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Final Paper

The *Banco/Marco de pruebas* Project: The Catalog as a
Conceptual Artwork

I.

Many artists signal the completion of their artwork with a final paint stroke, video edit, or collage arrangement. Once this moment passes, the following steps in the process of marketing the work, namely in exhibitions, are perfunctory and bureaucratic. However, for artists like the contemporary Chilean multimedia artist Gonzalo Díaz, the artwork is simply one aspect of a larger artistic endeavor. *Banco/Marco de pruebas* [Testing Bench/Frame] is a project developed by Díaz beginning in 1986, after receiving the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. As a project, *Banco/Marco de pruebas* (*BMP*) denotes a group of artworks, an exhibition, and an exhibition catalog.¹ In contrast to the format of preceding works, for this project Díaz worked in reverse developing the exhibition catalog first in order to create the artworks that would be exhibited in the Galería de Arte Actual in 1988 (fig. 1). Thus, from its inception *BMP* was an unorthodox project.

With some ideas in mind, in the mid-1980s Díaz contacted Justo Pastor Mellado, a Chilean art critic with whom he had collaborated on other projects, who at that time was living in Paris. According to the artist:

I narrated to [Pastor Mellado] what I wanted to do. He wrote completely blindly, he wrote about an artwork that did not exist. Once I received the text, from that text I made the images [in the exhibition catalog]. And then I made the artworks in the exhibition.²

Pastor Mellado's essay, titled "Sueños privados, mitos públicos" [Private Dreams, Public Myths] was written in April 1988. In this essay Pastor Mellado engages the concepts central in

¹ The group of artworks includes: a central structure (workbench, two boxes of balusters, and a diptych) that today carries the title of *BMP*; one mixed media piece titled *Catálogo* [Catalog]; and three mixed media triptychs titled *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*, *Diamela Eltit, la degollada* [Diamela Eltit, The Beheaded One], and *Zulema Morandé, la escritora* [Zulema Morandé, The Writer]

² Gonzalo Díaz, interview with the author, December 15, 2009, Santiago, Chile. Translated by the author.

developing *BMP*; yet because of the nature of the project the text does not provide details about the actual work or exhibition. Once Díaz received this essay, he collaborated with a photo-mechanic to produce collages of images. The artist would gather several images, present them to the photo-mechanic in the layered format he had designed, and the photo-mechanic transformed them into collages that could be printed from. While these collages were being made, Díaz wrote image captions for the catalog that were unrelated to the images they appeared beneath.

According to Díaz, the captions “do not want to ‘say’ in all their textual extension what ‘we will be seeing’ throughout the image [...] they counter-say, and in general, un-say.”³ Díaz also wrote a short essay—titled *Cuestión preliminar* [Preliminary Question]—which appears before Pastor Mellado’s essay.

The exhibition catalog for *Banco/Marco de pruebas* functions as the blueprint for the works that would ultimately be on view in Arte Actual. According to Díaz, the images within the catalog were like “a plan for the artwork, like an outline for the piece.”⁴ In addition to the images, the other elements within the catalog also serve as Díaz’s guide for the artworks that constitute *BMP* because it is the catalog as a whole that represents the conceptualization of this project, not simply the images. The essays, image captions, and cover as well as the images contribute significantly to how the art objects would materialize.

Díaz’s unorthodox approach to the catalog is evident in his critique of institutions and his application of experimental language. Such a stance infuses this object with many characteristics

³ Gonzalo Díaz, “Cuestión preliminar,” in *Banco/Marco de pruebas* (Santiago, Chile: Galería Arte Actual, 1988), 1.

⁴ Díaz, interview with the author.

of conceptualism.⁵ Though the concept behind the *BMP* artworks are articulated through the illustrations, as alluded to in the previous paragraph, what is the role of the texts in communicating this concept? A central issue within this paper is how, by offering an infinite number of interpretations and unfolding concepts, the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* catalog performs as a conceptual artwork. With an understanding of how the catalog can also be perceived as a self-contained artwork, it is possible to better analyze the relationship between the catalog, and the artworks and the exhibition catalog it ostensibly documents. My hypothesis is that the *BMP* catalog is a conceptual artwork that displaces the physical artwork and exhibition as the most important record of the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* project.

II.

i.

At the heart of much conceptual art is a tendency towards institutional critique. Such a criticism manifests itself in numerous ways. For Alexander Alberro artists working with institutional critique often highlight the hypocrisy of an institution within their artworks; an artist may create a work that requires the exhibition space to be open for twenty-four hours for example, and when the institution refuses to comply, the artist underscores the inherent hypocrisy of the institution since it presents itself as accessible to the public.⁶ With the *BMP* catalog, Díaz's institutional critique varies. For example, the inversion of the catalog-making process challenges the traditional notion of catalogs. The institutional definition of a catalog

⁵ Throughout the semester we have discussed the differences between usage of the terms “conceptualism” and “Conceptual Art.” In this paper, I will use “Conceptual Art” to refer to the art created by artists mainly living in New York City during the 1960s and 1970s, whose art is discussed in texts by Benjamin Buchloh, Peter Osborne, and Lucy Lippard, to name a few. I will use “conceptualism” as more of an umbrella term that refers to artistic practices that are related to this moment of conceptual art.

⁶ Alexander Alberro, Discussion for *Conceptualism and Institutional Critique* Seminar (The University of Texas at Austin, November 17, 2010).

consists of: an art historical essay regarding the artist and their artworks; installation images; exhibition checklist; and artist information. Instead, the *BMP* catalog includes text and images that allude to the concepts surrounding an non-existent artwork and, perhaps most boldly, this catalog not function in the traditional way as a historic document.

