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Two Objects That Are One Object:  
Roni Horn's Androgynous Minimalism

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by

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### Two Objects That Are One Object: Roni Horn's Androgynous Minimalism

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In 1988, Donald Judd acquired a work of art by Roni Horn (b. 1955) and permanently installed it at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, TX. The work in question, titled *Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)*, consists of two solid copper forms, precisely machined to mechanical identity. Invoking both serial repetition and an extreme reduction of form, not to mention procedures of industrial fabrication, *Pair Object VII* unambiguously adopts the formal language of minimalism. Yet, Horn describes her work as a "criticism of minimalism." What is the nature of this critique?

In the following paper, I argue that it is specifically the pair that troubles the foundations of minimalism and its predominant strategies. In particular, I examine Horn's work vis-à-vis Judd's seriality and Robert Morris' gestalt forms, claiming in both cases that the pair, as a structure and as a logic, critiques each on its own terms. From here, I go on to suggest that Horn's *Pair Objects* are also the site of the artist's early conceptualization of androgyny, which will explicitly emerge as a theoretical preoccupation of hers in the late 1990s. If the pair stages a

structural critique of minimalism, and if, for Horn, the pair bears a structural affinity with androgyny, what would it mean, this paper asks, for minimalism to undergo a critique not only by a *pair* object but by an *androgynous* one? In response to such a provocation, the issue of identity will arise as a central problem in what follows—specifically, the exclusive and fixed identities of the minimalist *object* and the minimalist *subject*. If androgyny ultimately expands the possibilities of identity beyond its stable, gendered binary, Horn's paired works propose the untenability of the fixed binaries on which minimalism historically staked its own critique.

This thesis of Zachary Rottman is approved.

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## A Pair Object in Marfa

With one object, its presence is emanating out into the world with it as its center.  
With two objects that are one object, you have an integral use of the world. You have  
the necessary inclusion of circumstance.<sup>1</sup>

– Roni Horn, 1989

1988, Galerie Lelong, New York, NY. On view was a work by Roni Horn entitled *Pair Object III: (for two rooms) “The Experience of Identical Things”* (1986-1988). The third in an ongoing series, this *Pair Object* followed two others—*Pair Object I* (1980) and *Pair Object II: “When the How and the What are the Same”* (1980-1986) (figs. 1-2). Each of these consisted of two solid copper forms, industrially fabricated to identical specifications. In the case of *Pair Object I*, they were long rods with hemispherical ends, installed leaning against a wall, while *Pair Object II* consisted of two identical spheres that the artist “rolled about the site and let stand.”<sup>2</sup> The objects comprising *Pair Object III* were similarly twinned and highly polished but were now truncated cones with vaguely discernable bulges on their smaller faces. “Two solid copper forms, each forged and machined to identical specifications,” stated the catalogue. “17” diameter, tapering to 12” diameter over 35”, with 5/8” convexity at small end.”<sup>3</sup> An exceedingly plain description indeed for forms otherwise so unusual.

It was here at Galerie Lelong that Donald Judd would see *Pair Object III* shortly before acquiring it.<sup>4</sup> He would have encountered these approximately 2,000-pound masses in

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<sup>1</sup> Mimi Thompson and Roni Horn, “Roni Horn,” *BOMB* 28 (Summer 1989): 38.

<sup>2</sup> Roni Horn and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, *Roni Horn: Pair Objects I, II, III* (Paris: Galerie Lelong, 1988), 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* This catalogue appears to have been published in conjunction with Horn’s 1988 show at Galerie Lelong, although *Pair Object III* was the only *Pair Object* shown there.

<sup>4</sup> To the best of my knowledge, Judd acquired *Pair Object III* from Galerie Lelong during this show: the Judd Foundation archives, for instance, include slides of Horn’s work from Galerie Lelong, perhaps provided by the gallery as a courtesy following his purchase; and a Judd Foundation employee anecdotally confirmed that Judd indeed did purchase the work at that time. However, a catalogue published by the gallery in February of 1988—and therefore likely in conjunction with the show—credits the work as

separate rooms, each lying horizontally on the floor, heavy and motionless (*fig. 3*). The wider ends of these objects, their flat, circular “bases,” in both cases faced the entrance of the gallery space that each occupied. When Judd (or any other visitor) entered either object’s area, he would have initially perceived only a two-dimensional disc, impossibly balanced on edge; and upon circumnavigating it, the geometrically precise but otherwise unfamiliar truncated cone would have revealed itself in three dimensions. The process of perceptual discovery would begin anew once he doubled back and entered the adjoining gallery space, only this time the experience would have a precedent. Horn has described her paired works as “formally redundant and experientially cumulative,”<sup>5</sup> a formulation that captures an asymmetry in how one comes to know and experience these ostensibly identical objects.

1988, Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX. In collaboration with Horn, Judd installed his new acquisition in a small, vacant structure just outside the remote and dusty West Texas town of Marfa.<sup>6</sup> This was a long way from just about everything, not least of all the sterile, white walls of Galerie Lelong. The space, a former military structure unused since World War II, bore the entropic scars of a building left to time: cracks traversed the walls; plaster crumbled everywhere; latticed wooden rafters spanned overhead; the residue of blue paint, long since faded, lingered on surfaces throughout. Opting to leave the space raw and unfinished, Horn and Judd retained such traces. And, in keeping with Judd’s commitment to

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“Collection of Donald Judd,” suggesting that he may have acquired it sooner. Judd Foundation, Marfa, Texas.

<sup>5</sup> Thompson and Horn, “Roni Horn,” 35. This “formally redundant and experientially cumulative” formulation occurs elsewhere in Horn’s writings, as well, including undated notes reprinted in Roni Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, vol. 2 (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2009), 137.

<sup>6</sup> As is well known, Judd relocated to Marfa, TX, in the early 1970s, where, with the financial assistance of the Dia Art Foundation, he purchased land and properties in this small town (including the entirety of the former military base, Fort D.A. Russell) in order to permanently install works of his own and of artists he admired. For more on the history of Judd’s presence in Texas, the recent Chinati publication is indispensable: Marianne Stockebrand, Donald Judd, and Rudi Fuchs, *Chinati: The Vision of Donald Judd* (Marfa, TX: Chinati Foundation, 2010).

“the serious and permanent installation of art,” it was here, in this place given over to the desert surrounding it, that the polished copper masses of *Pair Object III: (for two rooms)* would take up indefinite residence.<sup>7</sup>

At this juncture, however, the work manifested itself differently. Horn retitled it, even reconceptualized the project itself. This *Pair Object*, now reconfigured according to the conditions of its new site, was no longer “for two rooms” at all. In this undivided space it assumed a new name and identity: *Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)* (fig. 4). From opposite ends of the long room, the wide bases of these things now faced inwards toward a doorway located between them. At the threshold, the visitor would look left or else look right, in both cases meeting the illusory two-dimensional disc; and upon entering and circulating through the space, the unusual objects would again stage their “formally redundant and experientially cumulative” confrontation, but in a new format. Now, standing at one end of the space, the viewer had the option of seeing both objects simultaneously. Set off obliquely from one another, however, the work still withheld the identity they nevertheless shared. Against this space, a battered and broken-down ground, the pristine, copper forms dramatically surfaced, like alien objects somehow spared from the very same elements that had, over time, ravaged their space.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Donald Judd, “Marfa, Texas,” in *Complete Writings, 1975-1986* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 1987), 101. Like many other “permanently installed” works at the Chinati Foundation, Horn’s is in fact “on long-term loan” from the Judd Foundation. Because Judd stipulated in his will that things be left as they are, however, “long-term loan” effectively means “indefinitely.” Notably, too, the space inhabited by Horn’s work is the only unfinished space used for exhibition at the Chinati Foundation.

<sup>8</sup> There remains some uncertainty about the evolution of Horn’s work. As I stated earlier, Judd appears to have purchased a work titled *Pair Object III: (for two rooms)* “*The Experience of Identical Things*” from Galerie Lelong during (or before) its 1988 exhibition there. While literature published by the Chinati Foundation suggests that Horn’s work was then installed in Marfa that same year, I discovered personal correspondence suggesting that the two artists may not have settled on an installation for the work even by 1990. A letter from Horn to Judd dated 2/8/1990, for instance, includes sketches for three separate *Pair Object* installations at Chinati (identified as “PO III For two rooms,” “PO V For things which are

Horn has described her work, including these “formally redundant and experientially cumulative” paired sculptures, as a “criticism of minimalism.”<sup>9</sup> And truly her paired works take up many of minimalism’s tropes and favored strategies: industrial fabrication, materiality, geometrical precision, wholeness (in their evacuation of internal syntax and part-to-part relationships), seriality (in their deployment of both formal repetition and numerical indexing), a careful consideration of the work’s relationship to its site. Raising the stakes, as it were, *Pair Object VII* moreover finds itself physically very close to minimalism in its new Texas home. Permanent installations by Dan Flavin and Carl Andre occupy buildings nearby; and a large-scale work of Judd’s own extends through two former artillery sheds also on this former military campus. Which is to say nothing of Judd’s larger enterprise of permanently installing works of art at this location—an enterprise that itself can be seen as an extension of his minimalist practice. Here of all places, what is the nature of Horn’s “criticism of minimalism”?

Minimalism, it must be said, is best understood as a debate, a discursive space of contestation. In his book on the subject, James Meyer argues that minimalism ought to be seen “not as a movement with a coherent platform, but as a field of contiguity and conflict, of proximity and difference”; that, if anything, minimalism presents “a dynamic field of specific

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near,” and “PO VII For a here and a there”). Moreover, the sketch includes *two* floor plans for *For a Here and a There*, suggesting either that the work still had not been installed or that its configuration had not yet been finalized. Judd Foundation, Marfa, Texas. The installation was almost certainly finished by 1991, however, considering that catalogues from that year depicting *Pair Object VII* show it installed at the Chinati Foundation as it still is today. For the purposes of this text, however, I will consider a 2010 publication by and about the Chinati Foundation to be the authoritative account, which contends that Judd and Horn installed the work in 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson and Horn, “Roni Horn,” 38. In reviews of Horn’s early shows through the 1980s, critics regularly compare her work to minimalism—often dismissively. See, for instance, Roberta Smith’s review of the 1988 Galerie Lelong Show: Roberta Smith, “Roni Horn,” *The New York Times*, March 4, 1988, sec. C. Early catalogues of Horn’s work, moreover, are very instructive in seeing the affinity her 1980s work shared with minimalism. Here, see, for instance, Roni Horn, *Roni Horn* (München: Kunstraum München, 1983).

practices that we could name ‘Andre,’ ‘Flavin,’ ‘Judd,’ ‘Truitt,’ ‘LeWitt’ and ‘Morris.’”<sup>10</sup>

Bearing that in mind, I want to argue that Horn’s work specifically engages strategies of Donald Judd’s and Robert Morris’—two divergent but dominant aesthetic positions on minimalism that defined Meyer’s “field” to a greater extent than any other of its practitioners. Closely adhering to Horn’s work, this paper will take seriously its claim to the pair as “two objects that are one object.” In an effort to elaborate the logic of this specific structure, I will examine Horn’s *Pair Objects*, first, next to Judd’s serial work and, second, next to Morris’ gestalt forms. Mobilizing in the first case a pseudo-serial repetition and, in the second, doubled quasi-unitary forms, Horn’s pairs critique minimalism on its own terms, weakening the foundations on which such strategies are founded.

More recently, androgyny has emerged as a predominant theoretical preoccupation of the artist’s. Indeed, beginning later in the 1990s, a significant portion of Horn’s practice can be understood as a site for the active conceptualization of androgyny. Yet, as I will argue, the logic of Horn’s pairs anticipates the logic of androgyny more explicitly taken up in later works. If, like androgyny, the pair ultimately proposes identity as multiple, what might it mean, this paper asks, to fold this new meaning of the pair onto Horn’s structural critique of minimalism? What might it mean, in other words, for minimalism to undergo a critique not only by a *pair* object, but by an *androgynous* one? In response to such a provocation, the issue of identity will emerge as a central problem—specifically the identity of the minimalist *object* and the identity of the minimalist *subject*. If, in the end, Horn’s work propounds a “minimalism” that is “androgynous,” what I have in mind is this: a recasting of minimalism—

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<sup>10</sup> James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 4.

a memory, an afterlife, a recovery of minimalism—given over to fluidity, unfamiliarity, and non-essentialism.

### **Pair Logic: A Critique of Seriality**

Four sets of paired, solid copper forms, each forged and machined to duplicate mechanical identity: 17 inch diameter, tapering to 12 inch diameter over 35 inches, with a 5/8 inch convexity at the small end.<sup>11</sup>

– Description of *Things That Happen Again* (1987-1990)

*Pair Object III: (For Two Rooms)* and *Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)* belong to what Horn calls a “suite” of four works known as *Things That Happen Again*, typically dated as 1987-1990:

*Pair Object III: (For Two Rooms)*

*Pair Object V: (For Things That Are Near)*

*Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)*

*Pair Object VIII: (For a This and a That)*<sup>12</sup>

Each consists of the same two identical copper objects, and each specifies a unique configuration as befit their titles. *Pair Object V*, for instance, has the two objects together, their surfaces lightly kissing (*fig. 5*); and *Pair Object VIII* resembles the Chinati’s *Pair Object VII*, except that the viewer’s initial vista of the work includes the flat base of one copper form juxtaposed with the side of the other (*fig. 6*). None of these configurations are wholly fixed, since Horn allows each work to adapt somewhat to the physical conditions of the space it

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<sup>11</sup> Roni Horn, *Things Which Happen Again* (Mönchengladbach; Münster: Städtisches Museum Abteiberg; Westfälischer Kunstverein, 1991), unpaginated. The title of this catalogue reflects the original name given to the series, *Things Which Happen Again*; however at some point Horn adjusted the grammar to *Things That Happen Again*. Presumably, Horn changed the language from “which” to “that” in order to render the clause restrictive: not necessarily all “things” *happen again*, but these “things” in particular do. This change in title is acknowledge in Stockebrand, Judd, and Fuchs, *Chinati*, 150 fn. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Horn appears to have played with the titling and punctuation of her titles frequently, and so it is not surprising to see discrepancies in how a given work is identified. For the sake of consistency, I defer to the titling scheme used by the 2010 Chinati publication.

inhabits—“site-dependent,” she calls them.<sup>13</sup> And to a degree undermining the autonomy of each of these *Pair Objects*, Horn describes the *Things That Happen Again* suite as “one work with four identities,” suggesting that these “identities” are not so much distinct as they are manifestations of one another.<sup>14</sup>

To make matters somewhat more complicated, the four *Pair Objects* that comprise *Things That Happen Again* also belong to a larger constellation of works sharing the *Pair Object* title.<sup>15</sup> While these need not all consist of the same polyhedra—in addition to the truncated cones, we have already seen both rods (*Pair Object I*) and spheres (*Pair Object II*)—each *Pair Object* invariably involves doubled, solid copper forms, machined to mechanical identity; and to the title of each is appended a roman numeral that conjures a horizon of infinite extendibility.

