



among from with andrew witkin

PLATFORM11

- a list of facilitators is growing
- a purely moral critique of society is not quite sufficient (James Wood)
- a spider's web
- arranging, organizing, retrieving, saving
- attribute values to things on their own terms (Wolfgang Tillmans)
- augmented reality rather than virtual reality (Steven Skov Holt)
- authored and anonymous
- bits of bitterness
- capacity or willingness to address the work so that it addresses (Thierry Du Duve)
- everyday vocabularies (Masako Glushien)
- everyone is a refiner of sensibility (Yves Klein)
- foundation
- how much to leave unsaid
- Ideas cannot be owned. They belong to whoever understands them. (Sol LeWitt)
- image as event (Sarah Charlesworth)
- It's awareness of cognition
- leaving it nameless
- no response expected
- not wanting to say a story
- open to further investigation. (Rebecca Solnit)
- question thought
- reality is not where one finds it
- situation
- staged by language (Jose Luis Blondet)
- the one from which we came
- the state of becoming and being, not merely as ending (Betty Friedan)
- thinking is a physically productive experience
- time as place (Peter Downsbrough)
- to assess the markers of reliability (Carrie Lambert-Beatty)
- to bring the world into the world (Alighiero e Boetti)
- to make a contribution like a private conversation would
- translation irregularities
- tricky generosity
- uncertainty

## AMONG FROM WITH ANDREW WITKIN: PLATFORM 11

I like to think of Andrew Witkin as a poetic archivist. A studio visit with him involves sitting in an office space, lined with clean shelves that are filled with neatly arranged and stacked black boxes. The boxes are archival, of course, but unlabeled and purposefully so. This system means that each and every time Witkin opens up a box filled with his collections of newspaper clippings and photographs, he is forced to determine what the connective glue of each group is or might have been. And each time, as he has to rethink his filing method, it inevitably changes. When I described this system to our museum registrar, she said it was her personal nightmare. Maybe, for some, like our registrar, he's the anti-archivist. Which might very well be the theme of Witkin's work as an artist.

I distinguish his work as an artist here, because it is in the context of Witkin's day job with a well-known Boston gallery that I and so many others know him—as a gallery director, educator, and curator. This is meaningful because so much of his art practice involves many of the same skill sets—organizing, collecting, arranging, framing (literally and conceptually)—that he uses or re-directs toward poetic ends. In doing so, Witkin very cleverly asks us, as viewers of his work, to rethink our sense of things, our public and private means of categorizing and thus, knowing the world. His artwork effectively functions in dialogue with much contemporary art—it blurs the boundaries between art and life and probes the futility of such distinct categories.

For PLATFORM 11, Witkin created an installation in response to deCordova's fourth-floor Foster Galleries—a small cluster of spaces that were once part of the summer home of the Museum's namesake and founder, Julian de Cordova. The installation features groupings of Witkin's minimal objects; arrangements of his archives of newspaper, magazine, and web-based clippings; displays of his framed photographs, drawings, collages, as well as text-based works which collectively explore the layered character of the space as home-turned-museum.