Another aim of Díaz's institutional critique is with art institutions performing as sponsors. One of the most prominent texts on the cover of the exhibition catalog denotes an important sponsor of artistic endeavors—the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Beneath the most significant texts on the exhibition catalog cover—artist name, exhibition title— appears the following statement: “esta muestra forma parte de un proyecto aprobado por la JOHN SIMON GUGGENHEIM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION” [this show is part of a project approved by the JOHN SIMON GUGGENHEIM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION] (fig. 2). In 1987, while developing *Banco/Marco de pruebas*, Díaz was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in the field of Fine Arts. This funding allowed Díaz to amplify the archival density of *Banco/Marco de pruebas*:

In that moment I had won the Guggenheim scholarship, and so I had much more ease with which to produce [art], and I came from a complete state of poverty. And so, it was easier to produce a bit of everything, which I think also has a bit of an effect on the excessive baroque-ness of this piece.⁷

With *BMP* Díaz suddenly found himself at liberty to create an artwork without the constrictions of a budget. Thus, *Banco/Marco de pruebas* as a baroque piece is filled to the brim with images, three-dimensional objects, and other documents and is thus unique among his other works. But with regards to the catalog, why does Díaz prominently proclaim the source of his funding and, moreover, that this institution approves the exhibition? At work within this statement is a tension

⁷ Díaz, interview with the author.

inherent within much Conceptual Art, which is both “institutionally affirmative and [has] critical dimensions.”⁸ Therefore, perhaps this declaration is a means of demonstrating that by extension he has also been approved by the art establishment. Díaz affirms the Guggenheim Foundation as an institution by creating an artwork with their funding and exhibiting it under their name. Yet, by creating a piece symbolized by excess and stating that the exhibition has gained the approval of an institution, Díaz also criticizes the role of art institutions in influencing artists and thus, the direction of contemporary art production. Moreover, the *BMP* project is inherently critical of institutions since, according to the Chilean art critic Nelly Richard, “in a country like Chile, where the institutions are not only guardians of order but also agents of destruction, it is more difficult to accept the type of art that merely gives pleasure and no longer questions its complicity with such institutions.”⁹ Therefore, Díaz’s critical stance of the Guggenheim also reflects the tendency of Chilean artists also working within conceptualism during the 1970s and 1980s to create art that was not merely aesthetic but also questioned institutions.

As stated earlier the *BMP* catalog challenges what an exhibition catalog traditionally accomplishes—documentation of an artwork and/or exhibition—since the catalog contains neither artworks nor installation images related to the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* pieces and exhibition, respectively. This experimentation with the exhibition catalog and its role in relation to its exhibition echoes Lucy Lippard’s efforts with her exhibitions of Conceptual Art in *557,087* (Seattle), *955,000* (Vancouver), and *2,972,453* (Buenos Aires), shows which took place between 1969 and 1970. Each artist designed one card while Lippard used the other notecards for the bibliography and other texts relevant to the shows. At the exhibition spaces, the cards were

⁸ Peter Osborne, *Conceptual Art* (London; New York: Phaidon, 2002), 42.

⁹ Nelly Richard, “Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile Since 1973,” *Art & Text* 21 (1986): 20.

displayed as “randomly arranged packs of index cards” allowing viewers to skim them and “discard whatever s/he found uninteresting” (fig. 3).¹⁰ As a collection, for each show these notecards functioned as the exhibition catalog. Lippard critiqued traditional exhibition catalogs by playing with the form of the catalog, its accessibility, and the participation of the artists by giving the artist the liberty to do whatever they wanted on their note cards. Moreover, the notecards signified a space where the artists could express themselves in addition to the artwork they had on display. Thus, these notecards become an artwork in and of themselves as well as performing as exhibition catalogs. In addition to challenging orthodox notions of an exhibition catalog, Díaz’s work with the *BMP* catalog also parallels Lippard’s efforts since he, as the artist, has a strong if not principal role in the development of the catalog.

The critique of the catalog also signals another significant point of contention within conceptualism—the presence of the artist. Díaz is present within the catalog in many ways: from how the catalog was developed, to how the images were layered, to the issues Pastor Mellado would write about, to his own essay. The role of the artist was highly debated in early Conceptual Art. In many ways Conceptual Art promoted the “death of the author” as the primary authority of the artwork, thereby removing the “traditional hierarchical model of privileged experience based on authorial skills and acquired competence of reception,” since now the audience has the option of interpreting the artwork without the intervening figure of the artist.¹¹ Yet, critical writings by the artist were essential components of artistic production for many early Conceptual artists, like Joseph Kosuth. These texts signaled “the birth of the artist as self-curator’ ... [and] an inflation

¹⁰ Lucy Lippard, “Escape Attempts,” in *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California of Press, 1997), x-xi.

¹¹ Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 140.

in the cultural authority of the artists's critical discourse. Conceptual art required new modes of institutional validation."¹² Therefore, the use of language is a way to maintain the author's presence. According to Mari Carmen Ramírez, the Latin American case of conceptualism presents the artist as the "encoder' or 'organizer' of meaning" who enabled "the (re)insertion of the active social subject into the communication circuit."¹³ Díaz follows these strands as artist-curator and artist-organizer-of-meaning as he conceptualizes how language will be communicated in the *BMP* catalog. Within the Chilean avant-garde of the 1970s and 1980s exhibition catalogs enjoyed a prestigious position—

In the absence of other publication outlets to authorise or sponsor thought on the works of the new scene, the exhibition catalogues, together with a few magazines and some occasional monographs, contained all the self-reflection and critical textuality which characterizes the period.¹⁴

Thus, exhibition catalogs were essential in documenting the new type of art emerging during this period, especially in terms of containing writing done by the artist. As noted earlier, conceptualism in Latin America often called for the more active presence of the artist as a writer; a quality that was especially essential in Chile since, "due to the lack of an established market for painting, the only investment the art scene can make is a discursive one. What cannot be speculated within the picture is transacted through the word."¹⁵ This citation is an excerpt from *Protocolo 1*, a text co-written by Díaz and Pastor Mellado in 1984. It reveals the value of the written word for many Chilean artists of this period and, most significantly, offers a glimpse of

¹² Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, 42-43.

¹³ Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-1980," in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 65.

¹⁴ Richard, "Margins and Institutions," 46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50. Footnote 5: Gonzalo Díaz and Justo Mellado, *Protocolo 1*, June 1984.

Díaz's motivations for giving language such a dominant position in the *BMP* catalog, an issue that will be explored in the next section.

ii.

Díaz's experimentation with language within the exhibition catalog also marks this text as a conceptual artwork. This experimentation established the catalog as something perpetually unfinished, whose meaning springs not from a tidy conclusion but rather a continually unfolding layering of concepts.

