

LESLIE HEWITT on CARL ANDRE =

Roots and Radicals, Variables, Structures, Horizontal Planes and Analog Computations

INTRODUCTION

This text was originally prepared for a talk given at Dia Art Foundation on June 30, 2014 as part of their “Artists on Artists” lecture series. This text is an adaptation from the original form of the artist talk which is meant to be experienced and where the relationship between text, image and sound operate in tandem.

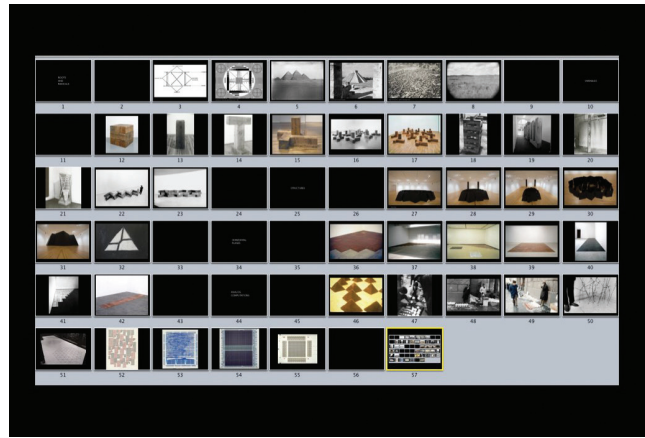
YASMIL RAYMOND: Good evening. Welcome to the series Artists on Artists at Dia. I’m Yasmil Raymond, and it’s a great pleasure to see you all here. Thank you for your presence and your support. We’re honored that Leslie Hewitt accepted our invitation tonight. She joins a list of about fifty artists who, ever since 2001, when this series was organized and put forward by Dia, have provided us with really enlightening lectures, reflections, and critiques, and sometimes affirmations. So it’s really wonderful that Leslie agreed to speak tonight about the artist of her choosing in our collection, Carl Andre. Since its inception, this series has been beloved. We’re going into our thirteenth year now, and our desire, when we extend an invitation to an artist, is to conceive of a presentation—not an art-history lecture per se—but to give us access, as if we were in his or her studio, and to reveal the practice and the choices as to why, through an artist in Dia’s collection, there is an affinity or a disagreement. So it was a great surprise when Leslie said she would like to speak about Carl Andre. She already knew that we had been working for about three years in the preparation of Dia’s retrospective of him, which is now on view at Dia Beacon. Carl only has a small work in Dia’s collection; it’s a very tiny tile work that he gave as a gift to Heiner Friedrich, so I knew that she hadn’t seen that. It was wonderful that she agreed to consider speaking about his work during the time of his retrospective.

Some of you may know Leslie’s history and practice, but I’ll give a brief introduction. She was born in 1977 in Queens, New York, and graduated from Cooper Union in 2000, and subsequently earned an MFA from Yale University in 2004. From 2011 to 2013, she was a Clark fellow for the Africana and visual studies programs at New York University. Recent solo exhibitions of her work have been held at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. She was also, from 2009 to 2010, the

Weisman fellow at the Radcliff Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. In 2012, she was the Guna S. Mundheim fellow of visual arts at the American Academy in Berlin.

Hewitt’s training in art, along with her location in cultural studies, is reflected and present in her signature photography and sculptural installations. Her works, sometimes constructed from items such as plywood, in minimal geometric forms, are then surrounded by personal ephemera: handwritten notes, family photographs, and historical books, which she arranges into still lifes. These are compositions based on sight and then rephotographed, with a kind of double-memory recurrence and presence in the compositions. This subtle approach to photography and to objects made quite an impact when she was coming about in the field. It was around this time that I first met Leslie, around 2004. We have a common friend, and ever since knowing her I have been a great fan. We here at Dia, including assistant curator Kelly Kivland, have been following Leslie’s work. Her inspiration, as many of you know, comes from art history and American history, our political and social history—and the resistance that exists within that history from the African-American community. Her well-known series from 2006, *Make It Plain*, shows that pivotal interjection or interruption into that history. Leslie makes her arrangements from numerous resources including, most famously, Joanne Grant’s 1968 anthology of black protest, with historical documents and analysis. Cinema is also a strong influence in her work, and it’s more evident in a recent installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, which currently features her collaboration with cinematographer Bradford Young. So if any of you are in the Midwest, I encourage you to see it. Aptly, some of Leslie’s work has emerged in a world in which events and situations are immediately captured and shared, and the construction of history is sped up. It is, therefore, important to consider her work in the present context. In juxtaposing the historical within the contemporary moment, her work allows one to consider, as she has said, “the limits of a single photograph, a single perspective.” Leslie will not take questions after her talk tonight, so I invite you to keep your questions and present them informally to her as we all gather and have drinks at the end of the lecture. And lastly, I want to thank our sponsors of the Artists on Artists lecture series, in honor of Frances Bowes, through the generous support of Cindy and Howard Rachofsky. ▶

