

**“Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology and Installation Art.” in Claudia
Giannini, ed. *Installations Mattress Factory 1990-1999*. Pittsburgh:
University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001; pp. 18-23.**

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Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology and Installation Art

Robert Hobbs

Most scholars focusing on installation art have exhibited a common desire to understand its post mid-twentieth-century currency through carefully tracing its genealogy.¹ In their efforts to comprehend its distinctness, they cite a range of disparate sources, including such genres as the decorous art of the tableau vivant and the improvisational outdoor environments of self-taught artists. They have also referred to such acclaimed works as the post–World War I Merzbau constructions of Hanover Dadaist Kurt Schwitters, Marcel Duchamp's *One Mile of String* for the First Papers of Surrealism exhibition in 1942, Frederick Kiesler's 1954 piece entitled *Galaxies* for the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York, Louise Nevelson's many black wall environments initiated in the decade of the fifties, Yves Klein's contemporaneous empty galleries evoking the Void, and Allan Kaprow's events, environments, and happenings that were developed around this same time. Scholars undertaking these studies have been assiduous in acknowledging legitimate and distinctly different threads leading to the widespread efflorescence of installation art that began in the late 1950s and early 1960s and has continued to the present.

Centre Georges Pompidou, Rosalind Krauss proposed that the initial French reading of Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* differs from the American understanding of it in the 1960s. She pointed out that soon after the publication of Merleau-Ponty's book in 1945, Giacometti's figures were regarded as particularly apt illustrations of its theories. The reason for this is that they seem to be “. . . forever caught in the aureole of the beholder's look, bearing forever the trace of what it means to be seen *by* another *from* the place from which he views.”² Because Merleau-Ponty's work was not translated into English until 1962, Krauss assumed an existential reading of his theories to have been unavailable to minimalists in the United States, consequently leaving them free to approach his preobjective experience

Their histories are careful and rewarding descriptions of *effects* based on mosaics of related phenomena that assume the force of a *raison d'être* when viewed together. Because these studies have been particularly conscientious in detailing installation art's serendipitous beginnings, this essay will explore specific *causes* leading to its accepted significance in the second half of the twentieth century by considering installation art a specific genre. It will concentrate on likely intellectual sources for this new form category by looking first at Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which examines embodied, interactive perception in which the “see-er” becomes one with what is seen. It will then consider the relevancy of westernized Zen and, after a brief detour introducing the concept of “suture” from psychoanalytic film theory, it will show how installation art incorporates viewers into itself, thus cementing Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the enmeshing of see-er and seen that constitutes preconscious perception, or what Merleau-Ponty refers to as preobjective vision.

Harold Rosenberg and Phenomenology

In her 1983 catalogue essay for Richard Serra's exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne,

in a radically new way,³ While Krauss's comments are appropriate and useful given the received wisdom regarding Merleau-Ponty's impact on American art at the time of her writing, my recent research on the American post–World War II response to his thought has uncovered his important discussions and correspondence with critic Harold Rosenberg. The Rosenberg/Merleau-Ponty connection shows that the latter's ideas were a direct influence on American art well before the first English translation of his work became available in 1962.

Rosenberg read many of Merleau-Ponty's major phenomenological studies in French and used them in 1952 to develop his concept “action painting,”⁴ a special existential/phenomenological reading of abstract expressionism in terms of its improvisational means. Rosenberg's famous essay, “The American Action Painters,” in which he first developed the term, “action painting,” was in fact written for the journal *Les Temps modernes*, edited by Merleau-Ponty and his long-time friend Jean-Paul Sartre. Most likely Rosenberg did not submit it to them for publication because Merleau-Ponty had resigned from the editorial board at this time.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological explication of action served as a background to Rosenberg's explanation of the way that action works. The French philosopher's ideas are useful in explaining why this New York critic was content to focus on the generative aspects of art rather than attend only to finished pieces as did his major competitor, critic Clement Greenberg. Merleau-Ponty asserted, “. . . painting does not exist before painting . . . style is an exigency. . . .”⁵ And he commented, “A vision or an action that is finally free throws out of focus and regroups objects of



the world for the painter and words for the poet.”⁶ We might compare Merleau-Ponty’s observations with Rosenberg’s claim in “The American Action Painters” that “The new American painting is not ‘pure art,’ since the extrusion of the object was not for the sake of the aesthetic. The apples weren’t brushed off the table in order to make room for perfect relations of space and color. They had to go so that nothing would get in the way of the act of painting.”⁷

Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy might be summarized as a reworking of the idea of phenomenological reduction, which is Edmund Husserl’s *epoché*, or bracketing of everyday phenomena from that which is known. This serves as a method for becoming aware of one’s initial relationship to the world, and as a means of coming to terms with consciousness through one’s own acts rather than from a preconceived perspective or a later reflection. Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on the primordial territoriality of the body that comes before thought and conditions it is no doubt one reason that Rosenberg, in “The American Action Painters,” preferred the preobjective world of action to the nonobjective world of formalist art.

While Merleau-Ponty’s (and Rosenberg’s) discussions are confined to painting, we do not need to look far afield to see how this philosopher’s ideas could be interpreted by artists wishing to break away from painting’s confines to environmentally-based art. A notable example from his *Phenomenology of Perception* is the introduction to Part Two, subtitled “The World as Perceived,” with the heading, “The theory of the body is already a theory of perception.” This section begins with the engaging analogy, “Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism. . . .”

And it continues with the following speculation regarding the dynamics of Merleau-Ponty’s body as a sensate organ:

*When I walk round my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to me could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them represents the flat seen from one spot or another, and if I were unaware of my own movements, and of my body as retaining its identity through the stages of those movements.*⁸

Although several steps ahead of our narrative, this example suggests at the outset the relevancy of Merleau-Ponty’s thought for installation art.

Allan Kaprow

Merleau-Ponty’s name would most likely not even have been known by Allan Kaprow in the 1950s, but he nonetheless served as the unknown bearer of the philosopher’s ideas. Over the years Kaprow has repeatedly credited Rosenberg’s action painting⁹ and Jackson Pollock’s fields of dripped paint as sources for the events and happenings he initiated, without ever mentioning Merleau-Ponty’s ideas. Kaprow’s lack of familiarity with this French phenomenologist’s thought is all the more remarkable when one considers the following passage from his 1958 essay “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock” that seems to have been inspired by it:

*I am convinced that to grasp Pollock’s impact properly, we must be acrobats, constantly shuttling between an identification with the hands and body that flung the paint and stood “in” the canvas and submission to the objective markings, allowing them to entangle and assault us. This instability is indeed far from the idea of a “complete” painting. The artist, the spectator, and the outer world are much too interchangeably involved here.*¹⁰

We can compare this prescient statement with Merleau-Ponty’s observation:

In short, he [Cézanne] wanted to understand what inner force holds the world together and causes the proliferation of visible forms. [Balzac’s] Frenhofer had the same idea about the meaning of painting: “A hand is not simply part of the body, but the expression and continuation of a thought which must be captured and conveyed. . . . That is the real struggle!”¹¹

The major difference between these two approaches is that Merleau-Ponty remains convinced of paint’s ability to communicate the uncertainty of

Yayoi Kusama, the artist in her work, *Repetitive Vision*, 1996, Formica, adhesive dots, mannequins, mirrors

Jessica Stockholder, *Mixing food with the bed*, 1989, appliances, wood, newspaper, bricks, concrete, and paint



preobjective vision, while Kaprow determines in this essay that Pollock “destroyed painting.”¹² Kaprow looked further afield for a new type of art that was consonant with his thinking, and, as a result, developed events and happenings, which were crucial precursors to installation art.

