succession of characters to read, the singular character in the mural was something to *face*. Movie critic Serge Daney agrees, “All form is a face looking at us.”¹² What was once typography had become an ideograph—a symbol of ideas, as artist Carl Andre postulates, “symbols are counters passed among people.”¹³ Departing from “the many” to the solitary—away from specificity and toward concepts of language and the self. Stepping toward the character to face the life-size mural, viewers became aware of their own bodies in relation to it. As Bourriaud notes, contemporary art “forms the foundation of artistic experience [in] the joint presence of beholders in front of the work.”¹⁴ The opulent yet comfortable architecture of the gallery reiterated the formal relationship that visitors could have with the work.

The ceiling was decorated with quatrefoil crown molding accented with delicate floral reliefs. The walls were bright white, softened with a neutral gray floor. Clean light from seamless, invisible mounts that spanned the periphery of the walls filled the room (fig. 3). From a bay window across the entryway, natural light poured in during the day. During Horwitz’s exhibition, visitors could gaze voyeuristically at the neighbor’s windows in the building next door, and admire the green treetops that obscured the ground below. The windowpanes echoed the rectangles in the mural—almost exactly the same proportions. To the left of the window was the ten-foot-wide mural with the inky surface of six jet-black canvases arranged in a *Language Series* character. Rather than receding or occupying the same picture plane as the wall, Horwitz’s canvases were thick, creating a small amount of dimensionality, nudging them that much closer to the viewer.

Horwitz’s canvases speak a formal art language that maintains that paintings are autonomous art objects. But the grid background locks her black paintings into a particular meaning dependent on the wall behind it—the two cannot be autonomous, they do not read as individuals without each other. Likewise, the mural cannot be disassembled and retain its meaning as a whole. As critic and historian Michael Fried similarly points out, art is “part of the situation, incorporating the room and the spectator.”¹⁵ Conversely, all relationships that intersect between the space, the viewer, and the artwork itself are halted when the mural is deconstructed.

ARRANGEMENT

This complex relationship shifted to an even more dynamic place after *What Would Happen if I . . .* was deinstalled and a new configuration was installed less than three months later. The new iteration was titled

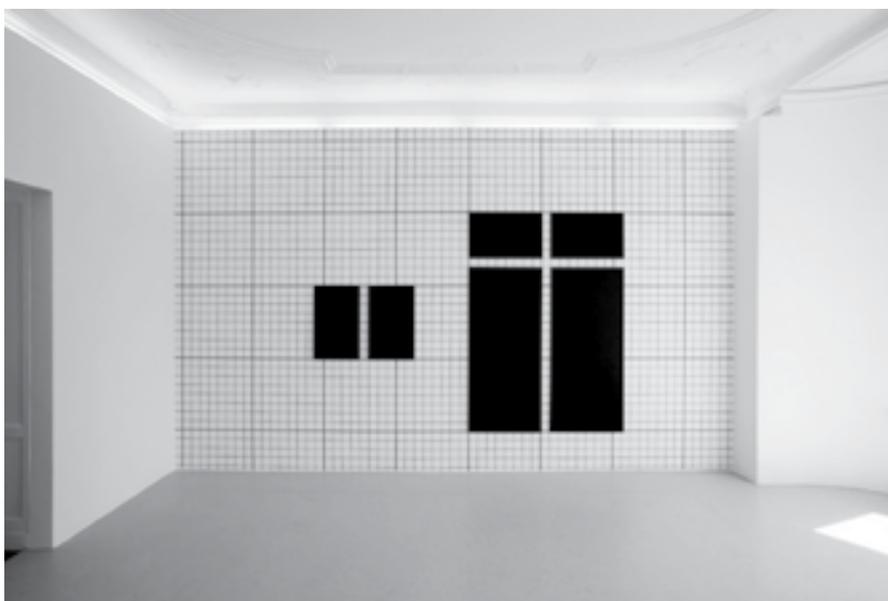
16. An ogee is an arch with a point at the top, typical in English Gothic in the thirteenth-century architecture, inspired by Persian and Egyptian designs.

