



the itch to interpret

Interpretation is carried to infinity and never encounters anything to interpret that is not already itself an interpretation. The signified constantly reimparts signifier, recharges it or produces more of it. The form always comes from the signifier.

The relation between the text and the work of art is a difficult one. It is contained in the words 'exhibition text'. 'Exhibition'. 'Text'. The combination of these two so distinctive words fills me with unease every time I sit down to write the 'exhibition text'. No pressure. Breathe in, breathe out. Just write. Keep. Writing. These. Words.

The functioning of words is as varied as the functioning of objects. If one takes the example of tools in a toolbox one finds a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue pot, glue, nails and screws. There is no single use of these tools. It is not even adequate to say that all tools are used to modify something. Wittgenstein thus argues that there are different kinds of use of what one calls symbols, words, and sentences. And this variety is not something fixed.

It is always the case that interpretation of this type indicates a dissatisfaction (conscious or unconscious) with the work, a wish to replace it by something else. Interpretation, based on the highly dubious theory that a work of art is composed of items of content, violates art. It makes art into an article for use, for arrangement into a mental scheme of categories.

the most basic question, how do we talk about affect without hitching our wagon to the rabid anti-intellectualism

What the overemphasis on the idea of content entails is the perennial, never consummated project of interpretation. And, conversely, it is the habit of approaching works of art in order to interpret them that sustains the fancy that there really is such a thing as the content of a work of art.

In the Berlin zoo, beside the pool containing the live walrus, there is an unusual display. In a glass case are all the things found in the stomach of Roland the walrus, who died on 21 August 1961. Or to be precise: a pink cigarette lighter, four ice-lolly sticks (wooden), a metal brooch in the form of a poodle, a beer-bottle opener, a woman's bracelet (probably silver), a hair grip, a wooden pencil, a child's plastic water pistol, a plastic knife, sunglasses, a little chain, a spring (small), a rubber ring, a parachute (child's toy), a steel chain about 18 ins in length, four nails (large), a green plastic car, a metal comb, a plastic badge, a small doll, a beer can (Pilsner, half-pint), a box of matches, a baby's shoe, compass, a small car key, four coins, a knife with a wooden handle, a baby's dummy, a bunch of keys (5), a padlock, a little plastic bag containing needles and thread.

The exhibition is. The things inside of it also are. The things are positioned in space. Therefore, the space exists. The relationships between the things and the space and the things and the things also exist. The duration of the exhibition is limited. The things in it come together only for a limited amount of time. The exhibition has a title. The title reads "the map is not the territory". This title might mean different things for different people. The exhibition might mean different things for different people. They may or may not see connections between the things. There may or may not be connections between the things.

one provides 'no information' either through secrecy or through refusal. For an artwork, secrecy will solicit no curiosity since viewers need to know it exists in order to care about it. Refusal is the punk strategy: fuck you, I owe you nothing, I make my own rules, leave me alone, I'll do my own thing. It is also the Situationist strategy to avoid definition, to strategically withdraw, to 'never work', as with most subversive acts, this approach of non-participation, refusal and overt opposition has been co-opted by the capitalist machine and is now a fashionable, marketable and historical style

Working on a map for the exhibition, I thought I would go mad; how much — how little information? Breaking with the cliché or taking it to the extreme? Or breaking with the cliché by taking it to extreme?

an artwork can be a map too; it can produce its own epistemology

Promise of an authentic experience

I say I, I say I, the king of the mussels. Me, you say you, I autologue you, I preserve, I sociologise, I manifestly manifest at the mussel sea level. I lost the lost time. I say I, the king of the mussels, the word of the mussels at the mussel level of the sea. I lost the lost time. Manifestly, I manifest, I sociologise, I preserve, I autologue you, you say you. Me, the mussel of kings, I say I, me, I say I, I, me, me, I say I, me, I say I, the king of the mussels. Me, you say you, I autologue you, I preserve, I sociologise, I sociologise, I autologue you, I preserve, I autologue you, I sociologise, I manifestly sociologise.

