



87°



John Knight

Storm King Art Center
Mountainville, New York

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Foreword

In the spring of 1996 the Storm King Art Center invited three artists—John Knight, Daniel Buren, and Michael Asher—to submit proposals for works to be added to its permanent collection. The intention of this project was to expand the range of site-specific pieces at Storm King by engaging artists whose work has traditionally addressed the context in which art is produced and consumed. We felt that Storm King offered them an interesting milieu in which to work and that together the three works would generate a critical dialogue on sculpture parks in general and this institution in particular. To date, works by Buren and Knight have been completed.

John Knight's work, *87°*, draws the viewer's focus off the Art Center's property to an industrial object in its viewshed: the shapely water tower of the former Star Expansion Company. From a telescope on a newly constructed viewing platform, a visual line is drawn obliquely across the allée of trees in the center's south fields to the upper portion of the water tower, about a mile away. Looking beyond Storm King, the work highlights the institution's relationship to its larger sociopolitical context, including its role within evolving regional land-use systems. Focusing on these overlooked aspects of contextual relevance, it adds meaning to a key element of Storm King's success: the value of a well-placed lookout.

Along with John Knight's site-specific project at Storm King, we are pleased to be able to assist in the publication of the following essays by Benjamin Buchloh and Alexander Alberro.

Beatrice Stern

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Knight's Negations

Benjamin H. D. Buchloh

Industrial design, a method of organizing production even before it is a method of configuring objects, did away with the residue of utopia inherent in the artistic expression of the avant-garde. Ideology now was not superimposed on artistic operations—the latter were now concrete because they were connected to the real production cycle—but had become an internal part of the operations themselves.

Manfredo Tafuri, "The Dialectic of the Avant-garde" (1973)

It has proven difficult to imagine what sculpture could be at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and it seems to have become next to impossible to actually produce it. The reasons for its temporary demise or its definitive bankruptcy are manifold. Some are obvious such as the incessant inflation and overproduction of objects of consumption and the resulting vernacular violence in the spaces of everyday life, a suffocating violence of enforced obsolescence that regulates every spatiotemporal order and devalorizes all object relationships. Other reasons for the demise of sculpture remain—for the time being at least—more latent, if not obscure: one could hypothetically point in the direction of sculpture's own recent and frequent collaborations with the forces of spectacle culture and its ideological mediations through postmodern architecture. Or perhaps, one should recognize its opposite: that it is first of all architecture's ruthless acquisition of formerly radical sculptural paradigms that constructs conditions of spatial domination and perceptual control against which any radical sculptural practice in the present inevitably would have to position itself.

Lastly, less obvious, but much more powerful in its impact on sculptural theory and practice, might be the increasing extrapolation of almost all previously visible, if not tangible, economic and material processes of production and exchange onto a heretofore unimagined level of electronic and digital abstraction, generating an all-encompassing mirage of a transformation of matter into its mathematical potencies. Whatever spatial relations and material forms one might still experience outside of the registers of the overproduction of objects, the spectacularized spaces of control, and electronic digitalization, they now appear merely as abandoned zones, as residual objects and leftover spaces, rather than as elementary givens from which new spatial

parameters and new object relations could be configured in sculptural terms in the present.

Sculpture's plethora, the multiplicity of its transformations, and the frequency with which it has modified its morphologies and object positions within the last thirty years alone are therefore not solely the signs of a prolific productivity. Rather, they also appear to be the desperate responses to the rapidity with which corporate enterprise and its architecture—the two most violent forces that have abrogated even the last remnants of spaces and temporalities that were once experienced as the public sphere and its social forms of interaction and communication—have reclaimed and recruited almost all of the new object types and spatial relations that recent sculpture had opened up (from the antimonuments of Claes Oldenburg and the phenomenological sculpture of Richard Serra to the Foucauldian pavilions of Dan Graham).

One crucial example from recent history would be the fate of phenomenology, which had informed the best of Minimal and Postminimal sculptural work from Robert Morris to Eva Hesse and Bruce Nauman: their radicality presumed the constitution of an emancipated spectator whose encounters with immediacy and presence would transcend all forms of preestablished conventions, stylistic morphologies, and aesthetic norms in the pure and spontaneous practice of embodied perception. Thirty years later it is precisely this radical phenomenological neutrality that has been abrogated. Either epigones such as Rachel Whiteread and Kiki Smith have reinvested the legacies of phenomenology with a retrograde appeal of figuration and literariness, or it has been recruited for contemporary architectural fusions of spatial control and spectacle (e.g., Richard Meier's Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art or Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao).

The other, even more problematic example, would be the fate of institutional critique and its sculptural practices in the recent proliferation of a new type of installation sculpture (e.g., from Jorge Pardo to Andrea Zittel). These artists actually pretend to have taken on the legacy of the most radical models of institutional critique developed from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s. De facto, contemporary installation sculpture defines itself, however, either affirmatively or cynically as mere décor (as Marcel Broodthaers had prognostically identified this prospect already in the early 1970s). Rather than criticizing and dismantling sculpture's submission to the discourses of design and architectural spectacle, these contemporary installation practices affirm and accelerate its definitive merger with the spatial reproductions of ideology.

By contrast, the practices of institutional critique, developed in the work of Michael Asher, Daniel Buren, and John Knight (among others) since the late 1960s, had formulated a radically different sculptural episteme emphasizing

that the discourses of sculpture, architecture, and of design would have to be subjected simultaneously to a systematic critical analysis. Thus, their motivation for an apparent synthesis of the traditional genres of sculptural production, of design, and of architecture was not at all comparable to that of the historical avant-gardes of the 1920s. At that moment, progressivist artists and architects had still envisaged fusing the various disciplines of the production of objects and spaces, hoping that their joined forces would initiate a sociopolitical transformation of everyday life under the sign of a universalized access to maximized conditions of use value.

Knight's disciplinary synthesis (or rather, his polemical collapse of the distinction of sculpture, architecture, and design) argued first of all that any strict segregation between sculpture as an autonomous discursive object (suspended between material production and visual representation) and design as its socially and ideologically utilitarian other could no longer be upheld under current historical circumstances when both had entered the primary condition of sign exchange value. At the same time Knight's work argued that sculptural practice would now have to dismantle the traditional split in the theorization of *space*: if the more recent theorizations of sculptural space had been conceived as virtual or phenomenological (e.g., the spaces of Minimal— and Postminimal—sculpture), this definition could only be maintained by repressing the actually existing ideological usages of space, concretized in the social institutions as sites of domination and as *dispositifs* of control.

Inasmuch as sculpture can still be conceived at all as a reflection upon the continuous changes of object relations and of the conditions of spatial experience, Knight's practice articulates these transformations with seismographic precision, with retrospective lucidity, and with uncanny foresight. If the prevailing conditions of spatial experience can still be discerned and represented with sculptural means at all, Knight's work since the 1970s has consistently engaged with the analysis of the conditions of public space, the forms of object experience permitted and solicited in those spaces, and the displacement of spatial experiences by structures of commodity production and exchange.

From its inception, Knight's work has contested both the traditional dimensions of the sculpture of his contemporaries and the discursive limitations of the models of site specificity and institutional critique that had been developed by artists and critics close to the sculptural production of the late 1960s. Therefore site, in Knight's practice since the mid-1970s, is first of all defined as an intersection of spatial containers and ideological investments, of social relations of exchange and communication (or the absence and impossibility thereof) inasmuch as these relations can be concretized in spatial

form. Accordingly, *site specificity* for Knight has always been defined not just as a critical reflection of a particular physical location and “place” (in the definition that it had initially acquired in Minimalism) but rather as an analysis of precisely those knots where the intertwinements of the various spatial, material, and semiotic strands and the structuring devices of social relations of production and consumption emerge.

While social relations remain of course deeply determined by production, it is precisely not the heroicized and mythified model of industrial production that can nowadays credibly serve as a sculptural articulation of the experience of objects and spaces. Rather, sculpture has to be situated at the intersection of services supplied, of objects of consumption delivered and acquired, of identifications sustained within various registers of sign exchange value and ideological suture: all of these elements currently seem to determine the primary experience of object relations and of public spaces.

Accordingly, Knight's work suggests that sculptural production at this point in history has to be reduced to a montage of negations, in order to operate as a construction analogous to the actual absence of any experience of “public space.” Thus, rather than insisting on a conception of sculpture as production (in the manner that most of Knight's Postminimalist peers still had insisted, maintaining “production” as the foundation of sculpture), Knight's work is first of all structured around the negation of any type of traditional production (artisanal, artistic, architectural, industrial) and the simultaneous absence of any type of conventional sculptural materiality. In an exact analogy, the works' procedures of structuring spectatorial experience negate any promise that sculpture might facilitate an immediate access to the material or phenomenological constitution of the self or to the experience of unalienated social relations. Instead they appear to originate in the matrices of institutional frameworks and their procedures, in a bureaucratic sphere of legal contracts and of administrative negotiations; indeed, they serve as mock interventions or mimetic reenactments (comparable in that with the work of Michael Asher).¹ Thus one could argue that Knight's negations, generating the absence of sculptural objects and the lack of spectatorial interaction, are the result of both, a refusal and a historical inaccessibility.