17. *Displacement* was one of several installations in an exhibition program that year titled *(Re-)Locating the Self*, curated by Marc Glöde. People affiliated with Y8 help install the exhibitions there.

18. Jasmine Shamsi, "(Re-) Locating the Self," press release for *Displacement*, Y8 International Sivananda Yoga Vendata Center, Hamburg, Germany, accessed February 17, 2014, http://www.artyoga.de/downloads/Y8-reLocating_pressemappe.pdf.

Figure 2.

Channa Horwitz, *What Would Happen if I . . .* (installation view), 2011; 84 x 120 in.; acrylic and wood on wall; courtesy of Aanant & Zoo Gallery, Berlin; © The Estate of Channa Horwitz.



19. Gregor Stemmrich, "Displacement," (Lecture, Y8, Hamburg, Germany, October 6, 2011).

20. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 38.

21. *Elementarisierung* is a German word that translates literally as "elementarization," which is technically not a proper English word but contains the word "element" and the suffix "-ization," which means "to combine."

22. Stemmrich, "Displacement."

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

Displacement, and took place at Y8 in Hamburg. Y8 is a multiuse space that serves as gallery, offices, meeting areas, and yoga studio, painted entirely white, with wooden beams spanning the ceiling and adjoining smaller rooms accented with Gothic-inspired ogee¹⁶ arches over several passageways. Its exhibition programming features contemporary art installations by conceptual and minimalist luminaries, such as Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, Meg Cranston,¹⁷ and others. The press release for the *Displacement* exhibition explained that Y8 was interested in disputing the separation between art and everyday life and dissociating from classical art representation.¹⁸ The installation included a hand-painted orange grid floor, and this time Horwitz's characters were eight three-dimensional sculptural blocks (fig. 4) that could be moved around to suit the needs of those using the space.

Historian Gregor Stemmrich presented a lecture explaining that throughout the course of the exhibition, the eight large blocks made the "dynamic tangle," creating a dynamism in relationship between the body's "continuously constituted own position."¹⁹ Rather than being put aside for yoga sessions, the blocks remained in the room, creating an in-between space where the system for using them resided. *Displacement* marked an historical moment for Horwitz because it was the first time that audiences were able to touch her sculpture and manipulate it as they saw fit. As Bourriaud acknowledges, with this kind of work, "It is the human flow of visitors, and its possible regulation, which thus becomes the raw material and the subject of the piece."²⁰ Participants and Horwitz have agreed that idiosyncratic relationships can develop, allowing for a nonhierarchical relationship with the rules for engagement.

Horwitz offered no how-to rules for placement of the blocks, which Stemmrich recognized allowed for a serialization and *Elementarisierung*, or "elementarization,"²¹ that was "in service of actualizing aesthetic ideas."²² Stemmrich observed that Horwitz's work uses the blocks as notation, as an *Erzeugungsmedium*, a "medium for production"—or more simply, a tool. More importantly, notation can be understood "in relation to itself as a process of *Notierens* [notetaking],"²³ he said. If one is to interpret the activity of moving the blocks as notetaking, this conjures the idea that the blocks are objects for the taking, or something to possess. Stemmrich went on to explain, "Notation presupposes a certain coding, a set of basic maps that can be operated"²⁴ into arrangements. Stemmrich shared in his lecture that the German word *Anordnung*, meaning "arrangement," also has a second meaning: "someone who is empowered to do so."²⁵ If we follow this deduction, it is logical to see that *Displacement* is anything but displacing—instead, it is place-making. And as Bourriaud reminds, "Art is made of the same



Figure 3.

Channa Horwitz, *What Would Happen if I . . .* (installation view), 2011; 84 x 120 in.; acrylic and wood on wall; courtesy of Aanant & Zoo Gallery, Berlin, 2011; © The Estate of Channa Horwitz.

