

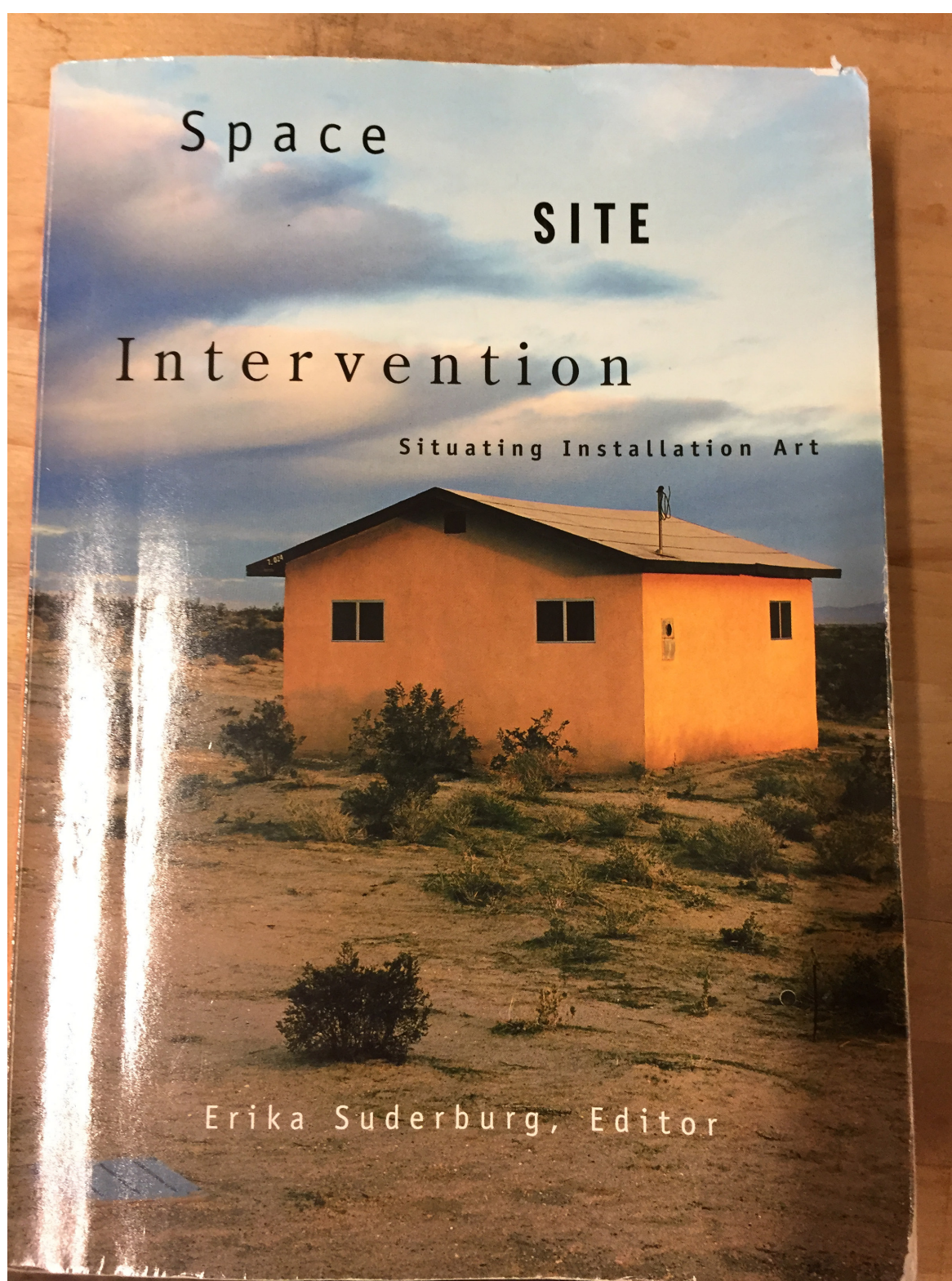
Space

**SITE**

Intervention

Situating Installation Art

Erika Suderburg, Editor





## 1. The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity

James Meyer

*To Kim Paice*

The word critique has attained a bad name in the 1980s. The way in which the work was deployed was only in reference to that which beats its opponent into submission. But if we think about criticality as embracing a more expansive field of reading, I would think of my work as being a critique of *site-specificity*. The site-specific seems to be grounded in a very particular location and a particular time, and all information is related to this. But when you take any of these coordinates, space and time, and you compound them, the model doesn't seem to hold up.

—Stephen Prina

In recent years, the exploration of site has again become a privileged investigation. The current fascination with the art of the 1960s and early 1970s, a phenomenon of scholarship and practice, has resuscitated the idioms of pop, scatter work, identity-based activist art and performance, modes of conceptualism, and minimalism's serial syntax; contemporary explorations of site recall the legacies of earth art and institutional critique. In these practices, the languages and strategies of now historical activities are hybridized and displaced. The comparative interest of such work lies, in part, in the "success" of these revisitations—whether the adaptation of previous modes to emerging content has resulted in something unexpected or in a project that seems uninformed, awkward, or, frankly, dull. The necessity to make such a determination is, I think, a pressing task of the critic of contemporary work.