While Kaprow was to serve as an unwitting carrier of the phenomenological strain that would proliferate widely in the 1960s, a number of artists—such as Robert Morris in his early Green Gallery installations and Bruce Nauman in his series of corridor pieces—knowingly embraced Merleau-Ponty’s thought. What made his brand of phenomenology so seductive was its apparent ability to release artists from the stranglehold of feeling that was one of abstract expressionism’s major legacies. It did this by dispelling the concept that sensations might reside in objects (like paintings). Instead of accepting the idea that feelings inhere in the objective world, Merleau-Ponty suggested that they are twice-removed from reality. First they must be abstracted from human consciousness in order to be ascribed to objects that in turn are assumed to embody them. This enables them to be projected back on the consciousness that conceived them in the first place. In addition to undermining sensations, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology promised a release from the twin pitfalls of empiricism and intellectualism that forced people to choose between a world that imposed its reality on them, making them its subject, and a world that was forced to accommodate itself to their thought.

In place of empiricism and intellectualism, Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy offered installation artists a primal vision lurking beneath their personal subjectivities. It claimed, in fact, to create a ground zero realm predicated on the dialectics of being structured by their actual bodies at the same time they were apprehending it. This doubly-viewed realm of the see-er becoming the seen was emphatically consecrated through Merleau-Ponty’s citation of Cézanne’s observation, “In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me.” It made the creation of art a collaborative proposition between artist and material, thus getting rid of the idea (grounded in the so-called “intentional fallacy”) that artists’ intentions might simply determine the work. Even more importantly, it transformed the viewer’s role so that looking became a dynamic and ongoing pursuit. We might say that in installation art, the role of the viewer is enhanced as never before, and it is this role that needs to be understood if we are to appreciate the important contributions that this recently developed genre offers to our way of knowing the world.

Brian O’Doherty’s Spectator

In his notable series of *Artforum* essays entitled “Inside the White Cube” (published in 1976 and 1986), the critic Brian O’Doherty explores the subject of the modern art gallery as an intelligible space informing and providing permission for new art. While he does not directly refer to phenomenology, his essay “The Eye and the Spectator,” included in this series, is a witty treatment of phenomenological themes. O’Doherty characterizes the Spectator (also referred to as the Viewer and Perceiver in the Merleau-Pontian terms of embodied perception) as possessing a “slightly clumsy” mien, an appearance of being “a little dumb,” and the habit of “stagger[ing] into place before every new work that requires his presence.”¹³ In contrast to the Spectator, O’Doherty views the Eye as aristocratic, highly sensitive, disembodied, and necessary to the smooth operation of modernist painting when he notes:

The Eye is the only inhabitant of the sanitized installation shot. The Spectator is not present. Installation shots are generally of abstract works; realists don’t go in for them much. . . . The art the Eye is brought to bear on almost exclusively is that which preserves the picture plane—mainstream modernism. The Eye maintains the seamless gallery space, its walls swept by flat planes of duck. Everything else—all things impure, including collage—favors the Spectator. The Spectator stands in space broken up by the consequences of collage, the second great force that altered the gallery space.¹⁴

Although O’Doherty is referring to the early modernist period in this passage, his analysis is



rooted in the assumptions of his time, particularly his acceptance of a phenomenological mode of perception for works of art in which the contiguities of daily life play significant roles. This interpretation is confirmed by O'Doherty's analysis of the Spectator approaching Schwitters's *Merzbau* when he cryptically writes, "Both space and artist—we tend to think of them together—exchanged identities and masks."¹⁵

These words are not far removed from Merleau-Ponty's ideas, particularly his exegesis on the role of the mirror image in his essay "Eye and Mind":

*... the mirror image anticipates, within things, the labor of vision. Like all other technical objects ... the mirror arises upon the open circuit [that goes] from seeing body to visible body. ... The mirror itself is the instrument of a universal magic that changes things into a spectacle, spectacles into things, myself into another, and another into myself.*¹⁶

Just as it is a short distance from O'Doherty's sentence to Merleau-Ponty's statement, so it is also a brief move from Merleau-Ponty's ideas to installation works incorporating mirrors, such as the Mattress Factory's two mirrored chambers *Repetitive Vision* and *Infinity Dots Mirrored Room* (both 1996) by Yayoi Kusama. In them, participants' identities are multiplied as they seem to be reflected into infinity, presenting them with both literal and multiple instances of viewers becoming the viewed. Although we enter Kusama's special terrain in these mirrored rooms, we also take over this realm, making it our own, through the series of ongoing exchanges—seeing ourselves being seen—that Merleau-Ponty has described as an inherently phenomenological activity.