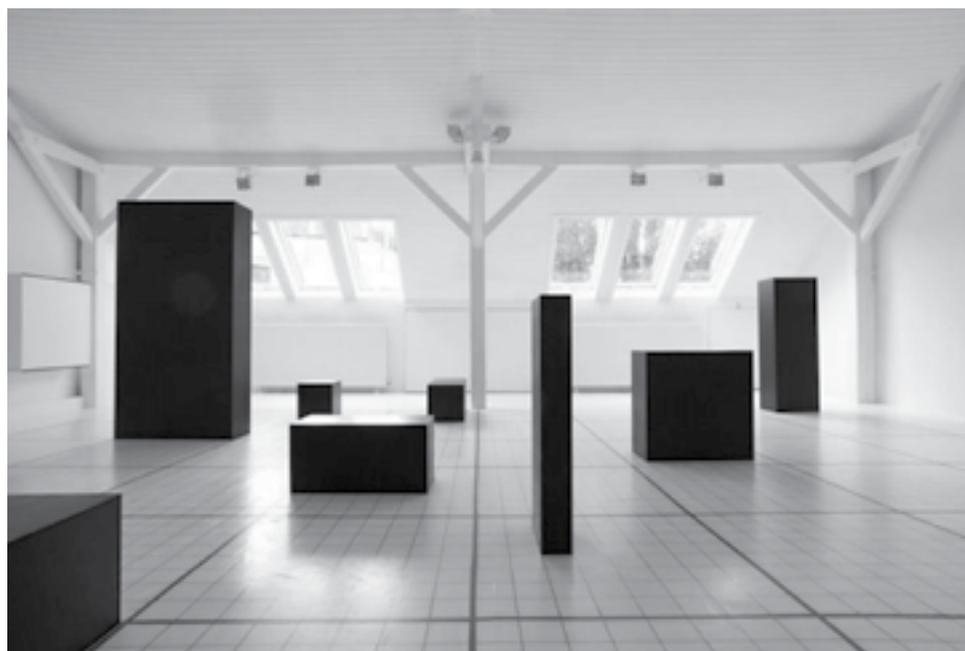


Figure 4.

Channa Horwitz, *Displacement* (installation view), 2011; approx. 240 x 300 in.; wood and acrylic; courtesy of Klaus Frahm, 2013; © Klaus Frahm.

26. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 41.

27. Klaus Frahm, "Displacement (2): An Installation by Channa Horwitz," February 14, 2012, YouTube video, 4:39, published in conjunction with *Displacement* at Y8 International Sivananda Yoga Vendata Center, Hamburg, Germany, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvYkzLmpS-g>.

28. Stemmrch, "Displacement."

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Klaus Frahm, "Displacement (1): An Installation by Channa Horwitz," February 14, 2012, YouTube video, 8:08, published in conjunction with *Displacement* at Y8 International Sivananda Yoga Vendata Center, Hamburg, Germany, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yum4iXbr90s>.

material as social exchange, it has a special place in the collective process."²⁶ For the twenty-four-day duration of the exhibition, the blocks were configured around the room with space in between for people to move and exercise.

A video created by architectural photographer Klaus Frahm²⁷ gives a documented glimpse of what took place in the space. Five adults (four females and one male) and one small boy stand among the black blocks, bending into various poses—stretching arms up, falling with one leg bent behind—then lying flat, face-down on the floor. The video captures blurry movements as the people begin to pick up the blocks and move them around the room (fig. 5). The adult male grasps one monolithic block and shimmies it around, unable to lift it off the floor. Even the child helps. Choices are "not made by the artist or a single participant, but by a group of participants on an agreed arrangement of elements,"²⁸ Stemmrch emphasized. More poses, more blurry movements—the arrangements continue in a constant flow of bodies, in organic agreement with one another. Stemmrch cites the fluidity of the configurations and that "no arrangement can be per se better than any other, but rather a dynamic flow-balance occurs."²⁹ Negotiating their placement with the blocks and with each other, the participants smile. The compulsive rearrangement of objects, or acts of repeated behavior, brings with it a sense of belonging and a feeling of normalcy.