All of which is to say that Horn’s *Pair Objects* appear to operate a serial logic. Their manifestation occurs in the disinterested fashion of a numerical sequence, and four of these also join a secondary and finite serial unity, *Things That Happen Again*, which iterates the same truncated cone otherwise not required of a *Pair Object*. And this is to say nothing of the seriality internal to the *Pair Objects* themselves. For each, after all, consists of a more

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<sup>13</sup> Horn discusses the site-dependency of her work vis-à-vis site-specificity in a 1990 interview with Hannelore Kersting. See Roni Horn and Hannelore Kersting, “Things Which Happen Again: Interview with Roni Horn,” in *Things Which Happen Again* (Mönchengladbach; Münster: Städtisches Museum Abteiberg; Westfälischer Kunstverein, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> From undated notes of the artist’s, reprinted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:137. Horn’s insistence on *Things That Happen Again* as “one work with four identities” adds yet more uncertainty to this particular body of work, since *Pair Object III* (1986-1988) seems to have preceded the creation of the “suite” of identities. Nevertheless, catalogues often represent each of these four identities as interchangeable, suggesting that it truly *is* one work with four identities. Further research would no doubt greatly benefit from examining certificates of authenticity and acquisition records to better understand, for instance, whether one purchases a single identity or all four.

<sup>15</sup> Horn also has a number of works on paper that share the *Pair Object* title. In some cases, but by no means all, these function as studies for or companions to their sculptural instantiations. The present paper is limited to the three-dimensional *Pair Object* works.

primary repetition of the work's constitutive copper forms—a repetition initiated by precise dimensional specifications and finally guaranteed through processes of industrial fabrication. “Simply order,” goes Judd’s famous dictum, “like that of continuity, one thing after another.”<sup>16</sup> What do Horn’s *Pair Objects* manifest if not this?

Of course, Horn’s work also announces the *pair*, and not seriality, as its principal unit and operative logic. Indeed it is a longstanding interest of the artist’s: her first *Pair Object* dates to 1980, but she has retroactively acknowledged that the pair emerged as a structural concern even before this.<sup>17</sup> Common to each of these pairs is a work identified as *one* object that, by virtue of its being paired, is also *two* objects; and that these, in many cases, exist serially. I open, then, with a deceptively simple question: When is one a pair, and when is a pair a series?

First response. *One* is a subset of *pair*; and both are a subset of *series*. Which is to say that these categories, these sets, refer to quantity: a series (more than one) is greater than or equal to a pair (two) is greater than a single term (one).

Second response. To the degree that seriality involves uniformity, invariability, and repetition—“simply order” and “one thing after another”—a pair is not necessarily serial. In fact, a pair may be antithetical to seriality. This more or less follows the mathematical definition of the series, which specifies a set of terms whose sequential values manifest at regular or otherwise predictable intervals according to the more primary existence of a

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<sup>16</sup> Donald Judd, “Specific Objects,” in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 827. Judd’s formulation of seriality here is specifically addressed to Frank Stella’s paintings as exemplary of the “new three-dimensional work,” or what he called “specific objects.”

<sup>17</sup> Horn considers *Field and Slab (Slope Forms)*, exhibited at her MFA graduate show in 1978, as her first paired work: “It is a pair of soft rubber wedges; *Field* was very thin and delicate and *Slab* was thick and blunt. I installed them in three rooms. The first had *Slab*, the second space which was also the largest was left empty. The third room was *Field*.” From undated notes of the artist’s, reprinted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:111.

function. And while a series can be finite or infinite, seriality specifies an autogenic entity, which means that its uniform array of values, *causa sui*, can be hypothetically extended *ad infinitum*. Not so with a pair, however. After all, three is hardly a pair at all. And if, in the absence of a third term, a pair produces only one relationship between its two terms, can it properly be said to be serial? If seriality expresses something like order due to the regularity of its manifestation, can a pair be said to do the same?

Anecdote. By the time Horn's *Pair Object VII* arrived in Marfa in 1988, Judd had finished renovating the military base's former artillery sheds and, only two years prior, completed a massive installation of 100 untitled works in mill aluminum (*fig. 7*). When Judd initially conceived the work in April 1980, however, he did not envision 100 works for the site but twenty-five. In May of that year, he designed fifty more—each one unique. These arrived in Marfa as they were fabricated beginning in November 1982, at which point Judd began installing them in the south artillery shed in disciplined and orderly rows, leaving the north shed for other work. Over the following four years, newly fabricated aluminum works continued to arrive; presumably, too, Judd conceived twenty-five additional boxes. The work's growing ranks expanded into the north shed, displacing the work that had previously inhabited that space, and by 1986 the installation of these 100 untitled works in mill aluminum was complete.<sup>18</sup>

Scalability and methodical organization, then. "One thing after another" and "simply order." Whether sequential or strictly repeated, a series implies its own orderly extensibility, and this orderly extensibility is manifest in the work's very gridded expression. Flowing from one artillery shed to the next, Judd's aluminum boxes gather neatly into rows, precisely

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<sup>18</sup> Stockebrand, Judd, and Fuchs, *Chinati*, 33–34.

aligned with the rectilinearity of the architecture itself as well as with the literal gridding of the concrete floor.

Of the grid, Rosalind Krauss has asserted that the chief outcome of its endless reiteration is a de-centering, a flattening of hierarchy. This, she has said, is precisely why it often prevailed as an avant-gardist strategy: the grid asserted itself as an origin and secured for art a position of autonomy outside of nature and outside of language.<sup>19</sup> In addition to overseeing and ordering the series' visual expression, then, the grid also disallows the consolidation of an *original* object. For if the original is that which wields hierarchical authority over mere copies, the seriality of mechanical reproduction (of which the grid is emblematic) forever furnishes only “multiples without originals.”<sup>20</sup> Judd's boxes may all be unique, yet surely no one of them constitutes an original. Instead, each consecutive serial element mutely affirms the order of the series itself. The gridded expression of Judd's serial aluminum boxes therefore captures what Krauss described as the grid's centrifugal force, in which “the given work of art is presented as a mere fragment, a tiny piece arbitrarily cropped from an infinitely larger fabric.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, walking amongst Judd's boxes, each vista opens out onto something like a slice of this greater series; and each individual work can be seen as standing metonymically for the series within which it is subsumed and for which it is paradigmatic and exemplary—never, however, as an origin.

To be sure, Horn's *Pair Object* works, with their patterning of titles and numerical suffixes, appear to instantiate an orderly one-thing-after-another expansion. Inaugurated in

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<sup>19</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “The Originality of the Avant-Garde,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 152–70.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>21</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “Grids,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 18.

1980 with *Pair Object I*, each subsequent *Pair Object* shares in the same format: two identical, solid copper objects, the dimensions of which are capable of being disclosed in plain and unambiguous terms. And each sequential addition to the series would seem only to extend and further entrench its overall order. Similarly, we may see the *Things That Happen Again* suite as an abbreviated sub-series. After all, which of its constitutive *Pair Objects*—indeed, which of its four *identities*—can be said to be the original one? Plus, as Horn stated of *Things That Happen Again* in 1990, “there’s always the possibility of discovering new identities”<sup>22</sup>—of, that is, extending it even further. And do not the copper pairs themselves express a seriality, if yet more severely truncated?

But these observations only return us to a question still unanswered: is the pair a quantitative subset of a series, or does it instantiate a condition incompatible with that of seriality? Is a pair, in other words, merely a stunted form of seriality?

Definitionally, a pair is somewhat stricter than seriality in that it comprises precisely two terms, each of which is essential to its being as a pair. Perhaps they constitute a repetition, perhaps not. What is clear, in any case, is that they instantiate a single relationship *internally* between them. There can be no “order” here—not yet, anyway. Metonymy is no longer the prerogative of either term—neither, that is, can speak for the other nor for both. Moreover, to remove one term or to add one term is to irrevocably destroy the pair’s very identity as such, the premise of which is indissolubly double. No doubt Horn’s pairs unambiguously meet such intuitive requirements: there are two; they are the same. And often installed obliquely with respect to one another, the copper pairs never quite suggest order; these “things that happen again” never quite materialize as “one thing after another.” As a

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<sup>22</sup> Horn and Kersting, “Things Which Happen Again: Interview with Roni Horn,” unpaginated.

result, and in spite of the mechanical exactitude of their manufacture, Horn's individual *Pair Object* sculptures do not fully gesture towards their serial continuation. They do not threaten to replicate in the way that Judd's work, historically, has.

And yet the pair is also very different from other categorical duos, for which "two-ness" is similarly critical. One thinks of biological duos (twins, clones), duos describing interpersonal relationships (mates, couples), linguistic duos (couplets, doublets). Which is not to mention those duos familiar from art history—not only a format like the diptych, but also (and more contemporary with Horn's work) in the discourse of originals and replicas, or originals and copies. Lynne Cooke, for one, has recognized the significance of the pair in Horn's work, but she has tended to collapse it onto other such twosomes: "A pair implies duality, a couple, a duplicate, a twinning, doubling or a duo—all features or qualities that recur in Horn's practice in ways that call their very identity into question."<sup>23</sup> However, it is significant that Horn chose none of these terms in describing her work—surely they are not interchangeable. A couple is perhaps too generic, after all, often conveying a quantity of two. Nor would it make sense for the work to stage the original/copy relationship of duplication, for neither of the forms is primary, neither is prior to the other. And bearing in mind the existence of eight of these conical objects through the *Things That Happen Again* suite, one again faces the prospect of seriality (of the repeated shape and the repeated pairs alike), which structurally precludes the possibility of an "original" in the first place.

A pair, then. Only, what is a pair? One thinks of common "pairs"—a pair of mittens, socks, eyeglasses, pants, headphones; a pair of scissors, tweezers, chopsticks, tongs. All consist of two parts, sometimes joined, sometimes not; and both of these parts are integral to

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<sup>23</sup> Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:111.

the unit's being-as-a-pair. Grammatically speaking, a pair is singular—one unit, which happens to consist of two things. However even pairs consisting of physically distinct parts—a pair of shoes, say—even these are not as separate as they seem. Less one shoe, for instance, a pair of shoes ceases to be a pair at all. A single shoe is a conspicuous thing indeed, and a useless one at that.<sup>24</sup>

But more than its general condition of essential two-ness, arguably common to many categorical duos, a pair consists of parts that are identical, or *almost* identical. One thinks of prescription eyeglasses for left and right eyes, left and right shoes or gloves, the opposable blades of scissors—such pairs consist of parts that are mirrored, reflected, complementary. And while component parts of certain pairs—socks, mittens, chopsticks—may be *exactly* identical, their condition of undifferentiation vanishes the moment they become posed opposite one another: actualized through use, that is, socks and mittens become differentiated for left and right feet and hands; and once held, chopsticks extend an opposable thumb-forefinger grip. This *almost identical* proposition describes a very different condition, I think, from that of the couple, which commonly consists of things that are different. For a couple is not only a generic quantitative twosome (one can have a couple of just about anything, providing one has two of them); it also describes lovers—two *different* beings that join together, that themselves *couple*. Because the pair, on the other hand, consists of two parts that are *almost* identical, is it a coincidence that so many familiar pairs are things worn on or

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<sup>24</sup> This, in any case, is what Martin Heidegger might say of the pair. It is a kind of useful thing, a *handy* one, something defined by an “in-order-to.” And in its being as useful *for*, a handy thing withholds its very thingliness: it “withdraws, so to speak, in its character of handiness in order to be really handy.” Yet at the moment a formerly useful thing becomes *unusable*, it becomes *conspicuous*. If a single shoe, then, is a *conspicuous* thing, that is because the handiness of a shoe lies in its being-as-a-pair. This condition of handiness, I suggest provisionally, is a condition more generally of the pair. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), especially pp. 64-70.

used by the body? If this is true, it must be because the bilaterally symmetrical human anatomy is itself “paired” and therefore has a use for such things. This observation recalls a cryptic one of Horn’s own, rendered in a fragmentary clause: “That the viewer *performs* the object.”<sup>25</sup>

A pair, then: provisionally, a single unit consisting of two parts—identical, *almost*—counterposed to one another, essential to the unit’s being-as-a-pair, and conventionally useful for beings like us who are also bilaterally symmetrical. For Horn to name her work a “pair” is therefore not only to stress the integrity of the two copper objects with respect to the unit’s identity, but also to suggest that these identical objects are, in fact, anything but.

I have admittedly strayed somewhat from Horn’s work in beginning to think through the condition of the pair vis-à-vis seriality. However, it is precisely this line of reasoning that *Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)* makes available. The title, first, announces the work itself as two incongruous terms (the paired *here* and *there*), which nevertheless constitute a single object (at once here *and* there). Seriality would propose that its constitutive terms are the same, or the same in spite of their difference; the pair, however, projects onto its terms a condition of difference in spite of their sameness. For the title’s intervening into the work differentiates these otherwise identical copper objects by identifying them generally as a pair and specifically as a *here/there* pair. Such empty linguistic shifters are identical insofar as they correspond to unactualized positions, but once invoked they initiate a categorical opposition.