How, then, to assess one subset of recent work—the site explorations of Mark Dion, Andrea Fraser, Tom Burr, Renée Green, Christian Philipp Müller, and Ursula Biemann, for example? How have these producers addressed or (as I will argue here) transformed the notion of site specificity as it emerged during the early years of



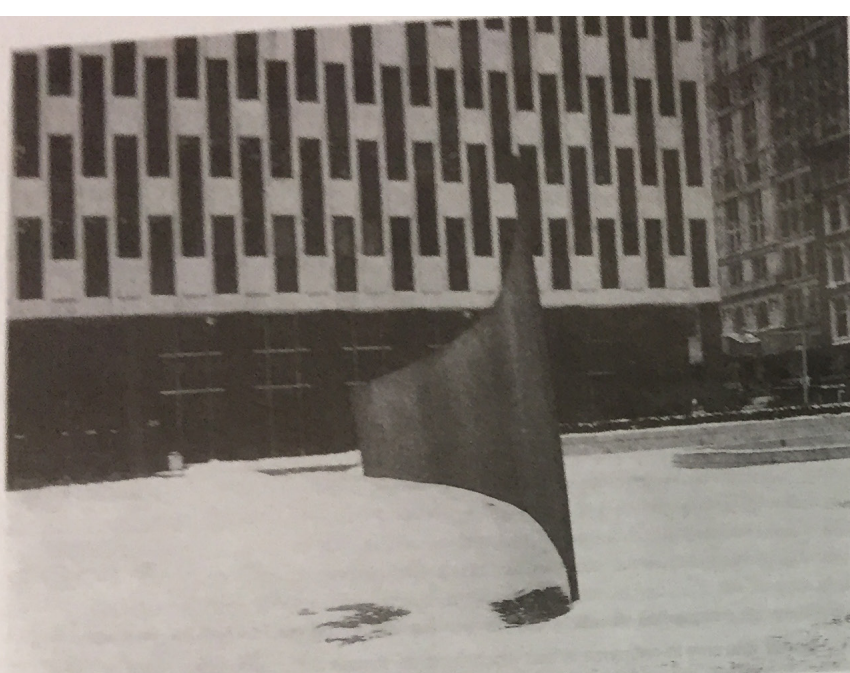


Figure 1. Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1981. Corten steel, 12 x 120 feet. Copyright 1999 Richard Serra/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery.

institutional critique and earthworks, revising the assumptions implicit in this model to reflect upon the globalized, multicultural ambience of the present day? How do we assess this work within a broader field of activity that explores institutional frameworks and locations? The present discussion will pursue these questions.

The primary distinction I wish to make concerns two notions of site: a *literal* site and a *functional* site. The literal site is, as Joseph Kosuth would say, in situ; it is an actual location, a singular place.<sup>1</sup> The artist's intervention conforms to the physical constraints of this situation, even if (or precisely when) it would subject this to critique. The work's formal outcome is thus determined by a physical place, by an understanding of the place as actual. Reflecting a perception of the site as unique, the work is itself "unique." It is thus a kind of monument, a public work commissioned for the site. The civic sculptures of Richard Serra exemplify this approach. As Serra has observed, "The specificity of site-oriented works means that they are conceived for, dependent upon, and inseparable from their location."<sup>2</sup> In the case of *Tilted Arc*, we have, in place of a traditional monument (a memorial to an event or person) or the decorative monument of late modernism (the Calder dominating a corporate plaza), a critical monument with claims to resistance. Inextricable from its location in Federal Plaza, a setting it overwhelmed, Serra's sculpture imbued the premise of site specificity with a newfound monumentality. Serra was "making a permanent work" for "a specific

place."<sup>3</sup> Reversing the terms of his early splashings and pourings, which thematized their transience through a motivation of process,<sup>4</sup> *Tilted Arc* was designed to stand in Federal Plaza in perpetuity, much like the neoclassical courthouse it faced. It sought to counter Federal Plaza's symbology of transcendent order with a real-time bodily experience of the literal site.

In contrast, the functional site may or may not incorporate a physical place. It certainly does not *privilege* this place. Instead, it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all). It is as an informational site, a palimpsest of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places, and things: an allegorical site, to recall Craig Owens's term, aptly coined to describe Robert Smithson's poly-mathic enterprise, whose vectored and discursive notion of "place" opposes Serra's phenomenological model.<sup>5</sup> It is no longer an obdurate steel wall, attached to the plaza for eternity. On the contrary, the functional work refuses the intransigence of literal site specificity. It is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories: a place marked and swiftly abandoned. The mobile site thus courts its destruction; it is willfully temporary; its nature is not to endure but to *come down*.

Certainly, earlier institutional critique did much to expose the functional or informational character of the gallery and museum.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, artists like Dion, Müller, Green, Fraser, and Burr have merely developed the inquiry introduced in the work of Hans Haacke, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Mel Bochner, and Michael Asher, which displaced the phenomenological site of the minimalist installation into a critical reflection on the gallery itself.<sup>7</sup> However, these activities were, for the most part, site specific; the force of their critiques was due, in part, to their confinement to a particular place.<sup>8</sup> What were the benefits of this literal orientation? To begin with, site specificity was understood, in its very constitution, as a mode of refusal of the system of art's commodification. Locating its critique within the gallery or museum, the site-specific work exposed this space as a material entity, a no longer neutral place, a backdrop for the merchandising of portable art objects. For, as Douglas Crimp argued, the modern museum developed in concert with the production and consumption of "homeless" works of art, whose aesthetic and commercial value it affirmed. It was claimed that site specificity would impede this process:

The idealism of modern art, in which the art object *in and of itself* was seen to have a fixed and transhistorical meaning, determined the object's placelessness, its belonging to no particular place, a no-place that was in reality the museum—the actual museum and the museum as a representation of the institutional system of circulation that also comprises the artist's studio, the commercial gallery, the collector's home. . . . Site specificity opposed that idealism—and unveiled the material system it obscured—by its refusal of circulatory mobility, its belongingness to a *specific* site.<sup>9</sup>

Twenty-five years after the first installations of Buren, Haacke, and Asher, we might begin to question the efficacy of such claims (the valorization of site specificity by its



