

Cade Tompkins Projects
198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com
Telephone 401 751 4888

Notations The Cage Effect Today online publication

Lynne Harlow

b. 1968 Attleboro, MA. Lives and works in Providence, RI and in New York, NY

“J’ai fait les gestes blancs parmi les solitudes.”– Apollinaire



BEAT, 2007

Acrylic paint, drum kit, live performance with musicians
Painted square 8’ 5” x 8’ 5” (245.1 x 245.1cm)
Courtesy of the artist and MINUS SPACE, Brooklyn, NY

Lynne Harlow’s work questions the limits of art, both in terms of the notion of the traditional art object and the viewer’s relation to it. Pushing the work almost to the point of dissolution, her work requires the participation of the viewer, even if only as witness, in order to operate—in order to rescue its very existence. Toeing the edge of this abyss, Harlow pushes the limit of the physical presence of her work. This emphasis on sensorial deprivation however, is offered by the artist as an act of generosity. What she offers is an “incomplete choreography,” inviting

the viewer to step outside the traditional artist/audience relationship and instead engage in a dialectic investigation. In her solicitation of the viewer, her work provides a space for an encounter, continuing the conversations and

propositions set forth by previous generations in the form of Happenings.

The origin of Happenings, a revolutionary performative practice that reached its apex in the ’60s, can be traced back to John Cage and a particular event that occurred at Black Mountain College in the summer of 1952. Inspired by *The Theatre and Its Double* by Antonin Artaud, which encourages the integration of theatre and life to create a new hybrid art form, Cage organized an evening that combined painting, dance, a lecture, the recitation of poetry, and the playing of music. The traditional notion of the stage was inverted with the performances taking place in and around the audience. The result of this subversion of the traditional audience/performer relationship combined with the heterogeneity of media and experience had the effect of dislocating the conventional status of art in every sense.

Cade Tompkins Projects
198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com
Telephone 401 751 4888

Following in Cage's footsteps, Harlow plays with a similar disruption of relationships, both in terms of the juxtaposition of media as well as between the viewer and the work. She describes her installation *BEAT* as hovering on the border between drawing and sculpture. Indeed, it is difficult to categorize this work, which is composed solely of a monochromatic white drum kit oriented towards a large yellow square painted on the facing wall. Over the course of two hours a series of drummers play to this yellow wall, creating an exchange between the visual and the aural. What Harlow seems to be proposing is that the interstice between these realms is the domain of the Happening. The focus of the work thus becomes a dialogue between two disparate elements, their shared space and the energy created between them. All of this is then triangulated by the presence of the viewer, bearing witness to this conversation and engaging in it.

-Annie Wischmeyer