One example of this experimentation is with the use of language to communicate visuality. Near the catalog spine, on the front cover, the following phrase appears: "este amarillo es el rojo que desprecia" [this yellow is the red that disdains] (fig. 4). The text appears in black letters on a yellow background. After an initial reading, the phrase seems incomplete, as if Díaz forgot to include a suitable noun to include at the end, like love, politics, or history. If we take the phrase at face value, assuming that Díaz intentionally left it unfinished, then the interpretation shifts to focus more on what the colors imply. The yellow refers to the color of the catalog, which is clearly seen as yellow; yet the phrase wants us to visualize the yellow as red. Moreover, here "rojo" is used as a noun, which confounds the issue of visuality since we are to think of "rojo" almost as an emotion; for example, hate or passion would adequately replace "rojo." The play between yellow and red is also evident in one of the artworks inspired by the *BMP* catalog, coincidentally titled *Catálogo* [Catalog] (fig. 5). In this multimedia work a yellow sheet of Mylar rests next to a red one, color here functions as a layer rather than filling in an object since the images remain black and white; this produces a jarring contrast. This color combination is also evident in the measuring tape that runs between the images and hopscotch grid. The other

dominant color in this work is blue, which underscores Díaz's interest in primary colors. The artist's interest in colors is also apparent in his recurring use of color registers, swatches of different colors used by publishers to grade the quality of their color publications, throughout *Banco/Marco de pruebas* (fig. 6). Thus these registers are a type of classificatory system and, along with the measuring tape and application of color, signal *BMP* to be a work still in the drafting stages.

This concept of language communicating a visual idea is also evident in Sol Lewitt's conceptualist work "Untitled" (Red Square, White Letters) (1962) (fig. 7). In this work, Lewitt mounts eight squares in the shape of one large square. Six squares have text within them: "red", "square", "white", "letters." Each of these words appear in both white and red letters. The exercise becomes complicated for the viewer when the color and text do not align as in the text of "white" which appears in red letters. As Benjamin Buchloh notes, Lewitt's inscriptions

Created a continuous conflict in the viewer/reader. This conflict was not just over which of the two roles should be performed in relation to the painting. To a larger extent it concerned the reliability of the given information and the sequence of that information: was the inscription to be given primacy over the visual qualities identified by the linguistic entity, or was the perceptual experience of the visual, formal, and chromatic element anterior to its mere denomination by language?¹⁶

Buchloh highlights an essential consequence of a work like this—can the information the artist provides be trusted? This notion of reliability of information is echoed throughout the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* catalog, beginning with the cover. Returning to the phrase "este amarillo es el rojo que desprecia", in the end what color do we perceive? There is a tension between the two options Díaz offers the viewer—the visual option of yellow versus the textual option of red.

¹⁶ Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969," 113.

Since neither option is more important than the other, there is no resolution to this question.

Thus, it is a significant ploy Díaz enacts since, by starting with the catalog cover, he establishes this as a “unreliable,” purely experimental, and conceptual project.

Another example of language experimentation within the *BMP* catalog is the play with word structure and meaning. One of the most notable examples is of the project title—Banco/Marco de pruebas—with letters crossed out on the catalog cover (fig. 8). At first it seems as if the original title was Banco de pruebas [test bench], implying a site where objects can be experimented with and evaluated, as if in a laboratory. Yet, someone has crossed out two letters in handwritten scrawl; replacing the B with m and N with r, the new title reads: mArCO DE PRUEBAS [frame of tests], implying the frame as a limiting device. This editing of letters also sets the groundwork for a plethora of other possible titles and interpretations—Barco de pruebas [ship of tests], where a ship becomes an experimental site; La prueba del marco [testing the frame], both literally—what exists beyond the framed works—and metaphorically—breaking away from the art historical canon; la prueba del manco [testing the one-handed person, or testing the old horse]. In a poststructuralist turn, by crossing out letters and adding new ones, Díaz invents new works to be associated with this project. Thus, from the literal beginning of the project the title remains unresolved and full of numerous interpretations. The title also functions in three ways: as the title of the installation, the exhibition, and the catalog. This further underscores Díaz’s penchant for experimentation and avoidance of conclusion since, in the end, it becomes more difficult to state what exactly constitutes *Banco/Marco de pruebas*. Thus Díaz “preserves the secret of [*BMP*’s] final signified.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.

Díaz's play with word structure and meaning is also evident in the optional word formations introduced in both essays. For the purposes of this paper, the essay content is not as important as noting the type of experimental language Pastor Mellado employs in his essay, "Sueños privados, mitos públicos," in the poststructuralist tradition used by many art critics and artists who wrote about art in Chile during the 1970s and 1980s. For example, one passage reads: "Como es, en particular, ju(z)gar al acceso de la identidad, productilizando su ex/ceso, en el sentido previo a la ex/cesión, buscando por este afecto, la letra faltante"¹⁸ (fig. 9). Here, Pastor Mellado wishes to simultaneously state "jugar al acceso de la identidad" [play with access to identity] and "juzgar al acceso de la identidad" [judge access to identity]. He also splits the words "exceso" [excess] and "excesión" [excessiveness] in order to imply "ceso" [stop] and "cesión" [cession], respectively. Moreover, in this sentence Pastor Mellado explicitly and playfully discusses the search for "the missing letter."

Díaz reiterates optional wording in a passage regarding the transition of the work into an exhibition space:

La empresa ha invertido entonces todo el proceso (y parte de su *capital icónico-lexical*) -lo(s) último(s) será(n) lo(s) primero(s)- restando así, en este balance, sólo el "espacio" de la galería: él es, propiamente, en BANCO DE PRUEBAS, el "Grado Cero" de una puesta a punto para una visualidad sobre-expuesta [The company has thus inverted the entire process (and part of its *iconic-lexical capital*) -the last one(s) will be the first- with just the gallery "space" remaining in this outcome: it is, fittingly, in TESTING BENCH, the "Zero Degree" of a final setup for an over-exposed visuality]¹⁹ (fig. 10)

"Empresa" as it is written and pronounced also suggests the terms "prensa" [printing press] and "imprenta" [printing site], thus offering alternative origins for those who have inverted the

¹⁸ Justo Pastor Mellado, "Sueños privados, mitos públicos," in *Banco/Marco de pruebas* (Santiago, Chile: Galería Arte Actual, 1988), 1.

