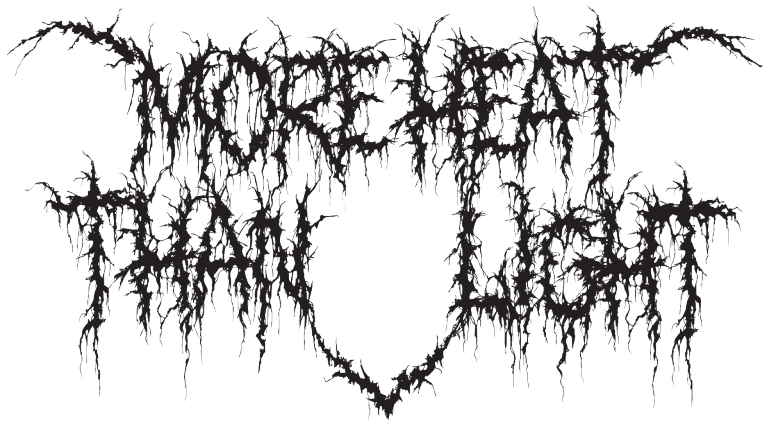


Sam Lewitt



1.4. – 29.5. 2016

Kunsthalle
Basel

Interrogating flows of information and capital through the global economy drives much of Sam Lewitt's oeuvre. Or, you could say, the *currents* of information and capital. As it happens, "currency" and "current" share the same root, from the Latin *currere*, "to run." Money, or currency, doesn't have value if it's not in circulation—in other words, if it's not running around. And an electrical current isn't considered operative if it doesn't flow—in other words, if it isn't running around. The US-American artist's project at Kunsthalle Basel reflects this need to keep moving by redirecting the flow. Literally. By rerouting the electrical current used for lighting to create heat instead, Lewitt redirects and thus disrupts one of the exhibition space's primary operations.

In the upstairs gallery a number of custom-made, flexible, ultrathin heating circuits lie across the floor, some draped over Volkswagen engine blocks. Wires hanging from the ceiling send power from the gallery's lighting grid to these copper-clad plastic (Kapton) heaters. The threshold to the back galleries is enclosed with the type of rubberized curtain that is meant to allow circulation while keeping temperatures contained. To enter the back spaces is to feel the thermal energy more pronouncedly than in the main gallery, where heat diffuses quickly in the cavernous space. Either way, the heaters are not meant to create a radiant blast of heat, nor to hold onto it; they create only as much heat as the institution's lighting grid will "feed" them. Lewitt's title, *More Heat Than Light*, thus announces a material fact of the experience of the show, but the visitor's perception of the heat might be more intellectual (thanks to the sensor readouts) than concretely sensual.

