ISO 6346: ineluctable immigrant

ELLEN ROTHENBERG
FEBRUARY 6–APRIL 13, 2019
I see the installation here at the James Gallery as a jumping-off point for communal activity about immigration, whether historical or contemporary, as well as imagined future inhabitation. This is similar to your project aspiration, in which the installation becomes a hub of performing activity related to your source. Because the site of Tempelhof is so charged, what does it mean to transpose it to the gallery space? Among stately lines, issuing 800,000 physically upon the gallery space recalls the site-specific installation, Common Assembly, that DAAR created in the gallery in 2012, though they investigated a different topic of the Palestinian Parliament, the act of translating a charged site in a gallery space connotes a fantasy that I find generative and possibly hopeful, but also vexing. What meaning is made by deliberately “objectifying” the Tempelhofer site and placing it in the gallery? How did you envision the installation would carry the layered, lived, political realities of that place that are ever-acting and dynamic?

I was very excited for the opportunity to share this work at the James Gallery, in the shadow of the Empire State Building, at the coausals of a robust international, intellectual community at the CUNY Graduate Center. It’s always been my intention that the presentation of my work is an ongoing, an opening for discussion and responses by others. I have been committed to that interchange from very early on in my artistic career and invested in it as a principle for most of my work.

It’s important to think that we have it within ourselves to employ an imaginary future and perhaps an imagined past as well, to produce our own empowerment. Nothing comes without imagination, and my work demands that each viewer produce those strands of connection, of our own empowerment. Nothing comes without imagination… and my work demands that each viewer produce those strands of connection, of meaning, ironies, and reverberations between all these moments in time.

It’s in the space of the gallery that the dwelling does occur… it’s a quiet and contemplative space, reimagining that as a place to consider these intersecting images, spatial moments, bodily intuitions, architectures, presences, and absences.

The photographs themselves are presented in different modes, such as directly to the wall, as ambulatory on cardboard presented as objects, and as digitally in a form that is not included in the gallery space. I always have my intentions that the presentation of my work is a beginning, an important step that demands that each viewer produce those strands of connection, of meaning, ironies, and reverberations between all these moments in time.
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ELLEN ROTHENBERG BIOGRAPHY
Ellen Rothenberg's work is concerned with the politics of everyday life and the formation of communities through collaborative practices. From her performances to her installations and research projects, Rothenberg has pushed formal boundaries for what they can produce, designing responsive structures that encourage participation. Her work has been presented in a variety of formats, including performances, installations, and research projects at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Institute for Curatorial Research and Practice at SAIC, and the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project. Rothenberg has received several awards, including NEA Regional Fellowships, The Bunting Institute Fellowship at Radcliffe College Harvard University, The Massachusetts Artist Foundation Fellowships, Illinois Arts Council Fellowships, and grants from The Charles Engelhard Foundation, The Chicago Foundation, and The Chicago Tribune Foundation. Her work has been presented in North America and Europe: at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Fine Arts and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; The Museum of London, Ontario; The Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen; and in Singapore, among others. Rothenberg's work has been published by The Green Lantern Press in 2018.

ELLEN ROTHENBERG

THE JAMES GALLERY
The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue at 35th Street
New York, NY 10016

centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery

Curator: Katherine Carl
Installation: Lanning Smith
Design: Sonia Yoon

Special thanks to:
Dan and Jesse Eisenberg, Cindi Katz, Bobby Gonzales, Sonia Yoon, Odile Compagnon, Janel Fung, Elnaz Javani, Chris Lowery, Charles Scott, John Flaherty, Ionit Behar, Dr. Felicitas Hentschke of THF Welcome, Marina Naprushkina of Neue Nachbarschaft, Bettina Klein, Kate Rabinowitz, Allison Kuo and students in Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, the PhD Program in Art History and the Center for the Humanities at The Graduate Center, CUNY.

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