¹⁹ Díaz, "Cuestión preliminar," 1.

process Díaz discusses. In the second part of the opening sentence, Díaz gives the option for plurality with “lo(s) último(s) será(n) lo(s) primero(s)” yet it is unclear which “últimos”/ “primeros” he is referring to. Are they the images? Are they the words that make up the “iconic-lexical capital” of this piece? The vagueness and overall feeling of being in one of the experimental stages of the project infuse the catalog’s concept with a sense of being perpetually unfinished, especially since the preceding passage closed Díaz’s catalog essay. Since it exhibits elements of institutional critique and experimentation with language, as well as an articulated and illustrated sense of the artwork’s concept, the *BMP* catalog is an artwork in and of itself.

III.

After considering these points on how the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* catalog functions as a conceptual artwork, it is important to compare it to the actual artworks Díaz developed for the show at the Galería Arte Actual. As noted earlier, Díaz uses the catalog as a blueprint for the works in this show. Therefore, the catalog’s images, essays, image captions, and cover materialize as artworks for the show at Arte Actual. For example, there are references to Diamela Eltit, Sor Teresa, and Zulema Morandé throughout Pastor Mellado’s essay, the images, and image captions. These three women also appear throughout the *BMP* artworks, notably in three triptychs that each carry the name of one woman. Moreover, all the images within the catalog are reproduced in some fashion in the artworks that constitute *BMP* (fig. 11). The clearest example of this reproduction is with *Catálogo* since it contains all the exhibition catalog’s images, in addition to a piece of measuring tape, a hopscotch grid, layers of colored Mylar, and a scythe (fig. 5). Through this work, the exhibition catalog is once again converted into an artwork, in this case one that has been exhibited along with other *Banco/Marco de pruebas* artworks. Yet, what is

the significance of incorporating the exhibition catalog into the exhibition and among the artworks it is ostensibly documenting? In one way it supports my claim that this exhibition catalog is indeed an artwork. Moreover, it is worth noting that only the images from the catalog have been reproduced in this multimedia work. Yet, this does not diminish the message of the catalog but rather reinforces it. Since the images appear within *Catálogo* as a consequence of the exhibition catalog being developed first, their appearance in this artwork is an acknowledgement of the exhibition catalog especially as the origins of the entire *BMP* project.

Within Conceptual Art, the catalog becomes more important than the art object as the nexus of the artwork's original concept. This re-working of the role of the exhibition catalog is evident in Seth Siegelaub's catalog for *January 5-31, 1969*, an exhibition he curated. This show, which took place in New York City, featured the art of four conceptual artists: Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner. At the heart of this show is "a reversal of the distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' information, which allowed for the exhibition catalogue to take precedence over the exhibits."²⁰ *January 5-31, 1969* "consists of (the ideas communicated in) the catalog; the physical presence (of the work) is supplementary to the catalog"²¹ (fig.12). Thus, this exhibition catalog becomes more important than the actual exhibition, in terms of how the artwork's concepts are communicated. For Siegelaub, there was a clear distinction between when an artwork existed as an idea versus as a physical entity—

When art does not any longer depend upon its physical presence, when it has become an abstraction, it is not distorted and altered by its representation in books and catalogues. It becomes primary information, while the reproduction of conventional art in books or catalogues is necessarily secondary information.²²

²⁰ Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, 29.

²¹ "January 5-31, 1969." *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...*, ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California of Press, 1997), 71.

²² Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, 29.

In this scenario, the artwork can exist simply as an abstraction within the primary information (i.e. the exhibition catalog). Therefore, the existence of the artwork in a physical format within the exhibition becomes almost inconsequential. In contrast to the *BMP* catalog, the *January 5-31, 1969* catalog contains exhibition checklists for each artist, as well as photographic reproductions of some artworks, and artist's statements. Siegelaub follows the traditional path of catalogs with the checklists and reproductions. Yet the artist's statements represent a key element in transforming these catalogs into primary information. For example, in the section on Lawrence Weiner, Siegelaub presents Weiner's famous conceptualist manifesto:

1. The artist may construct the piece
 2. The piece may be fabricated
 3. The piece need not be built
- Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist the decision as to condition rests with receiver upon the occasion of receivership²³

Weiner's statement suggests that whether the artwork materializes or not, the artist still constructs the piece in the abstract, conceptual sense. Thus, attending the actual exhibition is not as important as reading this catalog. This statement appears at the end of a four-page section dedicated to Weiner, after the list of his works in the show and two illustrations (fig. 13). By offering this variety of content, the reader is afforded to the possibility of gleaning a significant amount of information within a concise amount of catalog space. With this format, Siegelaub achieves a catalog that contains all the information that a reader may need about the artworks and the show, and perhaps more. Thus, this catalog reflects the essence of self-sufficiency.

²³ Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, *January 5-31, 1969* (New York: Seth Siegelaub Gallery, 1969), 11.

In comparison to *Banco/Marco de pruebas*, there is a stronger disconnect between the catalog and the exhibition. Whereas Siegelauab's catalog refers to actual works, both in text and image, Díaz's catalog does not: when the images from the catalog appear throughout the *BMP* artworks they appear either embedded within layers or within the piece titled after the exhibition catalog. Thus, in comparison to the actual artworks, the *BMP* catalog represents pure concepts. Yet, like the reader approaching Siegelauab's catalog for the first time the *BMP* catalog reader has most likely not seen the exhibition. Therefore, the actual outcome of the artworks is irrelevant. The *Banco/Marco de pruebas* catalog is self-sufficient because all the concepts for the *BMP* project have been conveyed within its pages. Moreover, this self-sufficiency is one of the defining characteristics of the catalog as a conceptual artwork.

If indeed the *BMP* catalog is a self-sufficient container of primary information, then does it displace the physical artwork? Since every exhibition—from Lippard's, to Siegelauab's, to Díaz's—eventually ends, then the historical documents recording the artwork (like the exhibition catalog, newspaper articles, etc.) would guarantee that the physical artwork would not be forgotten. Yet since *Banco/Marco de pruebas* does not document the physical manifestation of *BMP* then it deprives the *BMP* exhibition of a historical record thereby participating in the dematerialization of the art object. The *Banco/Marco de pruebas* catalog only maintains the memory of the catalog and the concepts behind the project, not what was actually produced and exhibited. Thus since the catalog enabled the material existence of the artwork, it was able to extinguish and dematerialize the life of the object through this lack of documentation. And thus, the catalog fully displaces the physical artwork as the locus of information on the *BMP* project.

IV.