postmodernist supporters has yet to occasion a critical reply):<sup>10</sup> to what extent site specificity accomplished the desired disruption of the commodity system through its vaunted "refusal of circulatory mobility," and moreover whether a practice grounded in a materialist analysis alone remains practicable or even desirable today. But let us first consider another claim made on behalf of site specificity, which concerned the viewer. Deferring attention from the portable modernist work to the gallery, the site-specific installation was said to render one conscious of one's body existing within this ambience. The body of site specificity was a physicalized body, aware of its surroundings, a body of heightened critical acuity. The viewer of the modernist work, in contrast, was purportedly blind to its ideological nature.<sup>11</sup> Thus the premise of site specificity to locate the work in a single place, *and only there*, bespoke the 1960s call for Presence, the demand for the experience of "being there." An underlying topos of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, of the happening and performance, Presence became an aesthetic and ethical *cri de coeur* among the generation of artists and critics who emerged in the 1960s, suggesting an experience of actualness and authenticity that would contravene the depredations of an increasingly mediated, "one-dimensional" society.<sup>12</sup> An antidote to McLuhanism, to popular culture's virtual pleasures and blind consumerism, the aesthetics of Presence imposed rigorous, even puritanical demands: attendance at a particular site or performance; an extended, often excruciating duration.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the notion of site specificity allied a New Left critique of the "System" with a phenomenology of Presence, a spectatorship that unfolded in "real time and space." Here we see the origins of site specificity in the aesthetics of minimalism. Buren's canvas installations, the wall displacements of Asher and Lawrence Weiner, and Bochner's *Measurements* built upon the phenomenological inquiries of artists like Robert Morris and Dan Flavin, who exposed the viewing conditions of the "white cube" through a solicitation of Presence. As Crimp observed, "Minimal sculpture launched an attack on the prestige of the artist and artwork, granting that prestige instead to the situated spectator, whose self-conscious perception of the Minimal object in relation to the site of its installation produced the work's meaning."<sup>14</sup> This displacement from work to frame, from the portable modernist sculpture to an environmental practice located in the literal space of the viewer, Michael Fried characterized as the distinction between "art" and "theater."<sup>15</sup> According to Fried, this revelation of the viewer's presence within the literal site of the gallery blurred the distinction between an ideal aesthetic space and real space, between art and not-art. Yet minimalism and the site-specific practices that followed in its wake took the literal site as the very locus, or precondition, of advanced work.

Site specificity had a more implicit, and less recognized, source: the modernist impulse of reflexivity. Modernist reflexivity was a reflection on medium, a task Clement Greenberg compared to Kant's call for Reason to reflect on the conditions of its immanence.<sup>16</sup> Minimalism displaced the object of reflection another degree—from the work's medium to its ambient space, from its optical and tactile qualities as painting

and sculpture to the perceptual conditions of its display. Institutional critique caused a further displacement, from the exposure of the "white cube" as phenomenological space to a critical exposure of the art institution. In the work of Asher or Buren, the phenomenological site of Morris and Flavin was revealed as a discursive place grounded in socioeconomic relations. Yet, for all its radicality, its materialist commitment, this work still operated within a Kantian cognitive model of reflexivity: it still confined its analysis to the "frame." The criticality of such work was perspicuous only within the physical confines of, or in close proximity to, the gallery site.<sup>17</sup>

The functional work explores an "expanded" site: the "art world," in this activity, has become a site within a network of sites, an institution among institutions. To be sure, previous institutional critique demonstrated the financial and ideological ties of the gallery to greater economic and political structures. The System Aesthetics of Haacke posited a vectored and constitutive relationship between the museum and its corporate patrons and trustees, while Asher's well-known interventions in the *Museum as Site: 16 Projects* show at the Los Angeles County Museum (1981) and in the *Seventy-fourth American Exhibition* at the Art Institute of Chicago (1982) revealed the nationalist agendas of these institutions. But the final focus of this work was the art system as such. Today, much practice explores an expanded site, enlarging its scope of inquiry into contingent spheres of interest, contingent locations.<sup>18</sup> This expanded institutional critique is as much at home in natural history and anthropological collections, in zoos, parks, housing projects, and public bathrooms, as in the art gallery or museum; it may engage several sites, institutions, and collaborators at once. The ostensible subject of *Platzwechsel*, an exhibition organized by the Zurich Kunsthalle in 1995, was the Platzspitz Park, a green space located in the city's center. The show itself occurred at a number of locations: the Swiss National Museum, which borders the park (both the turrets on the upper floor and the loggia below); the Kunsthalle; and the apartment of a local dealer. Devoid of a unique place, *Platzwechsel* led the viewer on a "tour" from one landmark to the next. Moreover, the collaborative nature of *Platzwechsel*, which included work by Dion, Biemann, Müller, and Burr, resulted in a project that reflected four distinct points of view. The "work" was thus not a single entity, the installation of an individual artist in a given place. It was, on the contrary, a *function* occurring between these locations and points of view, a series of expositions of information and place. As the visitor toured the "show" in its different venues, gleaned information from project to project, he or she accumulated a broadening knowledge of the Platzspitz's past. And in the course of this viewing the history of Zurich itself began to unfold.

For some time now, artists, inspired by feminist, postcolonial, and psychoanalytic writings, by the social philosophy of Michel Foucault and cultural studies, have analyzed a spectrum of public institutions and places. However, the exploration of an "expanded" site may produce differing results: projects reflect the specific interests, educations, and formal decisions of the producer. While some artists who work in this vein do so from a functional understanding of site, still others reveal a literal site



orientation. Fred Wilson's well-known installation *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore (1992–93) was a striking commentary on this city's racist past. In preparing the show, Wilson used only the artifacts and galleries of the particular institution. Praised in the popular press, *Mining the Museum* was attacked by critics who claimed the show reproduced the conventions of ethnographic analysis (the outside researcher, invited by local authorities, briefly visits the place, collects the data, presents the results, then moves on). They claimed that Wilson failed to address his own position as a "critical artist," or as an African American invited to "represent" the African American community of Baltimore.<sup>19</sup> In recent years, a similar critique has developed in European cities in response to the current wave of site critique. Only a local artist, an artist whose identity purportedly reflects the constituency being represented, these critics argue, should be invited to produce such work.<sup>20</sup> Now a functional practice, insofar as it traces the artist's movements through and around the institution, often reflecting on the character of the commission itself, inscribes his or her subjectivity within the work. In this meeting of producer and site, fixed identities blur; the insistence of a tautological correspondence of the subjectivities of the artist and community is questioned; the premise of a stable authorial self is troubled. Indeed, in the most thoughtful work, the artist-traveler or "nomad" is a thoroughly historicized subject.<sup>21</sup> Fraser and Müller's project for the Austrian Pavilion at the 1993 Venice Biennale considered the nationalist protocols of the international art fair, which traces its origins to nineteenth-century trade shows.<sup>22</sup> In the ad campaign announcing their participation, the artists posed in traditional Austrian costume in a Viennese café, counterfeiting and ironizing the Biennale's premise of national cultural representation (neither Müller nor Fraser is Austrian). Müller, in his own project, further estranged the notion of Austrianness. Traveling across Austria's borders to each of its neighboring countries without the proper visas, he enacted a series of illegal immigrations, marking these crossings with postcards mailed to his Vienna dealer from these frontier stations. Simulating the illegal immigrant's trials, Müller's gesture thematized the blurring of national identity at this historical moment of internationalism and late capitalist organization, when nationalist ideologies have returned with a vengeance.

