

Anna Oppermann

Ensembles 1968–1992

Hrsg./Ed. Ute Vorkoeper

anlässlich der Ausstellung/in conjunction with the exhibition

Anna Oppermann. Revisionen der Ensemblekunst

Anna Oppermann: Revisions of Ensemble Art

Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart

Generali Foundation, Wien

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Anna Oppermann

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Revisions of Ensemble Art

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Research in Art: Anna Oppermann's Model for Understanding the World

Elke Bippus

Order, experiment, distance, methods for obtaining knowledge, and reflection, as well as association, automatism, privacy, instinct, and sensation are words that appear with remarkable frequency in descriptions of Anna Oppermann's works and her ways of working. These words, used to characterize her ensembles, come from diverging concepts, and in the process of distinguishing her works, the analytical is generally joined with the scientific, the psychological, and art. Oppermann's artistic practice is methodologically ordered and associatively improvisational. She attempts to give adequate expression to the complexities of the world and to overcome traditional notions of opposites. From a 1984 text, *Das, was ich mache, nenne ich Ensemble* (I call what I make ensemble): "In the process, I would gladly be a mediator for the various disciplines, between rationality and sensory perception, between art and science, the average citizen and the outsider."¹

Oppermann can be counted among the artists who, in the 1970s, contextualized their art in society, politics or history and linked it to scientifically oriented research.² For their field work—that is, for their investigations of foreign cultures, places, ways of life, and people—artists such as Christian Boltanski, Nikolaus Lang, Paul-Armand Gette, Anne and Patrick Poirier, and Lili Fischer used ethnographic, geological, or botanical methods and modes of depiction. Parallel to this, artists such as Hans Haacke or Martha Rosler worked on themes and employed methods comparable to those found in sociological practice.

Along with the director of the Kunstverein in Hamburg and other artists, in 1979 Oppermann realized an exhibition whose theme was the social function of art. In the foreword in the catalogue, those who conceived the show asked, "Are today's artists hermits? Researchers? Social workers?" Their answer: "Hermits, although not in the usual sense of being confined to the shadows, but rather in the sense of being outsiders, and as such, they may reject society but they are still an indispensable part of it. Researchers, but not in the scientific sense; rather, experimenters, and as such, they question what goes on behind the façades. Also not social workers in the usual meaning of the term, but social workers who attempt to break through the outmoded boundaries of aesthetic production in order to communicate directly with those for whom they work."³

The investigation the artist carries out as outsider, experimenter, and initiator of communication is central to Oppermann's visual and textual productions. Both in, as well as through, her ensembles, she reflects (and this led to many misunderstandings of, and uncertainties about, her works in the 1970s) the various functions and roles of art and artists. Hence, she does not merely carry out a finished concept. Rather, she develops her method as she works, reflecting upon it while involved in the process of making art.⁴ Observation, exploration, and analysis of the environment and their everyday interaction with each other as spatial processes. This makes the ensemble both laboratory and presen-

tation at the same time. It does not happen in the studio alone—with every installation, with every exhibition, the artist continues to develop and reinterpret it. The highly heterogeneous, complex environments, which are constantly changing, creating new perspectives and different kinds of repetitions, are the visual expression of an understanding of the work that does not dissolve into the factual or the materially fixed.⁵

The Oppermann Method—In the Field of Insight

Oppermann's work on her ensembles alternates between subjectivity and systematics. In the 1970s, these two procedural methods were considered irreconcilable, and connecting them contradicted the common notion that the division of art and science was based precisely on these criteria of subjectivity and systematics.⁶ Yet in connecting the two, Oppermann attempted to do justice to the "shortcomings of the individual, who, when judging an object, is theoretically supposed to take into consideration all aspects, such as, for example, the most current state of knowledge in every different field."⁷ In this respect, change does not express a lack of decisiveness, but rather, it is a method of reflecting upon the state of unknowing; it allows us to see the limitations of knowledge and how perspective is selective and guided by interest. The process underscores the fact that the ensembles are not representations, documentations, or manifestations of certain, absolute knowledge. It shows spatial environments as representations of a process of making (art) and also forms a space in which the unpredictable can occur, permitting both changes and mistakes. It is the process, the method, the presentation, the communication itself that is the focus of the ensembles. In this respect, it is not of central importance that Oppermann employs scientific methods, but rather—and here is where her work distinguishes itself from that of Nikolaus Lang or Hans Haacke, for instance—that her method allows her to research different modes of representation. The ensembles shift the image of artistic praxis by showing it as methodically and discursively interconnected and at the same time associative and subjective.

