

After the Beginning and Before the End includes over 220 examples of "Instruction Drawings," in a variety of forms, such as working drawings, installation instructions, musical scores, sketches, visual or textural memoranda, fabrication notes, and work records. Artists featured in the exhibition include Vito Acconci, Eleanor Antin, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Walter DeMaria, Andrew Goldsworthy, Robert Gober, Rebecca Horn, Sol LeWitt, Piet Mondrian, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg, Diego Rivera, Carolee Schneemann, and many others. All the works in this exhibition are from the collection of Gilbert and Lila Silverman in Detroit, Michigan.

After the Beginning and Before the End is accompanied by a fully-illustrated 180-page exhibition catalogue with a complete list of the collection, acquired through the year 2000. Organized and published by Bergen Kunstmuseum, it features an introduction by Jon Hendricks and Gunnar B. Kvaran, exhibition curators, and a special essay by curator/critic Jan van der Marck. The collector, Gilbert Silverman also contributed an essay, "Instruction Drawings," which reveals how the collection began.

After the Beginning and Before the End is generously supported by the Fifth Floor Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Council for the Arts at MIT.



Media sponsor: Herald Media, Inc

All exhibitions at the List Visual Arts Center are free and open to the public. Wheelchair accessible. Accommodations are provided by request.

Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Thursday: 12–6 PM

Friday: 12–8 PM

Saturday and Sunday: 12–6 PM

Closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day

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MIT List Visual Arts Center

*After the Beginning
and Before the End*

Instruction Drawings
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection

October 17, 2002 - January 5, 2003

Organized by
Jon Hendricks with Gunnar B. Kvaran
for Bergen Kunstmuseum in Bergen, Norway

by Bill Arning
Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center

A Note on the Definition of the Instruction Drawings

The work of art originates, and is set to paper for various audiences. The artist might address the instructions to him/herself, to an assistant, to a curator, to a gallery, to a viewer, to a fabricator, to a collector, to a critic, to a designer, to a printer, to a museum, to a publication, or to a friend. And some Instruction Drawings are the final form of the work.

Frequently-applied terms for works that fall into the category of Instruction Drawings include certificates, fabrication notes and drawings, installation instructions, plans, scores, sketches, notes, versions and variations, visual and textual memorandum, and working drawings.

Catherine Morris and Jon Hendricks

After the Beginning and Before the End is a collection of Instruction Drawings that focuses on the beginning moments of works of art from the last century. Those moments—the creative big bang in which some powerful reality appears where nothing had existed seconds before—is intricately tied to the reason that works of art are fascinating. Art in any media is a real-world manifestation of the miraculous and fecund human spirit. Studying these drawings gives insight not only into the works of art that resulted from them, but into the creative force and the quixotic nature of art itself.

The exhibition has exemplary works from many of the significant visual art movements of the last century. Also included are related Instruction Drawings by composers, performance artists, word poets, graffiti writers, and many others whose practices are harder to classify. Some are drawings for what in their completed forms became icons of twentieth-century art, such as those for Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, Walter DeMaria's *Mile-Long Drawing*, or Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy*. Other ideas may have never been realized as works at all, but were completed only in the artists' minds.

A lesson from Conceptual Art was that (when physically contemplated with due mindfulness) unrealized art works could provide art experiences as powerful as those experienced directly with the eye. Similarly, works by artists such as by Smithson, DeMaria, and Schneemann that have now vanished or are inaccessible still can be savored aesthetically in the present tense with these drawings as experiential catalysts.

Every work of art begins with a thought. Then come labor, revision, erasure, self-doubt, and (ideally) the triumph over that doubt. In the case of those art forms that require collective effort—music, architecture, performance—there is the introduction of others' opinions, criticisms, and talents. In some cases, these can stop a project dead (as with architects whose clients may lack the funds or nerve to construct the building they have commissioned). In the drawings included in *After the Beginning and Before the End*, there is purity, a quintessence of unique vision, that has barely left the rarefied sphere of the artist's inner life and has been influenced only by his or her memories, muses, and genius.

This collection of drawings tells a story parallel to that of standard art history but with a crucial difference. Standard history is told as a collection of high points embodied most often in artists' boldest, biggest, and most highly-finished works. This group of drawings tells of a new attitude toward art that was possible only after conceptual practices challenged the primacy of the object in the 1960s. With the object no longer conspicuously in the foreground, the meaning of works over time that had a beginning (concept), middle (process), and end (product) allowed for a fuller, holistic understanding of art. That new vision of art stretches throughout *After the Beginning and Before the End* and spans many of the last century's defining moments.

Public Programs:

Panel Discussion:

On Considering "Instruction Drawings" as Permanent Records of the Evanescent Origins of Creative Thought
Moderated by Jan van der Marck. Panel participants: Jon Hendricks, exhibition curator, Gilbert Silverman, and Carolee Schneemann
Friday, October 18 at 5:30–7PM

Gallery Talk:

Guest Artist John Maeda, MIT Media Lab Professor and visual artist
Wednesday, November 13 at 6PM

Gallery Talk:

Bill Arning, curator
Wednesday, November 20 at 12PM
Friday, November 22 at 6PM

Regular Gallery Talks:

Hiroko Kikuchi, Education/Outreach Coordinator and other lecturers
Wednesdays at noon and Sundays at 2PM
(On Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Dec. 8 and 22, the talk includes hands-on activities about "Instruction Drawings")

Group tours are available by appointment.
Please call 617-452-3586 for inquiries.