ANALOG
COMPUTATIONS



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Additional support has been provided by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and we also thank Brooklyn Brewery for the complementary drinks. And finally, to my colleagues, my friends at Dia—thank you so much for tonight’s program.

LESLIE HEWITT: Thank you, Yasmil, for that wonderful introduction. So, before I begin, I have a statement that I want to read that I think is imperative, especially considering the artist that I chose. I would like to acknowledge the obvious and perhaps the less obvious regarding my presence, my desires, and, depending on your views, my audacity. The invitation by Dia to participate in the Artists on Artists lecture series came with this set structure. An artist chooses an artist from the Dia collection to discuss his or her art practice in the lecture format. I accepted this invitation, as Yasmil pointed to, and chose the work of Carl Andre. To clarify what is at stake here, I selected the work of Carl Andre without Dia’s intervention. All Artists on Artists formats shared by many museums display an inherent imbalance of power. Usually the invited artist is not represented in the collection. And the assumptions of that, of the layperson, could be only of a blind endorsement.

My participation here is not a tacit endorsement of Dia, though I love Dia, as a fixed institution or of any of the artists whose biographies are subject to scrutiny in the collection. My participation is contingent on the awareness of Dia in its 2014 infrastructure, which renders itself permeable to artists invited to discuss and make audible ideas, concerns, even criticisms. My assumption is that this format could be a discursive space and that the form of address I am interested in includes a critical position, not positioned in strict binaries. And this is where I find agency. There is no doubt that the personal and tragic biography of Ana Mendieta and Carl Andre unleashes strong emotional and ethical responses in the art context. Any such positions I am sure are present and seated within us here today, as well as outside, including with those who chose not to attend. We are a nation of laws with outcomes that we may or may not like, which we feel are just or unjust—and even designed with inherent biases. We can see examples of this in the recent shift in the Central Park Five lawsuit. We have a right to protest and to speak, criticize, and learn from such outcomes. But that is not the issue—we understand this and agree upon this, surely. But it is the heavy binaries at play here that are disconcerting. To eclipse, silence, or potentially censor in this discursive space, especially in this context, I find quite interesting.

A feminist group protesting the talk of another woman whose position was assumed powerless and whose voice was registered as inert or lacking a critical stance—I reject this premise and have the audacity to go off-script as a woman who does not render patriarchy invisible in my daily life; as a woman of color, who has the long view with pragmatism in mind; and as an artist who utilized historical distance strategically as a way to address art history through a personal, social, and political lens. I see this lecture as an opportunity to expose a way of thinking, a way of thinking through ideas and forms that are inevitably a part of my

DNA as an artist. So, in this regard, the lecture points to a period or moment in time really where things changed—and changed rapidly. And upon which, I experienced a thread from various chains of transmission. In this moment of transmission is the coalescing of many concepts and works of art, including images of archaeological sites, microchips, the referencing of works by artist Adrian Piper, not pictured; George Smith, pictured; Gordon Matta-Clark, not pictured; David Hammons, pictured; and that of Carl Andre, pictured—the only one represented in the Dia collection. So perhaps this is a Carl Andre in relation to or in context with lecture.

The text that I am reading is from a series of sketchbook entries, from a sketchbook I began in 2002 on a page of an *Artforum* of the same year. Please forgive any repetition of thoughts, as this is an evolving text, including earlier texts in earlier manifestations. The text that I am sharing is not at all fleshed out and could be, perhaps, gritty and yet to be refined. I felt this was fitting considering that I have yet to come to any definitive conclusion on the work of any of the artists I will name or for the work that I make. To do so prematurely would be disingenuous, surely. So it is in this regard that the text interfaces with personal narrative, questions, autobiography, formal concerns, images of artworks that challenge me and ask of me to be more than a passive consumer of art, but asks of me to be an artist who thinks of art as a practice that contends with the world in material and concrete terms, though often referring to the incorporeal. It is in this space that the work takes action, and it is in this space that it is in fact radical. I will return to this space often, and the images are meant to parallel the texts, not to illustrate or supplement, moving slowly alongside each word at first, then accelerating toward the end.