The blocks are "vivid characters . . . marks or things"³⁰ that regulate the behavior of the rules, resulting in *Doppelsinnigkeit*, or "ambiguity," elaborated Stemmrch. Ambiguity then opens the rules for a particular flexibility that spreads in relation to time and space. Stemmrch concludes that "experience and orientation respectively are to be won from the dynamic reciprocal orientation—whether it be from rules or decisions."³¹ The reward for "winning" is a symbiotic gain facilitated by Horwitz, and created by the participants who engaged with her work.

A second video created by Frahm³² excludes the people, emphasizing the blocks themselves and accentuating their orientations. For fifty-one configurations, changing every five seconds or so, the viewer watches the blocks move one at a time—sideways then upright, left, right, forward, overlapping, far left, close to the camera. The blocks seem to be emulating a modern dance. In the middle of the film, the monolith dominates the foreground of the shot until slowly the frame is entirely concealed in black. The moment alludes to completeness or mortality. Knowing that someone had to move the blocks between shots makes the presence of people behind the scenes more apparent, and the blocks serve as stand-ins for their activity. The whole video then replays in reverse until finally the room is empty again, except for the orange grid floor.



Figure 5.

Channa Horwitz, *Displacement* (still), 2011; approx. 240 x 300 in.; wood and acrylic; courtesy of Klaus Frahm, 2013; © Klaus Frahm.

37. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) accessed March 21, 2014, <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic641765.files/3%20-%20Fried%20-%20Art%20and%20Objecthood.pdf>.

38. Ann McCoy, [Journal of the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art](#), no. 2 (October 1976), 36. "If the basic structure is not adhered to, then I feel that the interpretation has no validity in connection with my work," said Horwitz about her [Sonakinatography](#) series in the late '70s. Because of her unwavering dedication to her practice, these sentiments seem to apply to [Orange Grid](#) as equally as with the other series that were interpreted over the years.

33. Linda Singer, "Merleau-Ponty on the Concept of Style," in [The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting](#), ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. and ed. Michael Smith (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 244.

34. [Orange Grid](#) was on display from April 13 to June 22, 2013.

35. François Ghebaly Gallery, press release for [Orange Grid](#). <http://ghebaly.com/exhibition-detail/4009>.

36. Bourriaud, [Relational Aesthetics](#), 57.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

At Y8, Horwitz's installation leaned toward a dynamic intersection of four elements at work: the artwork, the space, the artist, and the viewer. Linda Singer, in her essay "Merleau-Ponty and the Concepts of Style," frankly wrote, "Art and . . . the human enterprise at large [provide] powerful evidence of the fact that the world will never be reduced to a conceptual transparency from a distance."³³ Agreed, art must be brought close to touch, and touch brings perception closer.

TOUCH

After *Displacement* closed in Hamburg, Los Angeles gallery-goers became reacquainted with Horwitz's *Language* characters in the 2013 exhibition *Orange Grid* at François Ghebaly Gallery.³⁴ Visitors descended a staircase that led to a room with an open ceiling painted entirely with one-inch orange lines running vertically and horizontally (fig. 6) to form a grid. Inside the space were several black blocks ranging in size from twelve inches square to six feet by four feet arranged on the floor. According to the gallery, the exhibition was "created as an interactive installation, [giving] gallery viewers . . . the opportunity to walk into Horwitz's language, and participate in its elaboration by moving geometrical sculptures across the grid."³⁵ Like *What Would Happen if I . . . and Displacement*, *Orange Grid* was a reenactment of the *Language Series*. Horwitz was exploring what Bourriaud says is a "democratic concern"³⁶ with which many relational aesthetic artists also engage. Viewers were confronted with myriad options for how to read the work—as an immersive environment, as sculpture, and as a participatory space—and conversely, they began to question their roles with the work.