Two recent examples from Knight's radical redefinition of sculptural production are his untitled installation at American Fine Arts, Co. in 1998, and the 1999 installation at the Storm King Art Center titled *87°*. An examination of these projects might illuminate my arguments suggested above (if the arguments do not in fact emerge from the reading of this work in the first place). For American Fine Arts, Co. the artist suggested assembling an exhibition from the temporary loans of flower bouquets that were usually on display in

1. In a slightly different way these criteria of an administrative structuring of sculptural spatial experience (in his case by linguistic means alone) would apply as well to the work of Lawrence Weiner, who has always insisted on being recognized as having proposed a sculptural rather than a textual or conceptual model alone.



John Knight, Project for American Fine Arts, Co., 1998, detail. Floral arrangement. Courtesy American Fine Arts, Co., New York.

2. Later one could think of the use of cacti in the work of Jannis Kounellis and the display of potted palms in the décors by Marcel Broodthaers in the late 1960s. Another artist who has frequently deployed flower bouquets or potted plants in her installations—undoubtedly for very different reasons—is Jacqueline Dauriac, in works such as *Hommage à Henri Matisse*, 1987, or *Hommage à Madame Gisèle Guillory, Fleuriste aux Halles Centrales de Rennes*, 1987. One only would have to think of suggesting the usage of flowers or potted plants to sculptors such as Richard Serra or Carl Andre in order to recognize the profoundly subversive implications of Knight's work within the discursive conventions of Postminimal sculpture.

a variety of fashionable upscale Manhattan restaurants. While it was the artist who had initially selected the contributing restaurants and it was the task of the dealer to negotiate their participation, in actuality the work came about in a much more serendipitous fashion (albeit turning out not any less poignant for it).

The majority of the restaurants that Knight had originally envisaged as contributors simply refused the dealer's solicitation to participate in what must have appeared to them as a rather unusual request. Therefore, left to his own resources, it took the missionary skills of the artist to convince a good two dozen restaurants to participate in the project after all. Not only were they asked to agree to have their weekly flower décor delivered to the gallery, instead of having it installed on their own premises—and here lay of course one of the problems—but they also had to commit themselves to having the bouquet renewed on a weekly basis and to demarcate the vacated space with a caption card explaining the bouquet's absence, giving the reasons for its displacement, and describing its present location.

The first question posed by this work might be whether flower bouquets could or should ever qualify as sculptural materials. (To ask the reverse question, to identify the reasons why they could possibly *not* qualify is in fact more productive). Yet, while flowers as sculptural material are in fact rare and unusual, there are some artistic precedents for the use of plants and flower bouquets in sculptural and spatial installations. One of the first examples, known to us at least, dates back to the early 1960s when George Brecht proposed to arrange flowers on a piano as one of his performative sculptures (*Piano Piece*, 1961).² In contradistinction to the strategy of the Fluxus artist, however, Knight's deployment of the semiotics of the "natural" emphasizes first of all his engagement with the materials and production procedures of sculpture as cultural and semiotic conventions, rather than, as was the case with George Brecht, as a spatiotemporal performance.

Second, Knight's proposition to situate his arrangement of flowers in the sites and discursive registers of "sculpture" places his project explicitly within the traditional opposition of natural versus aesthetic beauty. Unlike the most outlandish readymades, flowers—unless painted or photographed—have been and remain for the most part an untouchable taboo in the artistic (certainly the sculptural) practices of Modernism and the present (as opposed to Japanese culture for example where the arrangement of flowers in the rites of *ikebana* is socially and aesthetically held to be as important as the folding of paper, the preparation of tea, calligraphic inscription, or the making of sculpture). This ban on flowers is not only the result of their inextricable link with "nature," their decorative potential for auspicious celebrations of "life,"

but also, inevitably, a result of their association with funereal functions. Third, and possibly worse yet, the prohibition results no doubt from the ancient synonymy of flowers with a patriarchal ideologem of passive natural feminine beauty, a perspective that makes flowers appear as particularly incompatible with the traditionally masculinist connotations of sculptural production.

Yet, Knight's installation generates still another set of disturbances: not only the proposition that flowers should be considered as "sculptural" objects, but worse, that "nature" should be considered as a sculptural "sign." This proposition would generally be perceived as a contradiction in terms since a natural object can only become a sign when it has been sufficiently mediated through a process of representation-production, and—until the arrival of Kounellis—biological organisms, let alone living creatures, did not qualify for the episteme of the readymade.

Paradoxically, however, flower arrangements in institutional spaces such as upscale restaurants and museum lobbies have become precisely that: spectacular signs and advertisement structures. They are as far removed from mere nature as any technologically produced object, and therefore they fully qualify as one other sign/object among an infinity of potential sculptural readymades. Their semiotic obscenity, however, results not only from the unabashed display of luxurious waste but perhaps even more so from their ostentatious gesticulation of mastery disguised as a sheer celebration of nature. Even as a spectacular display of luxury the bouquet is still surpassed by its substitutional character as a manifest marker of institutional or corporate identity. This then is the historical specificity of the flower bouquet even before it acquires its "aesthetic" dimension once Knight's flower sculptures have entered the gallery space.

To the extent that the presence of flowers as a sculptural arrangement in a gallery is perturbing to the gallery visitor, if not outright abject, the absence of the bouquet from a restaurant's (or a museum's) premises is even more intolerable since the public identity of their enterprises requires rigorous decoration. Especially in the larger museums in major cities, the presence of exorbitantly costly flower arrangements in the lobby spaces has become *one* if not *the* hallmark of an institution's initial visibility. One might wonder what these ostentatious lobby bouquets actually celebrate—whether they don't first of all congratulate a class on its proper status in leisure and luxury—since, by contrast, flowers would not be considered appropriate at the workplace in a factory, for example, nor even in the reading rooms of libraries and universities).

Knight's interlacing of the spaces of the gallery and the restaurant administers withdrawal and austerity to the one and infuses opulence and decoration

into the other, in exact reversal of each space's own traditionally kept program. By playing havoc with the conventions of the gallery and the object status of sculpture, Knight's "flower arrangement"³ denounces first of all the gallery's spatial claims for purity and radicality. At the same time it devalorizes sculpture's discursive claims for autonomous object production and uncontaminated perception by revealing the actually prevailing entwinement between apparently incompatible spaces and practices.

Thus—as in all of Knight's key works—it is crucial to recognize what one could call the installation's chiasmic structure, symmetrically linking elements that had been traditionally conceived as mutually exclusive opposites. This newly established, uncanny symmetry structuring Knight's project erodes the traditional exhibition value specific to both institutions, the gallery and the restaurant, only to see it simultaneously and grotesquely increased against the institutions' own interests and conventions. Thus, both acquire uncanny similarities along an axis of the décor, articulating to what extent aesthetic practice, once a critical, cognitive, and philosophical category, has now become entirely confined to the social rituals of leisure-time entertainment and ideological affirmation.

If Knight had calculated that the abject material of odorous or almost putrefied flowers would eventually scandalize sculptors and gallery visitors alike, he probably had also assumed that the space's sudden funereal appearance would inevitably be read as a prognostic commentary on the actual situation of the traditional art-world institutions, in particular galleries engaged with difficult contemporary practices. Thus, as to be expected, Knight's sculptural chiasmus works in the opposite direction as well. The flower installation's cumulative effect is that of a *pompes funèbres*, enforcing the melancholic discovery that the gallery as a space once committed to aesthetic production and experience has become just one more site in the ever-increasing arsenal of spaces where narcissistic subjects can ostentatiously celebrate seemingly hard-won class privilege.

Knight's project, entitled *87°*, installed at the Storm King Art Center in 1999—which is, in fact, the occasion for the publication of this document—originated from a triadic proposal that was to include a project each by Michael Asher, Daniel Buren and John Knight, thereby bringing together three of the key artistic figures whose work is now generally positioned within a larger context of Postminimal and Conceptual practices, identified as both *site specific* and as critical of institutional and discursive frameworks. To clarify whether it is at this point still justified to refer to the work of these artists in terms of site-specificity or institutional critique, whether the artists themselves have moved beyond these parameters, or whether historical

3. There is, of course, a startling predecessor in terms of a pun on "flower arrangements" in the work of Bruce Nauman. *Flour Arrangement*, executed in 1967, consisted, as a distributional sculpture, of random quantities of flour disseminated in a doorstep to be distributed by means of the pedestrian traffic entering and leaving the space.



Mark di Suvero, *Mon Père, Mon Père* (1973–75)
in winter, Storm King Art Center.

4. As in almost all instances of a radical modification of an artistic convention, a predecessor for Knight's peculiar object choice of a telescope could come to mind as well. We are thinking specifically of the installation by Daniel Buren at the Centre Georges Pompidou / Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris in 1975, entitled *Les Couleurs (Sculptures)*. In this work Buren deployed the telescopes that had been installed on the rooftops of the Beaubourg building for the sight-seeing delights of its ever-increasing numbers of touristic visitors so that they could also inspect Buren's own installation of striped elements dispersed in the form of flags across a large number of buildings in the vicinity of Beaubourg. See Benjamin Buchloh, ed., *Daniel Buren: Les Formes (Peintures), Les Couleurs (Sculptures)*, (Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, and The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 1978).

circumstances have in fact surpassed these positions, will be one of the tasks of the remainder of this essay.

Immediately following the project at American Fine Arts, Knight's permanent installation for Storm King Art Center constructs an even greater range of discursive layers, turning even the mere act of description into an interpretive archaeology. In terms of site alone, Knight's work at Storm King faced a dilemma rather different from that of the contemporary gallery: that of a sculpture garden, an institution defined within a dual mythology. On the one hand, its (self)-image in the twentieth century was that of a pastoral space of leisure and cultivated nature. As such it was commonly placed outside of the domains of labor and the architecture of production. The sculpture garden can be either walled off from the city, like that of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, or it can be ostentatiously situated outside of the spheres of everyday life altogether, as is the case with the Storm King Art Center. (It would be hard to imagine a sculpture garden adjacent to the Ford factory in Detroit.)

