

Currents 102: Sarah Oppenheimer April 11–July 6, 2008

Works in Exhibition

Horizontal Roll, 2008; plywood and stud walls; dimensions variable; Courtesy the artist

Saint Louis Art Museum works framed by the installation:

Gallery 337

Richard Artschwager, *Locations* 1969, 1969; Gift of Brooke Alexander

Roy Lichtenstein, *Curtains*, 1962; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer Jr.

Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen, *Mary Magdalene*, 1519; Gift of Edward Mallinckrodt

Piet Mondrian, *Composition of Red and White*, 1938-42; Friends Fund

Designed by Victor Proetz, *Girandole Mirror*, 1941; Bequest of Dr. Arthur W. and Mrs. Esther S. Proetz in memory of Victor Proetz

Gallery 336

Gerhard Richter, *Gray Mirror*, 1991; Gift of Gerhard Richter

Gerhard Richter, *Betty*, 1988; Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. R. Crosby Kemper Jr. through the Crosby Kemper Foundations, The Arthur and Helen Baer Charitable Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Van-Lear Black III, Anabeth Calkins and John Weil, Mr. and Mrs. Gary Wolff, the Honorable and Mrs. Thomas F. Eagleton; Museum Purchase, Dr. and Mrs. Harold J. Joseph, and Mrs. Edward Mallinckrodt, by exchange

Gallery 338
Ellsworth Kelly, *Spectrum II*, 1966-67; Funds given by the Shoenberg Foundation, Inc.

Gallery 322

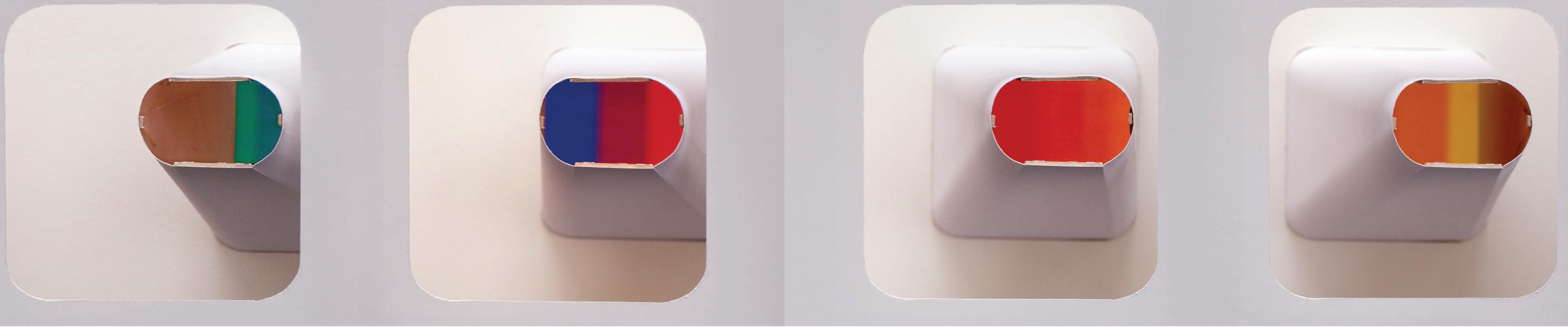
Chuck Close, *Keith*, 1970; Funds given by the Shoenberg Foundation, Inc.

Gallery 333

Max Pechstein, *The Big Indian*, 1910; Bequest of Morton D. May

currents 102

SARAH OPPENHEIMER



SARAH OPPENHEIMER

Born Austin, Texas, 1972
MFA, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 1999
BA, Semiotics, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1995

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2006
554-5251. P.P.O.W., New York, New York
Art Rocks-Containers @ Rockefeller Center. P.P.O.W., New York, New York

2004
Screen, Momenta, Brooklyn, New York
Box Man, Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo, Japan

2003
Lid, Queens Museum of Art, Queens, New York

2002
Hallway, The Drawing Center, New York, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007
Frieze. Annely Juda Fine Arts. London, United Kingdom

2006
Facts on the Ground. Center for Curatorial Studies. Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
Invitational Exhibition. American Academy of Arts and Letters. New York, New York
Site Specifics. Islip Museum. Islip, New York
Aporia: Aporia. LACE. Los Angeles, California

2005
Odd Lots. Cabinet Magazine, White Columns, Queens Museum of Art. Queens, New York
No Ordinary. Skulpturens Hus, Stockholm, Sweden
Off the Wall. Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Gallery. Hunter College, New York, New York

Selected Bibliography

2007
Patricia Phillips. "552-5152," *Art Journal* (cover image and article), Spring.

2006
Nancy Princenthal. "Sarah Oppenheimer at PPOW," *Art in America*, November. pp. 200-201.
Roberta Smith. "Sarah Oppenheimer:
554-5251," *The New York Times*. Art Listings. September 29.