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<sup>25</sup> Roni Horn, “Notes,” in *Roni Horn* (München: Kunstraum München, 1983), 100. This description is associated specifically with *Pair Object I*. My emphasis.

More importantly, however, the *Pair Object* in Marfa itself visually and spatially occupies the condition of the pair. First of all, there are the requisite two objects, and these do not yet conjure a serial potentiality since there is no pattern here, much less any order. Like the artillery sheds containing Judd's work, this space has a literal grid traversing its concrete floor as a function of its architectural construction (not to mention the grid-like wooden rafters spanning overhead); but Horn has arranged these copper forms obliquely with respect to the grid and with respect to one another. Further evacuating Judd's one-thing-after-another order, *Pair Object VII* denies its viewer any vista that will furnish a direct and orderly comparison between the objects. No doubt they are identical—we are told as much. But unlike Judd's aluminum boxes, the work's un-ordered and un-gridded expression muffles their sameness, obstructing the viewer's capacity for making a visual confirmation.

Moreover, Horn has herself described the paired works as “an attempt to include the viewer actively as part of the work and not just in the space between,”<sup>26</sup> as producing “a space in which the viewer would inhabit the work, or at least be a part of it.”<sup>27</sup> No doubt these are difficult claims to measure, but they have much to do, I think, with the oscillation that occurs between the *here/there* pair. For peering into the space inhabited by *Pair Object VII* and faced (to the left) with a two-dimensional circle and (to the right) a second two-dimensional circle, perhaps neither copper form is *here* nor *there*. But upon entering the space, indeed entering the work itself, the viewer's presence *generates* a *here* and, absolutely coincident with this event, a *there*. These shifters, the meaning of which depends on the relative location of their speaker, then change as we circulate through the space—what was *here* is now *there*,

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<sup>26</sup> Roni Horn, “[Untitled Lecture],” in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Jeffrey Kopie (Marfa, Texas: Chinati Foundation, 2000), 71.

<sup>27</sup> Roni Horn and James Lingwood, “From the South of England to the North of Iceland, Interview with Roni Horn,” in *Some Thames* (Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, 2003), 18.

and vice versa. These objects are identical, only they aren't; and the oscillation they generate, contingent upon and activated by the body, helps describe this sense in which the viewer inhabits the work. Even as they speak the language of seriality, then, Horn's pairs disallow any "one thing after another" scalability and forestall anything like "simply order." Instead, the artist gives us only "things that happen again."

### **Pair Logic: A Critique of Gestalt**

Four sets of paired, solid copper forms, each forged and machined to duplicate mechanical identity: 17 inch diameter, tapering to 12 inch diameter over 35 inches, with a 5/8 inch convexity at the small end.<sup>28</sup>

– Description of *Things That Happen Again* (1987-1990)

Each *Pair Object* belonging to the *Things That Happen Again* suite is capable of being verbally disclosed in the same, simple terms. With the requisite access to raw material, a fabricator need ostensibly know only four specifications: the diameter of each base (17" and 12"), the cone's "slant height," as the geometrician says (35"), and the depth of the small end's convexity (5/8"). Such facile and effortlessly apprehended instructions admit little room for ambiguity and project onto the objects a mass-producible potential. ("The choice of machining copper is relevant to the notion of duplication," Horn has said. "The machine process implicates the notion of duplicity which is critical to this work."<sup>29</sup>) But more than this, the instructions guarantee something like the *wholeness* of the forms they specify, their integrity as single and indivisible masses. No doubt these objects, once materialized, appear somewhat wonky, unfamiliar, unplaceable; and, once paired, they insist less on their *sameness* (seriality) than on their *difference in spite of sameness* (the pair). Still, each is whole, and

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<sup>28</sup> Horn, *Things Which Happen Again*, unpaginated.

<sup>29</sup> Horn and Kersting, "Things Which Happen Again: Interview with Roni Horn," unpaginated.

each lacks anything like composition, anything like a meaningful internal arrangement of parts.

In addition to his interest in one-thing-after-another seriality, Judd, too, expressed an investment in something like “wholeness” in what he called “specific objects.” “Most sculpture is made part by part, by addition, composed,” he wrote. However “there is little of any of this in the new three-dimensional work,” which tends to be either “something of an object, a single thing” or “that which is open and extended, more or less environmental.”<sup>30</sup> In the absence of parts and engaging, instead, “real space,” the wholeness of the new work signals a decisive move away from illusionism.

Yet Horn’s copper masses share more in the kind of “wholeness” championed by Robert Morris, Judd’s minimalist rival and the other dominant voice in the discourse surrounding minimalism. Both artists, it is true, conceived “wholeness” as a strategy for countering a sculptural tradition in which parts are arranged, composed, introduced into meaningful relations: for each, wholeness promised an escape from the syntax or grammar that conventionally supervised an artwork’s internal production of meaning.<sup>31</sup> However, if Judd’s “wholeness” was primarily *formal*, as James Meyer alleges (that ultimately his “specific objects” were pictorial, optical, things to look at), Morris’ “unitary forms” placed

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<sup>30</sup> Judd, “Specific Objects,” 826.

<sup>31</sup> While I discussed minimalist seriality specifically in terms of its expandability and its evacuation of anything like an “original,” Rosalind Krauss noted that Judd’s “one thing after another” imperative similarly offered a critique of “the interior space of forms”—that “sheer repetition,” in other words, provided “a way of avoiding the inferences of relational composition.” Of one of Judd’s early wall-mounted works, for instance—though surely equally apropos of Judd’s 100 mill aluminum works in Marfa—Krauss argued that “the regularity of the intervals between them seemed to drive the possibility of ‘significance’ out of the act of placing or arranging forms.” Morris’ “wholeness,” as we will see, similarly promises to evacuate any internal space of signification, albeit in a different manner. See Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), especially Chapter 7, “The *Double Negative*: a new syntax for sculpture” (pp. 243-288).

new import on the phenomenological *experience of wholeness*.<sup>32</sup> To that end, Morris proposed “unitary forms”—most often simple polyhedra—as structures whose “parts are bound together in such a way that they offer a maximum resistance to perceptual separation.”<sup>33</sup> As such, they had the capacity to relocate part-to-part syntax, previously internal to the art object, to the world: unitary forms promised to take those relationships “out of the work and [make] them a function of space, light, and the viewer’s field of vision.”<sup>34</sup> This operation depended critically on the successful transmission of a strong *gestalt* in response to the unitary object—that is, how easily the viewer could instantaneously *know* the shape of the object, how easily she could visualize it and sustain its mental projection. If the individual volumes comprising a work like *Pair Object VII*, then, present themselves as similarly “unitary,” the question here might be: when is a *Pair Object* unitary?

For Morris, polyhedra can be subdivided along two axes: simple-complex and regular-irregular. Most suitable for producing *gestalts* are the simple polyhedra, both regular (“cubes and pyramids”) and irregular (“beams, inclined planes, truncated pyramids”)—the reason being that such forms are, again, mentally visualizable, knowable. Not so with complex polyhedra, whether regular (a “sixty-four-sided figure”) or not (“crystal formations”).<sup>35</sup> For, even while a sixty-four-sided figure may be apprehended as whole, Morris wrote, it is impossible to strongly visualize; whereas a crystalline structure is sufficiently complex that it easily decomposes into constitutive parts. But with a cube, say, the viewer immediately

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<sup>32</sup> Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 166.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture,” in *Minimal Art*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968), 226.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

apprehends its gestalt. And once mentally visualized, the gestalt functions like a “known constant.”<sup>36</sup>

Crucially, though, this “known constant” never fully corresponds to our actual perception of the shape, or what Morris called the “experienced variable.” “The constant shape of the cube held in the mind but which the viewer never literally experiences,” the artist elaborated, “is an actuality against which the literal changing, perspective views are related.”<sup>37</sup> As a result of this discrepancy between the shape as *known* and as *experienced*, as a result of this turbulence between the *static constant* and *unfixed variable*, Morris’ unitary forms catalyze the spectator’s mindfulness not only of his own perceiving body in space, but also of the contingency of his experience of the work: “One is more aware than before that he himself is establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context.”<sup>38</sup> Thus minimalism’s celebrated “shift [...] from the object to its perception,” as Hal Foster put it, and the grounds for Michael Fried’s infamous dismissal of the work as theatrical.<sup>39</sup>

In practice, Morris’ strategies for externalizing the meaning of the artwork are clearly manifest in his *L-Beams* (1965) (*fig. 8*). The work consists of three identical, simple polyhedra, eight-sided and L-shaped, which, in spite of their slight irregularity, are designed to produce strong gestalts. Their neutral gray tone further “allow[s] for the maximum focus on those essential physical decisions that inform sculptural works,”<sup>40</sup> thereby communicating

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>39</sup> Hal Foster, “The Crux of Minimalism,” in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 54. On the question of minimalism’s theatricality, see: Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” in *Minimal Art*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968), 116–48.

<sup>40</sup> Morris, “Notes on Sculpture,” 225.

each thing's shape as transparently as possible. As if testing the viewer's proficiency in spatial reasoning, finally, Morris exhibits the identical volumes in differing rotations.

Measured against the “known constant” and depending on its orientation in space and where it is that the viewer stands, each beam then *reads* differently. After all, Morris wrote, “a beam on its end is not the same as a beam on its side.”<sup>41</sup> Consequently, Rosalind Krauss has argued, Morris' *L-Beams* “enact the pressure that placement exerts on an object's shape.”<sup>42</sup> Vis-à-vis the ideal gestalt, in other words, the work produces phenomenological difference. “This ‘difference,’” Krauss wrote elsewhere, constitutes the *L-Beams*' “sculptural meaning; and this meaning is dependent upon the connection of these shapes to the space of experience.”<sup>43</sup> Morris, for his part, anticipated the art historian's latter claim, noting that “some of the best of the new work [...] is more sensitive to the varying contexts of space and light in which it exists.”<sup>44</sup> In evacuating internal syntax, his *L-Beams* therefore labor to externalize that syntax, making it instead a function of the work's phenomenological conditions. The gestalt is immediate: we know right away what the shape is and that the three *L*'s are identical. However, the experience of the work is durational, variable, and constantly measured against that stable, “known constant.”

Ostensibly a work like Horn's *Pair Object VII* operates the same logic. Like Morris' *L-Beams*, the *Pair Object* consists of unitary copper forms—simple, if nominally irregular polyhedra. And like the *L-Beams*, each is repeated and then rotated so as to occupy a

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>42</sup> Krauss narrates this “pressure” on the *L-Beams*' “shapes” as follows: “the upright *L* appearing split between the solid half cleaving to the floor and the ‘lighter’ half reaching skyward; the *L* lying on its side seeming thickened and dense; while the *L* poised on its two extremities takes on an arched, lightened quality.” See Rosalind Krauss, “The Mind/Body Problem: Robert Morris in Series,” in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson, October Files 15 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 91.

<sup>43</sup> Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, 267.

<sup>44</sup> Krauss, “The Mind/Body Problem: Robert Morris in Series,” 233.

different spatial orientation. As a result of any internal syntax having been evacuated from each individual object, finally, the experience of *Pair Object VII* likewise unfolds in time as one circulates through their space. If Morris contends that, in experiencing the unitary form, “even shape does not remain constant,”<sup>45</sup> we recognize his assertion as consistent, too, with Horn’s work and its unexpected formal “surprises”—the elongated copper body hiding behind the two-dimensional disc, for example.

What is more, catalogues depicting the various identities of *Things That Happen Again* often “perform” this embodied experience of the work, as if attempting to communicate precisely the formal variability that the sculpture undergoes as a function of the viewer’s movement. Returning briefly to its first instantiation as *Pair Object III: (For Two Rooms)* at Galerie Lelong, we find the work captured in six-photographs, three devoted to each object (*fig. 9*).<sup>46</sup> Notice, however, that the photographer has taken great pains to reproduce each volume from identical positions: the head-on, two-dimensional circle we initially confront; the three-quarters view that follows as we round the object to the left; and, at last, a lateral view. Such a sequential representation of the work is less concerned with conveying the object itself than with narrating the viewer’s movement around it. In turn, it demonstrates not only how the shape transforms as one views the work, but also how the space around each object appears to radically reconstitute itself as one does so.

The temporal question—that, for Morris, “the experience of the work necessarily exists in time”<sup>47</sup>—is likewise particularly germane with respect to Horn’s work. After all, the rhetoric she invokes in discussing her *Pair Object* works is thick with temporality and

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<sup>45</sup> Morris, “Notes on Sculpture,” 234.

<sup>46</sup> I borrow this sequence from the following 1991 catalogue, devoted specifically to the *Things That Happen Again* suite: Horn, *Things Which Happen Again*.

<sup>47</sup> Morris, “Notes on Sculpture,” 234.

duration: “formally *redundant* and experientially *cumulative*”; “things that *happen again*”; “in the *first* room a unique object, in the *second* a familiar one”<sup>48</sup>; “a *recurrent* form: amplifying, not duplicating.”<sup>49</sup> Only, upon closer scrutiny Horn’s language differs rather astonishingly from Morris’, too. For how indeed does a formulation like “formally redundant and experientially cumulative” square with the kind of experience Morris envisions, in which the spectator engages in the activity of constantly measuring “the known constant” against “the experienced variable”? Far as it is from Morris’ quasi-mathematical language of variables and constants and polyhedra, Horn’s fuzzier rhetoric—of things that are redundant, cumulative, familiar—signals a disaffiliation with some notional gestalt.

