



Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art: Dt. /Engl. /Franz.

Mel Bochner



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Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art: Dt. /Engl. /Franz. Mel Bochner

Cited as the first Conceptual art exhibition and responsible for spawning decades of lousy Xeroxed artists' books, Mel Bochner's 'Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant To Be Viewed as Art' (1966) is the bedrock of mid-century Conceptual art history. Ironically, the project was the result of an innocuous Christmas exhibition at the New York School of Visual Arts that Bochner, as an art history faculty member, was asked to curate. He collected drawings from his friends, conveying to them that the offerings needn't be 'art' per se. Not satisfied with Bochner's procurement of work, the gallery's curator refused to spend money framing the submissions, so Bochner photocopied four sets of the 100 drawings, reduced them each down to standard paper size, inserted the sets into a binder and placed each binder on a pedestal. In the exhibition 'Mel Bochner: Language 1966-2006' viewers could flip through these seminal books, comprising studio notes and working drawings by Sol LeWitt, Dan Flavin, John Cage and Donald Judd, among others. The Conceptual and historical weight of this piece are located in its attitude more than in its content. Like Bochner's assessment of Minimalism at that time, the four identical black office-style archives signal a paradigm shift away 'from the humanistic stammering of Abstract Expressionism, Happenings and Pop art'.



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