Sketchbook entry titled “Roots and Radicals.” With the following titles listed here as variables, structures, horizontal planes, and analog computations—*root*, a noun: the part of a plant that is attached to the ground or to a support structure, typically underground, conveying water and nourishment to the rest of the plant via numerous branches and fibers; the basic cause, source, or origin of something; a number or quantity that when multiplied by itself, typically a specified number of times, gives a specific number or quantity. A radical object, especially of change or action relating to or effecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough; advocating or based on thorough or complete political or social reform; representing or supporting an extreme section of a political party or political platform. *Radical*, a noun: a person who advocates through or for complete political or social reform; a group of atoms behaving as a unit in a number of compounds; the root or base of a word; a quantity forming or expressed as the root of another. The most attuned and with heightened awareness, the coupling of the words *roots* and *radicals* may lead quickly to a discussion of origin and lineage on the sociopolitical register or plane. But the symmetry found here suspends me.

The symmetry found in both words, the parallel meaning—that each word has a second life in the realm of math processes and definitions. Expanding or narrowing or

both, definitions that float toward meanings, that push in the direction of concrete rules, equations, and proofs. They also go into the realm of visualization. It is this that I find attractive and allusive equally. Double meanings can be an effective tool when looking and grappling with what one sees and experiences, but they are also a tool for what effectively lacks representation in the material world.

Artist Adrian Piper addresses her move toward Conceptualism to include an attraction toward language and Conceptual symbols that can refer to content beyond themselves. But in this gesture, she also creates a perceivable distance between the viewer and her content of interest. For instance, the way in which exposing the implicit nature of structural racism, a heavily researched theme for her work in the 1960s, through the auspices of cool Conceptualism. Her use of the inherent distancing effect gave her work the ability to address such potent and eruptive subjects of the time with, in essence, a protective armor, a protective layering of sorts for her sets of reveals that cannot be directly addressed, experienced in conventional or, perhaps more appropriately labeled, *expected* forms. Or was it a cooling strategy for high-temperature material? Or an equation for dynamic forces that cannot be brought to bear simply through the illustration of them? Or is it in the sound of static before finding one station or a series of interruptions, a clearing, or points of emotional rest before tackling the difficult, highly charged materials? The coupling of these seemingly incongruent modes is what, in my mind, makes her work during that period extremely effective and even jarring. It is a much-needed counterpoint for work that produces an affect of deserving—ideally shifting consciousness and awareness to phenomena in the world that is often deemed invisible, hard to prove, hard to quantify, nonexistent, even mistaken for natural, but in all actuality and accounts, it is built and constructed—what a brilliant reveal.

Scholar Rosalind Krauss, in her seminal text from 1979, reflects on the paradigm shifts of the 1960s in sculptural and theoretical terms. Her text, titled “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” effectively problematizes the way in which spatial works of art can be discussed or even analyzed through employing the methods used or logic implied in creating them. How immensely intriguing to witness the application of mathematic processes and procedures to help expand the perceived limitations of our imagining of new possibilities in the realm of language. So, in this regard, new terms are forced to arise or return in a nonlinear sense. If I may proceed in listing the more enticing definitions from the Krauss essay that are arguably still operating in our contemporary moment: Site construction, stemming from the relationship to landscape and architecture. Marked sites, stemming from the relationship to landscape and not-landscape. Sculpture in a new location, stemming from the relationship to not-landscape and not-architecture. Axiomatic structures, or self-evidently true structures, stemming from the relationship to architecture and not-architecture. The not or negative space finds meaning that has little to do with a positivist reading or understanding, but more to do with locating a seemingly unidentifiable

space—locating by way of only marking what it isn’t and creating a set of open parameters, providing a range of possibilities and locations. If all forms have a linear history, this is clearly a rupture of sorts, an attempt to not simply recreate the past—and why simply recreate the past, when the past could potentially be filled with disappointment, frustration, controlling optimism, and a form of erasure that suppresses? How intense and utterly destabilizing life is or can be. In effect, the past could be traumatic and oppressive, so why desire a continuum in place of a break or a rupture in a time line? Does this break or rupture have a form or contain a series of forms? Could the break or rupture be a part of an even longer timeline? Or, this is simply what I imagine with historical distance.