In this respect, Oppermann does not build bridges between art and science, but instead, reflects upon knowledge-based, theoretical elements of art itself. The function of an ensemble is, as the artist writes, "[to] make it possible to see the processes involved in knowing, [to] document, [to] make it easier. Each ensemble transcribes (describes) a theme, circles around (investigates) a conflict, a problem, and at the same time aids the memory while it is engaged in the continuing process of reflection; and, don't forget, I offer it as a type of communication, in which I attempt, however, to infiltrate both conformist urges and behavioral clichés (which makes it easier to make the necessary adaptation to the everyday?)"⁸ In doing this, she does not exactly follow the dichotomy between conceptual thought and the process of viewing, but instead, her ensembles make it clear that "the process of making something visible, so that others can see it"⁹ is also constitutive for conceptual thought. The ensembles do not illustrate knowledge, but rather, they attempt to form a way of viewing the world, in which "complexity [can] be important."¹⁰

In her image-text ensembles, Oppermann began testing and investigating artistic practices at a time when the amount of visual and written information, which had been

increasing since the 1950s, caused the constitutive function of images to become more obvious, and this function began to reflect, theorize, and develop models of non-linear, intertextual communication. After the 1960s, when autonomy, originality, and the expressive subject were decisively negated in the field of art, there was a growing interest in the 1970s in social, economic, and political issues. The generation of artists to which Oppermann belonged separated itself from the modernist idea¹¹ of art, which, since the nineteenth century had explored its own means and processes and excluded everything that did not have to do with genre and medium. This generation revitalized the program promoted by the historical avant-garde: art was supposed to cross over into life, and every person should become "a co-creator, a sculptor or architect of the social organism."¹² Oppermann was interested in the creative methods and the structure of the social organism itself. She studied the establishment of boundaries and the criteria for both inclusion and exclusion.

Participant Observation

Oppermann's ensembles grow out of different repetitions, contextualizations, links, and montages. She begins with material—an arrangement of ordinary objects—which is then drawn, photographed, rearranged, expanded, and once again reproduced. Hans Peter Althaus considers the images and photographs visual texts from a process of communication that "is carried out by the artist with herself, her creative sensibility, and her works, which are the storehouse of her recollections."¹³ In texts and diagrams, the artist emphasizes that her subjective interest and her social context form the starting point for her research: "I explore and research myself and my surroundings using material I have collected, experienced, or found, in a specific framework with a particular method; and the story of the creation, possible results, or definitions can be seen, imagined, and tested in the ensembles I build."¹⁴

So Oppermann did not go into the field to do research—that is, she did not travel to foreign lands or engage in activities in public space. Starting with herself and the specific circumstances of her life, she then found and developed her own field, a place to contemplate and act, which is both theory and practice. It is here that she researches—and here she follows modernist theory—the means used by art. Not, however, from the perspective of her autonomy, but from the perspective of her unavoidable interconnection with society and politics. The artist employs the ethnographical method of discovery, originally directed by ethnologists at the foreign,¹⁵ to analyze her own environment and spheres of activity.

Oppermann records her work process in methodological diagrams. After taking steps to distance herself, she assumes a subjective perspective: the first two phases of work—meditative observation (mostly drawings of naturalistic details and sections) and associative reactions (every possible expression, without taking into consideration the usual artistic and behavioral norms)—are followed by a state in which distance, reflection, and analysis are paramount. After this process of discovering her position, other systems of reference are incorporated (statements and quotes from different fields and

disciplines), so that a general frame of reference can be created. Oppermann regards this material as an opportunity to interact (assuming further efforts). She classifies the first two phases as a primary, chaotic process, as a way of entering a problem; the secondary process, or the exiting of the problem, she describes using adjectives such as differentiating, linear-logical, orderly, and shaping.¹⁶