The mobile site suggests a distinct genealogy: Happenings, situationism, Richard Long's walks, On Kawara's postcards, Tadashi Kawamata's temporary shanty towns and scaffoldings, and André Cadere's *Barres de Bois Rond*, which the artist installed temporarily in galleries and other locations throughout Paris.<sup>23</sup> More recently, ACT UP examined the various authorities connected with the AIDS epidemic as a sequence of site-specific critiques. Traveling to the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, Wall Street, and other sites, AIDS activists developed a critical practice that traversed a spectrum of medical, political, religious, and financial institutions. For ACT UP, "place" had a symbolic, as well as literal, meaning: one journeyed to each institution not simply to protest its operations, but to expose these to the media's attention. As much as any recent practice, AIDS activism demonstrated

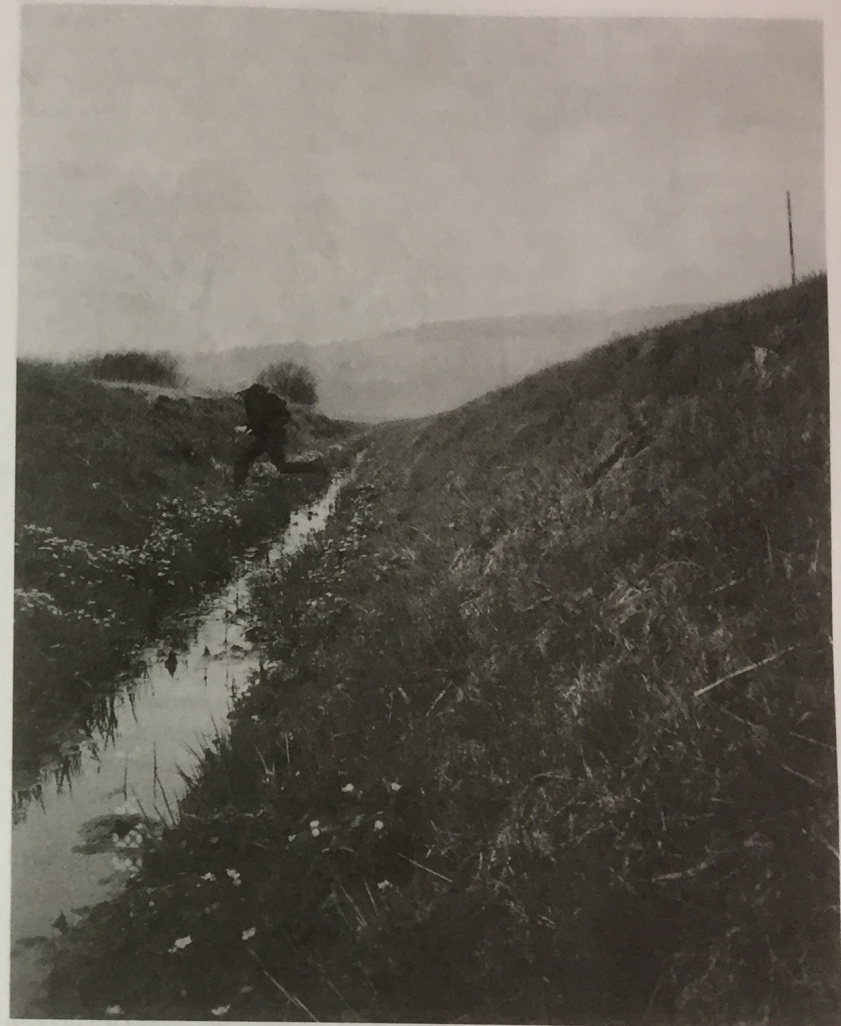


Figure 2. Christian Philipp Müller, *Illegal Border Crossing between Austria and Principality of Liechtenstein*, 1993. Courtesy of the artist and American Fine Arts, Co., New York. Photograph by Petra Wunderlich.

the postmodernist premise, associated with, for example, the writings of Foucault and the art of Kruger and Holzer, that information is material.<sup>24</sup> As Simon Watney, Cindy Patton, Paula Treichler, and others have argued, the physical facts of AIDS are inextricable from their representation.<sup>25</sup> And one of the effects of this Foucauldian assumption was that place could not be purely experienced (like the literal site of minimalism or Richard Serra), but was itself a social and discursive entity.<sup>26</sup>