In the end, it is provocative to consider that Díaz had completed the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* project once the catalog had been published. And therefore the creation of the artworks and their exhibition were simply residual activities that could not alter the content of the catalog—the nexus of the project—but rather exist simply as elaborations of that project. Díaz's inversion of the traditional role of the exhibition catalog also challenges the very purpose of creating an artwork, especially since documents of artworks persist for a longer time than the artworks themselves. Perhaps in the tradition of other discursive artists working within conceptualism who favored experimentation over conclusions, Díaz could not relegate his ideas simply to a three-dimensional object but instead desired to develop these concepts in the infinite space of the reader's mind. Through the catalog, Díaz creates a conceptual artwork that fully embodies the *Banco/Marco de pruebas* project.

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Figures

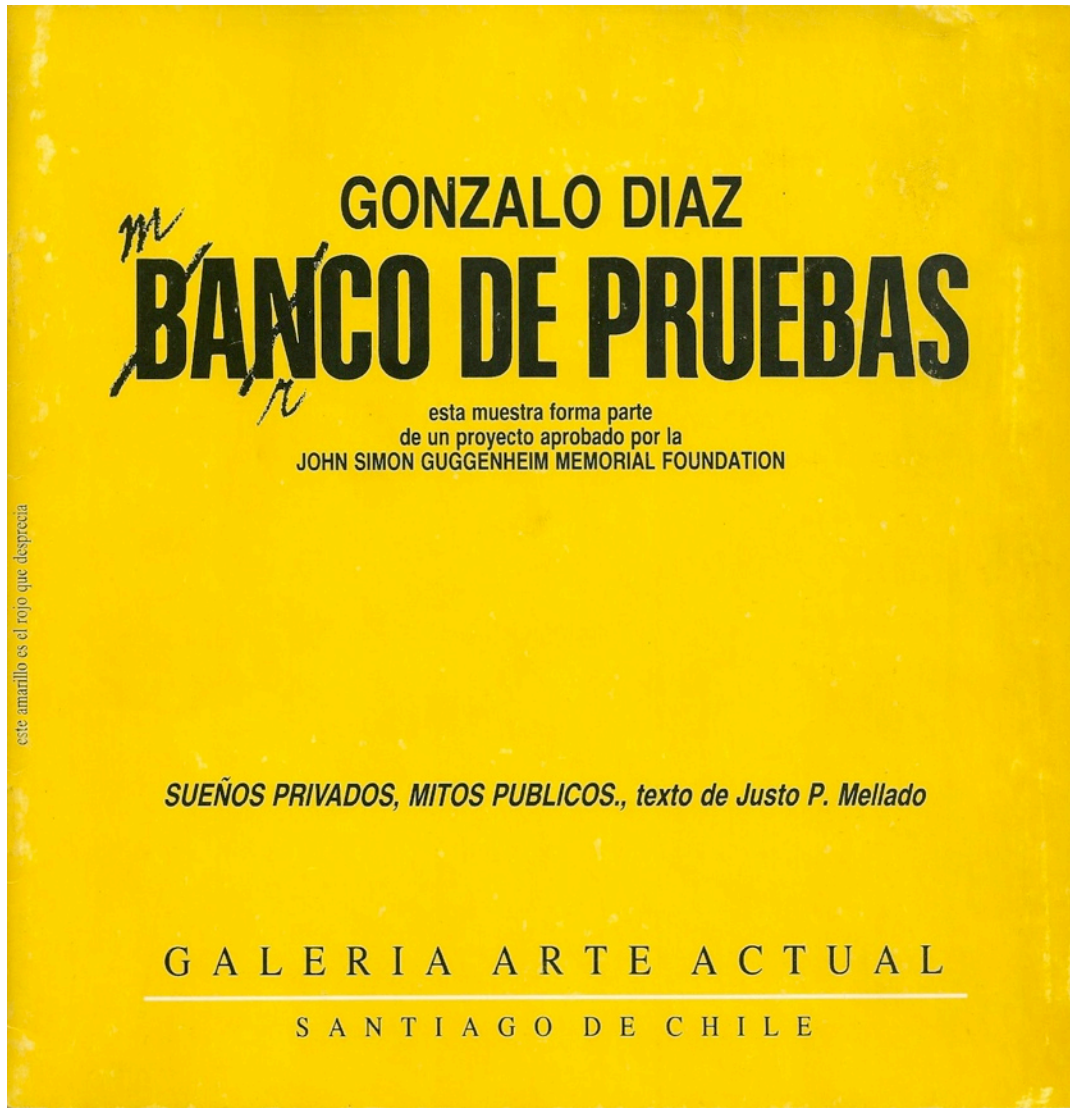
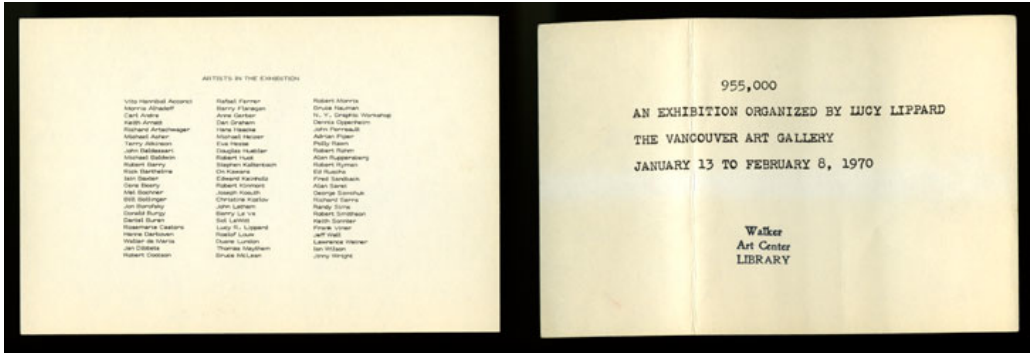


Figure 1: The *Banco/Marco de pruebas (BMP)* exhibition catalog cover. Scanned by the author.