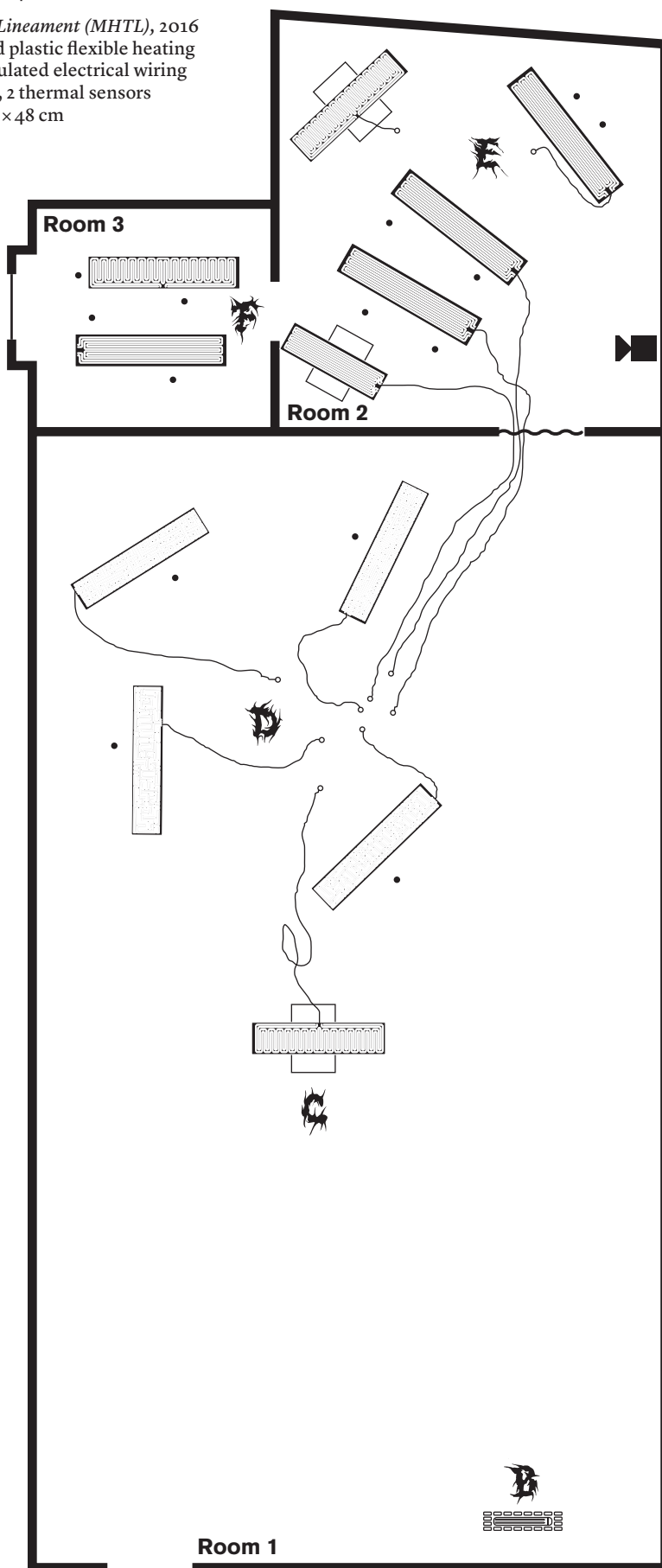
The heaters themselves are altered readymades. Lewitt specially fabricated enlarged versions of an existing industrial technology meant to regulate heat in highly controlled environments. Microthin and flexible, they are designed to wrap around or slide between parts in a closed environment and ensure that a certain temperature remains stable, for instance so that a portable computer, an outdoor digital billboard, or a satellite arm in space doesn't get too hot or too cold.

EN



Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Approx. 243 × 48 cm

Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Approx. 243 × 48 cm



Landing



Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Approx. 243 × 48 cm

Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Approx. 243 × 48 cm

Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Approx. 243 × 48 cm

Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, Volkswagen TDI 1.9 engine block, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Heating circuit approx. 243 × 48 cm, engine block approx. 30 × 43 × 34 cm

Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, Volkswagen TDI 1.9 engine block, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Heating circuit approx. 243 × 48 cm, engine block approx. 30 × 43 × 34 cm



A Weak Local Lexicon (MHTL), 2016
Four Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuits, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 8 thermal sensors
Each approx. 249 × 48 cm
Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London



Weak Local Lineament (MHTL), 2016
Copper-clad plastic flexible heating circuit, Volkswagen TDI 1.9 engine block, insulated electrical wiring with fixture, 2 thermal sensors
Heating circuit approx. 243 × 48 cm, engine block approx. 30 × 43 × 34 cm



The Cold Parts, 2016
Aluminum ingots cast from 7.0L LS7 Chevrolet Corvette engine block, etching on copper-clad plastic
Dimension variable



A Weak Local (Vacuum Sealed - Trace Revision 1E), 2016
Etching on copper-clad plastic, steel brackets,
304.8 × 50.8 cm

All works, unless otherwise noted:
Courtesy the artist and
Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New York

The upstairs galleries of Kunsthalle Basel are now a large-scale version of such a controlled space. But here Lewitt's heating circuits draw their power from the lighting grid, disabling the grid's usual function. It might be said that the artist turns off the lights to throw these conditions into view.

After all, what is an exhibition but a site for the presentation and display of selected items before a public? Lewitt doesn't refuse this, but he does disrupt it. By producing a detour in the infrastructure of an institution that is meant to put things *on exhibit*, he misuses its energy resources in order to throw them into relief. Optimal visibility is exchanged for thermal inefficiency.

And as the conditions of the space change—the addition of body heat from visitors, the sun's heat coming in through the skylight, gusts of wind from a child running—so too must the heaters constantly adjust themselves to maintain an even temperature. Thermal sensors extending from the individual circuits provide real-time readings of their output. A thermal camera in the exhibition space records these—but also the heat given off by visitors' bodies. It broadcasts all this on our website kunsthallebasel.ch, thus transmitting real-time, round-the-clock data regarding the institution's energy and labor patterns. Both the thermal sensors and the camera images remind us that visibility and knowability, like flexibility and enclosure, are here at stake.