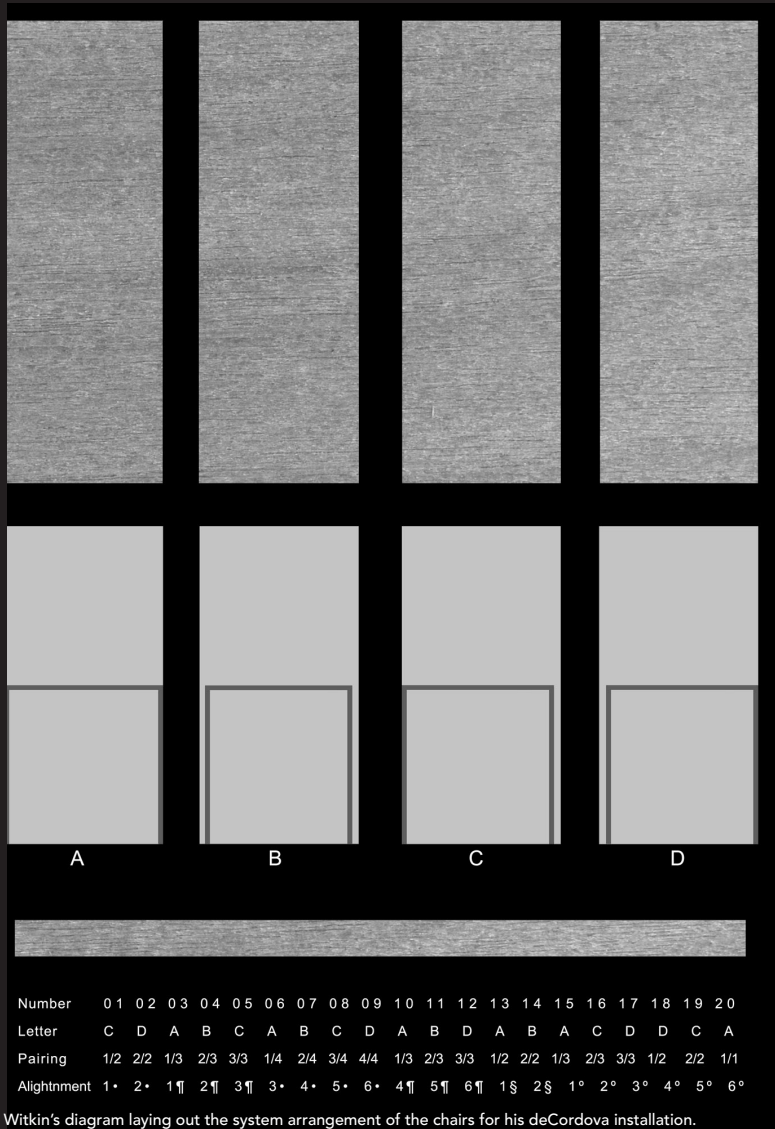


- a respite
- a spider's web
- absent, imagined, present
- among other places
- archeological depth (Elizabeth Willis)
- associative narrative
- attribute values to things on their own terms (Wolfgang Tillmans)
- authored and anonymous
- balance without control
- beyond the borders of language
- considering the effect of the circumstances (Robert Irwin)
- continually translating (Brayten Braytenbach)
- different dimensions
- emphasis on contingency
- everyone is a refiner of sensibility (Yves Klein)
- exploration not frustration
- foundation
- here was just there
- how much to leave unsaid
- imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. (Sue Bender)
- impure conceptual art—a descriptive, not a pejorative term (Stephen Prina)
- intervals between stimuli• leaving it nameless
- liminal moment
- making place as an activity of constellation making or network building (Micah Silver)
- more resonance than the one
- n/heed
- no stable knowing
- Nothing seems to be the most important thing in the world. (Robert Barry)
- object + event = structure (Claude Levi-Strauss)
- observation and formulation (Josef Albers)
- open to further investigation. (Rebecca Solnit)
- patterns
- points of contact
- product mass is being replaced by information (Steven Skov Holt)
- reality is not where one finds it• remembering is movement (Brayten Braytenbach)
- resonance of adjacencies (Elizabeth Willis)
- social ecology
- spatial adventure
- table of contents
- the object sings (Cornelia Lauf)
- thinking is a physically productive experience
- this, that just goes on and on
- tradition. archive.
- translation irregularities
- versions
- vis a tergo (the force of events behind) (George Kubler)
- within and between

In many ways, these collections function as surrogates—for people, locations, and experiences—that Witkin arranges and rearranges to create conversations among create conversations among themselves, among the viewers, among others.

NON- SPECIFIC OBJECTS

At the entrance to the show, a deliberate, rhythmic pattern of Witkin's minimalist chair sculptures line a long, hallway-like space. Each grouping of chairs is punctuated by a fleece wall banner, on which Witkin lists a series of thoughts, inspirations, ideas and stories. These alphabetically ordered text panels are printed identically but for the ways that Witkin has redacted certain lines and therefore adjusted the meaning of each. Similarly, while the chairs, too, look like they could be mirror images of one another, they vary slightly on closer inspection. Some have a 3/4 inch gap