In terms of method, Oppermann's process is like that of participant observation, which is common in ethnological field research. The observer is also a partner who interacts with the people under observation, which means that the scientist oscillates between proximity and distance, or participation and observation, as well as between familiarity and disconcertment. Participant observation is a method that permits reaction to the empirical field, to the specific contacts and experiences. In this respect, it cannot be canonized; it does not result in a logic of research, but instead, in "mimetic forms of empirical social research"¹⁷ and a cautious approach, which, in the process of research, constitutes the field under investigation. This strategy is concerned with being open to the unexpected, with integrating obstinate structures of the object under study, with reflecting on each of the conditions that permit access to the field, the "establishment of themes and the ramifications of the research issues thus created."¹⁸ In ethnology, too, a phase of distancing follows the tactic of mixing the roles of observer and participant. This is possible due to the application of scientific methods: observation, recording, writing, leaving the field of research, selection, translation, the communication of the findings to the scientific community—and ultimately, the creation of meaning. In order for the process of obtaining sociological knowledge to function, ethnographers have to produce reliable recordings. The scientific relevance of investigations assumes that the material collected has been prepared with meaning in mind: "descriptive observations, events, or experiences first become ethnographic data through the author's creation of meaning."¹⁹

In its connection of closeness and distance, its use of recording and translation techniques, and its comprehensibility, Oppermann's process is in accordance with conventional ethnological methods. In the scientific community, these methods are criticized as a gay science lacking methodological rationality and with only anecdotal entertainment value. Reasons for this are the aggressive relationship of the ethnological process to unknowing, the high degree of self-reflexivity that exposes the constitutive role of the observer, and ultimately the inclusion of the loss of control over the conditions of the process of gathering knowledge as a methodologically necessary liberty taken during the process of research. Unlike ethnologists, however, Oppermann refrains from translating her recorded observations, events, or experiences into comprehensible data derived from specific material, which means that she dispenses with the process of creating a linear kind of meaning. Observations and materials are not translated in accordance with the code and the conventionalized presentational modes employed in a community. On the contrary, the observing, selective, and orderly perspective and action are present in the mode of presentation.

The artist also blurs subject and object in her methodological diagrams. The subject painted on the lower edge of a piece of paper expands through the repetition of its

contour, losing its clearly outlined shape and dissolving into the ensemble space. The material is visible in its personal tinge, not as generalized data that has been prepared for discourse, and it is offered up as a starting point for further efforts. Since they are opportunities for communication, the ensembles initiate a hermeneutic process. Oppermann concentrates on both the surplus of stimuli involved in the material on display, which can be perceived by the senses, as well as on the method of presentation. These should be perceived along with their constitutive effect, which also structures meaning and simultaneously reveals an imaginative dimension. Science, on the other hand—in an attempt to benefit the way it creates meaning—tries to make mediality transparent and to underscore its representative, symbolic character. Since Oppermann uses materials and their presentation to articulate and open up a way of looking at the world, her ensembles are a non-conceptual, immediate form of knowledge; an intuition.

Artistic Research at Art Schools

Oppermann does not use her ensembles to stage a parody of science; rather, the goal of her research is to expand and question the expressive potential of art. This kind of research in the arts is a controversial issue at art schools today, which might possibly have been instigated by changes in art itself on the one hand, and changes in institutional contexts on the other. Due to the so-called Bologna Reform, begun in 1999, which aims to create a common space for higher education in Europe by 2010, schools will be expected to achieve more in terms of research. These new expectations have also intensified the discussion concerning artistic research, since the art schools that join the reform movement will be expected to require research at their institutions. Many involved with the field of design, which relates to application and is closely bound to the transfer of technology, realized this immediately; but in terms of art, this expectation is met with skepticism by both artists as well as scientists. Demands for clarity, coherence, comprehensibility, method, applicability, discursiveness, plausibility, transferability, generalization, and the instrumentalization of research seem to be irreconcilable with artistic strategies such as individualization, mystification, openness to situations or the focus on the singular. On the one hand, artistic research is regarded as a danger to standards of quality, or, on the other, as the academization of the fine arts.