Zen and the Everyday

Installation art's ready acceptance of the quotidian, ranging from the everyday materials used for building and for furnishing public and private interiors to the ephemera of daily living, can be considered a natural extension of phenomenology. In addition, this art can be regarded as an appreciation of the significance of everyday reality that is one of Zen's major contributions. Admittedly, post-World War II Zen in the West is different from its Japanese counterpart. Chiefly promulgated by D. T. Suzuki, who employed such terms as *keiken* and *taiken* (which are rarely found in pre-twentieth-century religious literature) to connote direct experience, western post-war Zen was far more pragmatic and far less doctrinal than its eastern counterpart.¹⁷ Suzuki's early introduction to western thinking while he was still living in Japan, in addition to his later self-appointed role as the Japanese spokesperson for Zen in the West, made him susceptible to its desire for a life-changing form of enlightenment. *Satori* (meaning sudden understanding) and *kensho* (coming to terms with one's original face) seemed to fill a western desire for unmediated experience in an overly mediated world. Such terms as *satori* and *kensho* are consistent with Merleau-Ponty's concept of preobjective vision. In addition to these interpretations of *kensho* and *satori*, which incorporate western ideology within a distinctly eastern orientation, this hybridized form of Zen shares with its eastern counterpart an interest in embodied perception that has made it particularly appealing to both installation artists and phenomenologists. Zen's emphasis on integrating the body with the mind and spirit is evident in the types of pursuits undertaken by initiates who often choose to learn this belief system indirectly as part of their training in archery, calligraphy, and flower arranging. In undertaking these activities, they seek an inner harmony between themselves and their acts, so that the limitations of the ego are surmounted and an indefinable "it" that superintends the archer, the bow, the arrow, and the target takes over when the bull's eye is hit time after time.¹⁸ Such transcendence of the self is akin to Merleau-Ponty's desire to move beyond personal subjectivity and find a pre-personal—and even anonymous—being. As he pointed out in his preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, "The world is not what I think, but what I live through."¹⁹

Similar to phenomenologically based art, the understated character of Zen art traditionally depends on both artists' and viewers' participation. Nowhere is this participation more evident than in traditional tea ceremonies, where visitors are immersed in a range of sensory experiences. They might

John Cage, *changing exhibition at the mattress factory*, 1991, chairs and art works

Damien Hirst, *Bad Environment for White Monochrome Paintings*, 1994, steel, glass, acrylic on canvas, plastic containers of food and water, sarcophaga, and musca domestica

Matthew McCaslin, *16 On Center*, 1990, metal studs, electric cable, light bulb

begin with the smells of the garden itself, the tactile sensation of washing their hands, the physical involvement of stooping to enter a rustic tea house, as well as the sounds of the water boiling and the tea bowls being washed. The visual beauty of the appurtenances of the entire tea ceremony, including the choice of painted scroll and special flower arrangement made to commemorate the fleeting sensations of the season and day on which it occurs, solemnizes the entire ritual, underscoring its ephemerality.