- a commitment to inquiry should replace a commitment to ‘Truth’ (John Dewey)
- a list of facilitators is growing
- a physical awareness of energy withheld and spent (William Kentridge)
- a respite
- a spider’s web
- absent, imagined, present
- all the while
- among other places
- archeological depth (Elizabeth Willis)
- arranging, organizing, retrieving, saving
- associative narrative
- attribute values to things on their own terms (Wolfgang Tillmans)
- balance without control
- bits of bitterness
- capacity or willingness to address the work so that it addresses (Thierry Du Duve)
- choreographed by the situation (Simone Forti)
- continually translating (Brayten Braytenbach)
- different dimensions
- emphasis on contingency
- everyone is a refiner of sensibility (Yves Klein)
- exploration not frustration
- here was just there
- how much to leave unsaid
- Ideas cannot be owned. They belong to whoever understands them. (Sol LeWitt)
- imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. (Sue Bender)
- intervals between stimuli
- It’s awareness of cognition
- keystone
- liminal moment
- making place as an activity of constellation making or network building (Micah Silver)
- n/heed
- no response expected
- no stable knowing
- object + event = structure (Claude Levi-Strauss)
- on and on
- open to further investigation. (Rebecca Solnit)
- patterns
- points of contact
- question thought
- rehearsal in french is repetition
- remembering is movement (Brayten Braytenbach)
- situation
- something about the order of perception of things and situations (Liliana Porter)
- specific intersections of memory and empathy in the visual domain (Michael Roth)
- staged by language (Jose Luis Blondet)
- that tricky generosity that gives and takes at the same time (Susan Goldwitz)
- the state of becoming and being, not merely as ending (Betty Friedan)
- thinking is a physically productive experience
- this, that just goes on and on
- threadbare banner (Alasdair Roberts)
- to bring the world into the world (Alighiero e Boetti)
- tombstones
- translation irregularities
- tricky generosity
- uncertainty
- versions
- whatever the discipline
- with years as a guide
- within and between

on the left of the seat, some on the right, others are centered and then others have none. There is a distinctive rule at play here in the hallway, one that sets the stage for the installation—similar, *but different*.

For Witkin, that “but different” is the space between in which he is most interested.

The overall effect of the hallway, with the chairs and uniform appearance, suggests a waiting room, showroom, or even a theatrical set. Following suit, the two interior galleries present distinct but similarly open-ended arrangements of furniture, art work, texts, and photographs, conflating the spaces of work, display, meeting, and storage (similar, *but different*).

The next gallery features an installation of hundreds of framed works on paper, presented in a manner more akin to art storage than display. The group extends from the wall and faces a single frame containing over 10,000 individual photographs (which, too, remain mostly illegible in their presentation).

The room is in fact storage as well as a retrospective of the artist’s photographs, drawings, and paintings (some date to his high school years). By presenting this work as a deeply layered stack against the wall, Witkin purposefully makes the majority of the work hidden—that is unless you feel bold enough to start moving the frames. Meanwhile, the adjacent room is set up with desks, chairs, and on the wall, a series of sections from newspapers and magazines grouped in loose categories of misprints, pairings, and abstractions. The arrangement references a type of back office and is equally perplexing as to how one should respond or act in the space—do we sit and look through the books and stacks of papers or simply observe the set up as a sculpture/installation? A soundtrack of “My Way” sung by 31 different artists fills the room—softly undermining the individualism of the ballad and the categories.





- a physical awareness of energy withheld and spent (William Kentridge)
- a respite
- a spider's web
- absent, imagined, present
- afterlife of forms and gestures
- all the while
- among other places
- archeological depth (Elizabeth Willis)
- associative narrative
- augmented reality rather than virtual reality (Steven Skov Holt)
- balance without control
- choreographed by the situation (Simone Forti)
- considering the effect of the circumstances (Robert Irwin)
- continually translating (Brayten Braytenbach)
- different dimensions
- emphasis on contingency
- everyday vocabularies (Masako Glushien)
- everyone is a refiner of sensibility (Yves Klein)
- exploration not frustration
- here was just there
- Histories are not representations but things that act in the world as proposals. (Frank Ankersmit)
- how much to leave unsaid
- image as event (Sarah Charlesworth)
- imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. (Sue Bender)
- intervals between stimuli
- leaving it nameless
- Lieb / Leid (Love / Pain)
- liminal moment
- making place as an activity of constellation making or network building (Micah Silver)
- more resonance than the one
- no response expected
- no stable knowing
- not wanting to say a story
- Nothing seems to be the most important thing in the world. (Robert Barry)
- observation and formulation (Josef Albers)
- on and on
- open to further investigation. (Rebecca Solnit)
- patterns
- points of contact
- question thought
- reality is not where one finds it
- rehearsal in french is repetition
- remembering is movement (Brayten Braytenbach)
- resonance of adjacencies (Elizabeth Willis)
- situation
- something about the order of perception of things and situations (Liliana Porter)
- spatial adventure
- specific intersections of memory and empathy in the visual domain (Michael Roth)
- the cosmic in the commonplace (Holland Cotter)
- the difficulty of any accurate conveyance of history, or even personal experience (Martin Herbert)
- the past is never dead. It's not even past. (William Faulkner)
- thinking is a physically productive experience
- this, that just goes on and on
- threadbare banner (Alasdair Roberts)
- to assess the markers of reliability (Carrie Lambert-Beatty)
- to make a contribution like a private conversation would
- tradition. archive.
- uncertainty
- versions
- vis a tergo (the force of events behind) (George Kubler)
- whatever the discipline
- with years as a guide
- within and between