Figure 2: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog cover



955,000

AN EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY LUCY LIPPARD
THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
JANUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 8, 1970

Walker
Art Center
LIBRARY




ALL THE THINGS I KNOW
 BUT OF WHICH I AM NOT
 AT THE MOMENT THINKING ...
 1:36 P.M.; 15 JUNE 1969
 NEW YORK.
 ROBERT BARRY

557,087

an exhibition organized by lucy r. lippard for the contemporary
 art council of the seattle art museum at the seattle art museum
 pavilion from september 5 to october 5 1969; version titled
 955,000 to vancouver art gallery 1970.

a) Anne Gerber
 b) organizer
 c) b. July 23, 1910
 d) lives in Seattle

e) Three different ways of sticking the paper:

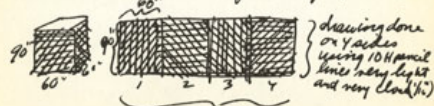




f)

SEATTLE

a) SOL LEWITT
 b) 9/9/28
 c) NYC
 A) Title: 3D unit with drawing on sides
 Size: 60" x 60" x 90"
 material: wood and masonite painted flat white

c)




Plan for direction of lines.



H. Barthelemy, B. October 10, 1946, New York, N.Y.

Instead of making any art I bought this television set.



The BUSINESS - MASTERY
 Scepter Command™ 600 Remote Control
 Compact Glass-screen 23" Deep 13-1/2" Color TV, Vinyl clad
 metal cabinet in grained Ashlar Walnut color. Zenith Tron 80
 Handcrafted Circuitry with exclusive Zenith Zoom Color
 System. Zenith Tron 80 features Zenith Zoom Color
 Command™ Control, Advanced Super Gold Video Guard Tuning
 System, Sunshower™ Color TV Picture Tube, Zenith REC-
 1000 Automatic Recording System, Zenith Tron 80
 Zenith Automatic VHF Touch Tuning Bar, 5" x 13" Tron-Cone
 Speaker. Cabinet size: 21 1/4" H, 28 1/2" W, 15 1/4" D.

Figure 3: Notecards from 955,000 (Vancouver) (1970)

este amarillo es el rojo que desprecia

Figure 4: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog cover



Figure 5: *Catálogo* [Catalog], 1988. Mixed media (paint, photography, silkscreen, photomechanical process, and Mylar attached to painted Masonite support), wood, and metal scythe. Object unframed: 82 3/4 x 60 inches; sculpture: 88 1/2 x 65 3/4 x 23 1/2 inches. The Blanton Museum of Art. Courtesy of the Blanton Museum of Art.



Figure 6: Detail from panel of *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*

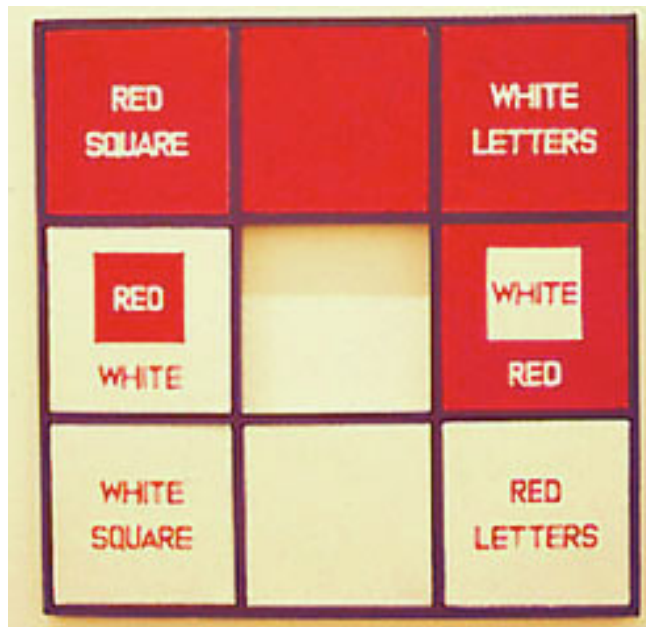


Figure 7: Sol Lewitt, "Untitled" (Red Square, White Letters) (1962)



Figure 8: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog cover

propriadamente *borderline*. Como es, en particular, ju(z)gar al acceso de la identidad, productilizando su ex/ceso, en el sentido previo a la ex/cesión, buscando por este afecto, la letra faltante. Investigo,

Figure 9: Detail from Pastor Mellado's essay, "Sueños privados, mitos públicos"

La empresa ha invertido entonces todo el proceso (y parte de su *capital icónico-lexical*) –lo(s) último(s) será(n) lo(s) primero(s)– restando así, en este balance, sólo el "espacio" de la galería; él es, propiadamente, el *BANCO DE PRUEBAS*, el "Grado Cero" de una puesta a punto para una visualidad sobre-expuesta.

G. Díaz. Santiago, Mayo 1988

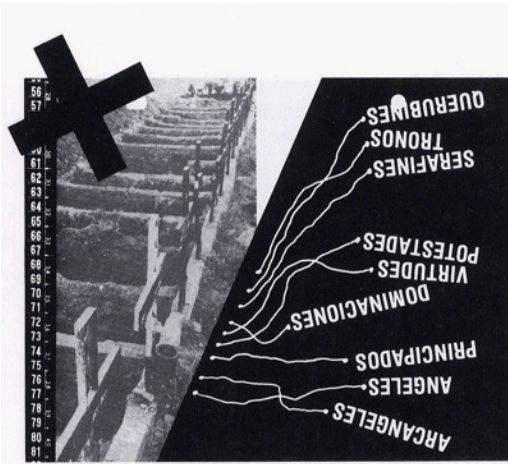
Figure 10: Detail from Díaz's essay, "Cuestión Preliminar"



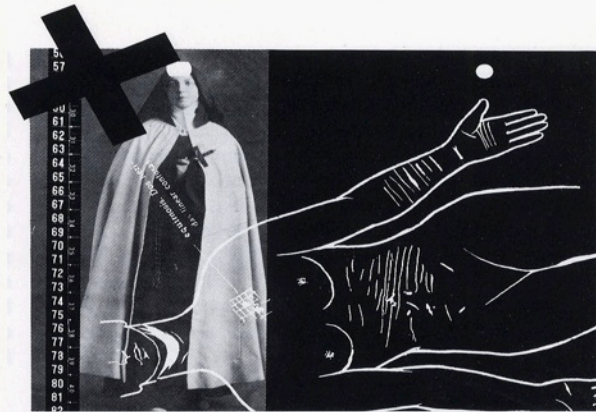
La Degollada, la Beata, la Lumpérica, estado larvario de tres Instintos, tres Vocaciones, tres Marcas del Cuerpo Social. Matricería para formar el perfil bioquímico de todo el Territorio.