Bearing this in mind, let us double back, as it were, and retrace our steps. First of all, perhaps Horn’s works do not disclose a gestalt at all—at least not with the instantaneity advocated by Morris. Recall the labored illusionism of *Pair Object VII*, how one initially faces a two-dimensional circle to the left, and, to the right, a second. At this moment we are in a position to visualize precisely nothing about the three-dimensional forms they conceal—in fact, it is not even clear these are three-dimensional at all. Forestalling as it does the immediate apprehension of a three-dimensional form, or of anything like a gestalt, *Pair Object VII* asks instead that we busily accumulate an embodied knowledge of the object. What was an “experienced variable” is now “formally redundant”—surplus, unnecessary, superfluous, something that *happens again*. And what was a “known constant” is now “experientially cumulative”—gathered over time, indefinitely amassed and collected. If, as Horn wrote of *Pair Object III*, “in the first room [there is] a unique object, in the second, a

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<sup>48</sup> From undated notes of the artist’s, reprinted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:137. Emphasis mine.

<sup>49</sup> Horn, “Notes,” 100. Emphasis mine.

familiar one,” this can only be because we have accumulated the requisite experience to recognize the latter as familiar.

While Morris is careful to install his *L-Beams* in wholly distinct orientations, moreover, the copper forms constituting Horn’s *Pair Object VII* in fact both lie heavily on their sides and “face” the doorway in anticipation of their viewer. What this means is that, in confronting Morris’ work, we can never replicate the “variable experiences” of, say, the *L* sitting upright with the one perched gingerly on its legs: each *L* is rotated uniquely in space. Yet, in Horn’s case, potentially (but not necessarily) identical vantages are all we ever get. (Recall the six-photograph representation of *Pair Object III*, which captures precisely this redundancy.) If the paired objects’ orientations are different, then, they can only be so in relation to one another and in relation to their anticipated viewer.

Lastly, it is the two objects being-as-a-pair that finally undoes the promise of a gestalt experience. Because Morris’ *L-Beams* produce a strong gestalt image, one immediately understands each of the three *L*’s as an instance of the same ideal shape sustained mentally. But with Horn’s work, and in the absence of any immediate gestalt, the copper pieces hardly appear as discrete instances of an ideal form, much less manifestations of a “known constant.” Instead, and in spatially occupying the condition of the pair, the copper volumes *themselves* stage a relationship—not with respect to a mental model and to an ideal form but with respect to one another and to their viewer. Perhaps the pair is ultimately not so unitary after all, consisting as it does of two very distinct parts.

Crucially, however, if Morris’ gestalt critiques internal part-to-part relationships as the conventional site for the consolidation and stabilization of meaning—a “procedure,” Krauss

called it, “for declaring the externality of meaning”<sup>50</sup>—it, too, presupposes the integrity of things called “interior” and “exterior” to begin with. For in emptying a form’s “inside” of signification—which, constructed from plywood, are literally void—Morris’ *L-Beams* only invert the semiological model of the traditional artwork. (Here is the “postmodern” shift from Author to Reader famously pronounced by Roland Barthes in 1968.<sup>51</sup>) Yet Horn’s work, as the reader might begin to suspect, confuses the stability of these very categories. On the one hand, the pair stipulates “*two objects* that are one object”: internal to the work are parts—two of them—and these instantiate a syntax (although surely a syntax to some degree contingent upon us); and when viewing the work, we walk *in* it, *through* it, *between* its two terms, recalling Horn’s stated goal of creating “a space in which the viewer would inhabit the work, or at least be a part of it.” On the other hand, the pair stipulates “two objects that are *one object*”: each individual copper form, being whole, evacuates internal syntax; and when viewing one of them, we walk *around* it, *outside* of it. Indeed, from the perimeter of the space, we stand external to the pair itself as a single and indivisible entity.

In this sense, Horn’s pairs reset the very terms of Morris’ own critique by collapsing the distinctions between inside and outside, internal and external. If *Pair Object VII* mobilizes syntax, its instantiation occurs both *in* the work (as two things) and *around* it (as one thing). And so in the same way that Horn’s work critiques Judd’s seriality on its own terms—her work, that is, adopts a recognizably serial rhetoric only to repudiate its viability by producing internal difference—her pairs also critique Morris’ gestalt on its own terms. For

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<sup>50</sup> Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, 266.

<sup>51</sup> The postmodern text, so claims Barthes, relocates the site of meaning from its interior to its exterior—from, that is, the place of the Author (as the figure of authority who deposits univocal signification into the text) to the Reader (as the figure who must parse what is in fact a richly citational and polysemous space). Roland Barthes, “Death of the Author,” in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 142–48.

the pair offers a “whole” that confuses the internal/external divide upon which Morris’ minimalism depends. The viewing subject anticipated by Morris’ work, who mentally sustains a fixed and ideal form, looks less and less like that imagined by Horn. Instead, *Pair Object VII* anticipates a subject who is herself under revision, who is herself a locus for the work’s variable expression.

### **From the Pair to Androgyny**

Integrating difference is the basis of identity, not the exclusion of it. You are this and this *and* that...<sup>52</sup>

– Roni Horn

In 1998 Horn traveled to London to begin work on a commission centered around the River Thames.<sup>53</sup> The result of this effort, *Still Water (The River Thames, for Example)* (1999) consisted of some fifteen photographic works, each depicting, in detail, the surface of the famous body of water (*figs. 10-12*). The first thing one notices is how dramatically these photographs vary in tone, texture, and hue; in affect, feeling, and intensity. The subject of the photographs is singular, but its expression is entirely multiple. Upon peering closer, one notices, too, that these images are extensively footnoted—tiny white numbers pepper the photographs, and corresponding blocks of text appear beneath. What one discovers in these footnotes is an utterly futile attempt undertaken by Horn to exhaustively catalogue this excess of expressivity.

One such footnote, for instance, speaks directly to water’s capacity for amorphous visual manifestation, for absorbing manifold psychological or emotional states:

You say water is troubled or calm. You say water is rough and restless. You say water is disturbed. You say water is serene and sometimes clear, it might be pure and

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<sup>52</sup> From a 2003 letter to Paulo Herkenhoff, reprinted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:11.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:134.

then it is brilliant. Water is still and then it might be deep as well. Water is cold or hot, chilly or tepid.<sup>54</sup>

Water is physically fluid, yes; but its fluidity of *form* and its attendant capacity to function as a site of projection were apparently what captured Horn's imagination. "One paradox about water," the artist would explain in a 2003 interview, "is how something so intimate and familiar constantly presents itself as unfamiliar."<sup>55</sup> Which is another way of saying that water foregrounds difference in spite of sameness—how very much like the pair indeed, as we will shortly see.

If I have shifted focus briefly to *Still Water*, that is because Horn's various photographic projects dealing with water and its variability emerge as an active site for the artist's conceptualization of androgyny. If, as Horn writes, "androgyny is the possibility of a thing containing multiple identities,"<sup>56</sup> perhaps it will come as no surprise that she finds water, in its vicissitudes and formlessness, as "the ultimate form of androgyny."<sup>57</sup> For it is precisely "the possibility of a thing containing multiple identities" that Horn's extensive footnotes seek, in vain, to capture.

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<sup>54</sup> Reprinted in Roni Horn, *Another Water* (Zurich: Scalo, 2000), n.p. Also excerpted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:165.

<sup>55</sup> Horn and Lingwood, "From the South of England to the North of Iceland, Interview with Roni Horn," 21. This interview is also excerpted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:165–166.

<sup>56</sup> From a 2003 letter to Paulo Herkenhoff, reprinted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:11.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:165. In addition to Horn's photographic works pertaining to water—which, besides *Still Water*, include publications such as *Another Water* (2000) and *Dictionary of Water* (2001)—Horn has discussed her *Asphere* sculptures (1988–2001) in terms of androgyny. Each of these works consists of a single sphere, fabricated from metal and nominally distorted. Of *Asphere XI*, for instance, Horn has said "it's not spherical and it's really not much of anything else. It is a sphere that's elongated in one dimension. So what you experience is something initially very familiar but as you spend more time with it, it becomes less and less familiar... [I]t's an androgynous object, an object that includes difference as the source of its identity." Horn, "[Untitled Lecture]," 73. Elsewhere she has described the *Asphere* works as "an homage to androgyny." Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:17. The *Asphere* works may therefore indicate an earlier interest in the theme of androgyny and one, importantly, that is roughly contemporaneous with the *Pair Object* work.

Now, Horn never speaks about her *Pair Object* works in terms of androgyny. She limits her claims for them to the kinds of questions we have thus far investigated—that is, the pair’s structural specificity and the kinds of relationships it engenders with the viewer. Nevertheless, I want to suggest that the engagement with androgyny that will become explicit in Horn’s water-related investigations of the 1990s exists in embryonic form in the *Pair Objects*—that Horn’s paired works may in fact offer an earlier site for the theorization and practice of androgyny. Listen, for example, to the ways in which *Things That Happen Again*—“one work with four identities”—rhymes with androgyny: “the possibility of a thing containing multiple identities.” Listen to the ways that the pair—a form that, “by virtue of the condition of being double, actively refuses the possibility of being experienced as *a thing in itself*”<sup>58</sup>—resonates with the fluidity and unstable expressivity that Horn attributes to water: “it’s more a state of perpetual relation, it offers a complexity that defines identity as a much more open-ended thing.”<sup>59</sup> Perhaps the pair has something to tell us about androgyny; perhaps the pair object is itself an androgynous one; and perhaps, finally, Horn’s *paired* critique of minimalism is ultimately an *androgynous* critique. Indeed if Horn’s *pairs* are (at least provisionally) *androgynous*, what would it mean to fold this new sense of the pair back into her work’s criticism of minimalism?

First of all, androgyny is, for Horn, “the possibility of a thing containing multiple identities.” Her pithy definition certainly resonates, I think, with a popular understanding of what androgyny might be. The androgyne is a kind of hybrid figure, after all—a being in which the male (or masculine) and the female (or feminine) become inexorably blurred.

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<sup>58</sup> Thompson and Horn, “Roni Horn,” 35. My emphasis.

<sup>59</sup> Horn and Lingwood, “From the South of England to the North of Iceland, Interview with Roni Horn,” 21.

Biological sex is conventionally an *either/or* proposition: you are *either* one thing *or* you are the other, *definitively*. And for someone like Freud, this either/or is, unsurprisingly, a primary mode of organizing the world: “When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is ‘male or female?’ and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty.”<sup>60</sup> It is here that androgyny intervenes. For androgyny posits a conjunction—no longer *either/or*, but *both/and*. It posits a yoking together of categorical opposites, a *pairing* inscribed into the very word itself: *andro* (male) + *gyn* (female). You are this *and* that.

Or, you are here *and* there. This was the proposition of *Pair Object VII*, at least, which asserted that it was two things that were one thing; and that it was (or, that they were) both *here* and *there*, at once here *and* there. And as we have seen, the cleaved identity signaled by the work’s title was also spatialized in its installation, since the singular “pair object” ostensibly occupied two places at once. Any either/or proposition, put simply, no longer obtains. Moreover, the identity of *Pair Object VII* is not only multiple (both *here* and *there*) but also in flux as its terms come in and out of focus. For not unlike Horn’s vision of water, whose expression is fluid and amorphous, what is *here* and what is *there* are contingent, mobile, functions of the viewer’s body. If Horn, then, ascribes thoroughly polysemous meaning to the manifold surface of water, indeed if she *projects onto it* her own investments and preoccupations, the viewer of *Pair Object VII* likewise emerges as instrumental in actualizing the distinction of these otherwise undifferentiated masses.

But not only does androgyny propose an incommensurate being-together of two categorical opposites; and not only does it anticipate the condition of oscillation generated in

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<sup>60</sup> Sigmund Freud and James Strachey, “Femininity,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 22 (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), 113.

turn. It also (and by virtue of this very being-togetherness) proposes the untenability of the very terms to begin with, throwing the categories themselves into crisis. In her 1973 book *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn Heilbrun couches androgyny's paradoxical pairing in precisely this sort of language, claiming that it generates a "movement away from sexual polarization."<sup>61</sup> Thinking the essentially male and the essentially female together opens onto an expressive spectrum, an emancipatory and expanded field within which, Heilbrun argues, "human beings choose their places without regard to propriety or custom."<sup>62</sup> It makes theoretically available a condition of possibility "unbounded and hence fundamentally indefinable."<sup>63</sup> Likewise, Horn's *Pair Object VII* demonstrates nothing if not the untenability of its *here/there* shifters. For in addition to performing the unstable shuttling between poles (again, what is *here* and what is *there* remain in flux), the work also literally produces a space for the viewer to occupy *between* and *outside* these two positional markers, both *internal* and *external* to them. If one copper form is *here* and the other *there*, in other words, where are *we*—we who stand in between, we who stand outside? Where are we, that is, if not somewhere within this expanded field? And is it not equally plausible that *here* is

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<sup>61</sup> Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Knopf, 1973), ix.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* Heilbrun's claims for androgyny are anticipated by the photomontages of Hannah Höch's dating to the 1920s and early 1930s. Being fragments of photographs, the works tend to preserve the legible characteristics and codes of each gender; yet by virtue of montage and by "recombine[ing] masculine and feminine gender attributes," as Maud Lavin argues, the figures effectively occupy both gender positions simultaneously. Lavin describes the strategy as producing an experience not only of ambiguity, but also of oscillation and fluctuation, since the gender identities of Höch's figures shuttle between maleness and femaleness. Being that it is montage that produces this flux, Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory helps elaborate the mechanism. For him, montage was not a sum, but a dialectic product of its pairs; in colliding two distinct images, montage conjured a new conceptual sphere available to neither of its constituent parts, "as a value of another dimension, another degree: each taken separately corresponds to an object but the combination corresponds to a concept." This "concept" is the expanded field to which Heilbrun alludes. On Höch's androgynes, see: Maud Lavin, "Androgyny, Spectatorship, and the Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch," *New German Critique* 51 (Autumn 1990): 62–86. On Eisenstein's montage theory, see: Sergei Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot [The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram]," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

where *we* always are, in which case both objects remain definitively *there*? Indeed, perhaps *Pair Object VII* even foregrounds the possibility that the copper forms, in anticipation of their viewer, are already *here*, and that it is *we* who therefore occupy the contrary object-position of *there*. A strange proposition to be sure, but a proposition one must think nonetheless once the categories begin to unravel.