At this point I would like to refer to an interesting distinction in artistic research, which can also be applied to the observation of Oppermann's ensembles. This distinction has been drawn by Henk Borgdorff, an art theorist at Amsterdam's Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, in his 2006 text, *The Debate on Research in the Arts*:²⁰ Systematically, he differentiates among research on the arts, for the arts, and in the arts. Typical art-based research is represented, for instance, by art history. Research of materials is achieved through art itself. In contrast, research in art is immanent and performative. It is not based on the separation of subject and object. On the contrary, artistic practice is constitutive for the research process and the result. "Research in the arts" is also based on the understanding that there is no fundamental division between theory and practice. Finally, artistic research takes materiality into consideration on the one side, and the process of transcending it on the

other: "More precisely, what is characteristic for artistic products, processes, and experiences is that in and through the materiality of the medium, something is presented which transcends materiality.... Research in the arts devotes attention to both: to the materiality of art to the extent that it makes the immaterial possible, and to the immateriality of art to the extent that it is embedded in the artistic material."²¹

Part of conducting research in art means reflecting upon its historical, immanent, and cultural context, as well as its social, economic, and everyday context. Some art schools have spent many years gathering practical experience in scientific, artistic, and interdisciplinary research. Nevertheless, there is still no generally accepted concept of artistic research. Often, there are simply attempts to define artistic research in terms of the scientific model. In that case, artistic research is meant to figure out the relevant questions, define thematic complexes, and discover sources so that they can be traced and systematically organized. Furthermore, it is expected that researchers be able to gather and analyze data, document the project in a conclusive, comprehensible manner, and formulate the results in writing. These demands are problematic—meaning, they require discussion, since, on the one hand, they conceal the danger of elevating artistic research into a scientific sort, thus hindering its possibilities and potential. On the other hand, taking the knowledge of art and applying it to a comprehensible discourse will make it understandable for other scientific and cultural fields, and thus its achievements in knowledge-based theory can be approached and dealt with.

Oppermann's process and presentational modes are not in accordance with the criteria of a scientific work. Still, they link research in art with research about art—in other words, an artistic practice with a (scientific) analysis. Precisely because the artist does not pursue the conservative opposition of theory and practice,²² she makes it possible to consider a discursiveness that goes beyond the conceptual.

Discursiveness of Artistic Research

Although the dictates of objectivity have long been criticized, the process of conferring meaning is, in the sciences, still marked by the methods and perspective of neutrality. The first person singular is avoided. The personal pronoun "I" hardly ever appears in scientific texts. "Grammatically, the subject is silenced. The vow of objectivity is directly inscribed into the way the scientist is permitted to speak in these texts."²³ In the art market, the opposite—the "I"—is demanded, despite the fact that the principle of the author was questioned in the 1960s. The self represents the contribution of originality to a work.

In this respect, this "I" seems rather incapable of exposing the inextricable linking of subject and object in a self-reflective way. It tends to emphasize, at least from an art historical perspective, the stabilization of the myth of the creator. Here I would like to refer to Michel Foucault's ideas on authorship, which do not concentrate on the writing (or shaping) subject, on the self, but on the text itself. Foucault's reflections upon authorship make possible concepts of a discursive kind of artistic research, which assumes neither their formulation as concepts, nor the intention of the artistic subject as a legitimizing authority. According to Foucault, the nineteenth century saw the appearance of

certain types of authors in Europe who could not be categorized as either literary or scientific. These founders of discourses (Foucault mentions Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx by name) created "possibilities and ... rules for creating other texts." Their texts opened up a space "for something else besides what they themselves are, which, however, is part of what they founded."²⁴

Foucault accords texts by a founder of discourse a status that is equal to that of a work. However, here, the term "work" has undergone a poststructuralist modification, meaning that it is a text or a methodological field, which—unlike the work regarded in a classic way, as an object-like product that can be seen or quantified—can only be experienced in discourse or through insight—or, in other words, through the completion of a work, through a reading that produces meaning.²⁵ According to Foucault, a discourse (such as psychoanalysis) is necessary in order to enable a return to the original text, to the source. This return is not to be confused with a rediscovery or a reactualization.²⁶ The necessary return to the origin—meaning, to the text—shows that a text is not simply the material product of a replaceable theory, but rather, it is itself the place where it is produced; it is the practice of theory. A text by a founder of discourse opens up spaces for thought and—as in these spaces—there is no other truth outside of it. Instead, its authority is derived from the function of its discourse.

Oppermann's ensembles are comparable to these kinds of texts. It is necessary to devote oneself to them in order to penetrate them, that is, to employ them within their frameworks and thematic settings as a site of intellectual production. The artist's process proposes a discourse of repeated readings and continuations. The ensembles are not absolute attention-drawing gestures, but rather an offering, the outcome of continued efforts: they are the practice of theory. With her ensembles, Oppermann not only opens up a space for something more than what they are; rather, she reflects on this (not merely conceptual) discursive space. Viewers can experience their own process of perception as a discursive continuation of the space that has been opened up for intuition. Like a text by a founder of discourse, the ensembles do not base their authority upon a referential idea, nor do they convey much information about artistic knowledge. However, their knowledge cannot be dragged into the light through a discourse about them. Inscribed in the reception of the ensembles is a confrontation with a state of unknowing and a loss of control, and it is precisely through this that intuition's constitutive function for conceptual thought can be experienced.