If we subtract from this entire ritual its precious refinements, including its highly developed nostalgia and its emphasis on nature, and replace it with western building traditions and manufactured objects, we begin to approximate aspects of installation art. Ridding ourselves of the Japanese connoisseur's over-refinement, this idea of immersion in sensory stimuli prepares us for the headlong encounters with the mounting detritus of western planned obsolescence that is an important component of much installation art. By doing so we come even closer to an entire group of installation works focusing on the diurnal. In these works, the Japanese appreciation of the simple presence of things finds its western equivalence in a frank acceptance of materiality. Such a transposition of commonplace elements into artificial components appears in Jessica Stockholder's 1989 installation at the Mattress Factory entitled *Mixing food with the bed*. In this piece, discarded appliances turned on their sides, building fragments, and a bathtub half-submerged in the wall were arranged in the gallery and partially painted with bright colors. In Stockholder's words, "The real elements and the painted elements are of equal value. . . . Mixing things which feel as if they are immiscible causes doors to open where there were none before. How we see informs how we are."²⁰

Although we must rethink Japanese Zen in order to appreciate the innovations of its American counterpart, we need to remember that eastern as well as western types of works are the result of affluent times. The seemingly egalitarian Zen art originally created by tea masters and shoguns can be compared to post-1950 vanguard works that were made in the West at a time when artists, intellectuals, and thoughtful collectors wished to separate themselves, at least aesthetically, from the rampant materialism embraced by the rest of their culture. This anti-materialist approach is the basis for John Cage's 1991 *changing installation at the mattress factory*, in which both everyday objects and works of art were subsumed under subject of daily changing installations over the 103 days comprising the exhibition.

Both phenomenology and Zen supported the development of new art forms predicated first on multisensory perceptions that involve the human

body and its surroundings. Most importantly, both of these theoretical constructs diminish the role of the artist's ego in support of a new type of interactive looking that synthesizes the viewer and the view. The possibilities of this new mode of perception have been of the utmost importance to installation artists since it has enabled them: (1) to reject the intentional fallacy and counter the residual romantic belief that works of art are mere bridges connecting the minds/spirits of artists with those of viewers, (2) to invoke a new directness in line with a rapidly changing, media-dominated world, (3) to develop the theoretical basis for an open-ended art capable of responding to these changes, and (4) to create new forms of interactive works, combining aspects of painting, sculpture, and architecture without being bound to elitist canons that channel looking along predetermined lines.

A number of these criteria are evident in Damien Hirst's *Bad Environment for White Monochrome Paintings* (1994). In this piece, Hirst uses the life cycle of ordinary house flies (*musca domestica*) to create, during the course of the exhibition, interactions with four pristine, white, seven-foot by seven-foot monochrome paintings. In front of each painting he places a black bowl. The first is filled with powdered sugar and powdered milk; the second, which is covered with gauze, holds water; and the third and fourth contain a recipe of molasses, wheat germ, yeast and water that provides sustenance for the maggots that are hatched from flies' eggs that have been laid there. Three of the paintings, which have been positioned vertically, have been sprayed with sugar water. During the exhibition, they are sullied by flies feasting on their surfaces. The fourth painting, positioned horizontally, is sprayed with a clear adhesive that will not dry,

so that it becomes a graveyard for these insects. Although the general trajectory of this piece might be predicted, its specific outcome depends on life itself. This new approach to art, which is inextricably connected with the changing world, has made artists less dependent on modes of perception that assume that viewers are firmly rooted in traditional culture and will use it as a diagnostic tool to interpret new art.

Differing from Zen but remaining firmly within the purview of Merleau-Pontian phenomenology, viewers who are apprehending particularly successful pieces of installation art for the first time need to respond to the question of whether the constructions before them should or should not be considered art. If they are works of art, these viewers must confront their own assumptions and prejudices regarding art even as they are viewing a particular work. Thus, looking is transformed from a passive acceptance of given objects in a known world (Merleau-Ponty's "act intentionality") to an understanding of unknowns (his "operative intentionality").