Just as map is not a territory, a text is not what it implicates, the signifier is not the signified. Except for when it is.

What is then the relation between the two; descriptive, interpretative, representational, symbolic? What would it mean to write a parasitic text? Am I doing it now?

Is hyper-subjectivism a way to avoid the writer's responsibility? When an artwork succumbs to interpretation — which is to say, when it is understood — it ceases to be on the horizon and becomes something from which its viewer no longer has any distance.

The sensitivity to space and sensibility in using and creating space. The subsuming of different systems of representation, of producing and categorising knowledge. The negotiation between the works and within the works, between their *Beyond the superficial, the considered phrase, "It feels right to me" acknowledges the strength of the erotic into a true knowledge, for what that means is the first and most powerful guiding light toward any understanding.* materials. How some are building hierarchy and others erasing it; how strict verticality is softened by horizontal planes, and how perpendicular relations dissolve into diagonals. I like the slight awkwardness in placement of the works, the casualness edging on nonchalance.

- Sontag, *Against Interpretation*, 1966
- Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987
- Ara, *Wittgenstein's Concept of Language Games*, 2006
- Huberman, *I (not love) Information*, 2007
- Ugrešić, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, 1998
- Fraser in conversation *The Artist Is a Currency*, 2006
- Gaiman, *Fragile Things*, 2006
- Broadthaaers, video portrait at FR3, 1972
- Lorde, *Uses of the Erotic*, 1978
- Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, 1973
- Bordowitz, *Minus Signs*, 2017
- Nöth, *Crisis of representation?*, 2003
- Barthes, *Mythologies*, 1957
- Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1981
- Lippard, *Six Years*, 1973

Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude, 1967
Image 1: drawing of a boa constrictor from *The Little Prince*
Image 2: a didactic example for ESL learners, found online
Image 3: Adrian Piper, *Context #7*, 1970, © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin.
Image 4: Emile Gillieron, *Reproduction of the Ladies in Blue* Fresco (ca 1525–1450 B.C.), 1927.

In many ways, art seeks to compromise our understanding of the world. To understand, therefore, although endlessly evoked in museum education programmes and mission statements, is missing the point... Whether we understand an artwork or not, what helps it succeed is the persistence with which it makes us curious.

one describes a tale best by telling the tale you see? The way one describes a story, to oneself or the world, is by telling the story. It is a balancing act and it is a dream

in place of hermeneutics we need an erotics of art

or I could use words as building blocks, slabs, bricks, concrete materials

For me, Conceptual art offered a bridge between the verbal and the visual

Even though you never asked me what I thought about the exhibition, I will tell you what I like about it.

Signs are effects: the effect of one body upon another in space

Or, I could tell you the story behind the work, and it would be right because the artist told me so, right?

Writing about art requires a subtraction—suspending my own assumptions about a work of art in advance of the encounter. How do I avoid attributing veracity to preset interpretative assumptions? Not-knowing, or unknowing— how does one dwell in language to arrive at surprising formulations? How do I surprise myself? This talk will approach the task of being an artist-writer. How do I recognize the status of words as objects—use subtraction as a counterintuitive method of producing novel emotions? Am I describing subtraction at all? The previous question is both a negation and additive.

The map is a model for abstracting and representing of something outside of it. It is a system of signs, a uniformised language which somehow evokes just the right response from the reader. Somehow, we know that the top of the map signifies the North, the bottom — the South, etc... We know that the lines signify borders while other types of lines signify roads. We understand how three-dimensional landscape can be represented on a two-dimensional plane. The units of meaning on the map are not fixed — they can be combined and create different variations, but the building blocks remain the same.

With an inked brush he marked everything with its name: table, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan... he realized that the day might come when things would be recognized by their inscriptions but that no one would remember their use.

It falls closer to the phrasal verb 'to map out', to plan something in detail. In this way mapping extends into the future. I can therefore map the exhibition (space) and try to map out the relationships between the works, but whether you're going to see them, or agree with them, that's an entirely different story.