In another Kunsthalle (Bern), in another time (1969), artist Michael Asher moved all the radiators in the exhibition space to the foyer, rerouting the institution's heat supply and making it "the show." Lewitt's project and his idea of a "weak locality" provide a sly counter to Asher's site-specificity. Whereas the Asher work tied an experience to a specific place and immediate infrastructure, Lewitt attempts to trace the *weakness* of the local, opting instead to subject different venues to the same exercise with the goal of making the experience (or at least the temperature) comparable no matter where you are.

"I like the idea that an artwork can determine its site: really structure it and not just aesthetically activate it," Lewitt has said.

Neither site-specific nor autonomous, his artwork needs a site to be operative, but it is made to be operative anywhere. Moving between the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco, where some of the heating circuits were first shown, a rented Airbnb apartment in New York, and Kunsthalle Basel, it localizes eddies of disorder within each of these different systems by accessing their global orders of flow and circulation. Lewitt thus realizes an artwork that can, following Airbnb's motto, "belong anywhere," but only on the condition that nowhere does it fit precisely and uniquely.

This is not to say that the way these works manifest themselves in their different locales, or the differences in their presentation, don't impact how they're perceived and understood. In the work *Weak Local Lexicon (MHTL)*, the graphic characteristics of Lewitt's sculptures are formed through etched lines generated by an algorithm that measured the most efficient path for lines to be traced around a series of signs or words. Some of these come from twenty-first-century capitalistic mantras such as "belong anywhere," "get connected," "custom profiling," or "flexible control." Others bear a fleeting resemblance to the anachronistic Greco-Roman "fret" decoration found as often on disposable napkins as on the doors of Basel bank vaults. Lewitt saw several of the latter on a site visit, curious about other local institutions' environmental regulation measures. The etched lines manifest an undeniable echo of this kind of decorative patterning, which in the case of the early 20th century strong-rooms suggests an apparent timelessness—that their protected contents are secure, ever the same, across time and space, a bit like the thermal regulation that determines constant conditions from one portable device to another.

The engine blocks over which Lewitt's heaters are draped specifically allude to the (millions of) cars that Volkswagen equipped with software that could detect when they were being emissions tested, and cheat. What was dubbed the "diesel dupe" created a moment of crisis in the seemingly airtight "truth" of technical systems and corporate communications about them. Strange relics that bespeak a scandal as much ideological as it was economic, they act as even stranger pedestals for Lewitt's sculptures.

In a 2012 project for the Whitney Biennial entitled *Fluid Employment*, the artist used ferrofluid, a NASA-developed lubricant used in everything from consumer electronics to military aviation, sliding between a product's internal elements in order to eliminate friction. When the ferrofluid is exposed to air—the moment the structure in which it's working is opened and the fluid can be *seen*—it congeals, ceasing to function. Exposure, then, leads to obsolescence. There is a connection between Lewitt's interest in opening up closed systems and his disruptions of operational flow. Here the flow in the institution's current is momentarily transformed into an unstable thermo-regulating machine. It may be darker inside the exhibition space than it should be, and it may be hotter than you remember from last time, but this is Lewitt's point.

Sam Lewitt was born in 1981 in Los Angeles, USA; he lives and works in New York, USA.

The exhibition is co-organized with the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco.

Thanks to
Miguel Abreu Gallery, Simon Baier, Denise and Rolando Benedick, Daniel Buchholz, Pilar Corrias, Peter Currie, Patrick Dreyfus, Hammer Zurich, Anthony Huberman, Alan Longino, Scott Minneman, Christopher Müller, Special Methods, Three Star Books, Thea Westreich and Ethan Wagner

The exhibition is generously supported by
Regent Lighting and Roldenfund.