The 1960s presented a series of shifts in perception. And these shifts were found in the ways in which people responded to the world in which they lived, by irreversibly changing it—not only in modes and forms of protest, which have inevitably changed laws and involved great risks by everyday folks, as it did from highly groomed people via traditional and nontraditional leadership. The strategic alignment of both is what always garners my attention and produces many questions relating to the power of the era, the galvanizing effect of the error and the echoes that are felt or misrecognized in our present tense. But in addition to what is often perceived as quintessential modes of protest, there are shifts taking place in the realm of art. Artists find ways to contend with the experiences of discontent, faced with the task of utilizing often effectively nullifying structures of times past, forms now deemed ineffective or inadequate. I imagine that all artists feel this impulse to reveal and expose a set of conditions that shape how we think and at times even feel. I imagine that all artists face their contemporary moment with momentary muteness and a desire to speak. Perhaps this, too, is overdetermined with the more altruistic or optimistic belief in the role of artists in society. The pointed shifts in the expanded field reveal more and more, foregrounding materials and processes in art making that shape the reveal of hard-to-define spaces in culture. Is this not conceivably a radical act? And does it reveal a root, exposing a core methodology that may speak to a kind of timelessness entangled in an even more distant past? Can this be helpful when attempting to develop any sort of oppositional or radical aesthetic rooted in form or the representation of radical form, or the broadcasting and gross duplication of radical form?

Innumerable are the possibilities, surely maybe. What has shaped my view? What has left me with the fascination with the contradictory sight of abstraction and attraction to pragmatic forms and approaches to making? I was raised in a home where both parents held degrees in mathematics. Both born at the end of World War Two, both were heavily aware of the times in which they lived and admittedly wanted to see and manifest change in concrete terms, for themselves and their respective families as they moved in what is perceivably the height or apex of the civil rights era. Racism more than gender roles and expectations of such roles held them frozen in their time, somewhere in the mid-1960s. At ▶

least this is only part of the narrative I choose to reveal here. In their political lives, they found agency in collective protest and common causes for the improvement of society as a whole. But somewhere in their pragmatic and intellectual lives, they found a protective armor, a shield, the sound of static again or a sudden interruption to give a release from the horrors and disappointments of daily life and troubled times. Somewhere in the realm of:

numbers
square roots
functions
proportions
variables
degrees
factors
rational functions
equations
tangents
roots
trinomials
numerical expressions
domains
graphs
solutions
geometric sequencing
infinite series
real numbers
slopes
constants
imaginary numbers
ordered pairs
matrix operations
octants
independent variables
systems
parabolas
Y and X intercepts
multiplicity
problem solving
computations
algorithms
set theory
signs
and symbols—

they were free agents operating as aliases outside of their actual subjectivity, their time-based selves, and historic framing, that for all intended purposes had misread them, labeled them wrongly and at times unjustly. In real-life terms, in these private spaces of interiority, they were individuals expressing themselves in ways that society at large had yet to fully grasp and come to terms with.

This is of extreme interest to me and is perhaps why I continue to return to this moment in time, the 1960s, with grave fascination and curiosity for the varying array of radical gestures that took material form during a time of sociopolitical flux and change. The dynamics of collective consciousness and individual responsibilities or the inverse—collective responsibility and individual consciousness—push

me to think about and even dream, to meditate on knowledge systems that have an even greater historical distance, but perhaps leave evidence of its complexity in concrete and material terms, which then find traces in more contemporary forms and in more contemporary times.

They began study toward a life in abstract thinking and its application in programming over the course of a thirteen-year period. I can't help but see uncanny parallels to sift through here as it relates to radical shifts in film, art forms, and not to mention the political climate nationally and internationally.

1956

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1964

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1966

1967

1968—some more loss in a sea of forms amongst millions.