On the other hand, inside the garden itself, some of the crucial examples of contemporary sculptural practice (from the work of Mark di Suvero to that of Richard Serra) engage with structural forms, materials, and procedures (and their impact on sculpture) that were not too long ago considered to be among the most advanced technologies of industrial construction. Thus Knight's 87° contemplates first of all the site's hybridity, its condition as a public space that acts simultaneously as a museum and as a park, as a pastoral preindustrial landscape setting that houses an accumulation of sculptural structures that hover between the registers of artisanal manufacture and industrial production.

The first element of Knight's installation encountered by the spectators at Storm King is a telescope positioned by the artist on a small outdoor mound in an area surrounding the Art Center's reception and indoor exhibition spaces.⁴ As a technoscientific object that focuses vision and enables its telescopic extension, this device forcefully asserts its place and utilitarian functions among the sculptures in its immediate vicinity (e.g., a work by David Smith and one by Ursula von Rydingsvard). Yet not only does the telescope's presence challenge the ruling paradigm of the adjacent sculptures, but it also perturbs the homogeneity of the "naturalized" gaze imposed by the landscaped setting. As a mere "device" of looking (and, in this case, of the estrangement of the conventions of vision) it could neither be mistaken as a sculpture in its own right, nor would it easily qualify as a readymade. Rather, the technoscientific artificiality and the technical functions of the instrument defamiliarize the "naturalness" of vision, presumed to be operative in this pastoral site where nature and culture supposedly have been integrated. At the same time,



The water tower of the former Star Expansion Company as seen through the telescope.

5. The actual water tower is situated about a mile outside of the park in the compound of an industrial enterprise neighboring onto the sculpture garden (in fact, on the grounds of the Star Expansion Company whose principals, Ralph E. Ogden and H. Peter Stern, were also the initial patrons founding and financing the Storm King sculpture garden project). H. Peter Stern continues to serve as the president and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Storm King Art Center.

6. Joan Pachner, "Visions and Vistas: A Sculpture Collection Evolves at the Storm King Art Center," in *Earth, Sky, and Sculpture: Storm King Art Center* (Mountainville, New York: 2000), p. 199.

the telescope extrapolates the spectator's attention from the actual site of the sculpture garden and projects "vision" literally beyond the park's physical and institutional boundaries, precisely into the very realm of everyday life that the park's mission and spatial organization had attempted to obliterate.

One particular position on the compass rose attached to the base of the telescope (demarcated, as the title of the work announces, at 87°) alerts the spectator to the second element designated by Knight as an integral part of his "installation." Peering through the telescope at that degree, the spectator discovers the light-reflecting metal sphere of an aluminum-colored water tower, hovering—as though suspended—in the center of the instrument's viewing frame.⁵ It is this visual suspension that induces a first, almost contemplative view, reflecting sculpture's capacities (or inabilities) to articulate the moment of transition from the ideology of an age of industrial production to an ideology of a postindustrial age, governed by services and consumption alone.

Once the water tower has been more clearly discerned and stabilized by the spectator, a second, almost ironical understanding of the vista occurs: the actual object, a rather sleek structure made by an architectural firm in Chicago in 1958, in its centered calm seems superior to the dramatic gesticulations of the large-scale sculptures still engaged with the discourse of sculpture under industrial production. Even a neutral observer who discusses all of the works at Storm King in equally laudatory terms, recognizes in a recent essay the astonishingly "monumental" qualities of the water tower and reports that the patrons' original decision to have this particular model installed was largely determined by "aesthetic" criteria:

When Ralph E. Ogden and H. Peter Stern had installed the water tower in 1958, they envisioned the monumentally scaled structure (over 100 feet high) as more than a purely utilitarian object. The cost was double that of an ordinary water tower. In retrospect, it was their first aesthetic endeavor.⁶

Knight's work thus solicits a comparison between the resident sculptures and the external industrial structure, more specifically between their forms, materials, surfaces, and production procedures. First of all, the perfect spherical shape of the water tower opposes Knight's "object" to the morphology of the park's sculptures, which proudly feature the dramatic irregularities of their relational and compositional weight distribution (often the result of hidden devices of suspension and structural support). A second and equally striking comparison occurs on the level of material: the water tower—because of its carefully and regularly applied coating—appears to be made from aluminum (though it is actually constructed from steel). Thus it conveys a sense of lightness and light reflexivity that are traditionally associated with the design of



The former Star Expansion Company plant and water tower as seen from across the New York State Thruway.

airplanes and the the packaging of consumer goods rather than with sculptural gravity. As such it is of a historical order distinctly different from the welded iron constructions and Cor-ten steel aesthetic that the majority of sculptures in the park still adhere to. In fact, Knight's work seems to programmatically negate the claim that sculpture on the level of morphology, materials, and procedures could still be linked to a latent order of (masculinist) industrial production, as an analogon to industrial labor.

Knight's choice of the water tower seems to suggest that sculpture at this point in history should be considered an object of design production articulating its inextricable entanglement with the orders of consumption and of services. By repositioning sculpture within an aesthetic of the anonymously manufactured utilitarian object—the legacies of the readymade—Knight makes the language of design the focus of his reflection on the historical conditions of sculpture. Yet, paradoxically, rather than merely inscribing itself mimetically within a mythical relation to production and aestheticizing industry, Knight's sculptural object remains a public structure, serving its purposes and performing its daily productive functions.

Thus Knight introduces a counterfigure into the perception of the garden's paradox, inverting that institution's terms on every account. If sculpture inside the garden had inscribed itself mimetically into a register of industrial production, Knight's work suddenly displaces that paradigm by substituting an actually functioning industrial object outside of the park's perimeters. If spectators flock to the park as a space of leisure in order to find relief from the instrumentalization of the spaces and temporalities of everyday life, in Knight's work they find themselves confronted not only with functioning utilitarian structures (the telescope and the water tower), but they are also invited to remember the actual economic foundation of the sculpture park's mirage of leisure in nature.

At this point, Knight's particular choice of the water tower as an object of industrial design and of functional utilitarian architecture inevitably generates another comparison with an artistic project that seems to have been at least partially motivated by the melancholic contemplation of sculpture's past aspirations toward the dimension of collective use value. Similar to Knight's skepticism with regard to the continuing credibility of the paradigm of industrial production as the foundation for contemporary sculpture, the doubts incited by the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher have circulated for decades around these seemingly unresolvable questions of how sculpture could maintain its claims for "publicness" of collective experience without succumbing to advertisement and propaganda, how it could aspire to architecture without serving the interests of spectacle, and how it could recognize the collective

7. It is almost inevitable to make yet another comparison, one in which it becomes obvious to what extent the presence of the industrial paradigm haunts sculptural production up to this very moment. In choosing exactly the object type that has been of central concern to the Bechers for the last forty-some years and that is the singular object of Knight's installation, Rachel Whiteread's recent polyester-resin cast of one of the wood water towers typical for New York's downtown water supply adds yet another layer to this debate. What drives Whiteread's project is of course a profoundly conciliatory, if not a fraudulent, sentiment whose immediate success with collectors and art-world institutions is currently guaranteed. The work is fraudulent first of all with regard to the nature of the casting process itself. (It re-mystifies and aestheticizes the index whose project in artistic practices from Duchamp to Bruce Nauman had always been one of a radical materialist phenomenology and one of defetishization. At the same time Whiteread's choice of a quaint nostalgically charged industrial object exoticizes and sentimentalizes the industrial object itself (and with that, by implication, the existential conditions of industrialization at large). Worst of all is, of course, Whiteread's fraudulence with regard to a newly opened wellspring of sculptural production, with the reflections on the conditions and availability of sculpture both as palliative and as placebo.

participation in the production process without mythifying and fetishizing industrial labor.

Thus, in the last comparison, the complexity of Knight's sculptural paradigms becomes even more transparent: suspended, on the one hand, between the muscular industrialism of Minimalists and Postminimalists in whose work—as we have argued—the metaphors of virility, of production, and of industry had still governed procedures and materials of sculpture and, on the other hand, the melancholic position of the Bechers in whose photographic documentation the waning of the age of industry is apparently bemoaned as much as the disappearance of the possibilities of sculptural production.

Knight's work repositions "sculpture" within a different register, that of a *détournement* of existing conditions of object experience and operative forms of spatial organization.⁷ Knight's installations thus function in the manner of a sculptural montage linking different social spaces and different discourses within which objects are constituted and confined. His work makes it compellingly plausible that in such a definition of sculpture an actual sculptural object is no longer conceivable. It is in this negation that Knight's dialectical approach originates, a dialectic that integrates a manifest refusal to deliver a fraudulent sculptural object with a programmatically declared absence (and inaccessibility) of certain forms of public and material experience that sculpture had traditionally provided.

This absence of sculptural object production and Knight's refusal to substitute for it the parameters of the new genre of installation (with its persistent oscillation between entertainment architecture, showroom design, and theatrical stage set) articulate precisely the discursive void that corresponds to the experiential absence of public space and to the lack of an elementary sociality once aspired to within its perimeters. Inasmuch as radical sculpture promises an object without exchange value, a structure outside of domination, an architecture of simultaneous collective perception beyond décor and product propaganda, and inasmuch as none of these models can even be conceived anymore, it is only in a montage of negations as Knight assembles them that a last glimpse of the practice of sculpture in the present could be caught.

