

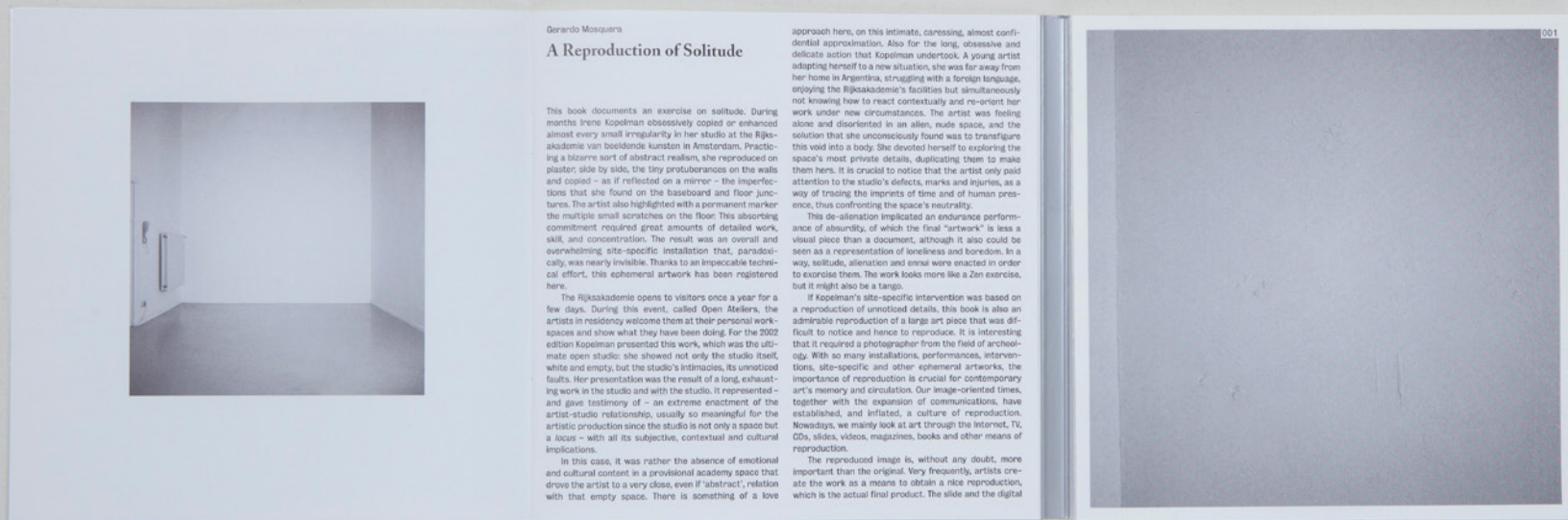


Documenting 'Three Interventions in a Space'

Project of Irene Kopelman, Selection from 257 photographs
17 × 17 cm, 257 + 12 pages, 2003



This publication is the documentation of Three Interventions in a Space (presented at the Open Studios at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in 2002), which shows every little unevenness on the walls, floor and plinths in the studio, by copying, mapping and drawing them.



Gerardo Mosquera

A Reproduction of Solitude

This book documents an exercise on solitude. During months Irene Kopelman obsessively copied or enhanced almost every small irregularity in her studio at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunst in Amsterdam. Practicing a bizarre sort of abstract realism, she reproduced on plaster, side by side, the tiny protuberances on the walls and copied – as if reflected on a mirror – the imperfections that she found on the baseboard and floor junctures. The artist also highlighted with a permanent marker the multiple small scratches on the floor. This absorbing commitment required great amounts of detailed work, skill, and concentration. The result was an overall and overwhelming site-specific installation that, paradoxically, was nearly invisible. Thanks to an impeccable technical effort, this ephemeral artwork has been registered here.

The Rijksakademie opens to visitors once a year for a few days. During this event, called Open Ateliers, the artists in residency welcome them at their personal work-spaces and show what they have been doing. For the 2002 edition Kopelman presented this work, which was the ultimate open studio: she showed not only the studio itself, white and empty, but the studio's intimacies, its unnoticed faults. Her presentation was the result of a long, exhausting work in the studio and with the studio. It represented – and gave testimony of – an extreme enactment of the artist-studio relationship, usually so meaningful for the artistic production since the studio is not only a space but a locus – with all its subjective, contextual and cultural implications.

