

Robin Rhode

(Cape Town, 1976)

Rhode has carried out a long and consistent project to expand the conceptual and physical space of drawing, describing within that realm a continuous tension, from the two-dimensionality of the surface toward the volumetric nature of the body, from fixity toward motion. He never attempts to resolve these dualities, but instead cultivates their ambiguity as a space of possibility, where all art languages and their spatial-temporal dimensions meet, expanding but never annulling each other.

Rhode cites Richter's *Diagonal Symphony* and Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* but goes beyond the possibilities of the dialogue between geometry and movement, which characterizes the former, and between geometry and the action of the body, investigated in the latter. To these Rhode adds an additional linguistic step, employing photography, which in itself implies a different time than that of drawing: the time of the instant. The artist carves out a space within the concept of animation, which has always been a place of encounter for drawing and movement, adding his personal obsession with everything that generates illusion. He does not limit himself to shooting photographs in sequence and then showing them rapidly, as in stop motion, but also arranges a slow fade whereby he creates musical connections between one photograph and another, connections as light as phantasms, like the almost imperceptible lingering of a note. It is as if the images were executed in space, leaving their vibration there, constantly free, in a *legato* effect that both conjoins and emphasizes the individual expressive unity of one photo with regard to the others. Compared to Rhode's earlier works, here drawing does not leave room for figurations of objects. Pure geometries gather around the performance and seem to embody subtle and pointed ideas such as the diamond shape, in which the artist has identified a symbol of light's power of spatial radiation. Rhode dances like a juggler among the multiplications of this symbol, or like a tightrope walker balancing between stasis and movement, between the moment frozen in the photo and the filmic flow of time. (EV)