The work of Robert Smithson bears particular mention here. In the allegorical



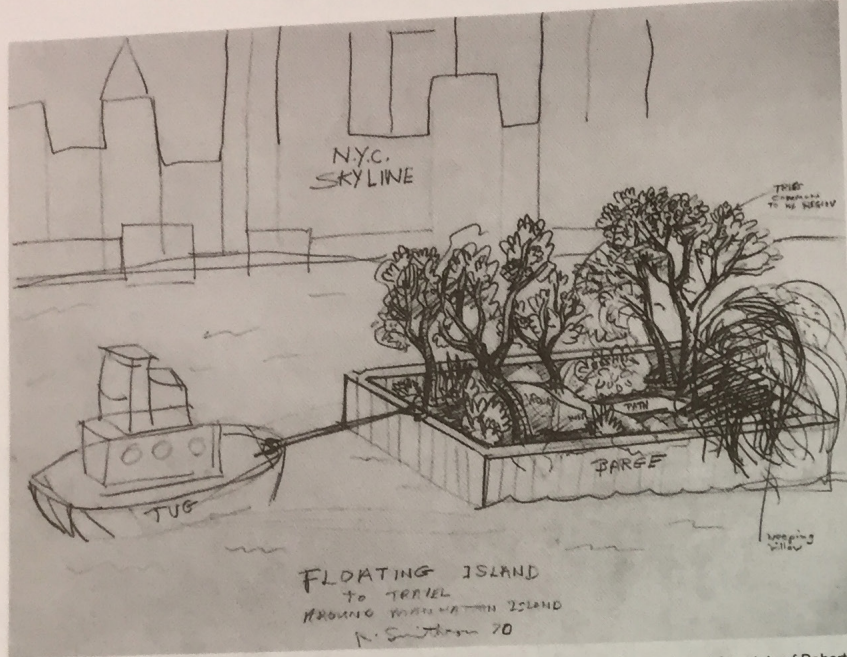


Figure 3. Robert Smithson, *Study for Floating Island to Travel around Manhattan Island*, 1970. Copyright estate of Robert Smithson. Licensed by VAGA, New York; used by permission of VAGA, Inc.

practice of Smithson described by Owens, the work exists in the overlap of textual account, photographic and filmic recording, guided tours by the artist, and the literal site. Place, for Smithson, is a vectored relation: the physical site is a destination to be seen or left behind, a "tour" recalled through snapshots and travelogues. It is only temporarily experienced (the Yucatan quicksand does not allow for dillydallying), if it is seen at all (*Spiral Jetty* sank soon after its completion). Site as a unique, demarcated place available to perceptual experience alone—the phenomenological site of Serra or the critical site of institutional critique—becomes a network of sites referring to an *elsewhere*. In the Smithson nonsite of the mid-1960s, the maps and rock containers point to the quarries from which the materials have been drawn. Inversely, the site refers to the gallery or magazine context of the nonsite. *Spiral Jetty*, completed in 1970, fractured the dialectical model of the earlier nonsites into a multipartite sequence of representations and literal sites. "Like the non-site, the *Jetty* is not a discrete work, but one link in a chain of signifiers which summon and refer to one another in a dizzy spiral," Owens writes. "For where else does *Spiral Jetty* exist except in the film which Smithson made, the narrative he published, the photographs which accompany that narrative, and the various maps, diagrams, drawings, etc., he made about it?"<sup>27</sup>

At *Platzwechsel*, the installations and texts set up a semantic chain that traversed physical borders; the Kunsthalle itself was transformed into an elaborate nonsite, a fabric of allusions. A concrete plinth built by Müller recalled a monument to the

Swiss Romantic poet Salomon Gessner located in the park; a wooden "surveillance booth" above referred to the turrets of the Swiss National Museum (once used by the police to monitor the park's notorious drug scene); the medieval Hardturm, Zurich's oldest tower, on which their design was based (just down the street, Hardturmstrasse, from the Kunsthalle itself); an observation station across the river from the Platzspitz, also used to survey the drug trade; and an art dealer's apartment in which the turrets' windows, removed from the tower, were placed. The lines' location of private and public life, of observer and observed, of historical and present-day experience was vectored and intertwined.

Burr's displacement of flora and earth from the Platzspitz to a container in the Kunsthalle recalled the park as it existed in the 1970s—the seemingly placid interlude before the onslaught of the drug culture during the 1980s, a period when the Platzspitz was known principally as a site of gay male assignation. The oral accounts of the park's visitors of those years, assembled by Burr in the Kunsthalle, reinscribed the park in personal and discursive history. For these individuals the Platzspitz was less a physical place than an object of memory, a symbol of a "quieter" time before liberation and AIDS. For gay men in their twenties, whose accounts were also recorded, it had none of these associations, however: they could only remember the park as a drug market.

The mobile site is an in-between site, a nonplace, a ruin. Whereas the critical monument of Serra wishes to dominate a civic plaza, Smithson's "monument" is entropic, a run-down factory, a polluted marsh, a wasteland stretching between city and

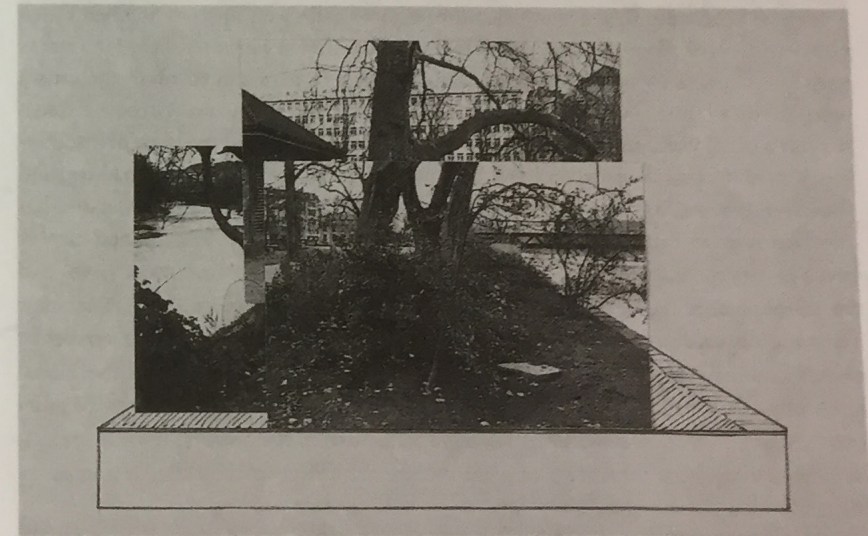


Figure 4. Tom Burr, *Circa 1977, 1995*. Landscape displacement from the Platzspitz, Zurich, to the Kunsthalle Zürich. Plywood container with soil, plants, trees, and rocks, 4 X 4 meters. Courtesy of the artist and American Fine Arts, Co., New York.