In his installation (all three spaces are considered a unified work), Witkin highlights a deep ambiguity present in both the objects and manner of display. Wavering between furniture and sculpture, the wood pieces and stacks of images and texts are arranged in ways that continually confound us. Are these meant to be used, sat on, leafed through or are these art objects that we are trained, since childhood, to never touch? The museum purposefully did not include our usual "Please Do Not Touch" signs per the artist's request, in order to prompt these very questions of value and behavior. Do I sit on this chair or since it's in an art museum is it a sculpture to be looked at, i.e., too expensive to be touched? Or, since I'm in a contemporary art museum where just about anything goes, maybe this is interactive? Or, and even more likely, since I've seen no seating throughout this museum maybe now I can finally rest?! All of these questions and their logical answers remain valid. It is this in-between space—this moment of questioning—in which Witkin's works live. And that space encompasses not only the objects he makes or commissions but the spaces that he produces/arranges/organizes. In each instance we can repeat the mantra—similar, *but different*. The space looks like something I know...but something is different.



Left: Donald Judd's banquet table and chairs. Right: Judd's variations. Photos by Andrew Witkin.

A slight detour back to the objects may now be in order. There are some aficionados that might recognize Witkin's chairs/sculptures as they are indeed inspired, in part, by the later furniture of Donald Judd (see above). In addition to his signature Minimalist sculptures—what he termed "specific objects"—Judd designed and made a set of furniture that used very direct, bare construction and modular elements. While echoing the direct nature and clean lines of his sculpture, Judd was insistent that his furniture and art were separate endeavors.

"I am often asked if the furniture is art, since almost ten years ago some artists made art that was also furniture. The furniture is furniture and is only art in that architecture, ceramics, textiles and many things are art." – Donald Judd

But, as Witkin readily points out, the cost and appeal of Judd's furniture today is inextricably linked to his art work—in form and, perhaps even more so, in reputation.<sup>1</sup> The idea that Judd's chairs embody, and which Witkin's chairs reiterate—that they are indeed sculpture and furniture at once—is a duality in which Witkin relishes.

- a commitment to inquiry should replace a commitment to 'Truth' (John Dewey)
- a list of facilitators is growing
- a physical awareness of energy withheld and spent (William Kentridge)
- a respite
- a spider's web
- absent, imagined, present
- afterlife of forms and gestures
- among other places
- archeological depth (Elizabeth Willis)
- arranging, organizing, retrieving, saving
- authored and anonymous
- balance without control
- beyond the borders of language
- bits of bitterness
- capacity or willingness to address the work so that it addresses (Thierry Du Duve)
- choreographed by the situation (Simone Forti)
- considering the effect of the circumstances (Robert Irwin)
- continually translating (Brayten Braytenbach)
- creative imagination and sensibilities are neither self-generated nor self-contained (Gyorgy Kepes)
- everyday vocabularies (Masako Glushien)
- exploration not frustration
- foundation
- here was just there
- how an object, idea or gesture can reappear and signify in different cultural contexts (Aby Warburg)
- how much to leave unsaid
- I don't think it's to name something, but to touch something. (David Wojnarowicz)
- imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. (Sue Bender)
- It's awareness of cognition
- leaving it nameless
- loadstone
- making place as an activity of constellation making or network building (Micah Silver)
- more resonance than the one
- not wanting to say a story
- Nothing seems to be the most important thing in the world. (Robert Barry)
- observation and formulation (Josef Albers)
- open to further investigation. (Rebecca Solnit)
- product mass is being replaced by information (Steven Skov Holt)
- question thought
- reality is not where one finds it
- remembering is movement (Brayten Braytenbach)
- resonance of adjacencies (Elizabeth Willis)
- something about the order of perception of things and situations (Liliana Porter)
- spatial adventure
- staged by language (Jose Luis Blondet)
- the difficulty of any accurate conveyance of history, or even personal experience (Martin Herbert)
- the one from which we came
- the state of becoming and being, not merely as ending (Betty Friedan)
- this, that just goes on and on
- time as place (Peter Downsborough)
- to bring the world into the world (Alighiero e Boetti)
- to make a contribution like a private conversation would
- tombstones
- tradition. archive.
- uncertainty
- versions
- vis a tergo (the force of events behind) (George Kubler)
- walls down to thin skin
- with years as a guide

In this, he takes a page from Richard Artschwager's famously enigmatic Pop sculpture of furniture surrogates—cubes and geometric shapes veneered in wood grained Formica (which Judd was referencing in the above quote). Artschwager introduced a blatant faux naturalism into the lexicon of contemporary sculpture that set up the questions in which Witkin trades. Although, no one is trying to sit on Artschwager's work.<sup>2</sup> In this exhibition, the museum and artist ask that visitors treat the material with respect—if you touch something be sure to put it back as you found it—as they would in anyone's home.