2002
Michael Meredith. "Sarah Oppenheimer, Drawing Room," *Artforum*, September, pp. 206-207.

SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM

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Currents 102: Sarah Oppenheimer is part of a series of exhibitions featuring the work of contemporary artists. Generous support for Currents 102: Sarah Oppenheimer is provided by the Henry L. and Natalie E. Freund Endowment Fund, established to support the exhibition and acquisition of contemporary art at the Saint Louis Art Museum and the teaching principles of contemporary art in the Sam Fox School of Visual Arts & Design at Washington University.

Front cover:
Horizontal Roll: Model (Framed view #1 and #2 of Kelly's *Spectrum II*), 2008

Back cover:
Horizontal Roll: Model (Framed view #3 and #4 of Ellsworth Kelly's *Spectrum II*), 2008

SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM



Horizontal Roll: Model, (Framed view of Lichtenstein's Curtains), 2008

Sarah Oppenheimer is the 2007–2008 Henry L. and Natalie E. Freund Fellow, which includes two month-long residencies at Washington University School of Art and a Currents exhibition at the Saint Louis Art Museum. During her October residency, Sarah taught at the School of Art while developing the exhibition, Horizontal Roll. Sarah Oppenheimer and Robin Clark discuss the project below.

RC: You've described your work as "the feedback loop between constructed spaces and pedestrian motion." For your exhibition entitled *Horizontal Roll*, you worked in a space embedded within the Saint Louis Art Museum's permanent collection galleries. How has the Museum's collection influenced the development of your project?

SO: *Horizontal Roll* is less a response to the Museum's collection than a response to the building's encoded space. Any work placed within the Museum's boundaries is framed by its institutional purview, its array of spaces and arrangement of objects. This project addresses the act of moving/viewing inside the Museum space. The components of *Horizontal Roll* are placed strategically in relation to works in the collection, in order to set up zones of pictorial reflection and repetition.

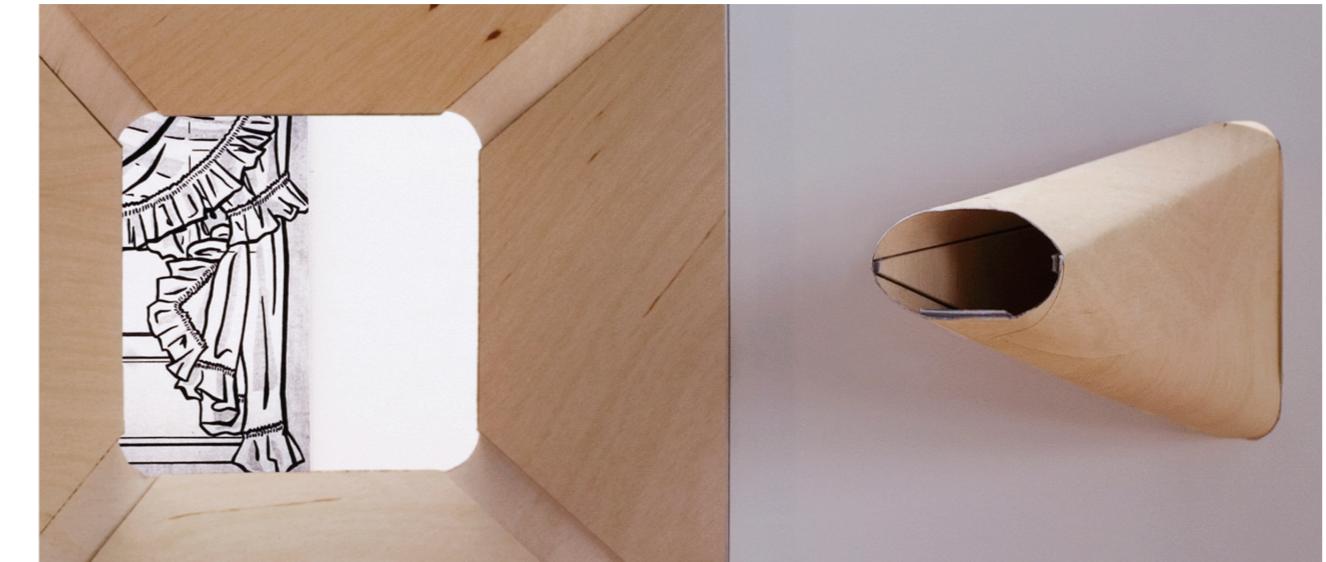
Works are aligned along specific sightlines that traverse multiple rooms within the Museum. One example of this is the pairing of Jacob Cornelisz's *Mary Magdalene* and Gerhard Richter's *Betty*; another is Victor Proetz's *Girandole Mirror* and Richter's *Gray Mirror*. This idea of doubling is inherent to the exhibition.