There is always one that stops you, that haunts you, a form that arrests your attention and actually slows down your perception. Your view is simultaneously obstructed by it and yet distilled in the act of looking. This obstruction or distillation has a form. This form falls in the space between the object of one's gaze and the viewer. This liminal space between looking and thinking about what one is looking at is of the utmost importance. This spatial experience of navigation or negotiation is often immediately evident when I look at the works of Carl Andre from the same period. The work purposes, and in some instances, draws lines around this in-between space, what is occurring in this space between viewers, participants. The participants fill the empty space momentarily, leaving, then returning, and leaving again, inevitably to return. The spatial forms are at once architectonic and familiar, but then render one forgetful of their exact origins or time line in human history. Is this erasure operating again? The visibility of interchangeability continues to fascinate me here nonetheless. I see them as a series of material equations with material variables. The level of readability and exposure to the parts of each material equation is what gives these works a weight, a weight of realism that a viewer cannot escape. The register of the everyday, the mundane, the unfantastic, in material choices speak to the blurred space between form and function—the implication of utilitarian use and design, but displaced or pared down to the least common denominator; the appearance of simplicity, or matter-of-factness, but only to point to a complex knowledge system trapped in cycles of existence, appearing and disappearing in nature and in the study of it. The feeling of or the attempt to try and focus with your eyes on the echoing object, but the object remains in a kind of stasis. Do you try to imagine clarity, to fantasize, in order to

fill in the gaps, the spaces where the information is lacking? Or do you pragmatically admit that somewhere lost in the original moment is something that falls between representation and experience in the present moment, and that the data just isn't there any more or meant to be retained? Or perhaps it is protected in its own time, the time of immediacy, not meant to resurface and to be relived or retrieved in expected ways.

How to describe such spatial moments in or relating to what scholar Tina Campt would call to attention one's haptic perception as it relates to an image, but an image as object, which is where I find her use of language most applicable to the discussion of spatial registers. The conception of the haptic foregrounds embodied relationships with images, which are viewed as critical to the study of materiality. She proceeds to address the optical-haptic, describing it as the shift in attention that occurs as one's focus moves from a thing being represented to an awareness of the texture of that thing, until a point is reached where we identify this with the very texture of the thing itself. The analysis of the haptic in her words aims at a mode of critical analysis that forces us to look beyond and behind what we see. This must include around and in-between what we see or experience, I must add. I'm haunted by such concepts and many more, because they challenge us to think radically different; those simple yet concrete gestures. How could certain forms of expression create an opacity that at once protects, creating a solid mass in a spatial sense, and simultaneously reveal its construction, rendering the form readable, accessible, relatable?

To increase the layers referred to, it is important to point out the role of fractal geometry and notations on the continuing blur between isolated systems and their mirror in natural forms, along with its influence on artists' modes and spatial constructions. There are several essential components of fractal geometry that is worth noting. *Recursion*, noun, the repeated application of a recursive procedure or definition. *Recursive*, adjective, characterized by a recurrence or repetition, in particular, relating to or involving the repeated application of a rule, definition, or procedure to successive results, relating to or involving a program or routine of which a part requires the application of the whole, so that its implicit interpretation requires in general many successive executions. The second is scale, each of the small plates protecting the skin of an animal, typically overlapping one another, a graduated range of values forming a standard system for measuring or grading something, a rudimentary leaf or feather, each of the numerous, microscopic, tile-like structures covering the wings of a butterfly or moth, the full range of different levels of people or things from lowest to highest, a series of marks at irregular intervals in a line used in measuring something, a system of numerical notation in which the value of a digit depends upon its position in the number of successive positions representing successive powers of a fixed base. To have a scaling shape means that there are similar patterns at different scales within the range under consideration; enlarging a tiny section will produce a pattern that looks similar to the whole picture, and shrinking down the whole will give something that looks like a tiny

part. The third is self-similarity, of an object or set of objects similar to itself at a different time, or to a copy of itself on a different scale. The result has the property of being self-similar or magnified, or a magnified portion that looks like the whole. The fourth, infinity—the state or quality of being infinite, the infinity of space. A number greater than any assignable quantity or countable number.

Working in both San Francisco and New York in the mid- to late 1960s, an artist like George Smith works through spatial terms outside of the grid and into a layered existence of form and materiality. Working on the micro and macro scale, the work addresses interchangeability, in motion, in place of ninety-degree angles and finite terms of sets. There is a cascading into the unknown in a different sense, in a deep-space sense, in a timelessness sense, referring to infinity. His angles are a series of oblique angles clustered and marked as a shield or protective act or gesture. I'm interested in the closed form in relation to the open form and their proximity, their close proximity. The closing of forms and the expanding of forms sets forth a labyrinth with infinite paths to enter and to exit and to conceal movement as a form of address. Seemingly impenetrable, the freely moving parts rely on gravity and a central axis radiating outward or inward.