If Horn's work posits a structural equivalence or affinity between the pair and androgyny, then, what would it mean for minimalism to undergo a critique not only by a *paired* object but also by an *androgynous* one? Since the pair and androgyny alike contest the notion of identity as stable and singular—the pair, remember, “actively refuses the possibility of being experienced as a thing in itself”—what it *might* mean is that minimalism, as the object of critique, itself consolidates an identity which it is invested in stabilizing.

For an art historian like Anna Chave, the “identity” at issue is very literally a gender identity. Minimalist rhetoric, she claims, is a masculinist rhetoric, a “rhetoric of power”: by virtue of its materials, its industrial fabrication, its geometries, and its scale, minimalism emerges as ultimately complicit with dominant and hegemonic structures, “those systems of mediation which have (over)determined our history: Money, the Phallus, and the Concept as privileged operators of meaning.”<sup>64</sup> The conceptual innocence of Judd's call for “simply order,” in this view, now slides uneasily towards a very different semiotic register—“order,” that is, no longer as an abstract sequencing but as a command, an injunction, an instruction. In their unwavering reiteration of materials, precise dimensions, and permuting planes, Judd's aluminum boxes body forth an unrelenting serial babble—*this*, and then *this*, and then *this*, *ad infinitum*. And propagated and promulgated with each instantiation of *this*, Chave might

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<sup>64</sup> Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power,” *Arts Magazine* 64, no. 5 (January 1990): 51.

allege, Judd's serial entities assume a rather menacing hierarchical position of authority—perhaps what Judd once described as the new work's "plain power."<sup>65</sup> Likewise, Morris' investment in "strong gestalt[s]" as a technique of ordering the viewer's relationship to the work, Chave writes, similarly divulges an "infatuation with power."<sup>66</sup> Wholeness, for Chave, emerges in Morris' work as an inverse strategy for controlling and circumscribing the viewer's experience. In both cases, the stakes are high: if the gridded expression of Judd's seriality and the ideal mental projection of Morris' unitary forms purport to be ideologically neutral and non-hierarchical, Chave claims that, "with closer scrutiny [...] the blank face of minimalism may come into focus as the face of capital."<sup>67</sup>

Following such a macho and authoritarian reading of minimalism is Lynn Zelevansky's 1994 exhibition, "Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties."<sup>68</sup> Surveying a feminist or women-centered (post-)minimal practice, Zelevansky's show selected artists who appropriated minimalism's "masculine" language and infused it, instead, with signifiers of femaleness or femininity. Such a critique labors alongside Chave, promising to reveal as ideological what minimalist discourse ostensibly naturalized—that is, its rampant masculinism. Yet in recuperating these "elements associated with

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<sup>65</sup> Judd, "Specific Objects," 825.

<sup>66</sup> Chave, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," 57.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 51. An anecdotal case-in-point specifically regarding Judd's 100 mill aluminum works in Marfa is a German slogan stenciled on the wall of one of the artillery sheds, which dates to the structure's erstwhile existence as a WWII detainment camp for German POWs. The slogan, which reads *Den Kopf benutzen ist besser als ihn verlieren* ("It is better to use your head than to lose it"), cautions its reader against transgressing the established system of power. That Judd opted to leave this intact—indeed that the very work itself occupies a former artillery shed, and that it gathers into disciplined rows as if troops standing at attention—only further enables an attack like Chave's. Such factors would, for her, even more inextricably implicate Judd and his work in this neutralization of a rhetoric ultimately masculinist, hegemonic, and militaristic.

<sup>68</sup> Lynn Zelevansky, *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties* (New York: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1994).

minimalism”<sup>69</sup>—the grid, repetition, geometric form—as potentially feminine, Zelevansky also further entrenches a traditional gender binary. Which is to say, she counters minimalism’s stable masculine identity with an equally essentializing notion of a stable feminine identity. Needless to say, this kind of binarism is precisely what androgyny disallows.

Short of anthropomorphizing minimalism, of imposing onto it a stable gender identity, we could also revise our earlier conclusions to suggest that minimalism’s favored strategies secure the identity of the art *object* (in Judd’s case) and the identity of the viewing *subject* (in Morris’). Judd’s orderly “one thing after another” seriality, for instance, testifies to the existence of some principle—be it a mathematical sequence, a kind of typological catalogue of form, or “simply order”—that authorizes and governs the work’s scalability. And the presence of such a principle is manifest, too, in the work’s very gridded expression, which produces equivalence, harmony, and wholeness in spite of individual boxes’ differences. It is in this sense that seriality consolidates the identity of the *object*: taken together, Judd’s boxes elaborate a rigid class to which they all belong and of which they are all exemplary. And so even while he claimed that “the order is not rationalistic and underlying but is simply order,” his aluminum boxes nevertheless evidence a conceptual primacy as predetermining the work and consolidating it as one single thing.<sup>70</sup> If we then read “order” the way Chave might, the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>70</sup> While Judd lays claim to an “order” that “is not rationalistic and underlying but is simply order,” James Meyer points out that much of his work (including his first show at Castelli) in fact *did* follow mathematical, systematic, or permutational logic. However the 100 untitled works in mill aluminum do not seem to follow any discernible pattern or development. In fact, Judd installed the works in non-sequential order as if to frustrate attempts to discover its logic. (That is, the order in which they are installed is different than that in which they were conceived and fabricated.) On the sequential seriality of his early works, see: Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 172. Meyer also notes that, despite Judd’s claims, Mel Bochner’s *Working Drawings* exhibit (1966) similarly “expos[d] the conceptual underpinnings of the minimal enterprise which literalism repressed.” Ibid., 178.

art object itself looks increasingly *ordered*—that is, disciplined, commanded, and circumscribed by the artist, excluding error and discord alike.

Judd further guaranteed the identity of the object through ancillary techniques, including his notorious certificates of authenticity. To be sure, seriality has been understood as a strategy for relinquishing authorship by automating production and distancing the artist from the process of fabrication.<sup>71</sup> Yet Judd’s certificates have historically stepped into this empty, authorless interior in order to function in the capacity of a surrogate author. They validate the work as such in strictly limited terms, they become proxies for the artist’s unflagging authority, and they exclude fraudulent manifestations of the work.<sup>72</sup> To a similar end, Judd also increasingly insisted on permanence as a benchmark for his work. He contended that permanently installed works “guaranteed” his more portable objects, a formulation that graces them with something not unlike an auratic authority and authenticity.<sup>73</sup> This is to say nothing of Marfa itself, a space held apart from what Judd decried as everyday art world “monkey business” by virtue, if nothing else, of its sheer island-ness. Indeed, Judd’s criteria in selecting Marfa seem to have included its purity and barrenness, its exclusion of the “careless development” he gloomily noted elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> The

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<sup>71</sup> On these points, see, for instance: Rosalind Krauss, “The ‘Double Negative’: A New Syntax for Sculpture,” in *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 243–88.

<sup>72</sup> On Judd’s certificates of authenticity, see: Miwon Kwon, “The Becoming of a Work of Art: FGT and a Possibility of Renewal, a Chance to Share, a Fragile Truce,” in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, ed. Julie Ault (New York: steidl/dangin publishers, 2006), 281–316.

<sup>73</sup> Donald Judd, “Statement for the Chinati Foundation/La Fundación Chinati,” in *Complete Writings, 1975-1986* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 1987), 111. If I have invoked the term “aura” here, that is because Judd’s sentiment inscribes a longing for something like the prelapsarian moment conjectured by Walter Benjamin in which “the uniqueness of the work of art [was] identical to its embeddedness in the context of tradition.” Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” ed. Michael William Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2003), 256.

<sup>74</sup> Judd, “Marfa, Texas,” 98.

imperative for permanence therefore promised to secure his work—however precariously, however tentatively—within an immobile framing apparatus.

Conversely, Morris' phenomenological investments consolidate something closer to a stable identity for his viewing *subject*. For, in transmitting to the viewer an immediate gestalt image, Morris argues, “unitary forms do not reduce relationships. They *order* them.”<sup>75</sup> Here it is no longer the *object* that is ordered but our *experience* of the object: it is *we*, the viewing subjects, who are disciplined, ordered, whole. The “known constant” attending the sculptural objects, in other words, mediates and oversees our “variable experience” of them. That Morris' work, as we have seen, relies on a clear distinction of interior and exterior only further entrenches the integrity of the subject as definitively external to the work and as the stable locus within which his exercise in spatial reasoning will take place.

And so if we have already seen Horn's pairs disrupt both seriality and gestalt, we are now primed to relocate that critique to the realm of identity: the pair, as an androgynous structure, disallows the consolidation of stable object and stable subject alike. In the first case, Horn adopts the rhetoric of seriality in order to deliver an object whose identity is multiple and in flux. The object, in a word, is no longer orderly or ordered. In the second case, Horn adopts the rhetoric of wholeness and gestures towards some notional gestalt only to decisively forestall it. Here, the objects no longer order our experience since they fail to transmit an authoritative known constant. Instead, in a work like *Pair Object VII* Horn stages a scenario in which any “mental model” is, at best, under constant revision, in which the very language of constants and variables is necessarily displaced by a language of redundancy and

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<sup>75</sup> Morris, “Notes on Sculpture,” 228. My emphasis.

accumulation. If Judd and Morris advocate strategies for excluding the incommensurate and incongruous, Horn's pairs delineate an identity premised on multiplicity and inclusivity.

## Coda

“Something is missing” as a definition of Utopia? Well that’s a beautiful definition of Utopia. Would you say that if something is missing then it is incomplete, or would you say that it is complete because there’s something missing?<sup>76</sup>

—Roni Horn in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist

Of utopias, eighteenth-century visionary architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux once said, “everything is within their realm.”<sup>77</sup> It will come as no surprise, then, when Utopia is so frequently a place bounded. Whether Sir Thomas More’s unnavigable waters or the verdant zone encompassing Le Corbusier’s Radiant City, the gesture serves to delineate a realm—to constitute an interior and to secure everything within. In doing so, Utopia invariably posits a whole, an inflexible finality (which explains why utopian schemes, once realized, historically fail). Of course, even as a wall initiates containment, it too constitutes an exterior and orchestrates its exclusion. Indeed, it is a paradoxical condition inscribed lexically into the very word itself—both a “good place” (*Eutopia*) and “no place” (*Outopia*).<sup>78</sup> Thus the very boundedness of the “realm” posited by Ledoux and so often part of Utopia’s visual rhetoric must, in order to include “everything within” and consolidate a harmonious interior, be based in exclusion. “Something is missing.”

One could say that the minimalist subject and object are similarly bounded, that both similarly depend on a strictly conceived interior and exterior. True, the object’s interior may

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<sup>76</sup> Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Roni Horn, “Roni Horn,” in *Hans Ulrich Obrist: Interviews*, ed. Thomas Boutoux, vol. 1 (Florence : Milan: Fondazione Pitti Immagine Discovery ; Charta, 2003), 442.

<sup>77</sup> Ruth Eaton, *Ideal Cities: Utopian and the (Un)Built Environment* (New York: Thame, 2001), 109.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. The word “utopia” is an invention of Sir Thomas More’s. It derives from *topos* (“place”), prefixed by “u-”—a contraction, in Greek, of both *ou-* (“no”) and/or *eu-* (“well”).

no longer be the privileged site of authorship or meaning—as we have seen, Judd’s serial and industrially-fabricated objects withhold an authentic original, and Morris’ unitary forms externalize the conventionally internal production of signification. Be that as it may, the minimalist subject nevertheless remains definitively outside the minimalist object. External to Judd’s aluminum boxes, for instance, the viewer surveys the internal order and incorruptible wholeness that constitutes the work’s identity. It is *we* who stand on the outside, who have been excluded; it is *we* who are missing. In the case of Morris’ *L-Beams*, it is alternatively the viewing subject who is ordered by the fixed, mental gestalt overseeing the experience. Excluded here is the phenomenological variability of the objects, as if it is *they* that remain outside, as if it is *they* that are missing from a subject now conceived as complete.

Not far from Judd’s boxes in Marfa such distinctions become entirely less clear. For in *Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)* it is no longer possible to reliably distinguish an inside from an outside. On the one hand, we must be external to the work: being solid copper—and thus very much unlike the literally hollow insides of Judd’s aluminum boxes and Morris’ plywood *L-Beams*—the work admits no interior for us to be prepositionally *in*. No, the pair posits a single entity constituted by precisely two terms; and we remain decisively around that entity and external to its constituent parts. But on the other hand *in* the work is precisely all we ever are. The experience, recall, commences such that the *Pair Object* exceeds the limits of our peripheral vision: it is, from the start, *around us*. Even from one end of the small room, having attained a position from which to hold both forms simultaneously in our field of vision, even then we are never fully outside the work. For the pair, as an

androgynous structure, proposes “a move away from [...] polarization,”<sup>79</sup> suggesting that this position, too, remains somehow *internal* to the pair’s field. Horn summarizes this paradoxical internal/external condition when she writes that the pair is as much about “the space between things as of the things themselves.”<sup>80</sup> We are never wholly in the work nor wholly outside it; instead, *Pair Object VII* utterly entangles these terms and deprives them of their utility.