GUIDED TOURS THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

Every Sunday at 3 pm guided tour, in German

10.4.2016, Sunday, 1 pm

curator's tour, in English and French

26.5.2016, Thursday, 6.30 pm guided tour, in English

EDUCATION / PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Children's tour *I Spy with My Little Eye!*

10.4.2016, Sunday, 1 pm and 3 pm

29.5.2016, Sunday, 3 pm

A tour and workshop for children,
from 5 – 10 yrs., in German

Kunsthalle Brunch

10.4.2016, Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm

Brunch à discrétion at the
Restaurant Kunsthalle followed by guided
tours for adults and children at 1 pm and 3 pm
through the current exhibitions

Student's tour *Student discount*

28.4.2016, Thursday, 6.30 pm

Guided tour by and for young people
interested in art, in German

Symposium with Sam Lewitt: *The Whole Cool System*

27.5.2016, Friday, 10 am – 6 pm,

at eikones NCCR Iconic Criticism,
Rheinsprung 11, 4051 Basel

With Simon Baier, Sebastian Egenhofer,
Devin Fore, Sam Lewitt, Felicity D. Scott,
and André Rottmann, in English,
detailed program at eikones.ch

In the Kunsthalle Basel library you will find
an associative selection of publications related
to Sam Lewitt and his artistic practice.

More information at kunsthallebasel.ch

Sam Lewitt

geboren 1981 in Los Angeles (USA), lebt und arbeitet in New York (USA) /
born 1981 in Los Angeles (USA), lives and works in New York (USA).

AUSBILDUNG / EDUCATION

- 2005 Whitney Museum of American Art, Independent Study Program, New York (USA)
- 2004 BFA, School of Visual Arts, New York (USA)

EINZELAUSSTELLUNGEN / SOLO SHOWS

- 2015 -CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (USA)
- 2014 -*Verbrannte Erde: Second Salvage*, Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren (DE)
-*Casual Encounters*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
- 2013 -*International Corrosion Fatigue*, Galerie Buchholz, Köln (DE)
- 2011 -*O110_ Universal-City_1010*, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin
-*Total Immersion Environment*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
- 2010 -*Paper Citizens*, Art41|Basel - Art Statements, Miguel Abreu Gallery, Basel (CH)
- 2009 -*From A to Z and Back*, Galleria Franco Soffiantino, Turin (IT)
-*Sam Lewitt: From A to Z and Back*, Gallery Taka Ishii, Kyoto (JP)
- 2008 -*I hereby promise... etc.*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*Printer, Scriptor: Folios*, Galerie Buchholz, Köln (DE)
- 2007 -*1010 in Universal City*, Galleria Franco Soffiantino, Turin (IT)
- 2006 -*Patience ... Fortitude*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)

GRUPPENAUSSTELLUNGEN (AUSWAHL) / GROUP SHOWS (SELECTION)

- 2015 -*The Radiants*, Bortolami Gallery, New York (USA)
-*bare code scan*, Fused Space, San Francisco (USA)
- 2014 -*Sequence 5*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*nature after nature*, Fridericianum, Kassel (DE)
-*Warm Side of Zero*, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles (USA)
-*Art of Its Own Making*, Pulitzer Foundation, St. Louis (USA)
-*Geographies of Contamination*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London
- 2013 -*and Materials and Money and Crisis*, MUMOK, Wien
-*drunken walks / cliché / corrosion fatigue / ebay*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*Looking Back / The 7th White Columns Annual*, White Columns, New York (USA)
- 2012 -*How do it know?*, Essex Street, New York (USA)
-*Surface Affect*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*Whitney Biennial 2012*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (USA)
- 2011 -*Quodlibet III, Alphabets and Instruments*, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin
-*The Lifestyle Press*, Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles (USA)
-*Time Again: Novel*, Sculpture Center, Long Island City, New York (USA)
-*Commodity / Fetish*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*New York to London and Back: The Medium of Contingency*, Thomas Dane Gallery, London
- 2010 -*Today I Made Nothing*, Elizabeth Dee, New York (USA)
-*The Evryali Score*, Gallery David Zwirner, New York (USA)
-*Greater New York: The Baghdad Batteries*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (USA)
-*So Be It: Interventions in Printed Matter*, Andrew Roth Gallery, New York (USA)
- 2009 -*Frottage*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*Notices*, International Project Space, Birmingham (UK)
-*Collatéral*, Confort Moderne, Poitiers (FR)
-*Dreaming the Mainstream*, Vilma Gold Gallery, London
-*Quod Libet II*, Galerie Buchholz, Köln (DE)
-*Practice vs. Object*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*Re-gift*, Swiss Institute, New York (USA)
- 2008 -*Power Structure*, Andrew Roth Gallery, New York (USA)
-*Lure*, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris
-*Sequence*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (USA)
-*A Rictus Grin*, 1602 Broadway, New York (USA)
-*Skipping the Page*, Center for Book Arts, New York (USA)