Meaning at the Margins: The Semiological Inversions of John Knight

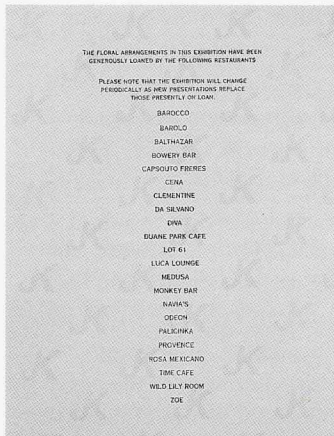
Alexander Alberro

Our lifestyle is not up for negotiation.

President George Bush, 1990¹

Since the late 1960s, John Knight has produced a thoroughgoing, institutionally critical art, and in his untitled installation at American Fine Arts, Co., in October 1998, he continued his caustic, interrogative practice with a project that was as intellectually rigorous as it was seductive. Entering the gallery from the barren concrete pavement of Wooster Street in New York City's SoHo district, one was immediately engulfed by the visual and olfactory extravaganza of more than twenty-five floral arrangements that seemed momentarily to transform the exhibition space into a flower shop or a funeral parlor.² For where else does one find a collection of so many disparate floral displays whose composition seems entirely random without any unifying style, theme, color, or motif—their only commonality being some type of plant? In one corner there was the chopped-off top half of a magnolia tree, in another a larger potted cactus; bouquets of all sizes—from the understated and discrete single stem in a vase to the completely over-the-top production—filled up the space. All of the bouquets were accompanied by small cards acknowledging the name of the lending institution, in each case a restaurant identified with the ever-expanding art world of Manhattan. Where applicable, the name of the floral designer was also printed on the card. In turn, a wall text at the entrance of the gallery, signed with the artist's monogram in the style of a corporate logo, *JK*, indicated that Knight had also installed museological plaques in each participating restaurant announcing the temporary loan of the floral display to the gallery for exhibition.

This project is probably Knight's most "beautiful" piece to date. However, the viewer should not let himself or herself be lulled by the visual and olfactory splendor into concluding that the installation is simply a collection of floral arrangements. For Knight's piece is polyvalent, its multiple interpretations unfolding like petals. Despite the overwhelming sensual and seemingly innocuous nature of the show, Knight has in no way compromised his ideals and the steadfastly defiant aesthetics of resistance that typifies his earlier work.



John Knight, Project for American Fine Arts, Co., 1998, detail. Courtesy American Fine Arts, Co., New York.

1. George Bush, 1990, as cited by John Knight on the brochure introducing his project *Worldebt . . . you can count on it*.

2. The exact number of floral displays differed each week, as the contributions rotated throughout the duration of the show. However, there were never fewer than twenty-five floral arrangements in the installation.



John Knight, *Project for American Fine Arts, Co., 1998*, installation view. Courtesy of the artist.

3. Jean Baudrillard, "Gesture and Signature" (1972), in *For A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981), p. 103. Baudrillard continues, "Similarly, the concept of forgery has changed—or rather, it suddenly appears with the advent of modernity. Formerly painters regularly used collaborators or "negros": one specialized in trees, another in animals. The act of painting, and so the signature as well, did not bear the same mythological insistence upon authenticity—that moral imperative to which modern art is dedicated and by which it becomes modern—which has been evident ever since the relation to illustration and hence the very meaning of the artistic object changed with the act of painting itself."

4. This criterion of evaluation is also operative in academia and criticism especially in the humanities where collaborative writing and research is strongly discouraged and disparaged in favor of the single-authored work. Of course, in the art world there have been challenges to this dominant paradigm, some of the most successful being the Art Worker's Coalition, the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, and Group Material in the United States, as well as the Art & Language Collective in the United Kingdom. For an informative discussion of collaborative art in the U. S. context, see Gregory Sholette, "News from Nowhere: Activist Art and After," *Third Text* 45 (Winter 1998–99), pp. 45–62.

Indeed, Knight's most recent project performs a number of semiological inversions that have come to characterize his artistic strategy over the past three decades—a strategy that is consistent in its resistance to reification and its pursuit of the increasingly vanishing realm of criticality.

Deconstructing Presence

Inevitably, when addressing the diverse oeuvre of Knight, one is drawn to the authorial presence of the artist as it is self-consciously inserted into the work. This entry point is encouraged by Knight's practice of deploying his signature in the spectacular form of a logotype, a practice in which the artist's monogram is stylized into a symbol like those commonly used by corporations for emblematic purposes. In a decades-long artistic practice characterized by a steadfast refusal to attain a consistent and identifiable morphology, *JK* at once stands as a nexus and a channel marker, bringing together a diverse array of projects for the viewer and providing a stable chart into meaning. This efficiency is obtained at the price of a radical simplification, of an impoverishment, and of an almost irrevocable regression in the language of "value." Here it is worth recalling that the overdetermining power of the artist's signature has traditionally served art historians, critics, dealers, museums, and collectors as a means by which to fix identity, determine meaning and interpretation, integrate a work into a series (that of the works of a particular author), and ultimately help to allocate value. Thus the artwork attains its status in the culture by means of the signature; it is not simply read but perceived in its differential value. "Until the nineteenth century," writes Jean Baudrillard in "Gesture and Signature" (1972), the copy of an original work had its own value; copying was a legitimate practice. In our time the copy is illegitimate, inauthentic: it is no longer "art."³ Indeed there is nothing more problematic in the history of modern art than the phenomenon of the "copy," or even worse, the phenomenon of the "in the school of," where the individual artist may still have been involved to a certain degree in production. In Western culture, the cult of the artist as bourgeois individual has been the dominant trope in the visual arts, architecture, literature, and academia alike since at least the late eighteenth century. Value increases in this context to the degree that an artwork can be identified positively as the product of a single person.⁴

The inherent inadequacy of a methodology that attempts to affix the meaning and value of an artwork solely according to the individual identity of an artist is apparent when facing the oeuvre of Knight. For he directly calls into question and parodies the fetishistic cult of worship around the solitary



John Knight, *De Campagne*, 1994, detail.
Plastic and metal, 3¾ in. dia. Courtesy
Stroom haags centrum voor beeldende kunst,
Rotterdam.

5. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Knight's Moves: Situating the Art/Object," in MCMLXXXVI, exh. cat. (New York: Marian Goodman Gallery, 1986), p. 9; reprinted in Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 2000), p. 292.

6. In order to inform as large a public as possible about the process of exchange at the core of this project, Knight mounted a broad advertising campaign. As he explained just prior to the unfolding of this work: "Advertising, as a subsequent step in the development of this project, will be used as a bridge between the public consciousness at large and the deployment of a work of art. Specifically, an advertising campaign will be waged on the sides of twenty-five buses that will traverse the city for a period of one month. To accompany the ad campaign will be the telephone number of Stroom, which will have a pre-recorded message concerning the nuts and bolts of this project. At the moment when the new bell is to be introduced, a second advertising campaign will be launched. During a one or two day period, thousands of tags, similar to those left on your door handle by Chinese take-out food services, will be hung on the handlebars of bicycles throughout the city." Kurt Dillon, "The Site of the Bicycle/Interview with John Knight," *Archis* 5 (1993), p. 12. Also see Birgit Pelzer, "The Irresistible Appeal of Utility," in *Campagne*, exh. cat. (Brussels: Encore . . . Bruxelles, 1996), pp. 7–39.

figure of the individual artist or godlike creator. By highlighting the function of the signature to entrench a subject at the heart of an object, Knight underscores how subject and object become fused in a complex operation of commodification. As Benjamin Buchloh insightfully observes in a 1986 essay on the work of Knight aptly entitled "Knight's Moves," "The art object traditionally registers projections of identity (individual, cultural, national, those of social class or ethnic affiliation). Paradoxically, the experience of identity is mediated by an act of reification, an act in which parts of the self are invested in the object which receives the projected image of that identity like a mirror."⁵ The signature is an indelible part of this process, for insofar as it at once serves to indicate the presence of the artist as the origin, the source, in the production of the work, and to establish normative constraints and a stable order of meaning, it is also used to legally seal and validate documents and to give proof of ownership, be it of a concrete piece of property or an abstract thought. And it is this relation to ownership and authority that is of obvious concern to Knight. For indeed, he manipulates not only his own signature but signature in its more abstract manifestation as sign and logotype.

During the past two decades, Knight has systematically deconstructed the personal signature and its immediate relatives: the historical seal, the coat of arms, the brand name, the national flag, the national language, and the corporate logo. For the 1992 project *De Campagne* ("The Campaign") for Stroom, The Hague's Center for Visual Arts, Knight produced bicycle bells that emitted the sound of croaking frogs. He then asked residents of The Hague, the Netherlands' national capital, to trade their standard bicycle bells for the *kikkerbels* (frog bells) and, in turn, sent the standard bells to Havana where they were sorely needed.⁶ By providing Cuba with bicycle bells, a seemingly innocent act of supplying a country with goods that it lacks, Knight's *De Campagne* at once mobilized a public and violated international trade agreements. Thus on a fairly immediate level, each person who participated in the exchange not only came to possess an artwork but became directly involved in global politics. However, a closer examination of the design of the *kikkerbel* and the choice of the frog's "croak" to replace the traditional ring indicates more complex metaphors at work.