La Revolución cópernicana para el Movimiento Retrógrado de los Cuerpos Celestes. Teología versus Astronomía en la investidura del Estado.

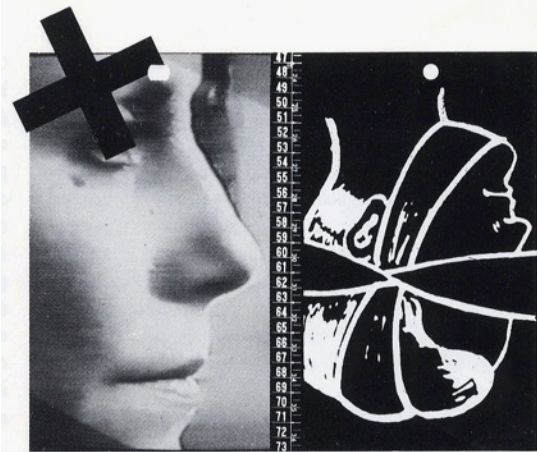


¡Ay de aquel que cultive Desiertos! Lo que se amarre en la Tierra, será amarrado en el Cielo. Levitación y Fuerza de Gravedad en la permisibilidad del Poder del Estado, de gracia.

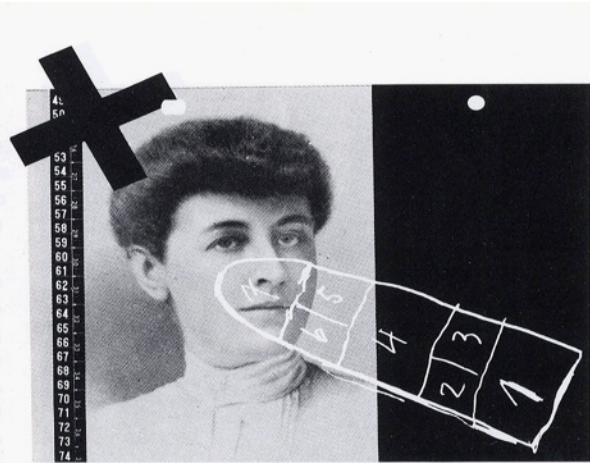


Sor Teresa, escritora; Diamela Eltit, degollada; Zulema Morandé, lumpérica: tres personas distintas y un sólo Dios no más. Los tres Poderes del Estado.

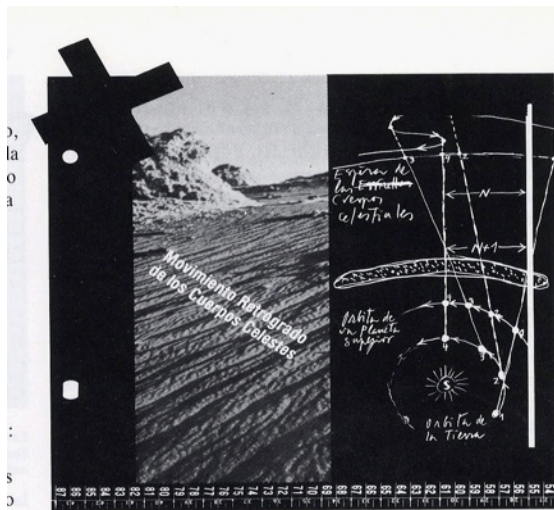
Figure 11: Images and image captions from the *BMP* exhibition catalog. Scanned by the author.



Diamela Eltit, degollada; Zulema Morandé, lumpérica; sor Teresa, escritora: tres personas distintas y un sólo Dios no más. Los tres Poderes del Estado.



Zulema Morandé, lumpérica; sor Teresa, escritora; Diamela Eltit, degollada: tres personas distintas y un sólo Dios no más. Los tres Poderes del Estado.



Allí donde YO esté, estará el Paraíso. El "Grado Cero" de la noción de Paisaje. La Sociedad contra el Estado para la marcación de todo Territorio.



La reconstrucción de la balastrada "neoclásica" en la inverecundia del Aparato del Estado. Teología versus Alta Costura: no porque tengamos que desvestir un santo (discurso) para vestir otro. El hábito ES el monje.

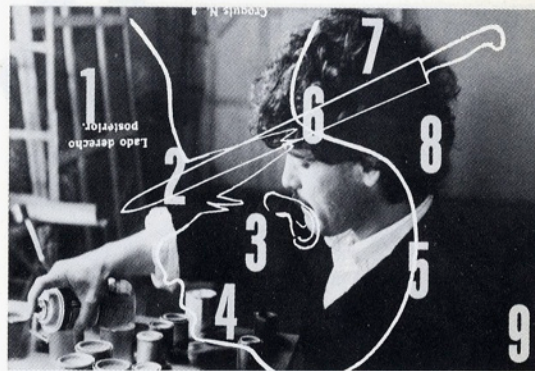


Figure 11, cont'd: Images and image captions from the *BMP* exhibition catalog. Scanned by the author.

