

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Tautologically yours,

William Anastasi **CONTINUUM**

October 23, 2015 – December 24, 2016

Opening October 22, 2015

open from Tuesday to Saturday, from 11 AM to 7 PM, and by appointment

Continuum represents a seminal installation in the history of photography. The site specific installation lays out the coordinates of temporal impermanence and the immaterial, phenomenological basis of experience. Anastasi explores these issues by rendering problematic the photograph as instrument of knowledge and objectification. Hung upon each wall of a space, a series of twelve photographs show the space directly behind the viewer as he or she looks at the photograph. Each wall reflects the one opposite it; since each photograph was mounted before the next one was taken, the early ones show a blank wall opposite them; the later ones show on opposing wall with a photograph of the first wall already hung on it. Anastasi metaphorically engages the reflective properties of mirroring by photographically inverting the space, placing the area behind the viewer in front of him. The viewer entering the gallery space and looking behind himself sees the same thing as in front of him. Thomas McEvelly a close friend and Anastasi's devoted art critic, described *Continuum* as an "infinite regress", somewhat like two mirrors facing each other, a space of silence in which the viewer is rendered invisible or immaterial or transparent.

Anastasi notes in a conversation with McEvelly in 2005 that the work involved with space itself in the 60ies is an allusion to the discomfoting fact that there existed sufficient nuclear weapons sitting in the U.S. and the (former) USSR to essentially bring human life to an end on this planet – that it might be a bit late for art to continue pointing to this or that corner of reality as was once its habit – that here and now had taken on a meaning beyond its meaning to past generations. Anastasi's interest in pure presence which also manifests itself in his signature "works", his blind drawings is expressed here clearly.

The umbrella under which the early works by Anastasi such as his sound objects, his wall removals and site related installations, all the way up to *Autobodyography* and *Nine Polaroid Photographs of a Mirror* bow to is the tautological. These works can be seen as an attack of representational art while simultaneously expanding a genuflection to the hear and the now.

It seems that *Continuum* sums up the preoccupations of classical art: the relationship of the context to the thing; the dichotomy between presence and representation, dematerialization and tautology.

Continuum was first presented to the New York gallerist Virginia Dwan in 1970, in the form of a drawing by Anastasi dating from 1968. It was then shown in Anastasi's third solo show at Dwan Gallery. In 1977 Alanna Heiss presented *Continuum* in a slightly modified version at PS1, NY. Galerie Jocelyn Wolff is now presenting this seminal site specific installation in its original idea of 1968.

William Anastasi was born in Philadelphia, PA in 1933. The recipient of the 2010 John Cage Award, is in nearly every major permanent collection in the US, including the Museum of Modern Art, NY, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Museum of Contemporary Art, Stockholm, among many others. His works are currently exhibited at the le CREDAC, Ivry-sur Seine, La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel as well as in SMAK, Gent.

Anastasi lives and works in New York.