Here, Witkin's installation oscillates between public and private space—gallery and home—and by doing so, tugs on the history of deCordova's fourth-floor Foster Galleries. They were in fact once part of a home. Like many museums, deCordova was founded by a collector who donated his house and art work to the public (in our case, the town of Lincoln) as a means to share his love of art and art education with future generations. While Julian de Cordova's collection no longer resides here, his house and land have introduced people—young and old—to contemporary art for over 60 years. And among those visitors was and is Andrew Witkin, who has been coming to these galleries in their various states for over 20 years, growing up in nearby Newton, Massachusetts.

Witkin underscores the galleries as a domestic space but also spaces with which he has a personal history. The installation's layered references to home, gallery, storage, office, classroom, and even studio, in many ways, echo the artist's own relationship to these galleries, as a visitor, artist, gallerist, and even critic.

In its multivalent character, Witkin's installation **AMONG FROM WITH** underscores an overall in-between-ness in our experience that elicits a distinct sense of not being able to know the entirety of a thing—a room, an object, an event, and even or above all, a person.



## AMONG FROM WITH

One might even say that what is unknowable here is the artist himself. Where exactly is Andrew Witkin in this maze of collected items, stacks, and even artist label? A museum label—the artist, title, and date of an artwork—is typically taken as fact and directly and even indirectly inscribes value to the artwork (through the artist's name/reputation and date of work).<sup>3</sup>

For each and every exhibition Witkin lists a very, very long group of names as the “Artists” in his label information. At deCordova, his singular object label reads as follows:

AA Bronson, Abby Cohen, Abby Newbold, Abigail Newbold, Adam Larson, Adrian Nicholas Matthews Thaws, Adrian Piper, Agnes Martin, Akira Kurosawa, Alan Gilbert, Alasdair Duncan, Alasdair Roberts, Alberto Gonzales, Alex Arredondo, Alfred North Whitehead, Alice Edwards, Alicia Hall Moran, Alighiero Boetti, Alissa Farber, Althea Gliick, Alvin Krakow, Alvin Lucier, Amanda Broder, Amanda Katz, Amie Siegel, Amy Baker Sandback, Amy Stacey Curtis, Amy Witkin, Ana Tiscornia, Andrea Anastasio, Andrea Crawley, Anita Sieff, Anna Cisler, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Anne Tyng, Aretha Franklin, Arthur Miller, Athena Kirk, Audrey Foster, Ava Jane Restuccia, Babsy Krichmar, Barack Obama, Barbara Broughel, Barbara Bush, Barbara Kaban, Barbara Krakow, Barbara Mirecki, Barbara Moskowitz, Barney Rosset, Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Benjamin Chaffee, Beth Kantrowitz, Bill Arning, Bill Callahan, Bill T. Jones, Billie Holiday, Billy Bang, Billy Shore, Bob Dylan, Bob Ostertag, Bob White, Boris Groys, Brad Calbeck, Brandon Hinman, Brendan Greaves, Brian Arredondo, Brian McNamara, Brian Zink, Britni O'Connor, Bronlyn Jones, Brook Banton, Bruce Barry, Carl Andre, Carla Herrera-Prats, Carlie Bristow, Carlo Schmid, Cary Leibowitz, Celeste Wyrosdic, Celia Pym, Celia Weiss, Cesaria Evora, Charles Mingus, Charlie Rouse, Charmaine Wheatley, Che Guevara, Chris Boulter, Christine Young, Christopher Flouton-Barnes, Constantin Brancusi, Corey Daniels, Cory Kadlik, Crystal Blanchflower, Cynthia Weinstein, Daiki Suzuki, Damon Krukowsky, Dan Restuccia, Dane Patterson, Daniel Scholnick, Danny Smith, Dave Glaser, David Bryant, David Duddy, David Kelley, David Kelly, David Marks, David Ortiz, David Reich, David Roxburgh, David X. Levine, Deborah Lee, Dennis Kois, Deval Patrick, Diane Heinz, Dick Albright, Dina Deitsch, Dionne Warwick, Don Byron, Don Zimmer, Donald Judd, Donald Nawi, Donna Berube, Dorian Lynskey, Dorothy Squires, Douglas Holston, Drew Volpe, Eadweard Muybridge, Ed Ruscha, Edward Mark, Ehud Olmert, Elaine Sturtevant, Ellen Berkman, Ellen Sturtevant, Elvis Presley, Emily Alexander, Emily Garner, Emily Isenberger, Emily Silet, Engelbert Humperdinck, Erna Rosenberg, Felix Guattari, Feliz Gonzalez-Torres, Fidel Castro, Finn Juhl, Francis Alÿs, Franco Pezzella, Frank Sinatra, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Franz Xavier Messerschmidt, Gary Drinkwater, George Adams, George H.W. Bush, George Herman Ruth, George Kubler, Gerard Van Keulen, Gerry Jones, Gil Scott-Heron, Gioia Guerzoni, Giulio Paolini, Glen Campbell, Glenn Goldberg, Gloria Ross, Gloria Steinem, Goody Petronelli, Greta Magnusson Grossman, Gyula Halász, Hamish Fulton, Hannah Barrett, Hannah Burr, Hans Peter Feldmann, Harold Asnes, Heather Pesanti, Helene Wildi, Hendrick Doncker, Henri Cole, Holland Cotter, Holly Berube, Horst P. Horst, Howard Gardner, Howard Halle, Howard Moody, Ian Raven, Ilya Kabakov, Ira Wool, Irene Jones, Irving Stenn, Jack Kevorkian, Jack Pierson, Jackie Wilson, James Castle, James Ellis Coleman, James Harris, James Kirby, James Levine, James Michael Curley, James Owen Weatherall, James Wood, Jamie White, Jane Bramberg, Janet Passehl, Jason Moran, Jay Glushien, Jean Prouvé, Jeanan Hypolite, Jeaney Hypolite, Jeannette Greenstone, Jeffrey Kipnis, Jena Duncan, Jenn Schmitt, Jennie Lou Brockelman, Jennifer Starr, Jenny Watkins, Jeremy Ziemann, Jerry Vale, Jess Rosner, Jessica Roland, Jevon Biffinger, Jill Pottle, Jill Slossburg-Ackerman, Jim Ackerman, Jim Foster, Jim Harris, Jim Lambie, Joan Bruck, Joan Mark, Joe Louis, Joe Scanlan, John Ashberry, John Bock, John Cage, John Cassavetes, John Dewey, John Douglas Thompson, John Kramer, John O'Reilly, John Paoletti, John Ritchie, John Stuart Gordon, Jonas Bohlin, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Jose Luis Blondet, Joshua Liberles, Judi McCloskey, Judith Butler, Judith Scott, Julia Ward Howe, Julian Opie, Julie Bernson, Julie Reich, Kaatje Gusse, Kara Pataki, Karen Pfefferle, Kate Leahy, Kate Legg, Kate Shepherd, Katharina Grosse, Kathleen Volp Leonard, Kay Hartung, Kay Rosen, Keely Smith, Kelly Dunn, Kelly Nipper, Kelly Sherman, Kenneth