Linear perspective and temporal orientation is transfigured here, floating seemingly so and moved by tetrahedral kites and space frames. Smith continues to apply the principles of a form in motion, in air to that grounded by gravity. By his choice of steel and heavy materials, and by doing so, placing the seemingly counterintuitive forms in relation, places stress on the intersection of the weight of the space in between forms. In this tension, I continue to find the systems that spatial works make concrete or visible to be an odd yet perhaps necessary counterpoint to the destabilization felt and experienced in the 1960s, or at least that is where I begin to imagine from historical distance, and where I return.

Works like Andre's and that of Smith, works that flatten space and time, and yet extend it infinitely, make certain wanderings possible for me, such as creating the mechanisms inherent to photography and other forms as ways for me to explore the concept of time with nuance. This nuanced approach finds seeds in works that fuels duration and repetition. Though I studied sculpture, my primary medium and focus centers around photography and its principles, which, in the end, make the work about orientation, place, and materiality. I'm drawn to three dimensions because of the flirtation that can occur with the realm of imagination and possibility, along with the spatial reality an object commands or demands. A sculpture constructed from a singular view, an aerial view, translated in a similar way to a photograph, continues to fascinate me, as my consciousness stems from phenomena out of the latter part of the twentieth century. I'm fascinated that the work could be a fragment, a fraction of sorts, yet maintain its autonomy as an object and trigger the conception of the whole without replicating it. By constructing in spatial terms, I'm compelled to bring the outside inside in order to explore a way of achieving site-specificity through inference, by shifting the terms from solely an object to gaze upon to an object that one physically

engages with, one that transforms its meaning. These kinds of architectonic investigations really begin a focus on the limits of photography, or, should I say, the power of photography as spatial, structural, and visceral. I look often to the work of Gordon Matta-Clark. Seeing the language of geometry in the site-specific works. Seeing the language of photography in his grand gestures. Seeing architectural collage in his cuts. Seeing how he flattened space sculpturally and responded to the materiality of the city in expanded terms, transforming our conception of space and of time. Materials speak and speak at an accelerated rate as we slip into a liminal space of algorithms testing our sense of touch, reality, and time, altering our corporeal existence, asking a set of questions that could be timeless or suitable for the time we are presently in, and relating to an abbreviated space between vision and the haptic register. So, a series of problems or sets of processes put forth leave me considering the following: an inquiry into properties of sight and touch, an inquiry into the properties of light and the manner of radiation of lights, material notes on the effect of light upon sight, material notes on the structure of the eye, material notes on the shifting manner of vision, material notes on the utilities of the instruments of sight, on the reasons for the conditions of which vision is not effected, undistinguished are the lines of the rays or that of emanating light on the perception of distance

position
dissimilarity
opacity
separation
continuity
motion
and rest

Thank you. ==

Leslie Hewitt was born in 1977 in New York, where she lives and works. Hewitt's work, which occupies a space between photography and sculpture, investigates how visual representation shapes readings of history, collective memory, and political consciousness. Recent group exhibitions include *Test Pattern*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2013) and *Body Language* at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2013).

Yasmil Raymond was appointed Curator of Dia Art Foundation in New York in 2009, where she has organized exhibitions and projects with artists Thomas Hirschhorn (2013-12), Jean-Luc Moulène (2012), Yvonne Rainer (2011-12), Ian Wilson (2011-13), Robert Whitman (2011), Koo Jeong A (2010-11), Franz Erhard Walther (2010-12), and Trisha Brown (2009-10).

NOTES:

01. Central Park Five Lawsuit. In 2014, a \$41 million settlement was awarded to five men whose wrongful convictions in the 1989 beating and rape of a female jogger in Central Park led them to spend more than 13 years in jail. They were 14 to 16 years of age at the time of their convictions. The arrests made national headlines and punctuated racial tensions in New York City. DNA evidence exonerated the young men in 2002.

02. A Feminist Group. *The No Wave Performance Task Force (NWPT)* is an artist lead feminist collective who staged several protest events titled: **We Wish Ana Mendieta Was Still Alive** in response to the Dia Art Foundation Artist on Artist lecture series talk on the work of Carl Andre.

03. Tina Campt. *Campt* is a historian with research focused on theorizing gender, race and diasporic formations in black communities in Germany and Europe more broadly.

04. George Smith. *Smith* is an artist based in Houston, Texas. His large-scale metal works and public commissions are heavily influenced by his relationship to post minimalism, the history of abstraction and his study abroad in Africa, specifically Mali.