An exhibition map is a colonising and totalising endeavour.
1, 2, 3, 4, name, title, medium, year... 5, 6, 7, 8...

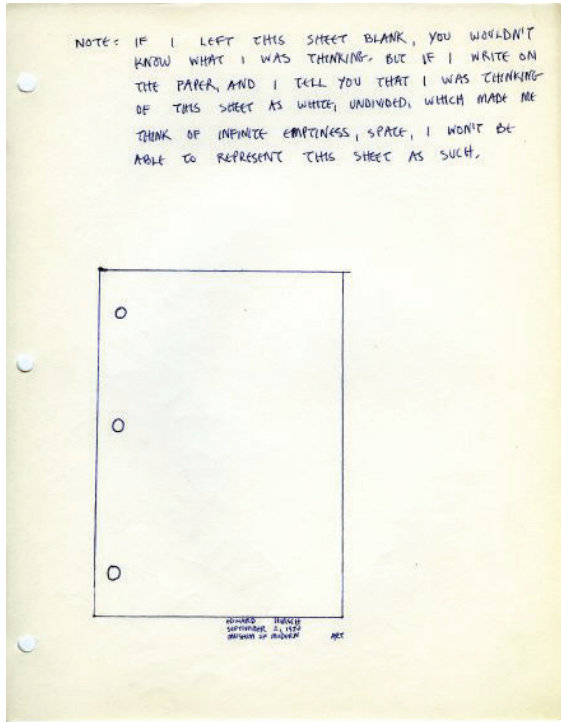
A text can guide you through an exhibition but it can also colonise it. It can impose interpretation.

Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses.

Imagine that you are visiting a city. Whether you use a gps, a paper map, or not map at all, each time your experience and the mental image of the city will be different.

In the model of a statement (art as the statement of the artist), content still comes first. The content may have changed. It may now be less figurative, less lucidly realistic. But it is still assumed that a work of art is its content. Or, as it's usually put today, that a work of art by definition says something. ("What X is saying is...")

"What X is trying to say is...," "What X said is..." etc., etc.)



is every map a representation?

This repetition of the concept through different forms is precious to the mythologist, it allows him to decipher the myth: it is the insistence of a kind of behaviour which reveals its intention. This confirms that there is no regular ratio between the volume of the signified and that of the signifier. In language, this ratio is proportionate, it hardly exceeds the word, or at least the concrete unit. In myth, on the contrary, the concept can spread over a very large expanse of signifier. For instance, a whole book may be the signifier of a single concept; and conversely, a minute form (a word, a gesture, even incidental, so long as it is noticed).

I like the idea that you look at a picture and then when you've finished, you know less than you did when you started. That's a great picture.



Derrida's critique of the phenomenological view of representation focuses on the idea of presence inherent in the idea of 're-presentation' (cf. Noth 2000a: 54–55; Mersch, this volume). According to Derrida's philosophy of presence, representation is by no means the repetition of something previously present.

I keep hearing the word 'mapping' and over again in different contexts. Just as Sol Le Witt spoke about 'conceptual art' with small and big 'c', we could speak about mapping and Mapping.

A central theme of Wittgenstein's Investigations rests on the concept of meaning. Wittgenstein asserts that to use the same word is not meant to have the same meaning. The meaning of a Bishop in a game of chess is not attained by finding out the material of which the piece is made. One must follow the moves that can be made with the Bishop and the rules it is governed by. 'Bishop' is not the name of a piece of ivory, but a function within a context of rules.

The map functions therefore like a language. And neither of those sign systems are neutral. We tend to forget about it as we use text as a sort of objective mediator of other meanings.

Interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art

Can there be a system of signs without reference? A model without a prototype?

"Let us repeat the two crucial negative premises as established firmly by all human experience: (1) Words are not the things we are speaking about; and (2) There is no such thing as an object in absolute isolation."

is all representation a mapping process?

Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: A hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it: it is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — precession of simulacra — that engenders the territory.