- ¹ Anna Oppermann, "Das, was ich mache, nenne ich Ensemble," *Anna Oppermann: Ensembles 1968–1984*, ed. Herbert Hossmann and Anna Oppermann (Brussels and Hamburg, 1984), pp. 28–29, p. 29.
- ² Günter Metken coined the term "Spurensicherung" (securing of evidence) to characterize the artists whose research outside of the studio was constitutive for their works. In 1974 he curated a show at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, "Spurensicherung," and for documenta 6 in 1977 he published *Spurensicherung: Kunst als Anthropologie und Selbsterforschung, fiktive Wissenschaften in der heutigen Kunst* (Cologne, 1977).
- ³ Exhibition conceivers [including Herbert Hossmann, Margit Kahl, Anna Oppermann, Uwe M. Schneede], "Kunstpolitische Überlegungen," *Eremit? Forscher? Sozialarbeiter? Das veränderte Selbstverständnis von Künstlern*, ed. Uwe M. Schneede, exh. cat. Kunstverein und Kunsthaus Hamburg (Reinbek, 1979), pp. 9–11, p. 11.
- ⁴ The exhibition catalogue *Eremit? Forscher? Sozialarbeiter?* is divided into chapters. Anna Oppermann's ensembles *Aggression—Arrangement mit dem Messer* (Aggression—Arrangement with Knife, 1971–78) and *Künstler sein—Selbstdarstellung, Selbstverständnis und die Entstehung der Methode* (Being an Artist—Self-Representation, Self-Image, and the Origin of the Method, 1969–78) are in the chapter titled "Probleme der Wahrnehmung"/*Nachdenken über das Kunstmachen* (Problems of perception/Thinking about making art). Other chapters are entitled "Selbstreflexion des Künstlers" (The artist's self-reflection) and "Nachdenken über das gesellschaftliche Umfeld" (Contemplating the social environment).
- ⁵ There are no fixed instructions for installing the ensembles. Since Oppermann installs her ensembles in an improvisational manner, reacting to the site, she creates a free space in which she can also reinterpret and alter the works herself. For more on this, see Ute Vorkoeper, "Zur Fortsetzung. Anna Oppermanns Wahrnehmungs- und Verstehenswege," *Anna Oppermann: Paradoxe Intentionen*, ed. id. (Brussels and Hamburg, 1998), pp. 8–14, esp. pp. 13f.
- ⁶ For instance, Uwe M. Schneede, who realized numerous exhibitions on the clue-finding and field research, wrote: "These artists collect evidence in order to create reconstructions in a systematic way, whose subjective impetus essentially distinguishes them from scientific findings." Uwe M. Schneede, cited in Wulf Herzogenrath, "Feldforschung," *Feldforschung: ATV (Alternative Television)*; M. Boecker / W. Niedecken, Lili Fischer, Walter Grasskamp, Hans Haacke, Dieter Hacker, *telewissen*, exh. cat. Kölischer Kunstverein (Cologne, 1978), pp. 4–5, p. 4.
- ⁷ Anna Oppermann, cited in Ute Vorkoeper, "Anders Sein: Anna Oppermanns Vermittlungen zwischen Welten," *Kunstforum International* 155 (2001), pp. 170–176, p. 175.
- ⁸ *Eremit? Forscher? Sozialarbeiter?* 1979 (see note 3), p. 64.
- ⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Anschauung und Anschaulichkeit," *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 18/19 (1980), pp. 1–13, p. 4. Plato contributed to an understanding of the concept of "intuition." He defined it as the excluding opposite of conceptual thought. Kant did not use the notion of "Anschauung" in the context of aesthetics, but rather, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he formed the "critical counterpart to the understanding of the concept and the corrective to rationalistic metaphysics." Concepts without intuition are, in his opinion, empty, and do not lead to knowledge. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, art is not based on the immediacy of its sensory existence, but on the "process of forming intuition." Consequently, he says, art does not do anything but invite one to look at it, since, unlike things, it is not subjected to any purpose. It stands apart from everything that is normally set up for a purpose and used accordingly. It is not simply a secondary moment; it is not the illustration of comprehensible knowledge, but rather, it is "Weltanschauung". Gadamer is interested in elevating art's achievements in knowledge when he writes that "before all comprehensible, scientific knowledge, the way one looks into the world and at the totality of existence-in-the-world finds its shape in art" (*ibid.*, pp. 7f.). He regards the insight or intuition gained through art as fundamental for the productivity of imagination and its interplay with the rational mind.
- ¹⁰ "Komplexität muß ja irgendwo in dieser Welt noch einen Stellenwert haben: Anna Oppermann im Gespräch mit Margarethe Jochimsen," Hossmann and Oppermann 1984 (see note 1), pp. 23–24, p. 23.
- ¹¹ For more on modernist art theory, see Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960), reprinted in *Die Essenz der Moderne: Ausgewählte Essays und Kritiken*; Clement Greenberg, ed. Karlheinz Lüdeking (Basel and