In his creation of a bicycle bell to be used as an instrument of exchange meant to break through the powerful U.S. embargo on Cuba, Knight also deconstructs, both visually and acoustically, the old city seal or signature of The Hague. On the crown of the *kikkerbel* was engraved an image of a stork—one of Holland's most cherished national treasures and the official seal of The Hague. But in Holland the stork teeters on the verge of extinction because of the near disappearance of a critical link in its food chain, the frog.

On the one hand, then, the *kikkerbels*, fabricated from recycled soda bottle molds, decorated with the sign of a stork, and emitting the sound of a frog, metaphorically comment on Holland's headlong rush for economic development and on the great costs of this phenomenon to the ecosystem. The recycling of the exchanged bells in Havana, on the other hand, redirects the issue away from the two obvious antagonists, the United States and Cuba, and toward a third player: the Netherlands. In a world of multinational corporations and increasing globalization, it is too easy to make a simple schema with only two protagonists—instead, all nations become implicated.

Indeed, a preoccupation with extinction (and its inanimate corollary, dissolution) is central to Knight's work and is something to which he repeatedly returns. In particular, Knight links extinction to the subject's or object's afterlife in the form of widely disseminated signs. For after something has ceased to exist, it is often only the sign that remains. Of course, this is part of the standard definition of a sign: something that it is not. The sign, however, though engaged in perpetual semiosis, continuously producing other signs, also includes the object. Hence the sign is never entirely split from its referent: that is, the sign is never completely separated from the conditions in which it was constructed, for those very conditions brought it into being.⁷ In short, the sign symbolically retains the power of the originary signified, although it is now only a trace of something that has vanished. And it is no coincidence that in *De Campagne* we are reminded, through the use of the official city seal, of all that in the past had been eradicated under this power as well as of The Netherlands' early role as a major force in European finance: banking and insurance. Also evoked, of course, is a past colonial history that croaks up every now and then.

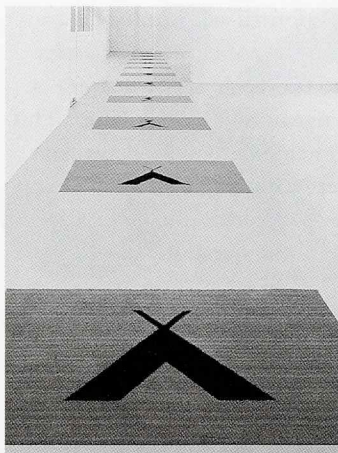
Further explorations along this line include Knight's 1989 *Federal Style*, which consists of approximately forty copper-plated units, each in the shape of the geographical area of a different Indian reservation, encircling the entire space of the gallery, and the words "FEDERAL STYLE" emblazoned in large letters on the exhibition wall. Through the double referencing of the governmental practices and the architectural style of the European colonial settlers, both in turn overlapped onto the geographical map of the reservations, Knight points to the near annihilation of the Native American population in North America. As Anne Rorimer has astutely remarked, *Federal Style* is located within the greater economic system by alluding to the way in which possession for some results from the dispossession of others:

As representations of vast land masses, shrunk to the scale of hand-graspable adornments, they critically harbor political intent while their metallic surface coating

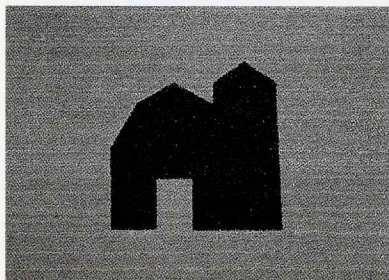


John Knight, *Federal Style*, 1989, detail.
Wall text, 14 x 31 ft. Courtesy Marian
Goodman Gallery, New York.

7. See Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, ed. Robert Innis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 4–23.



John Knight, *Home, Home on the Range*, 1991, installation view. Cocoa mat, 1 x 1.5 m. Courtesy Galerie Roger Pailhas, Marseille.



John Knight, *Home, Home on the Range*, 1991, detail. Cocoa mat, 1 x 1.5 m. Courtesy Galerie Roger Pailhas, Marseille.

8. Anne Rorimer, "John Knight: Designating the Site," in *John Knight*, exh. cat. (Villeurbanne: Le Nouveau Musée, 1989), p. 24. Also see Edward Bryant, "John Knight: FEDERAL STYLE," *Artspace: A Magazine of Contemporary Art* 14:2 (January/February 1990), pp. 32–34.
9. Marie-Ange Brayer, "John Knight/Interview," *Artefactum* 9:42 (February–March 1992), p. 19.
10. Birgit Pelzer, "The Irresistible Appeal of Utility," p. 16.

makes direct reference to lucrative mining ventures in the international, corporate quest for commercially viable raw materials. In their delineation of those geographical areas that have been allotted to displaced, indigenous peoples in addition to their identification with semi-precious, jewel-like commodities, the copper forms poignantly point to the elision of large scale enterprise with the production of consumer objects and to the exploitation and omission of the individual incurred in the process.⁸

Knight's *Home, Home on the Range* of 1991 also summons up reflections of a colonial past. The work consists of a series of eleven 3 x 4 foot doormats, each with a computerized icon, installed flush into the concrete floor in a straight line from the gallery's entry to the rear wall. The first image in the series is clearly discernible as that of a traditional tepee such as those associated with the culture of the First Nations of what has come to be known as North America. As the series continues, however, the tepee icon gradually morphs into that of a homestead farm. Thus the work presents a narrativization not only of the progressive domestication of nature but also of the relentless obliteration of all previously existing cultures by the manifest destiny of the European settlers. According to Knight, this "computerized narrative present(s) a symbolic metamorphosis from one cultural derivation (nomads), to another (settlers). I would say that the shift from image to a signalectic sign induces the symbolic loss of life."⁹

Consistently in tension in Knight's work as a whole, and fundamental to his long-standing strategy of inversion, is a complex interaction between presence and absence. As Birgit Pelzer notes, "In a game of illusion, and deception, which are characterized by conventions of distribution and allotment, John Knight's work addresses the veiled, but coercive violence of a type of symbolic constraint, by rendering certain invisible stages material."¹⁰ Additionally, as noted above, a deconstructive or hermeneutic approach is also at work, one that employs emblems such as city seals as segues into an endless chain of deferred meaning and signification. For as we saw with *De Campagne*, the seal operates not only visually but also acoustically, since Knight's *kikkerbels* function as cries of warning and procurers of memory as they croak through the streets of late-twentieth-century Europe.

The modern version of the traditional seal is the corporate logotype, which also confers legitimacy, validation, and authenticity, and acts in a similar fashion as a legal copyrighted signature. Concerning an earlier work from 1983, *Museotypes*, for which Knight presented a series of sixty bone china commemorative plates, each featuring, in the form of an emblematic trademark or corporate logotype, the individual ground plan of one of sixty museums located around the world, Anne Rorimer observes that "it is the de/sign

11. Anne Rorimer, "John Knight: Designating the Site," p. 14.

12. Indeed, according to Jacques Derrida, the signature is the first lie, since "by definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical nonpresence of the signer"—so, too, the corporate version is equally false. See Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context" (1972), in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 328.

13. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1969) in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), p. 126.

14. See Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1949), in *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977), pp. 1–7; and Kaja Silverman, "Fassbinder and Lacan: A Reconsideration of Gaze, Look, and Image," *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 125–56.

15. Jaques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 107, as cited in Kaja Silverman, "Fassbinder and Lacan," *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, p. 149: "Only the subject—the human subject, the subject of desire that is the essence of man—is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. The screen is here the locus of mediation." My discussion of Silverman's stress on Lacan's concept of "gaze" is indebted to Keith Moxey, *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 46–56.

capacity of the corporate logotype that binds the formal and ideological concerns of [the work] together and allies them with the socioeconomic underpinning of their support."¹¹ For Knight seems to be keenly aware that just as the corporate logo is based on a lie, so too the signature is equally false.¹² This would then mean that Knight's strategic deployment of *JK* is not dependent on a tautological concept of signification, iconically standing in for the identity of the artist. Rather, the sign is employed to point emphatically to something else. The particular nature of that something else is the question at hand.

The Screen of Resistance

In the process of communication, which necessarily takes place through systems of signification, not only cultural attitudes on which the social order depends but also human subjectivity are shaped and molded. As Louis Althusser postulated in the wake of the failures of 1968, these systems of signification function as ideological state apparatuses that center the subject. And yet if, as Althusser writes, "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence," then it supposes a subject capable of mediating the realm between what Jacques Lacan terms the symbolic (the social conventions that interpellate the subject as a social being) and the real (the material conditions of existence, which the symbolic is inherently unable to fully encompass).¹³

Here it is useful to turn for a moment to the problematization of Lacan's concept of the "gaze" by recent scholarship. Kaja Silverman in particular has productively addressed this issue by relating Lacan's theory of the gaze, which she defines as analogous to the symbolic, to the latter's account of the formation of the subject. According to Lacan's often-cited thesis, the subject's self-awareness as a social being is initially arrived at through the contradictory dynamic of simultaneous identification and alienation.¹⁴ Silverman develops this theory of subject formation by coupling it with another of Lacan's speculative proposals, namely, that of the subject's ability to "isolate the function of the screen and . . . play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze." In other words, although the subject is itself a representation of the gaze or of the symbolic order, Silverman argues, the screen (as "the locus of mediation") empowers the subject with the ability to present a representation of its own before the gaze, and thus with (even if only a limited) agency.¹⁵

The concept of the screen can also productively be employed to understand Knight's use of his signature and monogram as more than a theatricalization of tautological self-reference. For if the screen can be regarded as the means by which the subject struggles with the alienating power of the



John Knight, Project for Documenta 7, 1982, detail. Birch plywood and advertising poster, 24 x 30 x 1 3/8 in. Courtesy of the artist.