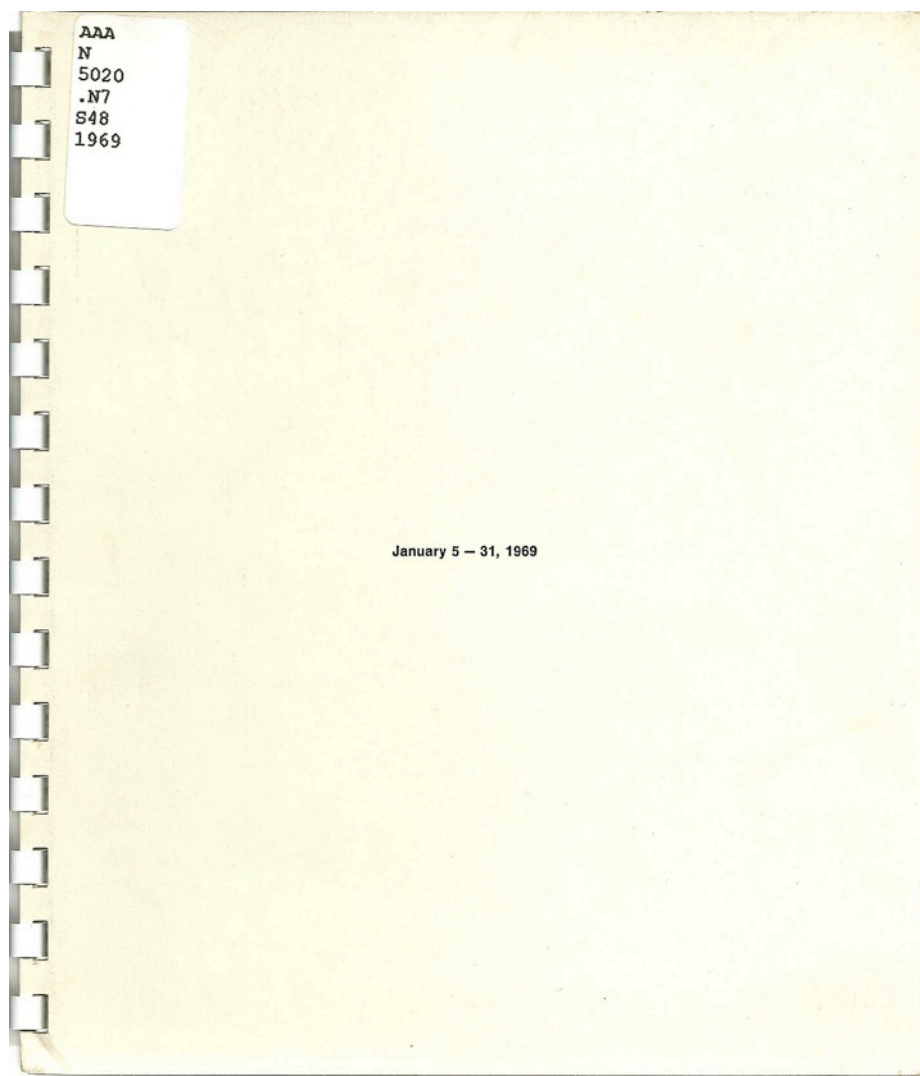


Figure 12: Cover of the *January 5-31, 1969* exhibition catalog. Scanned by the author.

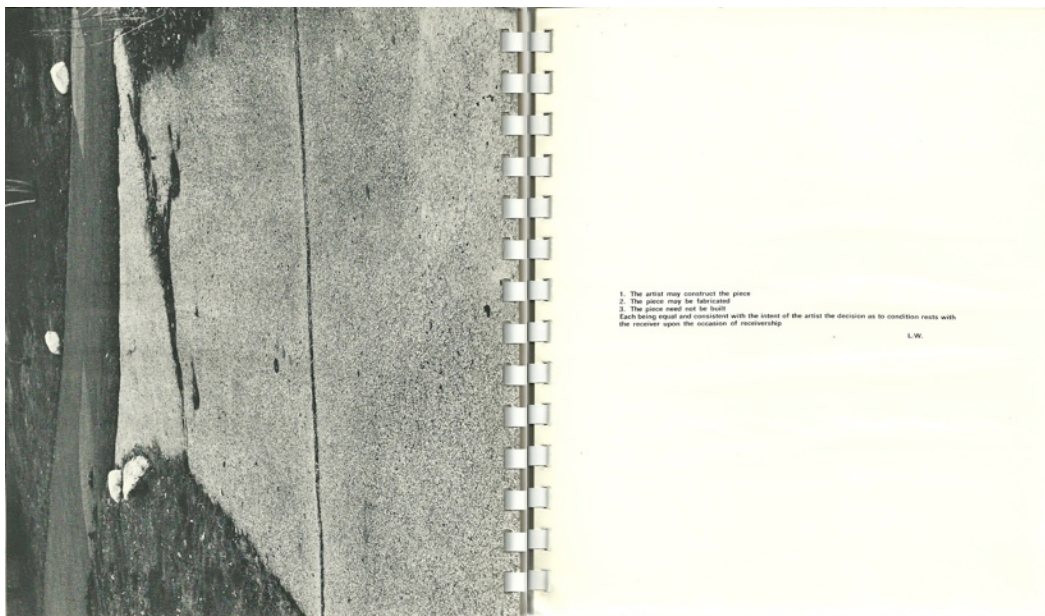
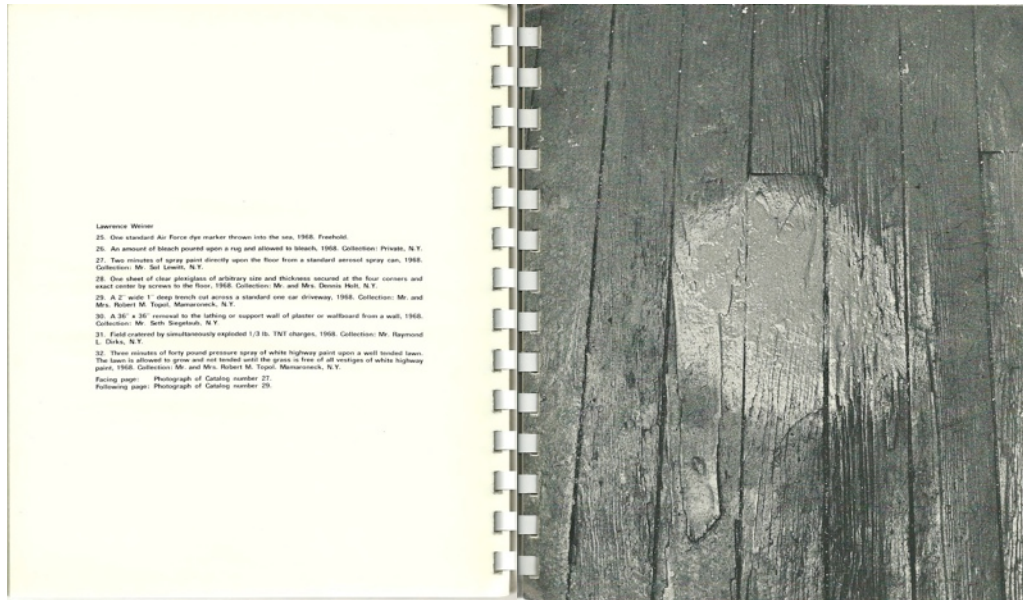


Figure 13: Four-page section on Lawrence Weiner in the *January 5-31, 1969* exhibition catalog. Scanned by the author.