Kunsthalle Basel

Sam Lewitt

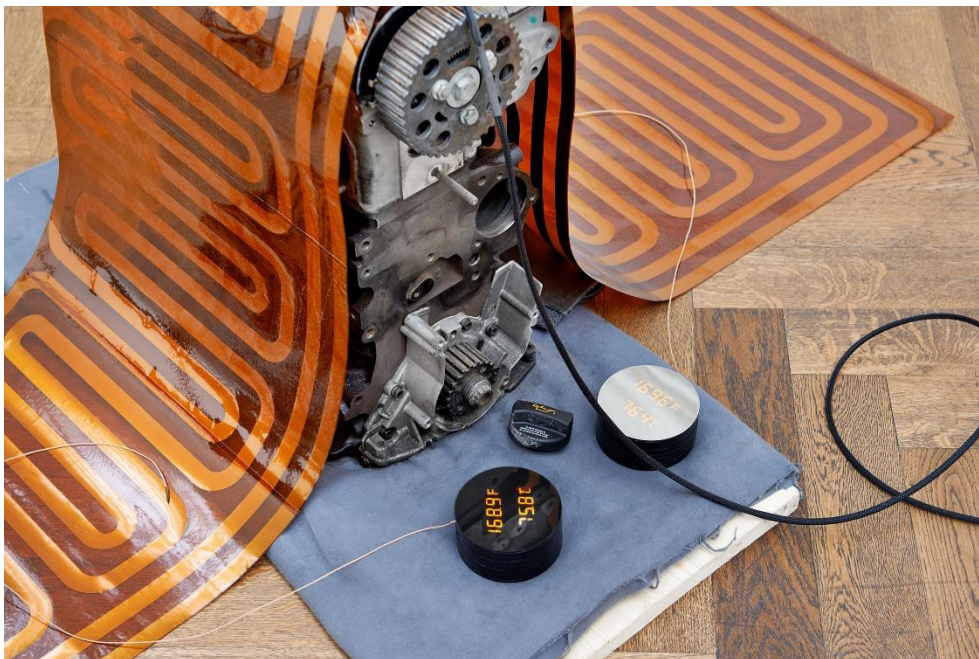
More Heat Than Light

1.4.-29.5.2016

Pressebilder / Press Images



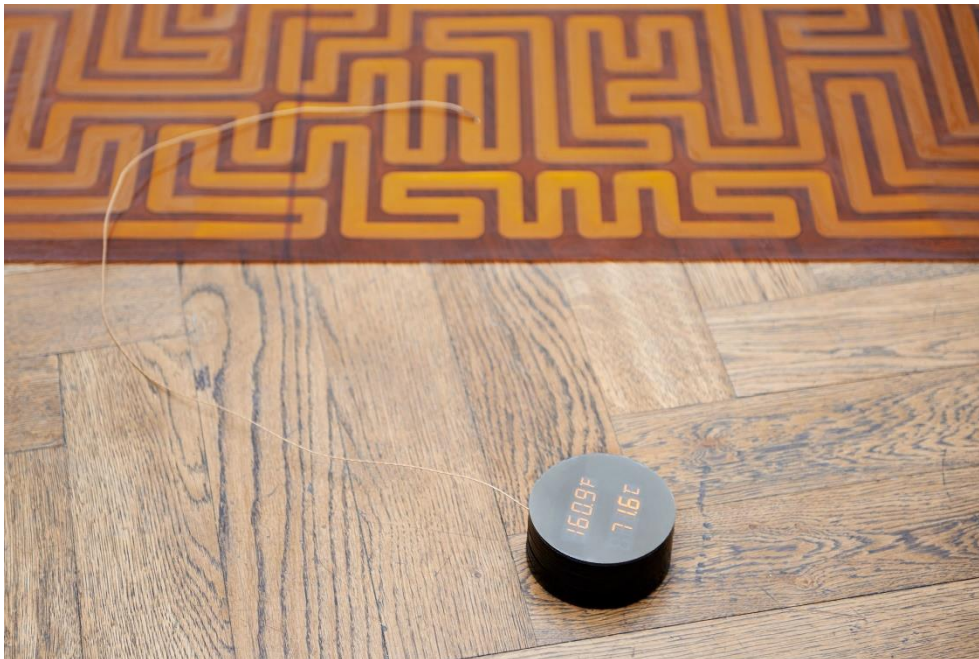
Sam Lewitt, Installationsansicht *More Heat Than Light*, Blick auf *Weak Local Lineament (MHTL)*, 2016, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger / Sam Lewitt, Installation view *More Heat Than Light*, view on *Weak Local Lineament (MHTL)*, 2016, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