- Dresden, 1997), pp. 265–278. Greenberg's formalist establishment of art negates any sort of intermedial ways of working and rejects social contexts as well as political affairs.
- ¹² Joseph Beuys, cited in Hubertus Butin, "Kunst und Politik in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren," *DuMonts Begriffslexikon zur zeitgenössischen Kunst*, ed. id. (Cologne, 2006), pp. 169–176, p. 171.
 - ¹³ Hans Peter Althaus, "Kreative Bildsprache: Anmerkungen zur Ensemblekunst Anna Oppermanns," Hossmann and Oppermann 1984 (see note 1), pp. 9–11, p. 10.
 - ¹⁴ Oppermann, cited in *ibid.*, p. 28.
 - ¹⁵ The ethnographical method of discovery is based on familiarity and alienation and is used as a process according to which whatever seems most familiar will seem strange or foreign if viewed in this manner. For more on this, see Klaus Amann and Stefan Hirschauer, "Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur: Ein Programm," *Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur*, ed. id. (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), pp. 7–52.
 - ¹⁶ For more on these steps of meditation, catharsis, reflection, feedback from a distance, and the analysis and creation of a general frame of reference, see Vorkoeper 1998 (see note 5), esp. pp. 12f.
 - ¹⁷ Amann and Hirschauer 1997 (see note 15), p. 20.
 - ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21. Through a certain kind of mimesis, "a kind of fitting into the milieu" (p. 25), the ethnologist attempts to create trust. Ethnological research is conducted through independent work and in reliance upon the ethnologist's individual experiences.
 - ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.
 - ²⁰ Henk Borgdorff, *The Debate on Research in the Arts, Sensuous Knowledge: Focus on Artistic Research and Development 2*, Kunsthøgskolen Bergen (Bergen, 2006).
 - ²¹ Borgdorff 2006 (see note 20) p. 18.
 - ²² The division into research in, on, and for does not correspond to those of artist, scientist, and technician. The fields overlap; many artists conduct research about as well as for art.
 - ²³ Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Iteration* (Berlin, 2005), p. 79. The use of the pronoun "I" is merely permitted in historical reflections and recollected anecdotes at the openings of conferences and in autobiographies.
 - ²⁴ Michel Foucault, "Was ist ein Autor?" *Schriften zur Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), pp. 7–31, p. 25.
 - ²⁵ According to Roland Barthes, work and text do not oppose each other in the sense of classic and avant-garde forms of representation. In Barthes's opinion, the text is a methodological field. The radical change that causes the work of art to lose its privileged status and become involved in an interplay of artwork, observation, reading, and discussion should not be overestimated, he says, for it is not an absolute break. Roland Barthes, "Vom Werk zum Text," reprinted in *Kunsttheorie im 20. Jahrhundert: Künstlerschriften, Kunstkritik, Kunstphilosophie, Manifeste, Statements, Interviews*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Ostfildern, 1998), pp. 1161–1167, p. 1162.
 - ²⁶ The return leads back to the text itself and to what is marked as a gap in the text. The return to the text proves to be a transformative work of discursiveness, which, on the one hand, refers to what was already there: one only needs to read; while on the other hand, it refers to what is not in any of the legible words, but rather, "between the lines (words) are said, through the space between them, through their liminal spaces." Foucault 1974 (see note 24), p. 28.