Suture

In order to comprehend more clearly the persuasiveness of installation works and their mode of implicating viewers, it helps to recognize the usefulness of the term "suture," which Jacques-Alain Miller originated in the late 1970s, and which has since become an accepted mode of interpretation in film criticism.²¹ If one thinks of suturing in its surgical sense of stitching together the two sides of a wound or incision, one comes close to Miller's use of the term. Suturing is not only a means by which a viewer identifies with a given work of art, it is the agency by which an onlooker is called into being as a subject so that he or she assumes a subjective role through it. As Merleau-

Ponty pointed out, "Seeing is not a certain mode of thought or presence to self; it is the means given me for being absent from myself. . . ." ²² We might think of this absence as analogous to a viewer's wound or a break in identity which the subjectivity of a given work of art both catalyzes and also helps to heal, even if only briefly. In this way, viewers are induced to undergo the experience offered by the work in order to come to terms with the new identity it holds out to them. Sometimes installation art, in a similar way to classic film, assumes a coercive stance in relation to its viewers. In installation art, a variety of provisional and discontinuous subjectivities await viewers: in this genre viewers may be recruited as subjects, but their roles depend on the dynamics resulting from a synthesis formed between themselves and the special environment awaiting them.²³ These subjectivities are even more discontinuous than in classic films: they are negotiated and then renegotiated in the time necessary to move through the installation. Matthew McCaslin pointed out in his statement for *16 On Center* (a 1990 installation at the Mattress Factory), "The inbetween, to be somewhere, to be in a room, to be in a wall, to be in your mind, to be in my mind. A work place. A domestic place, any place, every place. The journey, the continual, letting go to find out from within."

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Notes

1. Important recent summaries of the genre include: Julie H. Reiss, *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1999) and Hugh M. Davies and Ronald J. Onorato, *Blurring the Boundaries: Installation Art 1969–1996* (San Diego: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997).
2. Rosalind E. Krauss, "Richard Serra, a Translation," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1986), 263.
3. Their interest in straightforward description and desire to avoid emotions stems not only from the excesses of abstract expressionism but also from the literary precedence of French New Wave novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet, who wished to look at the world through an objective lens. In such novels as *Jealousie*, he plays with the limits of objectivity and suggests that it can serve as the mask of paranoia. But even this rationality gone awry appealed to the American artists who wished to rid themselves of the excesses of the romantic ego.
4. Robert Hobbs, "Rosenberg's 'The American Action Painters' and Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology," (paper presented to the 1999 College Art Association Annual Meeting, New York City).
5. Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 54.
6. *Ibid.*, 56.
7. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *ARTnews* 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 50.
8. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1962; rpt. 1996).
9. Elaine O'Brien, "The Art Criticism of Harold Rosenberg: Theaters of Love and Combat" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1977), 53, note 68. In this footnote, O'Brien refers to her conversation with Allan Kaprow in La Jolla, California, 23 September 1992, as well as correspondence between Kaprow and Rosenberg in the 1960s in the Rosenberg/Takak Papers, now located in the J. Paul Getty Library and Archives. Cf. Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., n.d.) in which he points out the following in the essay "Art and Architecture," written in 1959 and revised in 1961: *Painting, which has been without question the most advanced and experimental of the plastic arts, has over and over provoked the question, "Should the format or field always be the closed, flat rectangle?" by utilizing gestures, scribbings, large scales with no frame, which suggest to the observer that both the physical and metaphysical substance of the work continue indefinitely in all directions beyond the canvas.*
10. Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock." *ARTnews* 57, no. 6: 24–26, 55–57.
11. Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 18.
12. Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock."
13. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, expanded edition (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), 39.
14. *Ibid.*, 42.
15. *Ibid.*, 45.
16. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).
17. Robert H. Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism" in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 107–160.
18. The classic statement on Zen and archery is Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953).
19. *Phenomenology of Perception*, xvi–xvii.
20. *Mattress Factory: Installation and Performance 1982–1989*. (Pittsburgh: Mattress Factory, 1991), 202.
21. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Sutures (elements of the logic of the signifier)," *Screen* 18, no. 4 (1977–78): 24–34.
22. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. Michael B. Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 146.
23. A good source on this subject is Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).