country, a "slurb." The Platzspitz park is such a "monument." Once at the edge of the baroque city, it is now Zurich's center. Yet it is an empty center, a not-quite-usable place between industrial, civic, and natural boundaries (the National Museum, the train station, the Limmat and Sihl Rivers, the warehouses and factories beyond). It has remained willfully unassimilated to official life: "The Platzspitz became a place of refuge for various fringe groups in the 20th century," we read in a recent account. "The revival attempts of the most varied kinds [including the restoration of 1991] were able to do little to change this" because of its "isolated location."<sup>28</sup> It is the kind of space that the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have described as nomadic, a shifting or deterritorialized site at odds with sedentary, striated space, the organized ambience of the polis; a space inhabited by nomadic peoples or "fringe groups." The nomad "goes from one point to another . . ." Deleuze and Guattari write. "Every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is only between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own."<sup>29</sup> For all its renovations—the official attempts to evacuate unwanted groups—the park resists territorialization. During the period of its most recent restoration, in the early 1990s, the Platzspitz was closed. Yet the drug culture merely changed its location (hence the exhibition title, *Platzwechsel*), penetrating to less visible zones. The function of the Platzspitz as *nomos* has continued after the abandonment of the literal site. In other words, the *nomos* remains at the heart of the polis, a fact the polis politely ignores. "What counts for me is that what you don't see is OK," as one official put it.<sup>30</sup>

Much current work explores a mobile notion of site and a nomadic subjectivity. The travel snapshots of Martha Rosler; the vectored gallery critiques of Stephen Prina; Gabriel Orozco's floating balls, hammocks, and yellow scooters; Rikrit Tiravanija's tents and dinners (which, performed from one gallery to the next, mark the artist's peregrinations); and the practices of Burr, Fraser, Müller, Dion, and Green have surfaced at a time of unprecedented globalization and multinational mergers, of instantaneous satellite transmission and the Internet, when terms like *synergy*, *linkage*, and *flow* are the new corporate mantras. The shabby traveling salesman of yesteryear has devolved into an international flaneur who moves through VIP lounges and airport hotels in a perpetual motion.<sup>31</sup> Concurrently, a relative democratization of travel and the dissolution of formerly closed borders have fostered a more universal itinerancy. Thus the displacement from the literal site of the 1960s, grounded in the verities of phenomenological experience, to a mobile, mediated placement follows the global reach of capitalism itself, the triumph of the free market predicted by Ernest Mandel and Fredric Jameson in now classic studies. At the turn of the century, the late capitalist culture inaugurated in the 1960s—the culture that site specificity sought to resist—has achieved a new apogee.<sup>32</sup>

The most convincing site-related work not only represents, or enacts, this mobility, but also reflects on these new parameters. *Secret*, a work by Renée Green produced for two different shows, *Project Unité*, curated by Yves Aupetitallot at Firminy, France,

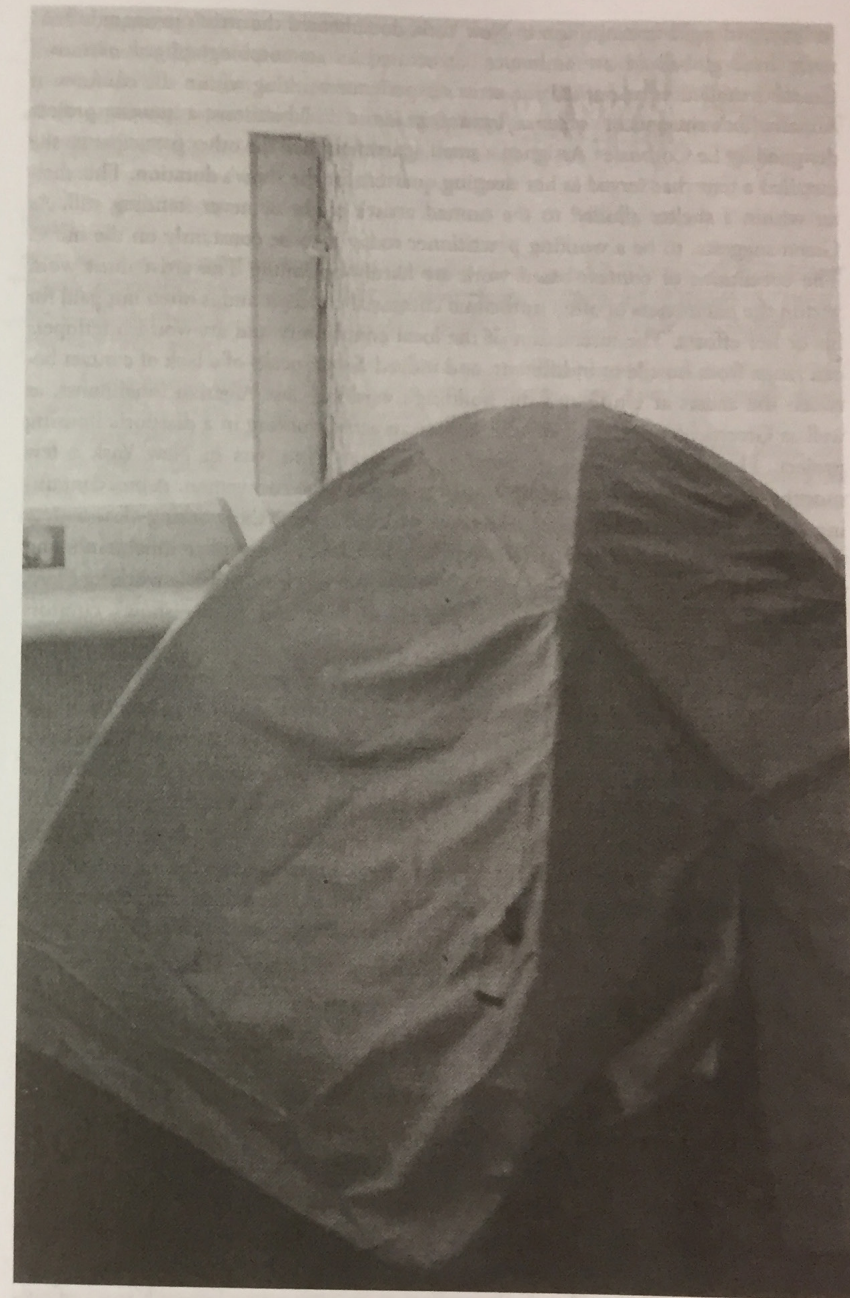


Figure 5. Renée Green, *Secret*, 1993 Courtesy Pat Hearn Gallery, New York.



