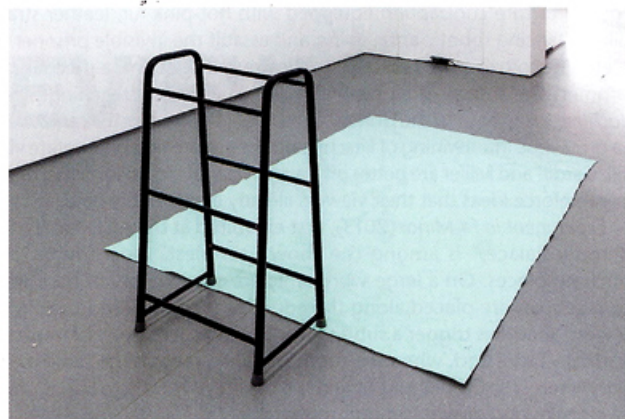


TORONTO
MKG127

“SEMICOLON HYPHEN BRACKET”

by Shannon Anderson



The games began with the exhibition's title. "Semicolon Hyphen Bracket" seemed like it had something to do with grammar, and it did, if only in the sense that the group exhibition was all about play—including wordplay—and challenging initial perceptions. In its clever turn at titling, the act of writing out the punctuation mark series rendered a winking emoticon. This tongue-in-cheek attitude was consistently present in the work of the nine artists while avoiding well-worn paths of irony and flippancy. Liza Eurich, Kristiina Lahde, Joy Walker, Roula Partheniou and Laurel Woodcock are artists from the gallery roster. They showed alongside invited artists Cynthia Daignault, Ceal Floyer, Anna Kolodziejska and Kay Rosen. The exhibition was comprised entirely of women artists and the curators' decision to not proclaim that fact was another aspect to commend.

At a glance, "Semicolon" had the air of a lighthearted summer show. There was, after all, a "swimming pool" in the centre of the gallery (a sculptural piece by Kolodziejska, *Ohne Titel (swimming pool)* (2009), made from a metal rack and a sheet painted blue). But while the exhibition may have been playful, it took its play seriously. The work was laid out impeccably, with a rhythm that gave each piece its breathing space but also allowed for accruing layers of association. For instance, the doubling seen in Eurich's tarp and AstroTurf canvases *Not Quite There No. 08* and *No. 09* (both 2010) was echoed by the twinned megaphones in Floyer's *Secret* (2009) and the pairs of trousers sewn at together at the legs in Kolodziejska's *Ohne Titel (zweimal ich)* (2012). Another involved high-wattage lighting. It was part of Partheniou's installation of vinyl adhesive applied to the fluorescent signage above the gallery's exterior to emulate the shape of a fluorescent tube in *Fluorescent Tube* (2013), Woodcock's untitled sculpture of neon text reading "where the sun don't shine" (2013) and the gallery's own fluorescent lighting system, which had a curiously sculptural presence in these surroundings. These visual matches were like a game of Pong in reverse, letting the viewer's attention bounce back and forth—quickly at first across the exhibition's aesthetic surface, then moving more slowly, delving deeper into the conceptual layers underpinning each work. Importantly,

there was a seamless integration of local and international artists that offered a broader context for shared artistic terrain.

A commercial gallery's "summer show" usually entails a straightforward gathering of gallery artists under a loose theme. MKG127's exhibition, which combined the curatorial acumen of Michael Klein, Elle Kurancid and Jennifer Simaitis, pushed that formula to another level.

ANNA KOLODZIEJSKA *Ohne Titel (swimming pool)* 2009 Found metal rack and painted sheet 1.5 m x 110 cm x 2.9 m COURTESY GALERIE BERND KUGLER, INNSBRUCK PHOTOS TONI HAFKENSCHIED

ABOVE: Installation view of various sculptures by Roula Partheniou 2013 Mixed media Dimensions variable