And we have seen the same entanglement occur with the here/there shifters announced in the work’s title. These, too, refuse to stabilize, much less remain distinct. For neither object’s identity can definitively claim *here* nor *there* as its own, but is always constituted by both. What is more, our presence introduces a third term into a structure that purports to have only two: surely one of us is *here* and one of us *there*, but the third? Where are *we*—we who stand neither *here* nor *there*, neither *inside* nor *outside*? Recall Horn’s androgynous imperative, “You are this and this *and* that.” The three-term statement instructively describes the *Pair Object*, as well, as if to identify *this* first copper object and *this* second copper object and *that* spectator. “The concept of the pair is that of inclusion,” Horn elaborated. “[The] pair is an acknowledgement of the space between—which in these works bear both the viewer and the mundane reality of the room itself.”<sup>81</sup>

Ultimately, it is the identity of and distinction between subject and object that begin to fail in Horn’s work. For even as it is *we* (as subject) who view *the work* (as object), it is too *the work* (as subject) that anticipates *us* (as object). No doubt it is at the doorway where this is felt most obliquely—that moment in which *the work faces us*, even *sees us* (both copper objects “point” toward the door), but in which *we cannot face the work*, in which we cannot

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<sup>79</sup> Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, ix.

<sup>80</sup> Horn, “Notes,” 100.

<sup>81</sup> Horn and Kersting, “Things Which Happen Again: Interview with Roni Horn,” unpaginated.

return its gaze. Upon entering the space, however, these dynamics fluctuate. Now it is the objects, still pointing helplessly towards the door, that cannot fully “see” us.

Here, then, lies Horn’s critique of minimalism. Not only does her work adopt a serial rhetoric to repudiate serial order, and not only does it adopt a language of wholeness to disallow an ordered gestalt experience of wholeness; it also, and most radically, refuses the stable identities on which Judd and Morris stake their own practices. Which is to say that Horn’s *Pair Object* works stage an aesthetic experience in which such binaries as here/there, interior/exterior and subject/object become undone—crucially, however, without asserting a new and stable counter position. Or, one could say, without asserting a new utopia. For unlike Utopia, the pair and androgyny alike operate not by exclusion but by inclusion. Utopia’s fragile boundaries, which consolidate a harmonious and complete interior as distinct from an exterior, have vanished. In their place, the identity of the inside begins to include the outside, and vice-versa. The identity of the subject begins to include the object, and vice-versa. The terms begin to merge in Horn’s work and lose their purchase on a situation they no longer manage.

And yet the encounter staged by *Pair Object VII* need not be paradoxical. “Androgyny, not paradox,” Horn has written.<sup>82</sup> A paradox describes a logical category for the unthinkable, for a proposition rendered invalid by an internal contradiction. But once the categories producing that contradiction begin to falter we are no longer left with a paradoxical condition at all. We are left, instead, with a structure that integrates difference as “the basis of identity, not the exclusion of it.” If the paradox stipulates the failure to achieve a complete and indivisible identity, if the paradox fractures under the internal strain of multiple

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<sup>82</sup> From undated notes of the artist’s, reprinted in Horn, *Roni Horn Aka Roni Horn*, 2:11.

irreconcilable terms, androgyny would task us with occupying that space nonetheless and with living the multiple together.

## Figures

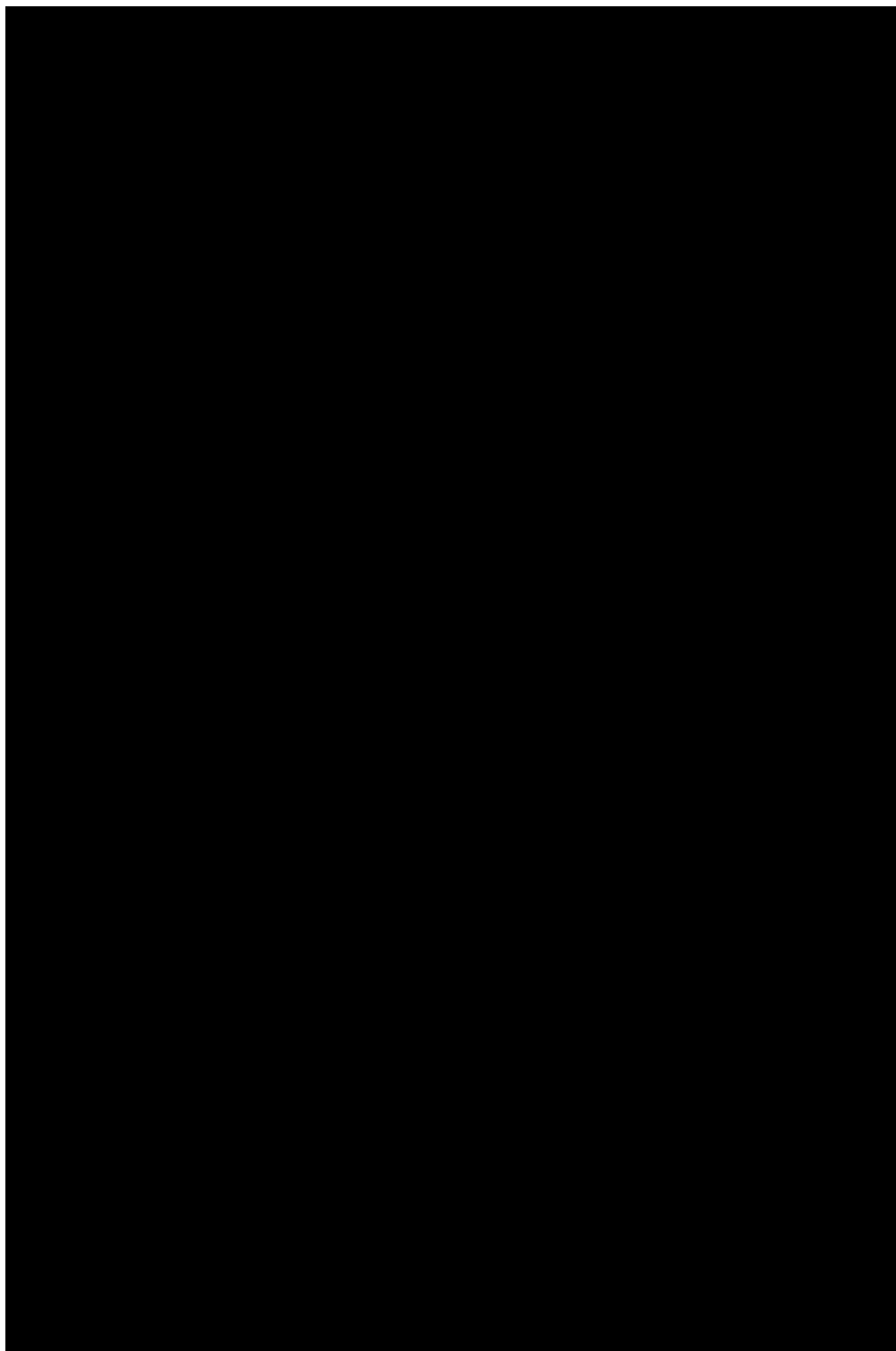


Figure 1. Roni Horn, *Pair Object I*, 1980 (installation view at the Clocktower, New York), solid copper, diameter 2 ½ in. each, height 192 in.

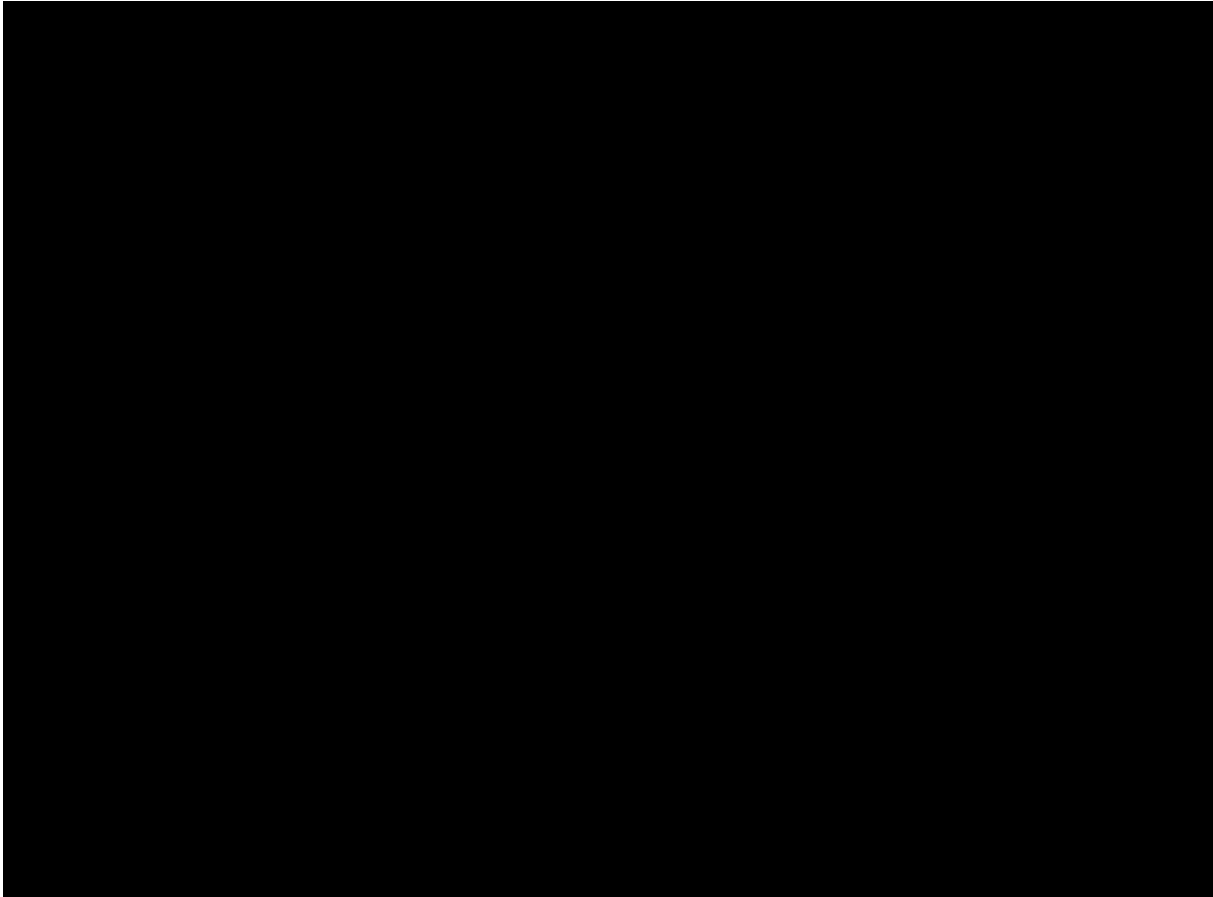


Figure 2. Roni Horn, *Pair Object II: "When the How and the What are the Same"*, 1980-1986 (installation view at Landesmuseum, Münster, Germany, solid forged copper spheres rolled on location, diameter 17  $\frac{3}{4}$  in.

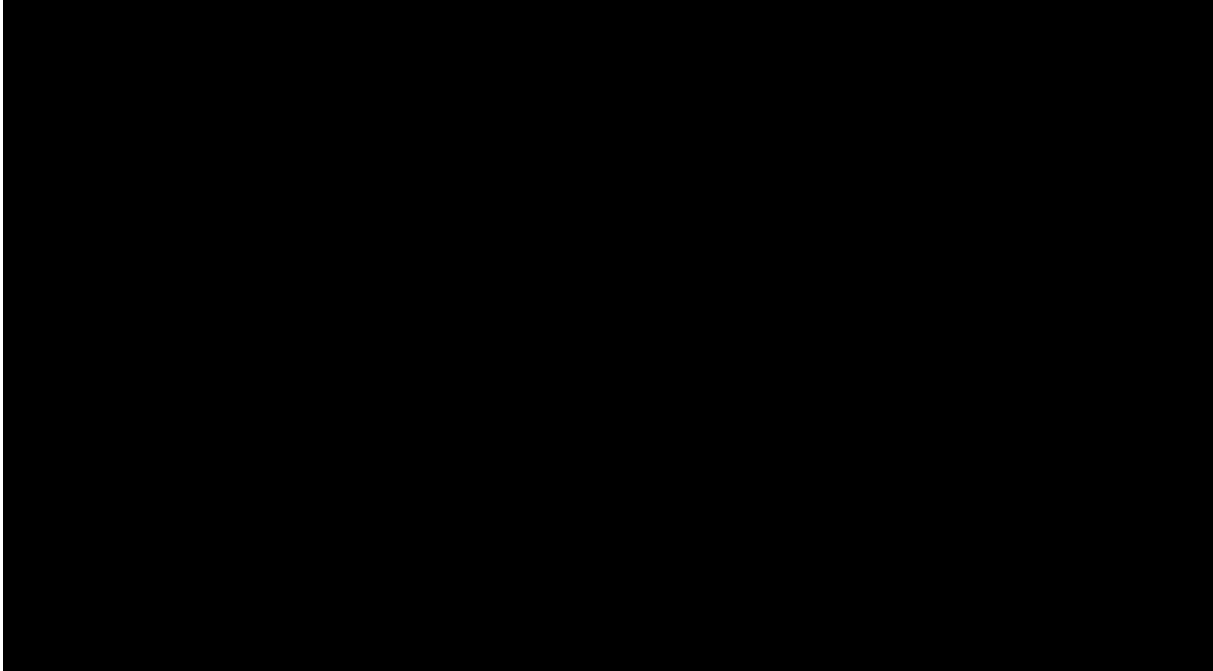


Figure 3. Roni Horn, *Pair Object III: (for two rooms) “The Experience of Identical Things”* (later retitled *Things That Happen Again, Pair Object III: (For Two Rooms)*), 1986-1988 (installation view at Galerie Lelong, New York), two solid copper forms, 17 in. diameter tapering to 12 in. diameter over 35 in. with 5/8 in. convexity at small end.