in 1993, and a group exhibition in New York, documented the artist's peripatetic existence in a globalized art ambience. Structured as an autobiographical narrative, Green's installation recounted the artist's experience working within the confines of Aupetitallot's site-specific schema, located in Unité d'Habitations, a housing project designed by Le Corbusier. Assigned a small apartment, like the other participants, she installed a tent that served as her sleeping quarters for the show's duration. This shelter within a shelter alluded to the nomad artist's plight of never standing still. As Green suggests, to be a working practitioner today is to be constantly on the move. The conditions of context-based work are hardly optimum. The artist must work within the parameters of often unfocused curatorial concepts and is often not paid for his or her efforts. The interaction of the local community and art-world interlopers can range from hostile to indifferent, and indeed *Secret* speaks of a lack of contact between the artists at Unité and the building's working-class Algerian inhabitants, as well as Green's identity as an African-American artist working in a diasporic housing project. Her re-presentation of *Secret* at American Fine Arts in New York a few months later created a vectored relationship between the two venues. A box containing copies of Emile Zola's novel *Germinal*, which discusses the working-class society of nineteenth-century Firminy, referred both to Unité's blue-collar inhabitants and Green's own experience of having read Zola's account of Firminy while working there, while allusions to fellow participants Dion and Burr and to the show's curators brought the narrative full circle.<sup>33</sup>

Let me conclude with two other examples. Fraser's *Cologne Presentation Book* (1990) and Müller's 1994 installation *Inter-pellations* tell the story of German-American cultural relations in parallel fashion. Produced for her first show in Germany, Fraser's volume records the history of this exchange since World War II, interspersing accounts of political events (the implementation of the Marshall Plan and opening of the U.S. Information Agency, anti-Vietnam War protests, and the fall of the Berlin Wall) with cultural ones (the importation of the MoMA's *New American Painting* in 1958, the triumph of pop at *Documenta IV*, and so on), a narrative that concludes with Fraser's entrance as a participant in the 1990 Cologne Art Fair. Müller's installation, presented at American Fine Arts Gallery in New York, was a sequence of vitrines containing German and English guidebooks to SoHo. Produced before the gallery district's recent decline, Müller's textual interpellations swiftly guide the tourist to American Fine Arts and other "hot" galleries, as well as boutiques and restaurants, with ironic expediency, quenching the German art lover's thirst for the new (for what does America represent but rapid innovation?). A related project by Müller, a "bookcase" presented in New York a few years earlier, told this story in reverse. Not an actual bookcase but a wooden solid, it was covered in wallpaper depicting rows of European "classics," an allusion to the old American fantasy of Europe as High Culture's guardian. Inserting catalogs of his previous shows in slats between the depicted volumes, Müller offered himself as the latest European import in a longer history of cultural exchange. Though executed for specific shows, the projects of Green, Fraser, and

Müller explored the cross-cultural fantasies of the other in a period of rapid globalization. Alluding to other points of departure and return, they posited a model of place that is, like the subject who passes through it, mobile and contingent. In so doing, these works suggest nothing less than a displacement of the 1960s-generated notion of "site specificity."

## Notes

This text is an expanded version of an essay produced for the exhibition catalog *Platzwechsel: Ursula Biemann, Tom Burr, Mark Dion, Christian Philipp Müller* (Zurich: Kunsthalle Zürich, 1995) and republished in *Documents* 7 (fall 1996): 20–29 and *Springer* (December 1996–February 1997): 44–47.

1. See Joseph Kosuth, "1975," in *Art after Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966–1990*, ed. Gabriel Guercio (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 134.

2. Richard Serra, *Writings, Interviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 203. On the critical claims of Serra's work and the model of site specificity that it presupposes, see Douglas Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site-Specificity," in *Richard Serra's Sculpture*, ed. Rosalind Krauss (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 41–55.

3. Julia Brown, quoted in *ibid.* It would be inaccurate to suggest that all of Serra's civic works have been conceived to last indefinitely: for every *Tilted Arc* there is a temporary construction like *St. John's Rotary*. Yet *Tilted Arc*'s claims of permanence, and its great scale, would suggest that, by the 1980s, Serra's notion of site specificity had taken on a monumental character. Serra himself admits that his large-scale works are "often referred to as being oppressive and monumental," even if he disagrees with this characterization, noting that his work does not "memorialize any person, event, or place." See *ibid.*, 170.

4. On this reversal in Serra's work, see Douglas Crimp's comments in *ibid.*, 135.

5. See Craig Owens, "Earthwords," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 40–51. To be sure, the phenomenological viewer of Serra is as mobile as Smithson's tourist, and the fact that the artists were close friends—Smithson was one of the first viewers of *Shift*, and Serra was involved in completing *Amarillo Ramp*—would seem to suggest a sympathy of views. See Rosalind Krauss, "Richard Serra: A Translation," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 260–74, and Yve-Alain Bois, "A Picturesque Stroll around Clara-Clara," in *October: The First Decade*, ed. Annette Michelson et al. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 342–72. Even so, Smithson's and Serra's notions of place were ultimately distinct. Asked to compare his work to land art, i.e., Smithson's, Serra observed: "If you build a piece in the desert, you have the possibility of remaining private while working on a large scale, and then bringing your private concerns back to the public in the form of documentation. I have never found that satisfying. I would rather have the actual experience of the work at urban scale. . . . What most people know of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* is an image shot from a helicopter." Quoted in Serra, *Writings, Interviews*, 129. In other words, where *Spiral Jetty* could, indeed must, be accessed through representational means, Serra's work could only function as a phenomenological encounter.

6. The writings of Daniel Buren in particular described the art world's institutions as "functions." See "The Function of the Studio," in *October: The First Decade*, ed. Michelson et al., 201–20; "Function of the Museum," *Artforum* 12, no. 1 (September 1973): 68; and "The Function of an Exhibition," *Studio International* 186, no. 961 (December 1973): 216.