RC: The framing of views is a major element of *Horizontal Roll*. That also seems to be a theme in a number of the artworks chosen. In different ways Cornelisz's *Mary Magdalene*, Roy Lichtenstein's *Curtains*, and Mondrian's *Composition for Red and White* are all pictures within pictures or pictures about pictures. How does this relate to your idea that this exhibition is a "movie made with architecture"?

SO: *Horizontal Roll* uses architecture to approximate filmic experience. The shaped holes in the interior walls frame vistas into adjacent spaces. Each hole operates like a sequence of filmic frames, animated by the viewer's motion of walking or looking. The body's horizontal motion animates the vignette visible within each frame. The sequence of the "film" is determined by the viewer's motion through the space.

The notion of a self-conscious camera is also brought into play architecturally. Not only are objects framed by the structure of *Horizontal Roll*, but the viewer also sees him/herself doubled and framed through an identification with other visitors. Just as the viewer of a film identifies with those immaterial bodies in celluloid, the frame allows each viewer to see him/herself as other and self simultaneously.

RC: The pairing of Cornelisz's *Mary Magdalene* and Richter's *Betty* has to do with their functions as portraits, and the pairing of Proetz's *Girandole Mirror* and Richter's *Gray Mirror* highlights their status as artworks that reflect other artworks. However, there is a different kind of doubling between the Cornelisz and



Mondrian paintings. While the grid of the Cornelisz is representational and the Mondrian is abstract, the two grids seem to echo to each other. Focusing on the Mondrian for a moment, the visual effect of "popping" that the intersecting lines achieve when viewed over a period of time emphasize the temporal element in looking at art. To get the sense of movement in Mondrian's painting, I think one has to stand still.

SO: Actually, I think of *Horizontal Roll* as a critique of the idea of a static viewer. One never "stands still." The eyes are always moving, and, in less perceptible ways, so is the body. *Horizontal Roll* stresses the impossibility of viewing the Mondrian all at once.

RC: How does it do that?

SO: Adjacent to the Mondrian painting is an aperture. The opening looks through Gallery 337 and into Gallery 338, framing a section of Ellsworth Kelly's *Spectrum II*. When viewed from a single position in space, the composition within the aperture mimics the composition of the Mondrian: a red rectangle is isolated in a white field. As the viewer's gaze/body shifts, the composition through the aperture changes. The spectral color of the Kelly is exposed, as is the architecture behind the supporting wall. This framed view recontextualizes *Composition of Red and White* in a sequence of views that changes in space and time.

The title of this exhibition refers to Joan Jonas's seminal video work, *Vertical Roll*, 1972, which fractures the time-based image by desynchronizing television monitor frequencies. A recurring

black band interrupts the continuity and synchrony of the image. *Horizontal Roll* refers to this visual fragmentation by using the motion of the viewer rather than the display of a monitor. The horizontal movement of the viewer's body fractures the simultaneity of viewing.

RC: Unlike the viewer of standard cinema, moving viewers can determine their route through the museum. How does this process of viewing differ from that of the usual cinematic experience?

SO: *Horizontal Roll* is like an active cinema, one that assumes agency in a viewer. Unlike traditional filmic media, *Horizontal Roll* allows viewers to choose the sequence of their navigation through the built filmic space. Visitors determine the narrative by their procession through the exhibition. They are at once camera and audience.

Sarah Oppenheimer and Robin Clark would like to thank the following people for their assistance: Brent Benjamin, Jonathan Brand, Michael Byron, Carmon Colangelo, Jack Cowart, Hugh Davies, Charlotte Eyerman, Michael Freund and Nancy Siteman, Stephanie Hanor, John Hoal, David Juda, Renee Mertz, Wendy Olsoff and Penny Pilkington, Patricia Olynyk, Jeff Pike, Noga Shalev, Kenneth Tam, Andrew Walker, and Anabeth and John Weil. We are grateful to the late Natalie Freund for fostering this collaboration between the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, College and Graduate School of Art at Washington University and the Saint Louis Art Museum.