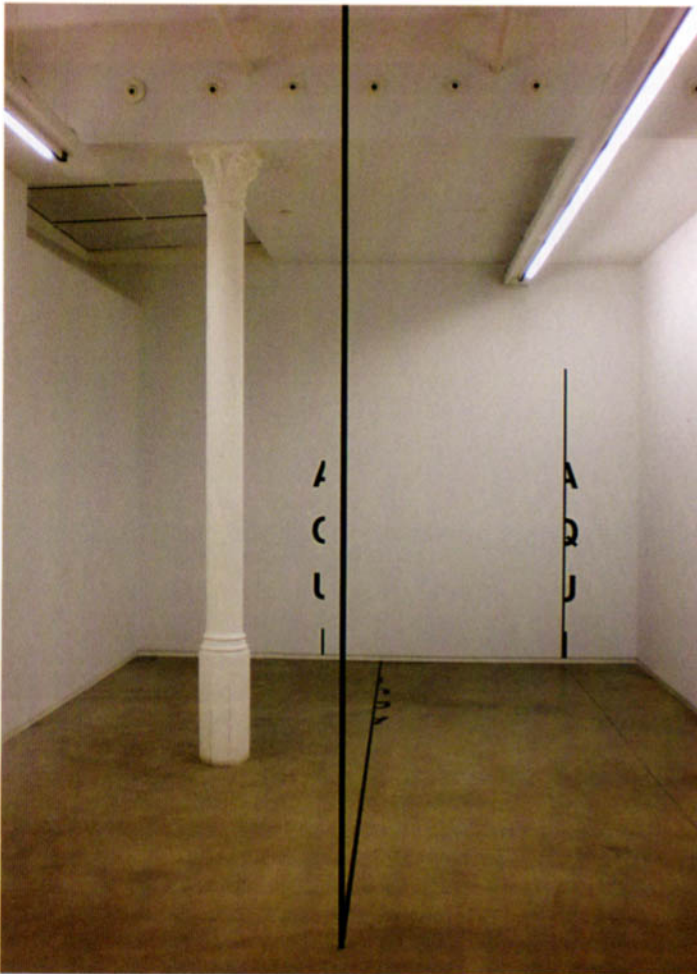


PETER DOWNSBROUGH

BARCELONA
DELS ÀNGELS GALLERY



Aquí, 2008. Courtesy of the gallery.

PABLO G. POLITE

Although it may be unnecessary to introduce one of the most original and controversial figures of the international avant garde scene –as proven by catalogues, books and magazines– it is worth pointing out, to start off, two features of the extensive work by Peter Downsborough, an artist who is now opening the season at the Galería dels Àngels, with a selection of his work on different media. First, his creative

versatility: since 1962, when he altered his plans and abandoned his studies of architecture, Downsborough has never stopped cultivating, experimenting with and exploring the limits of his expression, in a wide range of disciplines: sculpture, photography and video, above all. The second element, which is essential if we are to do him justice, has to do with his subsequent influence and legacy, which are impossible to assess because they are still relevant today (although here we are not very aware of them, as is the case with his tentacular connections with other artists, both contemporary and subsequent).

This is the first solo show by Peter Downsborough to be presented at a private gallery in our country, after the show of most of his videographic and cinematographic work, which took place at the Museo Reina Sofía in September, 2007. A unique occasion, which is unlikely to be repeated, to gauge the magnitude of his proposal, and, while we're at it, confirm the reasons which have led Downsborough to become one of the most outstanding and unique –possibly incorruptible– proponents of conceptual art: that artistic movement born in the 1960s, in which concepts always prevails over objects, as announced by Sol LeWitt, in the machine, instrument or engine which drives art. Downsborough is well aware of its mechanisms, and plays with them as he wishes, subverting them, in fact, to make us reflect on the space which surrounds us and to encourage us to question it from new perspectives and points of view.

As opposed to what happens with minimal art, where “what you see is what you see”, Downsborough causes us to watch the most radical subtleties of space and geometry. And he achieves this with surprising results (or at the very least, unusual results) whichever disciplines he chooses. His installations, for example, that *sui generis* combination of sculptures and mural works, generally made out of black adhesives over white backgrounds and letters or words, sometimes with meaning and sometimes not. With this succinct grammar of elements, the artist subjects us to the empirical exercise of perception and establishes a code o language, which is metaphorically invisible, and which he shares with the viewer. If we take into account the principles of minimalism, Downsborough's discourse is a contradiction, as it sets the immediacy of perceptive empiricism against the geometric construction of vision.

This is, precisely, where we are to find the key to understand the rest of his artistic production: the structuralisation of space is the beginning and the end of all of his creations. The photographic series he shows here–loose images, diptychs and triptychs–are a very illustrative example. As are his example, both videographic and on celluloid. In *PASS-ING*, the moving camera films unmoving objects. In *THRU*, a steadycam records moving objects. *AS/JIN* proposes an interpretation of the urban space by means of constant comings and goings from the inside to the outside of buildings. Despite its linear appearance, all of these works are erected and formulated on the basis of two concepts: position and movement. Although the most surprising and striking is that, visually, they end up behaving like Japanese haikus, those static poems which illuminated a moment, almost always by means of landscape.