7. This is the argument of Benjamin Buchloh's important essay, "Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture," in *Performance Text(s) Documents* (Montreal: Parachute, 1981), 55–65. On Buren's displacement of the minimal installation, see Alexander Alberro, "The Turn of the Screw: Daniel Buren, Dan Flavin, and the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition," *October* 80 (spring 1997): 57–84.
8. As Benjamin Buchloh has pointed out to me, this was not always the case. For example, Buren's stripes could appear on buses and park benches, integrating his museum critique within a vectored urban fabric, while Bochner's *Measurements*, consisting of a standardized duct tape, were transportable between installations. However, these were exceptions: underlying most Buren, Asher, and Haacke installations is a presumption of site specificity.
9. Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 17. On the opposition of the site-specific work and the nomadic, modernist sculpture, see Rosalind E. Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 280.
10. An exception to this rule is Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development," in Diane Ghirardo, *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture* (Seattle, Wash.: Bay Press, 1991), which questions the "critical" claims made on behalf of Serra's *Tilted Arc*. Among postmodernist writers, Craig Owens must also be singled out: although he too would be an advocate of site specificity (in the essay "From Work to Frame"), it will be argued here that his reading of Smithsonian led to an allegorical understanding of site that ultimately subverts the premise of site specificity.
11. For this distinction, see Annette Michelson, *Robert Morris: An Aesthetics of Transgression* (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Museum of Art, 1969), and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge: MIT Press), 201–42.
12. The classic account of this loss of "authentic" experience is Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
13. On the phenomenological aesthetics of literal time/space, see Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture I and II" (1968), in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton Press, 1968), 222–35; Michelson, *Robert Morris*; and Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, 201–42.
14. Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 16–17.
15. See Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in Gregory Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton, 1968), 116–47.
16. See Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 85–93.
17. See Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 21–23.
18. For a discussion of this tendency, see James Meyer, "The Expanded Site: (Beyond Reflexivity)," in *What Happened to the Institutional Critique?* exhibition catalog (New York: American Fine Arts Co. and Paula Cooper Gallery, 1993), 14–16. More recently, Hal Foster has characterized this expansion in structuralist terms: on one hand, a thematic and spatial, "synchronic" expansion; on the other, a diachronic or "vertical" expansion of medium or genre. See "The Artist as Ethnographer," in Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 199–200.
19. See "On Site Specificity," roundtable discussion, *Documents* 2, nos. 4/5 (spring 1994): 11–22. On the reproduction of ethnographic conventions in site-specific work, if not necessarily Wilson's, see Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer." In discussion with the curator of *Mining the Museum*, Lisa Corrin, I was informed that Fred Wilson, in preparing the show, had spent as much as a year living in Baltimore, a period in which he had a sustained interaction with the various communities the show could be said to "represent." But it is certainly the case that Wilson's project did not comment on his own participation.
20. Reported in conversation with Christian Philipp Müller, New York, January 6, 1995.
21. This is my argument in James Meyer, "Nomads," *Parkett* 50/51 (May 1997): 205–9.
22. For a description of this project, see Peter Weibel, ed., *Österreichs Beitrag zur 45. Biennale von Venedig 1993*, exhibition catalog (Vienna, 1993). The third participant was the "authentically" Austrian artist Gerwald Rockenschau.
23. On Kawamata's nomadic structures, see Yve-Alain Bois, "Keep Out: Construction Work," in *Kawamata Project on Roosevelt Island* (Tokyo: Gendaikikakushitsu, 1993), 63–72, which also establishes an opposition with Serra's site specificity. On Cadere, see Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, *Reconsidering the Object of Art, 1965–1975* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996), 98–99.
24. The best discussion of ACT UP's methods is Douglas Crimp with Adam Rolston, *AIDS Demographics* (Seattle, Wash.: Bay Press, 1990).
25. See Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Cindy Patton, *Sex and Germs* (Boston: South End Press, 1985); and Douglas Crimp, ed., *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988).
26. Hal Foster considered the limits of the phenomenological installation with the advent of postmodernism in "The Crux of Minimalism," in *The Return of the Real*, 35–70.
27. Owens, "Earthwords," 47. It is, I think, no coincidence that a number of artists working in this vein, including Fraser, Dion, Biemann, and Burr, were students of Owens. On the role of Owens's pedagogy in the development of these artists' work, see Meyer, "Expanded Site," 14–16.
28. Judith Rohrer, "Platzspitz Zürich," *Anthos* 1 (1994): 17.
29. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 351–423. For a previous application of this analogy to Müller et al., see Chantal Mouffe, "For a Politics of Nomadic Identity" in *Andrea Fraser/Christian Philipp Müller/Gerwald Rockenschau: Österreichs Beitrag zur 45. Biennale von Venedig 1993*, ed. Peter Weibel (Cologne: Buchhandlung Walther König, 1993), 239–56. On the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari's nomadism within an urban context, see Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 206–14.
30. Monika Stocker, director of Zurich's Social Affairs Department, quoted in *New York Times*, March 12, 1995.
31. See Martha Rosler, "In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer," *Assemblage* 25 (1995): 61–79.
32. See Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1975), and Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism; or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991).
33. *Secret* appeared in yet another incarnation in an installation at Louisiana, Denmark. The theme of travel is long-standing in Green's work, as suggested by such projects as *Anatomies of Escape* (1990), which concerned the Hottentot Venus's circulation around nineteenth-century Europe; *Vista/Vision: Landscapes of Desire* (1991), a reflection on Theodore Roosevelt's hunting safaris; *Import/Export Funk Office* (1992), which traced the cross-cultural fantasies of the German and American intellectuals Dietrich Diederichsen and Angela Davis; *World Tour*, an installation at the Los Angeles MoCA and the Dallas Museum of Art in 1993; and *Partially Buried* (1997–98), which documented the artist's "search" for Smithson's legendary 1970 *Partially Buried Woodshed* at Kent State University in Ohio. In many of these projects, a reassemblage of the installation in a new form in a subsequent venue highlighted the vectored nature of the work itself.