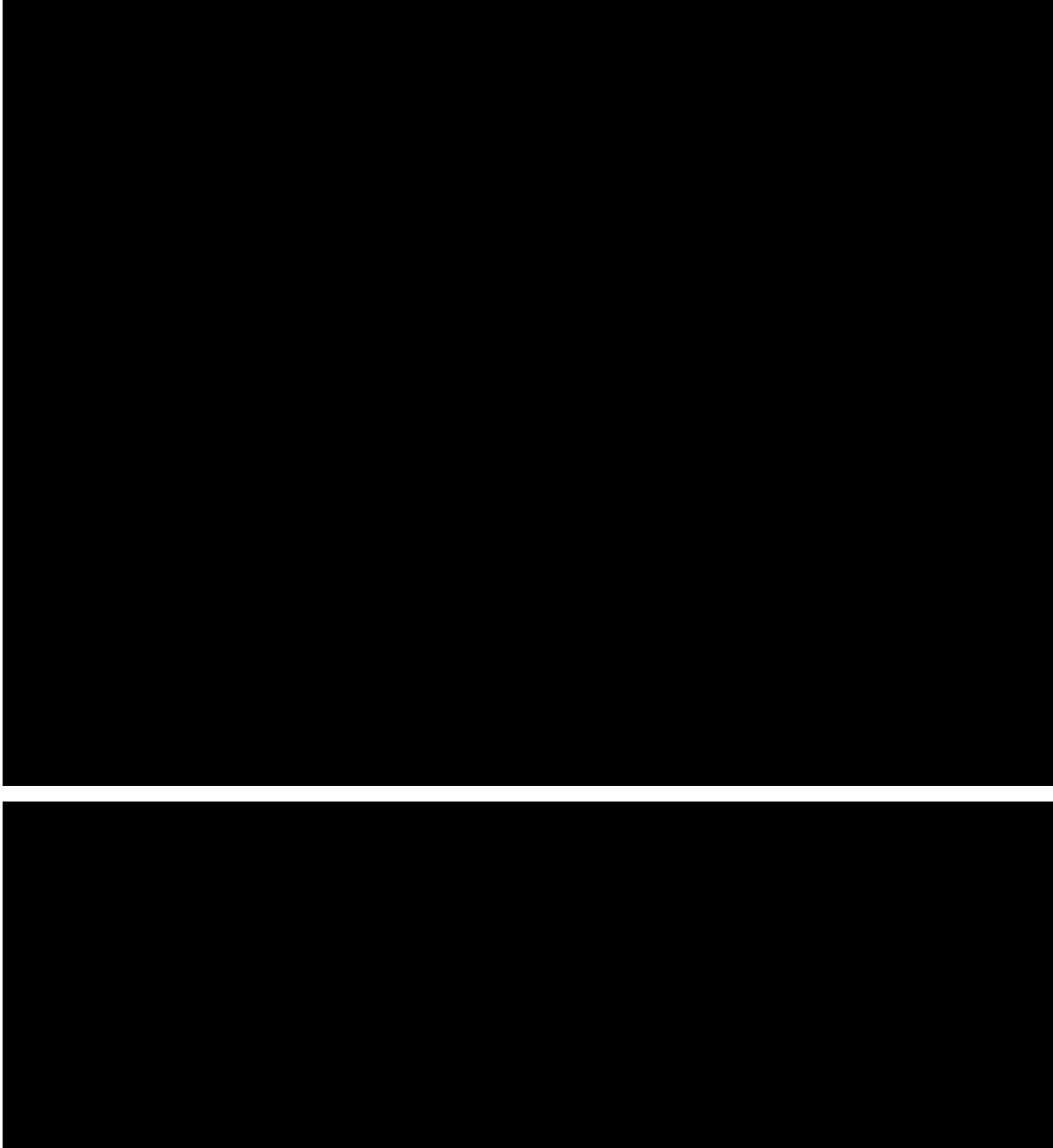


Figure 4. Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again, Pair Object VII: (For a Here and a There)*, 1986-1989, two solid copper forms, 17 in. diameter tapering to 12 in. diameter over 35 in. with 5/8 in. convexity at small end. On long-term loan from Judd Foundation, the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas. Photo by Florian Holzherr, 2001, courtesy of the Chinati Foundation. © Roni Horn, New York

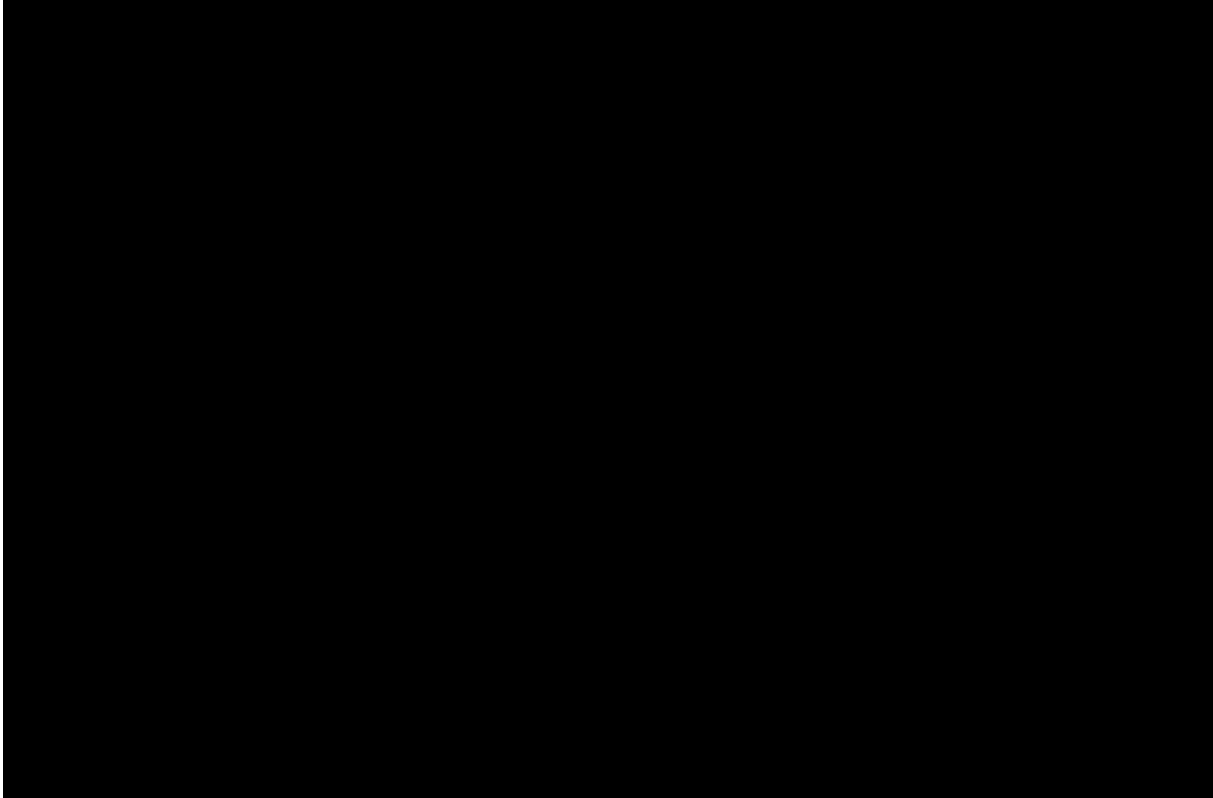


Figure 5. Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again, Pair Object V: (For Things That Are Near)*, 1986-1989, two solid copper forms, 17 in. diameter tapering to 12 in. diameter over 35 in. with 5/8 in. convexity at small end.

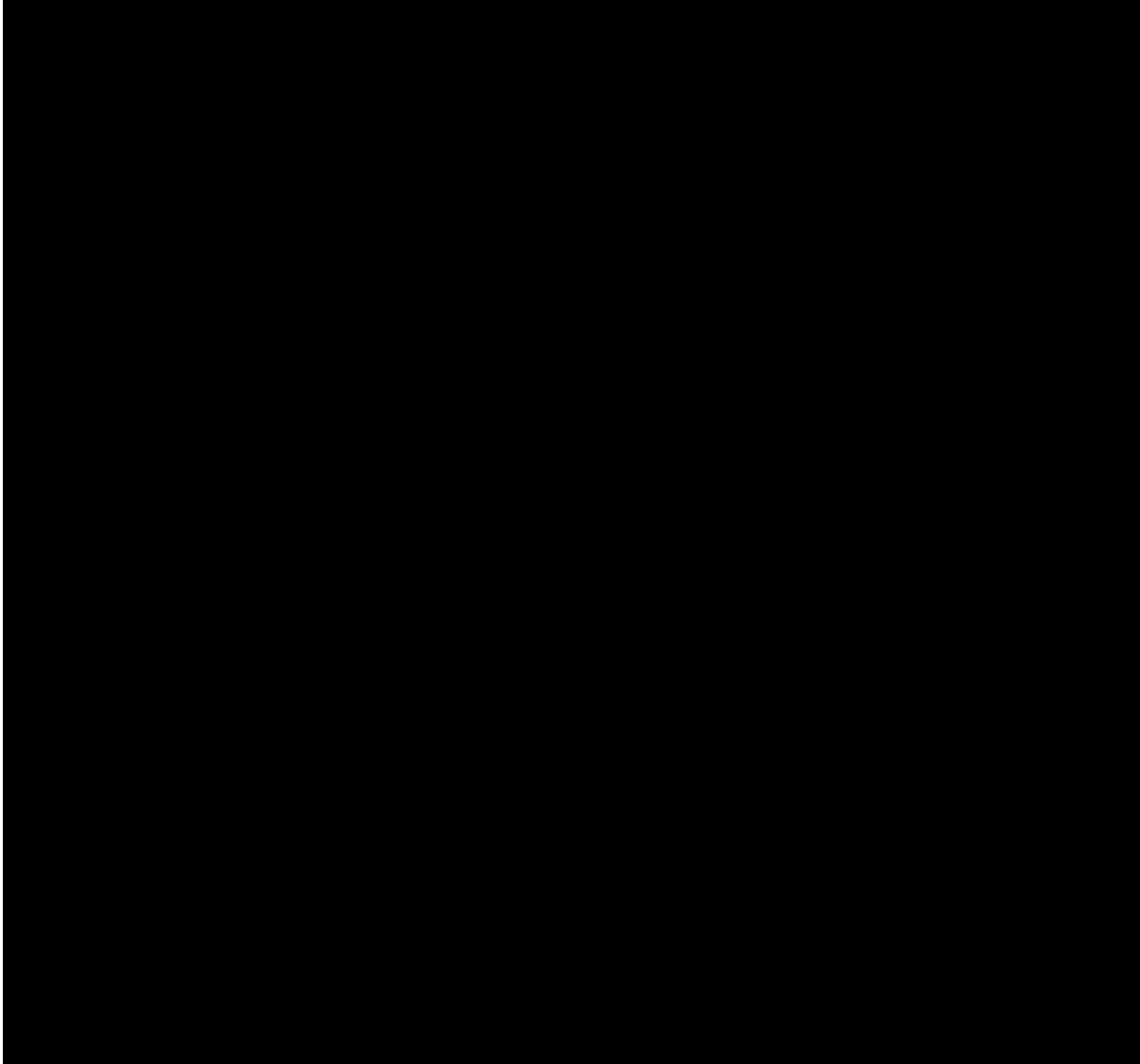


Figure 6. Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again, Pair Object VIII: (For a This and a That)*, 1986-1989, two solid copper forms, 17 in. diameter tapering to 12 in. diameter over 35 in. with 5/8 in. convexity at small end.

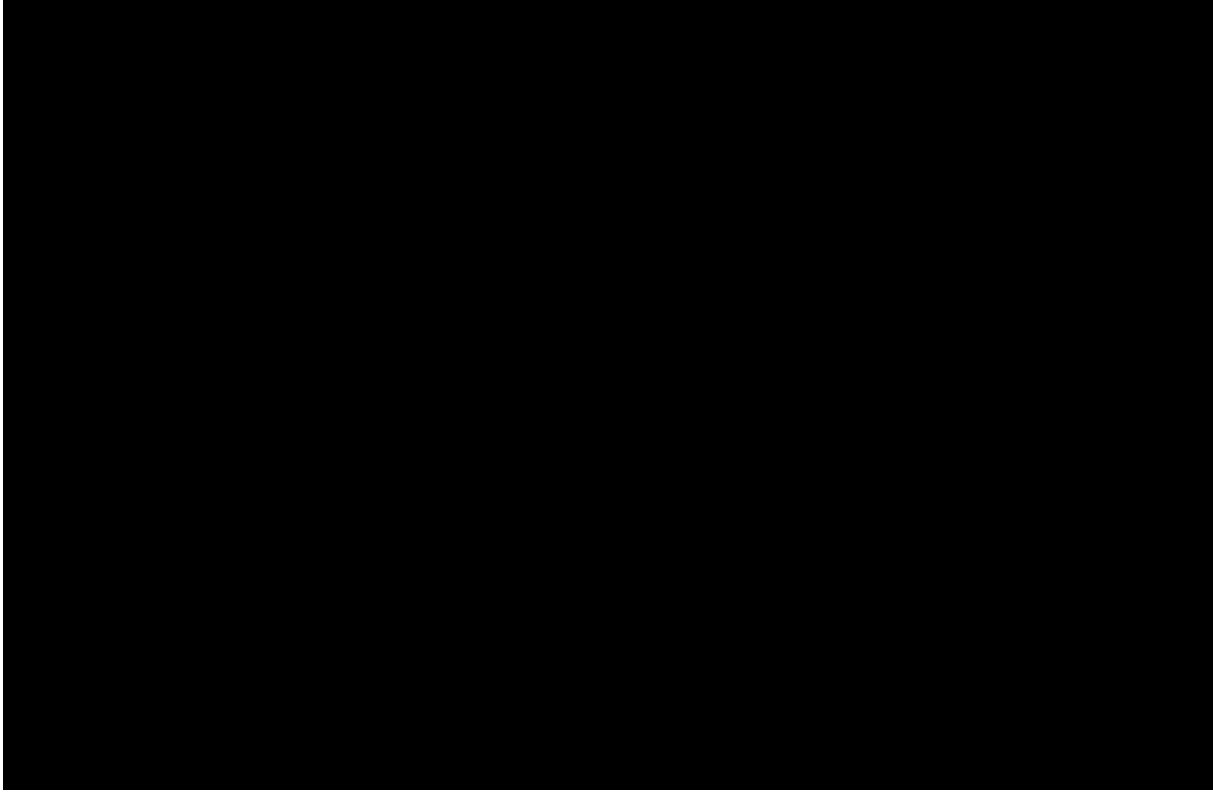


Figure 7. Donald Judd, 100 untitled works in mill aluminum, 1982-1986. 41 x 51 x 72 inches. Permanent collection, the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas. Photo by Douglas Tuck, 2009. Art © Judd Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