Negotiating the blocks and their own relationships to them, visitors faced many choices of how to engage with the space. Critic and historian Fried states that "literalist works of art somehow confront the beholder—they must, one might say, be placed not just in his space but in his way."³⁷ The physical task of moving the blocks is still bound by the system that Horwitz created for the viewer. "The structure cannot be lost or there is a breakdown of the meaning or truth of the work,"³⁸ the artist explained. The blocks subverted the linear motion of language and time because they were impenetrable, and their solid state of "being in the way" did not easily promote the activity of moving freely.

But *moving freely* does not just imply the ability to move about a space without hindrance. Here, the activity of moving the blocks facilitates the flexibility that complicates ideas of freedom. "The freedom allowed is the intrinsic part of the concept,"³⁹ Horwitz said, adding that giving a "person total freedom is the expression of the composition."⁴⁰ This declaration by Horwitz speaks to the generosity that she bestowed on audiences of her work. She did not relinquish her authorship of the

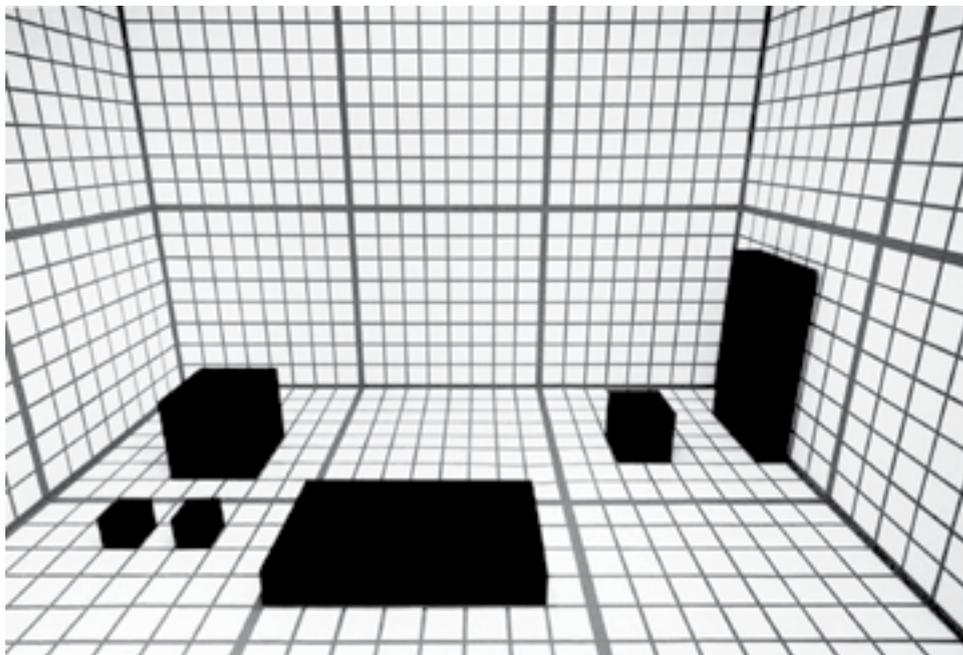


Figure 5.

Channa Horwitz, *Orange Grid* (installation view), 2013; approx. 24 x 24 feet; three-sided room with no ceiling attached to the object space, painted mural, and painted wood boxes; courtesy of François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, 2013; © The Estate of Channa Horwitz.

41. Carolina A. Miranda, "In Channa Horwitz's *Orange Grid*," *Hyperallergic* (June 4, 2013), accessed August 26, 2013, <http://hyperallergic.com/72643/in-channa-horwitzs-orange-grid/>.

42. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. and ed. Michael Smith (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 82.

43. Paul Crowther, "Meaning in Abstract Art: From Ur-Nature to the Transperceptual," in *Meanings of Abstract Art: Beyond Nature and Theory* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), 272.