John Knight, *Treize à la Douzaine*, 1991, installation view. Nylon fabric, 3 x 5 m. Courtesy Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.

symbolic, as the way the subject subverts the symbolic's control of the real by offering it that which it cannot encompass, Knight's manipulation of his signature (or monogram) can be understood as a personal screen of resistance that seeks to invert the values that characterize the culture of late capitalism by advancing an understanding of the real that was not mediated by the symbolic.¹⁶

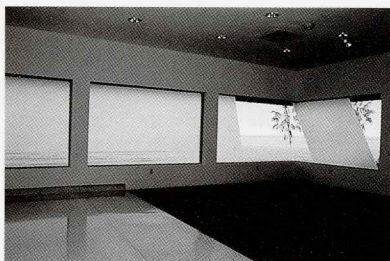
Indeed, as early as 1982 with the series of *JK* reliefs that he contributed to the Documenta 7 exhibition, Knight experiments with his own signature, making it the subject of his investigation. By having his monogram (shaped in large wooden letters upon which were pasted commercial travel posters) serve as the actual work of art, Knight suggests that what matters most for the institution of art in its present configuration is not the meanings of artworks but whether or not they are "authentic." He thus whispers the lie of the Documenta exhibition and its organizers, who, under the pretense of an interest in art and aesthetics, are ultimately mostly concerned with the name-value—the *signatures*—of the participating artists. Knight thus tactfully seeks to invert the myth and point to the reality that it is not aesthetics but capital and its late capitalist corollary, sign value, that now regulate artistic production, exhibition, and by extension, distribution.

Like a signature, city seal, or corporate logo, a national flag also stands as a sign that creates a false identity. And it should come as no surprise that this is the topic of Knight's *Treize à la Douzaine*, which he proposed be installed on the exterior wall above the Palais Royal entrance of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, in 1991. For *Treize à la Douzaine*, Knight made a 3 x 5 meter replica of the European Community flag. However, each of the twelve gold stars that represent the European nations in the Community was transformed into a star-shaped fragment of one of the "home" flags of the twelve largest populations of guest workers in the Community. By giving visibility to the non-represented peoples in the European Community, Knight exposes the flag's function as a sign of homogeneity that elides the real, and increasingly splintered, community it ostensibly represents. The flag, like the signature and corporate logo, is thereby posited as a lie that blinds us, that conceals something by showing something else. We see without really seeing, or to put it in the words of Althusser when discussing the operation of classical political economy:

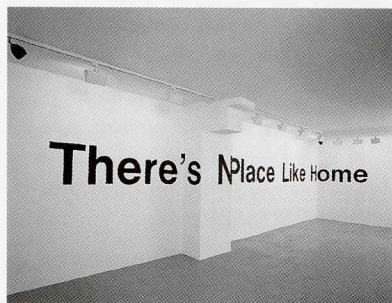
*what [it] does not see, is not what it does not see, it is what it sees; it is not what it lacks, on the contrary, it is what it does not lack; it is not what it misses, on the contrary, it is what it does not miss. This oversight, then, is not to see what one sees, the oversight no longer concerns the object, but the sight itself.*¹⁷

16. Moxey, p. 55: "The semiotic definition of subjectivity allows for a recognition not only of the incapacity of the symbolic to encompass the real but also of the subject's power to develop an interpretation of the real which was not provided by the symbolic."

17. Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1968), p. 21.



John Knight, *Bienvenido*, 1990, detail. Paint on glass, 28 x 240 ft. Courtesy Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, La Jolla.



John Knight, *There's No Place Like Home*, 1990, detail. Wall text, 30 ft. Courtesy Galerie Roger Pailhas, Paris.

18. For a good description of *Bienvenido* and some of its operations, see John O'Brien, "John Knight: BIENVENIDO," *Artspace* (March–April 1991), pp. 35–38.

Knight's *Bienvenido*, produced in 1990 for the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, consists of an array of elements including a 28 x 240 foot supergraphic, a postcard invitation featuring an image of a Mayan ruin, an intermittent guided tour, and some identifying placards.¹⁸ The frieze, applied to the inside surface of the museum's windows, presents a fragmented composition of the Spanish word for "welcome" (*bienvenido*) in block letters. But only fragments of the individual letters appear on the building's widely dispersed ocean-view fenestration. Thus, for those viewers looking out from the inside of the building, access to the spectacular oceanscape is momentarily suspended, and the potential for a critical moment opens up. For those viewers looking at the building from the outside, it is at once a greeting that can barely be deciphered, and a welcome that is hollow. In order to fully appreciate the specificity and inherent doubleness of *Bienvenido*, it is important to consider not only that the museum is located very close to the Mexican-U.S. border, but also that at the time of this exhibition the welcome BIENVENIDO operated as a frieze spanning the entire ten-lane international border. Thus the museum visitor in the space of the gallery is, structurally and allegorically, put into a position similar to that of the newly arrived Mexican immigrant. For although both see the welcome, neither sees the full picture, which for the museum visitor is considerably greater than the objects they come upon in the gallery (e.g., the day-to-day operations and machinations of the institution) and which for the immigrant is much more than the friendly greeting they initially encounter when crossing the border (e.g., the racial, economic, and class hostility that in fact underlies the duplicitous welcome). Note also that "bienvenido" is a linguistic phrase and that it is thus not only the visual that this work deconstructs, but the aural as well. Recall that it is the croak of the frog bell that issues its double warning in *De Campagne*. Thus Knight puts in motion the power of discourse and the subtleties of the doubleness of language, for like *Bienvenido*, "bienvenido" means the exact opposite to many people.

Also in 1990, Knight made *There's No Place Like Home*, which, except for a neon sign that represented a generic image of a cow and a thirty-foot graphic of the words "There's No Place Like Home" wrapped around two elevations of the gallery interior, consisted entirely of a CD/audio piece that explored the multiple resonance of place-names. The recording constituted a sampling selected from place-names in North America with Native American etymology. By problematizing the ostensible stability and rootedness of "home," *There's No Place Like Home* demonstrates the hollowness of that patriotic phrase, popularized in 1939 at the beginning of World War II by Judy Garland as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. At the same time, like Knight's *Home*, *Home on the Range*



John Knight, *Huchal*, 1992, installation view. Continuous color video projection, 3 min. Courtesy La Criée, Halle d'Art Contemporain, Rennes.

19. By "fascism," I mean what Barthes describes as "the performance of a language system": "This object in which power is inscribed, for all of human eternity, is language, or to be more precise, its necessary expression: the language we speak and write. Language is legislation, speech is its code. . . . To speak, and, with even greater reason, to utter a discourse is not, as is too often repeated, to communicate; it is to subjugate. . . . [L]anguage—the performance of a language system—is neither reactionary nor progressive; it is quite simply fascist; for fascism does not prevent speech, it compels speech." Roland Barthes, "Lecture in Inauguration of the Chair of Literary Semiology, Collège de France, January 7, 1977," trans. Richard Howard, in *October* 8 (Spring 1979), pp. 4–5.

20. As Knight informs Brayer concerning his 1991 piece *Treize à la Douzaine*: "It was my intention to re-direct, not inject social content." See "John Knight/Interview," p. 18.

21. According to Peirce's tripartite concept of the sign, the interpretant is the new sign created by the interpreter in the process of understanding. See Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," p. 5.

of the following year, *There's No Place Like Home* evokes the legacy of manifest destiny and the mission of European settlers and colonialists to exterminate entire native populations in order to establish radically different concepts of "home" for those few remaining.

Knight's *Huchal*, presented for La Criée, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Rennes in 1991, functions in a similar way. This large, 4 x 5 meter video installation features a child who is shown conjugating the French verb "crier" (to shout) translated in the Breton dialect as "huchal." The choice of the verb "to shout" is no coincidence since the building in which the work was first exhibited, La Criée, took its name from its original function as a fish market typically characterized by mongers loudly hawking their goods. But more significantly, Knight's video projection stands as a protest against the French-language-only policy that dominates "minor" languages and cultures that seek recognition in France today. Seen from this perspective, *Huchal* stresses the linguistic aspect of colonialism and imperialism within a country. France, it is worth recalling, was the first in the nineteenth century to execute a systematic plan to form a standardized national language of unity. In a way that once again evokes the function of a signature, logotype, and the like, with *Huchal* Knight points to the function of a national language to extinguish all difference in its stead, creating one homogenized and corporatized national culture. By inverting the dominant dialect, *Huchal* serves as a reminder not only of the possibility but also of the necessity of resistance against such fascistic practices.¹⁹