Sam Lewitt, *Weak Local Lineament (MHTL)*, 2016, detail, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger / Sam Lewitt, *Weak Local Lineament (MHTL)*, 2016, detail, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



Sam Lewitt, Installationsansicht *More Heat Than Light*, Blick auf *A Weak Local Lexicon (MHTL)*, 2016, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger. Courtesy Sam Lewitt und Pilar Corrias Gallery, London / Sam Lewitt, Installation view *More Heat Than Light*, view on *A Weak Local Lexicon (MHTL)*, 2016, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger. Courtesy Sam Lewitt and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London



Sam Lewitt, *A Weak Local Lexicon (MHTL)*, 2015, Detail, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Foto: Philipp Hänger / Sam Lewitt, *A Weak Local Lexicon (MHTL)*, 2015, detail, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016. Photo: Philipp Hänger



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Alle Arbeiten, falls nicht anders angegeben: Courtesy Sam Lewitt und Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Köln/New York / All works, unless otherwise noted: Courtesy Sam Lewitt and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New York

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Tel. +41 61 206 99 11, press@kunsthallebasel.ch

TEXTE ZUR KUNST

WEAK LOCAL LINEAMENTS

On Sam Lewitt at the CCA Wattis Institute for
Contemporary Arts, San Francisco



"Sam Lewitt: More Heat Than Light," 2015

In 2005, artists Gareth James, Sam Lewitt, and Cheyney Thompson set out to make a twelve-issue magazine questioning drawing's place in theory and practice. The issues, which would be based on the series of lectures held on New York's Lower East Side over the course of one year, would be released all at once, thus challenging the supply and demand cycles expected of artists (and the media) and which were thought requisite for maintaining currency in the public eye.

This fall, Lewitt mounted a solo show at San Francisco's CCA Wattis center, feeding the entirety of the gallery's energy supply directly into his sculptural work, rewiring the institution's conditions of circulation and display. With full awareness of how that mid-00s discourse might relate, James, here, offers his thoughts on the valances of Lewitt's production.

In the first of three planned iterations, Sam Lewitt's solo exhibition "More Heat Than Light" was on view at the CCA Wattis Institute this fall. A second staging (with the same objects and under the same title) will briefly take place in an Airbnb apartment in New York before traveling on to the Kunsthalle Basel in April 2016. As those familiar

with Lewitt's ongoing interrogation of visual, material, and financial economies might expect, his exhibition draws into its purview a number of compelling aesthetic and political issues. Wattis curator Anthony Huberman neatly laid out the discursive entanglements of the exhibition in a text available at wattis.org, so the following remarks will focus on the two initially simple gestures that organized the show.

The first precipitating gesture consisted of a redirection of the total available electrical energy supplied to the Wattis' ceiling lighting tracks. Ten track heads were installed but rather than supply electricity to lights (there were none), the heads were rewired to long cable extensions that hung down throughout the space, dispensing their current into large copper-clad flexible heating circuits that lay directly on the concrete floor of the gallery. Flexible micro-heating circuits are a ubiquitous and essential component of a wide variety of digital technology (think of everything from medical equipment to military targeting systems to smartphones), that requires the constant