In this case, it was rather the absence of emotional and cultural content in a provisional academy space that drove the artist to a very close, even if abstract, relation with that empty space. There is something of a love

approach here, on this intimate, caressing, almost confidential approximation. Also for the long, obsessive and delicate action that Kopelman undertook. A young artist adapting herself to a new situation, she was far away from her home in Argentina, struggling with a foreign language, enjoying the Rijksakademie's facilities but simultaneously not knowing how to react contextually and re-orient her work under new circumstances. The artist was feeling alone and disoriented in an alien, rude space, and the solution that she unconsciously found was to transfigure this void into a body. She devoted herself to exploring the space's most private details, duplicating them to make them hers. It is crucial to notice that the artist only paid attention to the studio's defects, marks and injuries, as a way of tracing the imprints of time and of human presence, thus confronting the space's neutrality.

This de-alienation implicated an endurance performance of absurdity, of which the final "artwork" is less a visual piece than a document, although it also could be seen as a representation of loneliness and boredom. In a way, solitude, alienation and ennui were enacted in order to exorcise them. The work looks more like a Zen exercise, but it might also be a tango.

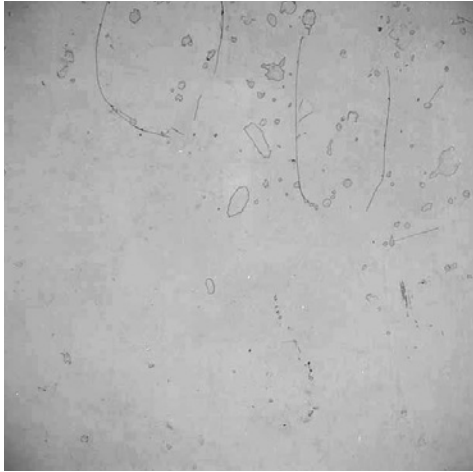
If Kopelman's site-specific intervention was based on a reproduction of unnoticed details, this book is also an admirable reproduction of a large art piece that was difficult to notice and hence to reproduce. It is interesting that it required a photographer from the field of archeology. With so many installations, performances, interventions, site-specific and other ephemeral artworks, the importance of reproduction is crucial for contemporary art's memory and circulation. Our image-oriented times, together with the expansion of communications, have established, and inflated, a culture of reproduction.

Nowadays, we mainly look at art through the internet, TV, CDs, slides, videos, magazines, books and other means of reproduction. The reproduced image is, without any doubt, more important than the original. Very frequently, artists create the work as a means to obtain a nice reproduction, which is the actual final product. The slide and the digital

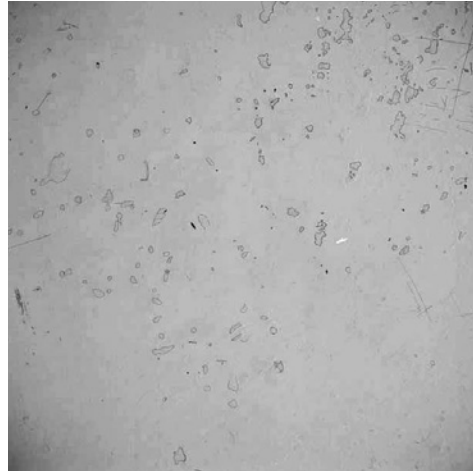
First, the photographer, René van der Weerd made spatial photographs of the room. He then divided all surfaces in small square parts, after which he photographed every minute detail of the walls, plinths and floor of the studio according to the maps, as if it were an archeological site. The result was an extensive

collection of 257 pictures to be used by the artist to make a virtual reconstruction of the work by scanning the images. A selection of photographs is shown in the photo section.

Photography
(documentation of the book):
Ayako Nishibori



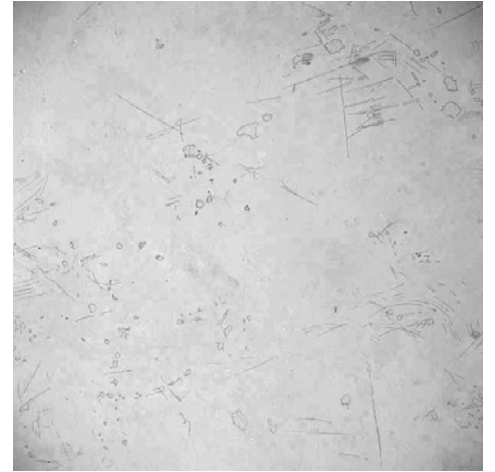
154 (Floor)



155 (Floor)



156 (Floor)



157 (Floor)



030 (Wall)



037 (Wall)



218 (Plinth)



222 (Plinth)