Goldsmith, Kevin Holston, Kevin Youkilis, Kimon Kirk, Kimon Yannopoulos, Kjerstin Salvesson, Kristin Soderqvist, La Monte Young, Laura Hajar, Laura Yee, Lauren Fensterstock, Lauri Bounty, Leah Glushien, Leah Witkin, Lee Mingwei, Lena Cisler, Lenny Kaban, Leslie Condon, Lewis Lapham, Lexi Lee Sullivan, Lila Kanner, Liliana Porter, Lily Ho Schlafer, Linda Coyne, Linda Saar, Linda Widstrand, Lisa Canning, Lisa Ebel, Livia Signorini, Liz Geller, Liz Herring, Lonnie Rashid Lynn, Jr., Louis Menard, Louise Brown, Lucie Fontaine, Lucinda Burk, Lucinda Childs, Lydia Gordon, Lynn Schwartz, Lynn Traub, Magalie Guerin, Major Harris, Manuel Ernesto, Mario Diacono, Mark Vincent, Mark Weltner, Marlon Brando, Marsha Ginsberg, Martha Rosler, Martha Winter, Martin Creed, Martin Herbert, Marvin Gaye, Marvin Hagler, Mary Frances Breen, Mary Lou McColl, Mary O'Grady, Mary Tinti, Maryam Amiryani, Masako Glushien, Masao Yamamoto, Matt Magee, Matt Sheridan Smith, Matthew Oates, Maura Glandorf, Maureen Feeney, Max Schmeling, Megan Riley, Meghan Petersen, Mel Bochner, Merce Cunningham, Michael Asher, Michael Bernstein, Michael Darling, Michael Jackson, Michael Jordan, Michael Scheller, Michael Tims, Michelle Davis, Mike Brant, Milutin Gubash, Mitsuji Shimoyama, Miwa Watabiki, Monya Rowe, Mort Spitzer, Mstislav Rostropovich, Muhammad Ali, Nana Mouskouri, Nancy Fincke, Nancy Reagan, Nancy Temple, Narayan Khandekar, Natalia Porter, Natasha Khandekar, Nate Douglass, Neil Young, Nick Kane, Nick Terry, Nicki Bibbo, Nicola Sacco, Nina Felshin, Nina Gara Bozicnik, Nina Simone, Nona Hershey, Noni Armony, Nora Maroulis, Norma Jeane Mortenson, Nuit Banai, Nuno de Campos, Oprah Winfrey, Orson Welles, Otilia Martins, Otomo Yoshihide, Patricia Reville, Paul Anka, Paul Pierce, Pedro Martinez, Peter Downsborough, Peter Flaherty, Peter Kalb, Peter Kaye, Peter Littlefield, Peter Pakesch, Peter Sandback, Peter Schjeldahl, Pieranna Cavalchini, Puffin D'Oench, Quinlan Jones, Rachel Berube, Ralph Ellison, Randi Hopkins, Randy Frost, Ray Allen, Rebecca Solnit, Regina Parkinson, Rei Kawakubo, Reisha Kennison, Richard Linklater, Richard Smith, Rick Mansfield, Riva Weiss, Rob Alexander, Rob Weiner, Robbie Williams, Robert Bauer, Robert Chester, Robert Huot, Robert Wilson, Roberta Smith, Robin Melendez, Roe Ethridge, Roger Conover, Roger Witkin, Roland Barthes, Ronald Reagan, Roy McMakin, Rudyard Kipling, Ruth Fernández, Ryan Cross, Sam Cataldo, Sam Rodia, Samantha Jones, Samantha Linnane, Samantha Minshull, Samantha Topol, Sammy Davis Jr., Sandy Macey, Sara Baker, Sarah Charlesworth, Sarah Thompson, Scott Graczyk, Scott Pagano, Seiji Ozawa, Shellburne Thurber, Shirley Bassey, Simon Lince, Skyela Heitz, Slinger Francisco, Sol LeWitt, Sonia Almeida, Stacie Slotnick, Stacy Hill, Stan Cohen, Stefan Burnett, Stephanie Theodore, Stephanie Weilert, Stephen Prina, Stephen Shore, Steve Kendall, Steve Reich, Steven Leiber, Steven Mooney, Steven Skov Holt, Su-Mei Tse, Suara Welitoff, Sue Higson, Susan Goldwitz, Susan Maguire, Susan Stoops, Suzanne Esposito, Tamiko Shimoyama, Tatyana Gubash, Ted Lowry, Tejo Remy, Teresa Accola, Terrence Gaide, Terry Albright, Terry Richardson, Thelonius Monk, Tim Albright, Tom Ardolino, Tom Jones, Tom Levine, Tom Sachs, Topher Cox, Toshi Ichinyanagi, Trayvon Martin, Trisha Brown, Trudy Lambie, Tyler Terrasi, Ulrike Müller, Valerie Laycock, Vera Lynn, Vesela Sretenovic, Vic Taylor, Vija Celmins, Wadada Leo Smith, Wade Silva, Wendy Klix, Will Oldham, William Kentridge, Wilma Lake, Wisława Szymborska, Witold Rybczynski, Ximena Bernal, Yo-Yo Ma, Yosef Glushien, Yoshi Shimoyama, Yuri Rasovsky, Yves Klein, Zang Huan, among others, all with Andrew Witkin

untitled, 1996 -

acrylic lamination sleeves, aluminum, apple plywood, audio speaker, birch plywood, books, cardboard (single, double and triple wall), collages (newspaper, magazine, found, hand-made pieces of paper, along with acrylic, adhesive, charcoal, graphite and other materials), collected texts (altered, composed, found, heard and written), confusion, context, corrections, cotton, detritus, electrical cords, electricity, etchings, experience, exploration, faith, fleece with pigment, frames (wood, metal, archival, non-archival and formerly archival), glass mirror, history, lack of context, methyl cellulose, mistakes, mulberry paper, multiplicity, newspaper clippings, office paper, photographs (silver gelatin, light-jet, ink-jet, laser and Polaroid), postcards, scheduled discussions with visitors and pre-arranged speakers, silkscreens and assorted other prints, small objects, space, speaker cable, stainless steel square drive screws, stamps, steel brackets, steel self-drilling screws, stereo receiver, stone, time, trust, versions of the song, My Way, as mp3 files, wool, among other ideas, materials, sensibilities and situations