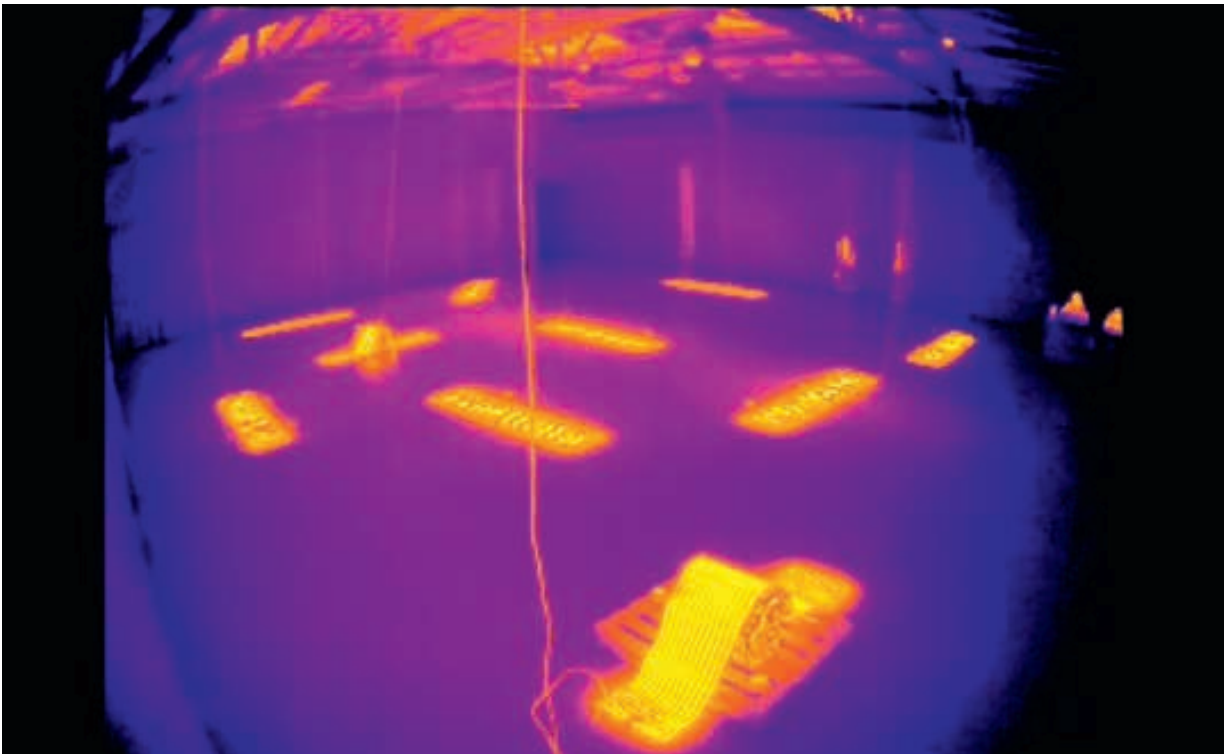
regulation of internal temperature for precise and reliable operation. Lewitt's comparatively enormous, custom-fabricated circuits were almost grotesque in scale; combined with their redirection of the gallery's energetic resources away from the showing of the show to the heating of it, the observation that the exhibition space is itself a highly regulated computational apparatus became unavoidable.

At the opening event on a warm evening in San Francisco, as the available natural light and the outdoor evening temperature fell, the increasingly hot and dark interior of the gallery enforced a similar change of description on the exhibition's visitors too: transformed from spectators (defined by their capacity for looking) to, in a sense, autonomic computational bodies (redescribed as galvanic sensors). As dusk fell over the conventionally vibrant visual field of the gallery, a relatively uncommon degree of physical caution was required to avoid stepping on the sculptures on the floor. The digital sensors taking their temperature – ranging from 130°F (54°C) to 190°F (88°C) as the heating circuits struggled to maintain the entire gallery as one corresponding to the description “160°F” (71°C) – provided the only distinct visual evidence of their location. Meanwhile slightly sweaty faces and underarms registered the moist thickening of the epidermal encounter between the skin and the too-warm air.

There are gestures in art into which the possibility of critical discourse disappears like a black hole (joke paintings for example) leaving in their place a kind of affective afterlife or cosmic shudder. But there are also gestures, concerning mundane technical details of apparently limited interest, that prove capable of unfolding in such a way that they envelop questions of a far greater

magnitude. This capacity of a gesture to be unfolded fascinated Walter Benjamin, a key intellectual touchstone for Lewitt, and to adequately situate the latter's gesture we would need to turn to work with clear formal as well as calefactory relationships with Lewitt's show: Michael Asher's “Kunsthalle Bern, 1992” (1992), in which Asher aggregated all the institution's radiators along a single wall); and Art & Language's “The Temperature Show” (1966), a series of photographs using infrared film to reveal heated infrastructure below the surface of the apparently natural landscape. The trouble with good examples, of course, is that they obscure and mislead like bad ones: the composition of their relative intellectual and artistic conditions, their medium of intelligibility, are, in fact, significantly different.