To sum up thus far, the strategy of inversion—of trying to get a glimpse of the repressed image, sound, or connotation contained within the one presented to the public—is central to Knight's working method. And it is this guiding principle that makes Knight's work so different from that of other artists, who consciously, and at times didactically, inject their work with social content. Instead, Knight argues that the politics are immanent in the work and that his role is merely to "redirect" vision or interpretation in a way that ultimately, though subtly, brings the issues at hand to the fore.²⁰ Through this redirection, Knight deconstructs the lie. Knight's work represents a significant break from the tradition of political art for which Brechtian strategies of estrangement are central. Instead of alienation, Knight's work presents what is most familiar and naturalized. Conspicuously absent from his practice as well are pedagogical strategies of any type. The end result is ultimately a much more subtle work where the deconstruction of the prevailing ideology and the construction of a new image or view, what Charles Sanders Peirce would refer to as a new "interpretant," is left entirely up to the viewer.²¹ Furthermore, rather than make assertive claims about the "real," it focuses on the

social institutions that are responsible for the real's production. Instead of affording the viewer a vision of the institution of art that is informed by a predetermined political agenda, it criticizes the political values on which the institution is based. In short, Knight refuses to fix meaning, leaving it wide open in an often frustrating and, in turn (at least for those willing to engage with the work), potentially illuminating gesture.²²

An Open Form of Dialectical Montage

Knight returns to the intricacies of the personal identity of the artist and the role of the signature in his installation at American Fine Arts. This project called for specific restaurants to loan their floral mascots to the gallery for the duration of his show. In their stead, a museological plaque was temporarily installed on the site left vacant by the mascot in the restaurant, announcing that the floral arrangement was on “temporary loan,” thereby parodying the practice of lending works of art in the museum world.²³ This strategy of mounting an exhibition with double or parallel components, so that if carried out properly two sites would operate simultaneously, referencing each other across town as it were, is not new for Knight. For instance, with his two-part installation for the alternative gallery Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art (LAICA), in 1984, Knight already experiments with the notion of displacement. In LAICA's reception area, he deliberately blocked the entrance to the exhibition space with a large mural (directly appropriated from the Wells Fargo advertising campaign posters) evoking the mythical expanse of the Western frontier with the ridiculous slogan “LAICA: When the Conversation Turns to Art.”²⁴ This motto was also printed on all LAICA letterheads sent out for the duration of the exhibition. Several wall reliefs, again in the shape of the artist's initials but this time covered with a publicity image for the Wells Fargo Bank, were displayed as well, combining with the other elements to create the ambience of a corporate waiting room. The second part of the exhibition featured another wall relief of Knight's monogram in logotype installed within the interior of the Santa Monica branch office of Wells Fargo Bank allocated especially for “art exhibitions.” The role each institution usually plays was recontextualized and reversed—the alternative gallery was turned into a corporate office, and the corporate space into a gallery space—and the inherent viability of LAICA to funding organizations and corporate businesses like Wells Fargo was highlighted. As Kim Gordon perceptively notes in the catalogue to Knight's LAICA exhibition, ideologically the message is clear:

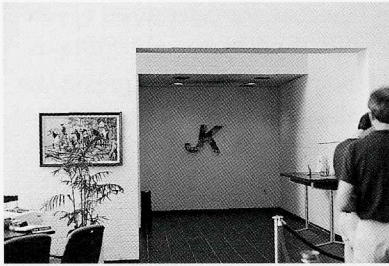


John Knight, Project for Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1984, installation view. Photo mural, 8 x 9 ft. Courtesy of the artist.

22. Thus, when asked in a 1991 interview with Joël Benzakin if he uses “logotypes as a signature,” Knight responds enigmatically, “Do you think we can get away with that?” Joël Benzakin, “Benzakin–Knight,” *John Knight/Haim Steinbach*, exh. cat. (Brussels: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1991), p. 28.

23. Not all of the restaurants adhered to these guidelines: some did not display the plaque, and others substituted duplicate arrangements.

24. The size and location, in fact, were determined by the existing entry into all gallery spaces. That is, the mural actually closed off—negated—the galleries for the duration of the exhibition. As such, instead of the reception area functioning as an entry/passageway into the galleries, it became the sole site of presentation.



John Knight, Project for Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1984, installation view at Wells Fargo Bank, Santa Monica. Courtesy of the artist.

For the corporation, [the Western pioneer imagery] functions by presenting a cohesiveness, as in the Wells Fargo stagecoach bringing information and paychecks from the East to the West and stopping at isolated outposts of civilization along the way. It presents the corporation as a primary force in making possible what now exists. Superimposed on this scenario of the past is the photo advertising technology of the present. This strategy of the image appears on corporate billboards throughout the city and extends the locus of the corporation, becoming a part of the exterior architecture of the city. Through their repetition they create the sense of momentum and the illusion of a series of events: heroic service. For LAICA the isolated display of the mural represents a fragment of its concerns: corporate visibility and the evolution of progress of the alternative space toward a state of higher visibility within the community and on an international level.²⁵

What is extraordinary about the LAICA/Wells Fargo display in the context of the present investigation of the tactful operation of Knight's interrogative practice is that it provides an early glimpse of another mode of semiological inversion that is consistent throughout Knight's work but is once again potentially operative in the American Fine Arts exhibition—namely, dialectical montage. But unlike Sergei Eisenstein's (one of the originators of this semiological strategy) cinematic practice of dialectical montage, which tried to simplify each element into an unequivocal statement that could then be combined with other shots to achieve a precise effect on the viewer, Knight not only pushes montage into the realm of the spatial and performs a montage of sites but also presents each of the elements with multiple, often autonomous levels of meaning and varied connotations. Moreover, the minimal unit of this kind of montage is not the individual element, as for Eisenstein, but its negation—namely, the empty space between elements. Consequently, the effect intended by the montage is not a dialectically determined “third meaning” (as Roland Barthes would fittingly describe it), an abstraction resulting from the juxtaposition of separate representations, but rather indeterminacy of traditionally fixed associations.²⁶ Eisenstein makes whatever overtones or connotations are present in each element reinforce the overall effect he is after; in contrast, the polysemy Knight endows his elements with hinders any attempt to arrive at a singular meaning. Instead, a range of possible implications extends over the weave of elements, but the point remains elusive. Meanings proliferate and radiate out toward other sequences, producing as much perplexity as illumination. Each element suggests a variety of other associations as well as ruptures, opening onto many alternative pathways that could be followed. The subsequent meaning-construct is almost never necessary, it is simply one of many alternatives.

25. Kim Gordon, “Turning the Conversation,” in *Journal: A Contemporary Art Magazine* 4:40, p. 107.

26. Roland Barthes, “The Third Meaning. Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills” (1970), in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), pp. 52–68.



John Knight, American Fine Arts, Co., 1998, detail. Floral arrangement. Courtesy American Fine Arts, Co., New York.

27. A full list of participating restaurants—which would be updated weekly—is also inscribed on the wall text with the logo JK. The restaurants are as follows: Baracco, Barolo, Balthazar, Bond St., Bowery Bar, Capsouto Freres, Cena, Da Silvano, Diva, Frontiere, Lot 61, Luca Lounge, Medusa, Monzu, Monkey Bar, Navia', Odeon, Palacinka, Provence, Rosa Mexicana, Time Café, The Sanctuary, and Zoe.

28. O'Brien, "John Knight: BIENVENIDO," p. 38.

29. As Kim Gordon puts it, "Knight is concerned with the topography of the object. One cannot describe an artwork without describing all events surrounding it." Gordon, "Turning the Conversation," p. 109.

The choice of restaurants for American Fine Arts was determined in part by their identity as "art bars" or "watering holes" for the art world.²⁷ Originally conceived in 1986 just to include establishments in SoHo, the project was broadened for the American Fine Arts exhibition, reflecting the expansion of the gallery world to accommodate some restaurants from Chelsea, Fifty-seventh Street, and the Lower East Side. If for his project at LAICA Knight linked corporate money to art, here he draws a more social connection. What is now targeted is all the networking, self-promotion, making-the-scene type of behavior that is necessary for an artist to be successful in the contemporary art world.

Knight, in a collaborative gesture, left both the selection of particular restaurants and their solicitation up to American Fine Arts, thereby at once wittingly engaging the gallery and pointing to its complicity in this game of connections and publicity. The involvement of the gallery in producing the show is part of Knight's overall working methodology, which we have seen rallies as many players in the art world as possible. His art is not just meant to be produced, displayed, and consumed passively, but to be actively constructed at all stages. For example, if viewers genuinely sought to comprehend fully the American Fine Arts exhibit, it would be necessary for them to visit each of the restaurants participating and see if each in fact did replace its floral arrangement with a plaque. This encouragement of the viewer to actively partake in the exhibition recalls not only the LAICA project but also the *Bienvenido* installation, which, as one critic noted, imposed on the museum staff to yield time in their schedules to take curious viewers "on a guided tour of the administrative offices, the conference rooms, the storage areas, and other locales normally off-limits to non-museum personnel in order to see the windowpanes that have been modified for the exhibition."²⁸ By pointing to the inner workings of the museum or gallery, Knight prompts the viewer to contemplate all the "behind the scenes" activities involved in an exhibit. Similarly, in the American Fine Arts installation Knight not only elicits cooperation from the gallery to secure the floral arrangements from the restaurants and to ensure that the flowers receive proper attention (a labor-intensive act that includes climate control, replenishment of water, and removal of dead leaves), but he also points to all the wheeling and dealing that take place before and during the gallery exhibition. The analysis of an artwork, or even an exhibition, he suggests, cannot be divorced from a consideration of the other dimensions of the institution of which it forms a part.²⁹ According to this view, art is shaped and colored by the social location of its exhibition, so that the artistic sign or object draws its meaning from the full complexity of its social function, rather than from the qualities that define its place within

a system of internal differences. Knight diverges from the traditional (e.g., Ferdinand de Saussure's) binary of signifier and signified and allows a much broader array of cultural and social factors to permeate the concept of the sign. From this perspective, the sign is shaped not only open to its object, but also by the "semiotic activity" operative in the context in which it circulates.³⁰ In sum, Knight's conception of signs—and, in turn, of the operation of his art projects—leads him to the production of a body of work that is fully determined by contextual circumstances and that, as such, plainly exposes for contemplation the social and economic forces that enable its formulation.