44. Miranda, "In Channa Horwitz's *Orange Grid*."

45. Crowther, "Meaning in Abstract Art," 272.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

work, but rather she invited others to make it their own, as well. Writer Carolina Miranda visited *Orange Grid* and created seventeen different configurations: "In fact, I spent the better part of an hour arranging and rearranging the shapes in the gallery. Not an easy task, since the larger rectangular prisms are more than six feet tall and made from wood, making them awkward to move—especially if you're five three."⁴¹ Hindrances in size and scale complicated Miranda's free movement, generating options that required thought before she could act. The experience of rearranging *Language* in the *Orange Grid* is embodied in the statement by philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty that "language bears the meaning of thought, as a footprint signifies the movement and effort of a body."⁴² While interacting with the installation, Miranda photographed fourteen block configurations and then made a GIF. The GIF repurposed the blocks from real time and shifted them to a temporal moment that could be viewed continually, creating multiple shifts—as an archive of touch between scale and the viewer's body.

The scale of the installation was an ideal human scale: not too monumental yet not so small as to appear toy-like or inconsequential. As philosopher and visual culture historian Paul Crowther asserts: "Scale is felt and cannot be communicated either by photographic reproduction or description."⁴³ The advantages of the scale are lost to those who did not visit the space in person. The participants *see* the space and *feel* the blocks—touch them. And, as Miranda noted, "It's in handling the pieces that I really discovered the power of Horwitz's work."⁴⁴ The thrill of touching the art gave Miranda and other viewers a sense of ownership, enhancing the work's social capital and satisfying their desire to partake.

DEPARTURE

Horwitz's *Language Series* and *Orange Grid* are in a constant stage of becoming, fixed in what Crowther calls "the presumption of virtuality,"⁴⁵ since the perception of the work as a physical space depends on the participants' recognition of their own complicity. Subsequently the work must be interpreted by acknowledging the people who engage with it. As Crowther explains, minimalist works "are created with the intention of not being about anything over their physical presence, but of course, this affirmation of bare physical presence can be of virtual significance in itself. We seek the work as being about physicality."⁴⁶ A differentiation occurs between that which is seen and that which is perceived. Think: *things are not always what they seem*. Knowing that the body is present creates immediacy toward its physicality, which Crowther calls "autofiguration."⁴⁷ The presumption of physical virtuality occurs because the embodied subject in the space is acutely aware of his or her connective cognitive activity of inhabiting the work. *Orange Grid*

takes on the form of cognition and thus takes on figuration.

Despite its formal geometric structure; orange, screen-like grid shell; and black, stoic blocks, Horwitz's *Language Series* unfolded in later iterations to create new modes of reading minimalist works. The systems, or parameters, that governed the work afforded Horwitz the dynamism of mark-making and of language, and ultimately of human interaction. Systems created a way for her to confirm and use her language, much in the same way that structuralists strove to apply proof that would speak to the phenomenology of words and their exchanges between people. Artist Donald Judd explained that the appeal of geometric art was a new vocabulary for abstraction in the 1960s: "Geometric art is non-relational and non-anthropomorphic," and eliminating human reference was key to the minimalist and conceptual works being made at the time.⁴⁸ Focusing on a minimalist and conceptual visual aesthetic, Horwitz used her own typographical language to explore the materiality of her abstract subjects as objects to transcribe action. Grounded in the concept of language, her work departed from known tropes because she invited others to engage with and touch her work. Simultaneously, a flexible space within her structured system evoked relational awareness for others, creating a convergence where visual minimalism meets viewer ownership. Bourriaud assures such dynamic work "encourage[s] the 'beholder' to take up a position within an arrangement, giving it life, complementing the work, and taking part in the formulation of the meaning."⁴⁹ Unlike minimalist tropes that eliminate the body, Horwitz's work is a place *for* the body, where language can be read and rewritten, and where ownership resides.

48. Frances Colpitt, Minimal Art: The Critical Perspective (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990), 74.

49. Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, 59.