In the 1980s, Art & Language leant heavily on Wittgenstein's argument that description was the only activity proper to philosophy (explanation being the preserve of the natural sciences). Description, for Art & Language, was thus a key activity for establishing a critique of interpretative method and for intervening in the discourses that receive and recursively condition artistic work. Today, this type of argument is more likely to evoke Latour, and his transformation of Wittgenstein's philosophical stricture into a normative prescription for knowledge production in *general*, leaving the task of explanation to the spontaneous aggregating activity of networks. Such arguments evidently serve free market advocates embarrassed by the implausibility of their explanations (description will suffice!) more than they serve Lewitt's critical purposes. Perhaps Lewitt's recurrent titling motif “Weak Local Lineaments” evoked the fading of explanatory power into mere description, but additional language occasionally



"Sam Lewitt: More Heat Than Light," CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2015, installation view

included in subtitles and insinuated obscurely into the wall pieces (such as "Belong Anywhere" or "Get Connected") evoked the related logic of the order-word. The move from an initial statement to a parenthetical or imbedded second statement reminds us that descriptive statements do not merely circulate as innocent re-presentations of their subjects, but perform operations according to the value judgments of the systems in which they are imbedded.

The second regulatory gesture concerns the limitations placed on the circulation of images of the exhibition beyond the exhibition space itself. While by convention galleries quickly photograph exhibitions (in order to capitalize their contents in as many and as far-flung locations as possible), the primary images broadcast beyond the physical confines of this exhibition were those made by a thermal camera located in one corner of the gallery, live-streamed via the Wattis' website. The thermal camera does not produce "photographic" images since it bypasses the visual spectrum of light altogether, registering radiation

exclusively. Thus what passes for a photographic representation is in fact no such thing. Rather, it is a re-presentation of relations of temperature difference as spatial relations, in a symbolically organized description: white heat cools to yellow, orange, red, cools further into blues and violets, all mapped over a standard perspectival description of space.

In "The Art of Describing," Svetlana Alpers's project was to correct the false imposition of the hegemonic models of art history (those developed to explain the symbolic, iconographic, and narrative logic of Italian art) upon the conspicuously optical mode of knowing and representing the world in the emergent Dutch landscape and still life traditions of the seventeenth century. Applying Alpers's argument might seem nonsensical at first, given that Lewitt's exhibition represents something like the dusk of the optical image. Yet its relevance derives from the fact that Alpers does not champion one tradition of pictorial analysis over another, but describes the historical emergence of their conflict: a point that turns not



"Sam Lewitt: More Heat Than Light," CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2015, installation view

just on information optically recoverable from the artworks themselves, but equally on the substantive shift in the market form of distribution, exchange, and consumption for Dutch art. Alpers elaborated on the claim that Dutch art "adds actual viewing experience to the artificial perspective system of the Italians" by clarifying that the viewing experience was not one grounded in nature but a highly technologically mediated one. Lewitt's regulation of conventional documentation is attenuated by the two photographic details he selected for active circulation (that effectively function like re-descriptions of the thermal images of the exhibition), and the exhibition title itself is rendered in a conspicuously ornate font designed for the show; meanwhile, the .mov file playing on the website is also less a documentation of an artwork than an operational image in Farocki's sense, an image that goes to work rather than shows a work.

In a lecture on Hanne Darboven, Lewitt observed that the difficulties Darboven's work presents to the task of description are not inci-

dental but immanent to the construction (or impossibility) of a point of view. Lewitt described the experience of attempting to subjectively enter Darboven's "Kulturgeschichte: 1880–1983" as producing "the distinct feeling of what I can only call defensive fatigue. The sort of strange psychic enervation that is pleated with both excitement and anxiety, an anticipatory resistance that I can relate perhaps to a primitive reflex for self-preservation. This usually occurs in front of phenomena that I know are simply too interesting to deal with." I would argue that Lewitt shows what happens in art when the seeing/knowing amalgam of Dutch art is utterly imbricated in its insensible economic conditions of possibility rather than floated on it (and Nathan Brown, who presented an early version of his Mute article "The Distribution of the Insensible" at a conference organized by Lewitt, offers a compelling structure for this analysis). I would only add that if ekphrasis should be understood as the activity that not only attempts to exhaust its object in a mimetic doubling, but makes the activity of description itself seen in what it shows, then Lewitt's project can be understood as a return to the full complexity of a rigorous, non-positivistic descriptive activity, in conditions so utterly heated by the insensible, that fatigue and interest have become virtually indissociable.

GARETH JAMES

"Sam Lewitt: More Heat Than Light," CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, September 10–November 21, 2015.