The Ideological Function of Design

The function and transformation of the signature or the corporate logo-type is not absent in Knight's American Fine Arts exhibition. For these bouquets have been chosen by the restaurants as their personal signature and fulfill a similar role as an emblem, seal, or logo. Each arrangement is carefully thought out and stylized and somehow made to seem an expression of individual identity. For example, the Wild Lily Tea Room is represented by a solitary wild lily in a small vase, the Monkey Bar by an abundance of colorful, "exotic," and tropical blooms, Provence by a delicate pastel configuration, Bond Street Restaurant by several stark, though imposing, low-maintenance tree branches connoting the no-nonsense business-like atmosphere of the stock exchange, and Palacinka with light red and purple summer field flowers that one would find in eastern Europe. The installation thus points to floral displays in restaurants as architectural or structural signifiers of what Knight calls "identity capital."

This is not the first time that Knight investigates and deconstructs signifiers of class and taste as metaphors for what goes on in the art world. We need only to recall his *Journal Series*, begun in 1976 and continuing to the present day, which consists of the unsolicited mailing of gift subscriptions of popular journals and magazines to the homes of, by now, more than a hundred people. The magazines are carefully selected according to Knight's understanding of the interests and personality of the receiver and the architectural design environment in which the latter resides. Most of the magazines and journals are of the lifestyle variety and deal with issues of fashion, interior design, architecture, food, travel, gardening and popular hobbies. As the early commentator Dan Graham wrote about Knight's *Journal Series*, by penetrating with carefully selected magazines the private spheres of people and homes known by the artist, Knight subtly but deliberately attempts to "influence these recipients' lifestyles or domestic habits and tastes."³¹ Furthermore,

30. Moxey, p. 36.

31. Dan Graham, "On John Knight's Journals Work," *LAICA Journal*, no. 40 (Fall 1984), pp. 110–11; reprinted in "Art as Design," *Rock My Religion / Dan Graham, Writings and Art Projects, 1965–1990*, ed. Brian Wallis (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1993), p. 219.



John Knight, American Fine Arts, Co., 1998, detail. Floral arrangement. Courtesy American Fine Arts, Co., New York.

32. Knight in conversation with Dan Graham, in "On John Knight's Journals Work," p. 220, in note 31, above.

33. Buchloh, "Knight's Moves," p. 4.

34. Knight has often pointed to the powerful function of design within architectural contexts. For instance, in his 1991 interview with Joël Benzakin he elaborates on the importance of design in his work: "In the general sense, people do not have the tendency to consider design a self-contained ideology, but simply a mechanical operation. I happen to disagree. Posed as a mild mannered reporter on positivist behavior, 'design for better living,' is actually a prefabricated mechanism for capital domination. It is possibly the most cleverly devised lubricant used in the linkage between early industrial colonialism and multinational hegemony, the fossil fuel of modernity. It is the monster that stands upon the heads of aboriginal culture." Benzakin, "Benzakin-Knight," p. 26.

received as an artwork from the artist, the journals "can take up space in the architecture which it is not possible for the conventional artwork to occupy—the bathroom, the garage, for instance. It uses the interior design aspects of the architecture which already has a coffee table, magazine rack or bedside table."³² In a further sense, too, since many of the magazines sent by Knight are already discursive systems creating dialogues on "aesthetic experience," they exceed the concept of the readymade. "What separates the *Journal* from the traditional readymade," Buchloh writes in "Knight's Moves," "is the fact that they are initially already 'discursive' objects; they are reproductions and representations of objects. These journals speak on fashion, on interior design and architecture, and on taste—discourses which all border on the aesthetic experience or can become congruent with it."³³

Many of the principles that govern the *Journal Series* are at work in Knight's installation at American Fine Arts, for the flower arrangements as briefly described above stand as arbiters of style, commenting directly on the type of restaurant and clientele. At work, then, is a sharp if somewhat duplicitous institutional critique. On one level, the flowers in the restaurants directly relate class and taste, fine dining and fine art. Knight's installation includes within its own construct as art the myths and fantasies that the restaurants proffer as real. On another level, like wallpaper within restaurant settings, each flower arrangement functions as architectural design in the dining establishment, operating primarily as a "cleverly devised lubricant" to convey the particular ambience of the institution.³⁴ No one would read them as works of art in their original context. However, through their displacement and removal to a SoHo gallery, they are transformed into artworks. The project thus highlights the function of context in determining meaning.

This idea of a mutual exchange of goods—the restaurants were allowed to pick the bouquet they would loan to American Fine Arts—and the crucial role of context in defining the status of objects were also manifest in Knight's contribution to *Al(l)ready Made*. This 1992 group exhibition at Museum Het Kruithuis, Den Bosch, the Netherlands, consisted of selected pieces by artists (e.g., Jeff Koons, Haim Steinbach, Guillaume Bijl, and others) working in the legacy of Marcel Duchamp's readymade strategy as manifest in the latter's *Fountain* of 1917. Initially invited to exhibit his *Museotypes* in this show, Knight instead proposed a project that would engage with the museum's so-called artotheque program, which rents works of art from the Kruithuis's collection to the public. Knight's project, titled *Ecoaesthetics*, altered the artotheque by replacing the rental transaction with one of exchange for the duration of the exhibition. A new contract was drawn up by the museum, which specified that subscribers to the artotheque should trade a ceramic item (in accordance

with the show's reliance on Duchamp's porcelain *Fountain*) from their own personal collection for one of the institution's objects. In this way, many ordinary domestic items from the community, introduced into the museum as a material sign of Knight's project for this exhibition, would attain the auratic status of art. A certain tone of irreverence is also evident in Knight's project, for it had the secondary effect of putting to task the work of other artists included in *Al(l)ready Made*. Indeed, by introducing objects with actual use value into the exhibition, Knight's *Ecoaesthetics* not only points emphatically to the overdetermining function of context but also suspends, even if only momentarily, the reified aspect of the work of the "name" artists in this show and allows viewers to see these artists' "sculptural objects" for what they really are. Wasn't this, after all, the effect that Duchamp had in mind when he initially exhibited his *Fountain*?

But there is yet another layer of the contemporary art world that is inverted by Knight's intervention at American Fine Arts. For Knight's project also underscored the limits of exclusive art production as such by substituting a strategy based on the fluid nature of a collaborative exhibition. With the installation becoming a subtle send-up of the group show, Knight himself disappeared beneath the mélange of objects, functioning merely to facilitate the exposure of the work of others. At the same time, as each unique composition fused with the others in the room to culminate in a lush floral spectacle, the installation problematized the practice of privileging curatorial conception over an exhibition's constitutive parts. Knight thus powerfully evoked the recent phenomenon of the "power curators," exhibition organizers who position themselves as the real stars of the shows, coordinating artworks (and those who make them) in a manner not unlike the way artists handle their materials.

From dismantling the inherent presence of the artwork to problematizing the integrity of the artist, from tearing down the artificial parameters of the museum or gallery to interrogating the dominant ideologies, the strategy of semiological inversion has been consistent throughout Knight's career. It is manifest in all of his works to varying degrees on many different levels where it is not a simple flip but a complex set of operations. With the floral installation at American Fine Arts, not only does Knight invert the semiological integrity of the artwork, artist, exhibition, gallery, and an array of practices and contexts integral to the operation of the institution of art, but he even inverts the genre of the still life in painting, bringing the *nature morte* to life, as it were. For the flowers are not painterly renditions but the real thing. Their "realness" is attested by the fact that the entire gallery is filled with overwhelming fragrance. Indeed, the olfactory is a new sense to be deconstructed by Knight. And we need to ask in conclusion what the overpowering scent

conceals, keeping in mind that the original use of perfume was to hide the foul odor of unwashed bodies.

Despite a few exceptions, such as the arrangements consisting entirely of dried flowers or the large cactus representing Time Café, the floral compositions exhibited in American Fine Arts have a distinct temporal aspect. Even with attentive care, most of the works will wither away, their ephemeral nature contradicting the idea of a "timeless" creation. Here we are reminded of our initial response upon walking into the space—a sense of the funereal aspect of the work. And if indeed a funereal tone is invoked, the question emerges: whose funeral is it? What is concealed beneath one of the most spectacular shows of 1998, and certainly of Knight's oeuvre? Interestingly enough, of all of Knight's projects, this one goes untitled—a title, after all, as with a signature, fixes and stabilizes meaning. As when encountering an unmarked gravestone, we wonder for whom the work was erected, and what has been rendered extinct? One explanation lies in the restaurants themselves, trendy signifiers of the gentrification process that has now been completed in SoHo and is currently marching full force ahead in Chelsea. That in itself would be too simple, however. For it must also be acknowledged that the installation, in whole or in part, entirely defies commodification: when the flowers wilt and die, the work will dissipate with them. The experience is ephemeral and nonreproducible; there is nothing that can be defined as an artistic object. Thus the show not only stands as an act of pure defiance to everything the artworld has become, but it also sums up the core strategies of Knight's work and his determination to resist reification at all costs, even at the cost of his own career.

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