courtesy of Andrew Witkin and James Harris Gallery, Seattle, Washington





The typical museum label format is usually a concise grouping of basic information that can locate the artwork for a visitor: Artist, title, date, materials, or the ‘who, where, what’ of the art work. In Witkin’s hands it becomes long form prose—especially the artist name which includes an alphabetical listing of the artist’s influences, friends, assistants, inspirations, and, of course, museum staff. In this arbitrary format hierarchies are toppled and Roger Witkin, the artist’s father, is aligned with Roland Barthes, the French cultural critic and theorist. The label makes tangible that this installation, like all artwork really, is a product of an amalgamation of voices, conditions, and histories and reiterates Witkin’s position that none of us work in a vacuum and that everything is a conversation.<sup>4</sup>

This very brochure echoes that same sentiment as you, the reader, may have noticed. Interspersed between my writing about Witkin’s work is his redacted text work (minus the redactions)—alphabetical lists of quotes, things, and thoughts that toggle between poetry and narratives. And just as the lists operate in generating new meaning through the use of simple and even random juxtaposition, so too does this essay unfold into new and more interesting dimensions through these momentary detours. It is indeed a conversation, between writers, and even more so, between texts that only coalesces in the act of reading.

It is then only logical that almost all of Witkin installations come with artist-driven programming—either music, lectures, or discussions. At deCordova, Witkin will host a series of salons that he’s titled—Conferences/Conversations/Convergences/Convivialities. Each conversation will feature a short talk by a friend of Witkin’s whose work has poetic dove tailings with his own: a classicist who studies

lists, a graphic designer, and a newspaper editor of an Ideas section. Pulling on different portions of the installation, the talks will highlight the performative and social component of the installation. And again, using the formats and framework of the museum (each exhibition here is typically accompanied by an artist talk or conversation) Witkin manages to open up these structures to allow in, what can we say, poetry, the unknown?

Throughout his installation, Witkin presents us with the problem created by delineating strict categories between art and life. In this situation, the overall presentation is both familiar and unusual, similar, *but different*. It hints at Witkin’s desire to create a sense of deep ambiguity for viewers as they grapple with their ability to ever truly know a thing in full... be it a room, a time, a subject, or an object.

**Dina Deutsch**  
Curator of Contemporary Art

<sup>1</sup> Artist Interview with Emily Silet, deCordova Audio Guide, December 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Witkin, I should state here, is adamant about his wood grain and material and construction of each piece. For instance that the chairs are Baltic Birch plywood is important not only for the grain of the wood but for the resonance of its origin; Witkin’s heritage hails from the Baltics as well as from Russia where most Baltic Birch comes from today. But, like Artschwager, Witkin crafts his furniture with specific care and attention—not unlike a furniture maker. See Artist interview.

<sup>3</sup> See Roland Barthes (1967) *Death of the author*. Aspen, no. 5-6 and Michel Foucault (1979) *What is an author?*. *Textual Strategies: Perspective in Post-Structuralist Criticism*.





The 2012–2013 PLATFORM series is generously funded by James and Audrey Foster. This project has been supported by a grant from the Artist's Resource Trust.

## BIOGRAPHY

Andrew Witkin (b. 1977) has an MAT from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts. In addition to being an active artist, he serves as Gallery Director at the Barbara Krakow Gallery on Newbury Street in Boston, and splits his time between Boston, Massachusetts and Sanbornton, New Hampshire. Witkin's work has been featured in a number of group exhibitions in New England including the 2008 Foster Prize exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, of which he was the Prize recipient, but also as far afield as Beirut, Damascus, and Japan. He has an upcoming museum-wide project at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH. Andrew Witkin is represented by the James Harris Gallery, Seattle. For more information, visit [www.awitkin.com](http://www.awitkin.com).

## PROGRAMMING

Conferences/Conversations/Convergences/Convivialities

Andrew Witkin in conversation with

Amanda Katz, Deputy Editor, The Boston Globe Ideas Section

Sunday, February 10, 1 pm

Andrew Witkin in conversation with

Adam Larson, creative designer and brander

Sunday, March 17, 1 pm

Andrew Witkin in conversation with

Athena Kirk, Mellon Fellow in Classics at Washington & Lee University

Sunday, April 14, 1pm

ALL GALLERY INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN, BOSTON.

# JANUARY 27–APRIL 21, 2013

**deCordova** | Sculpture Park and Museum

51 Sandy Pond Road  
Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773  
781.259.8355 [decordova.org](http://decordova.org)