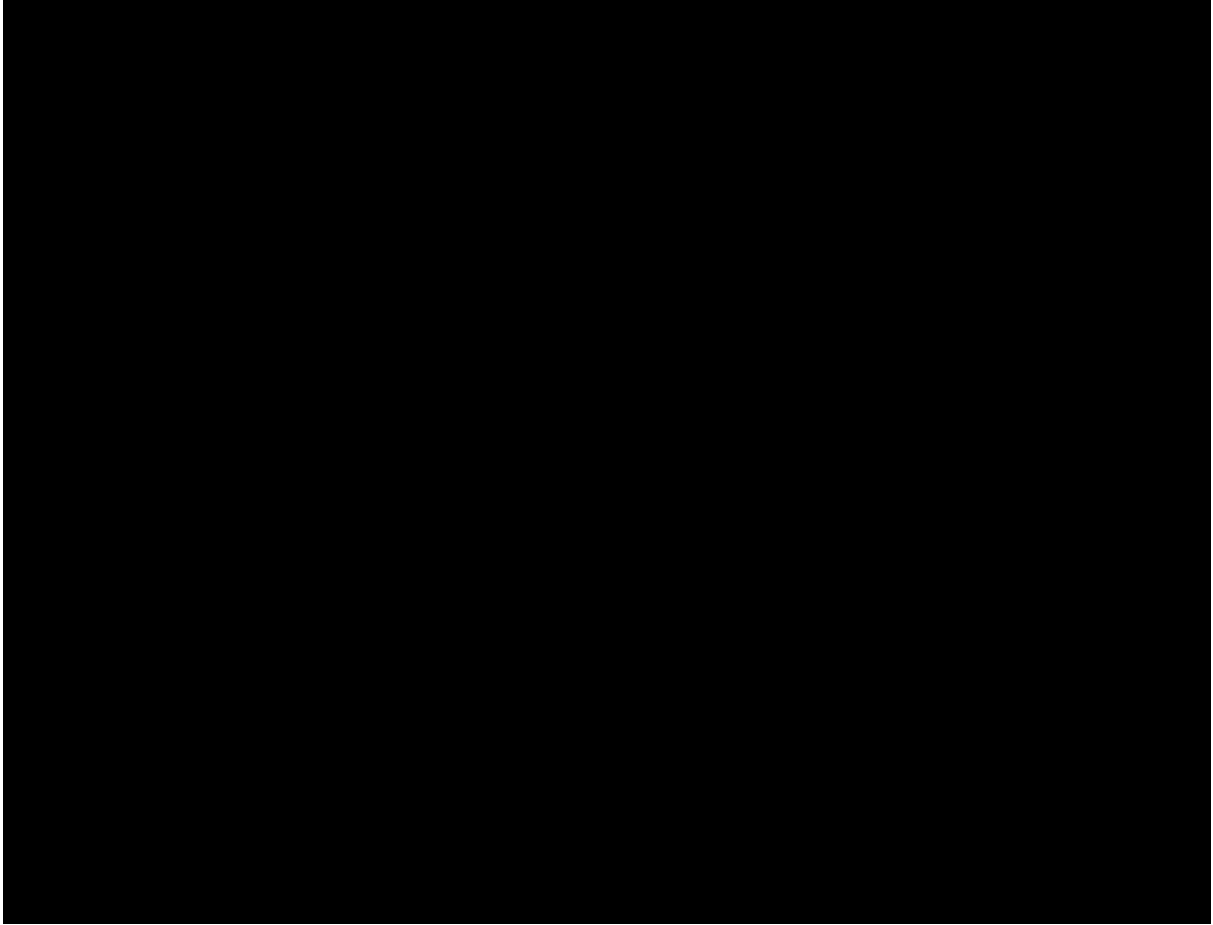


Figure 8. Robert Morris, *Untitled (Three L-Beams)*, 1965, painted plywood, three units, each 96 x 96 x 24 inches.

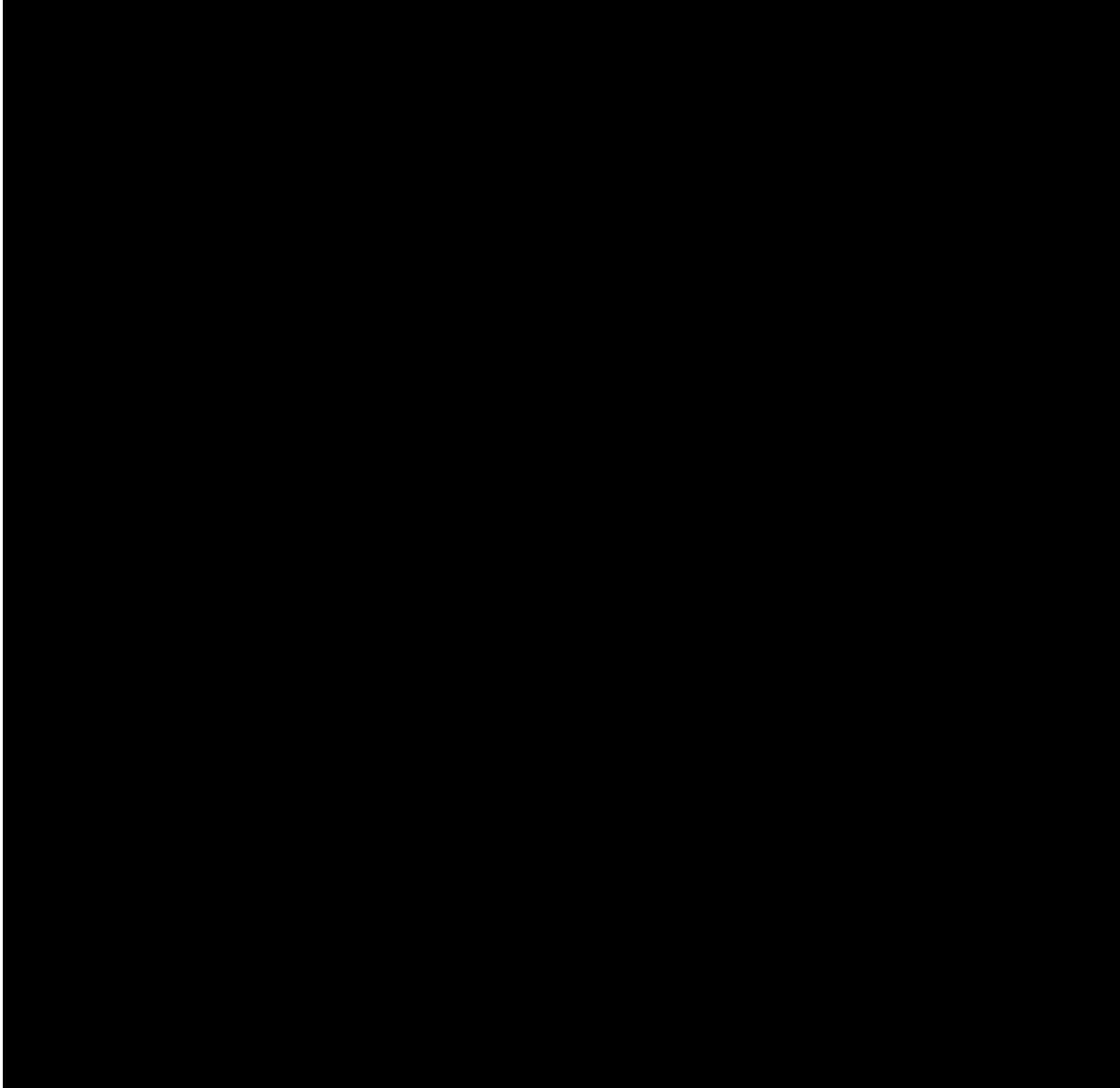


Figure 9. Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again, Pair Object III: (For Two Rooms)*, 1986-1988. From top to bottom, left to right, photo sequence as it appears in the catalogue, *Things Which Happen Again* (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Abteiburg, 1991).

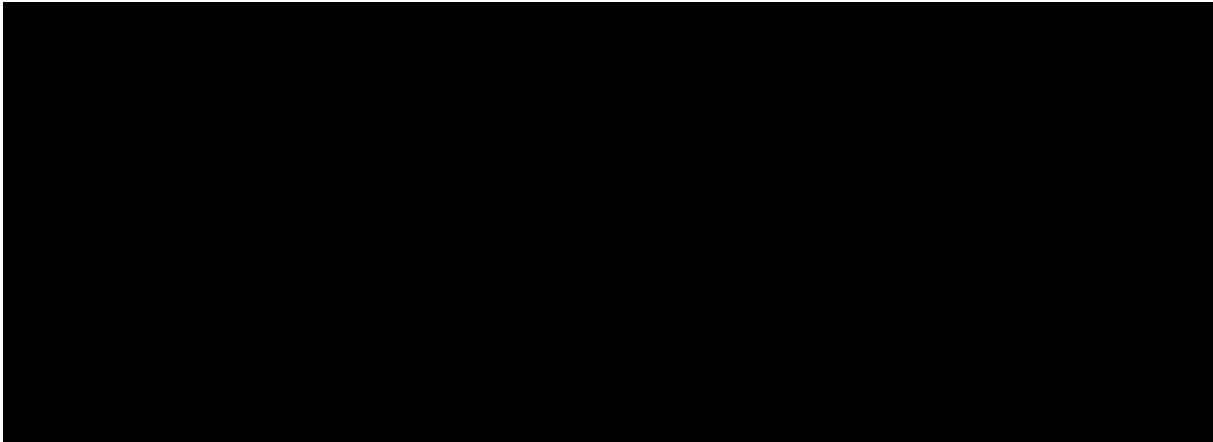


Figure 10. Roni Horn, *Still Water (The River Thames, For Example)*, 1999, Fifteen offset lithographs on uncoated paper (photographs and text), 30 ½ x 41 ½ in. each.



Figure 11. Roni Horn, *Still Water (The River Thames, For Example)*, 1999 (detail).

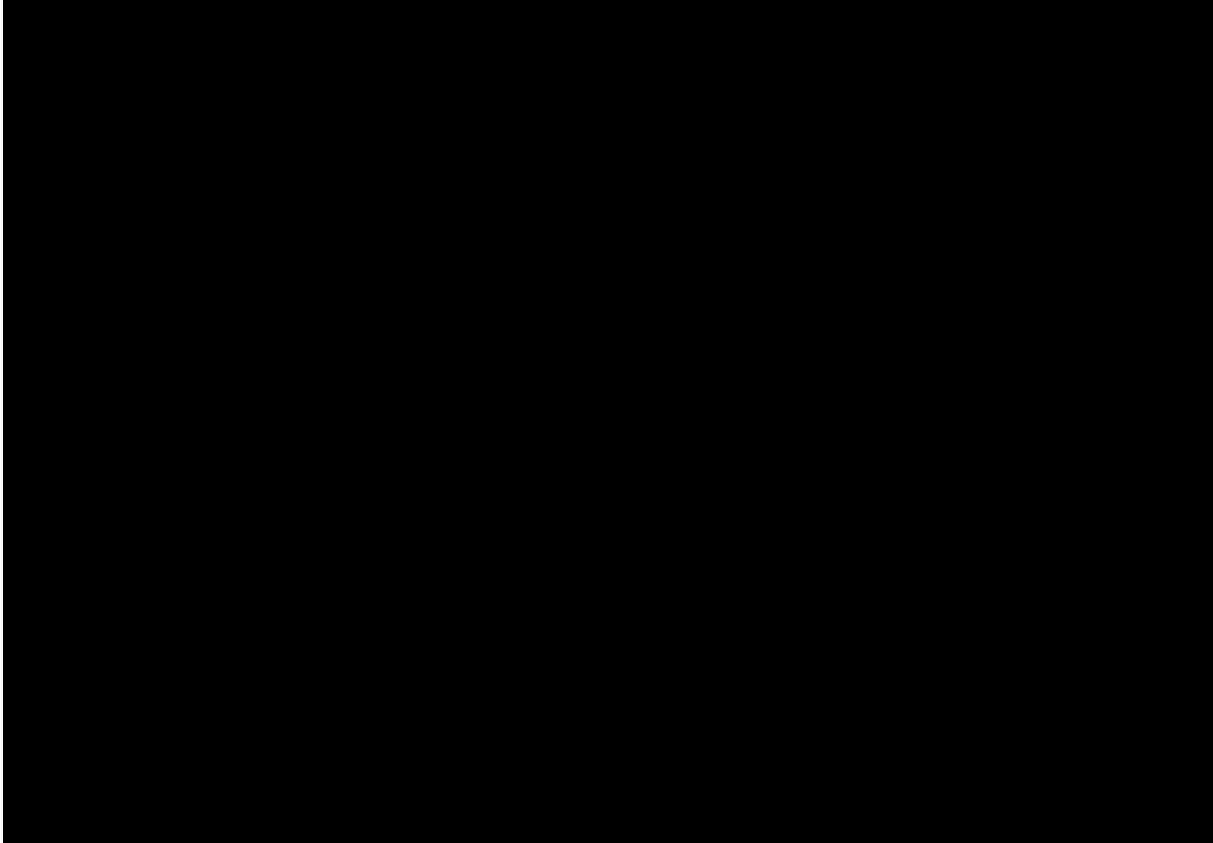


Figure 12. Roni Horn, *Still Water (The River Thames, For Example)*, 1999 (installation views at Castello di Rivoli, Turin).

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