

## Gallery Talk: Christian Jankowski - Everything fell together

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### Concept:

My final project for this Major Media Text class consists of a gallery talk on the work of Christian Jankowski, currently on display at the List Visual Arts Center.

The outline of the talk is the following:

#### *Introduction*

Who is Christian Jankowski?

How to characterize his work?

#### *A walk through the gallery*

Brief explanation of every piece with built-in references to issues of authorship (~ postmodern artist-entrepreneur), conceptual and postmodern conceptual art, community-relations, transformational possibilities of art and a small elaboration on the issue of art, ritual and belief systems.

#### *Conclusion*

#### *Questions*

### Motivation and goals:

Just before finishing my paper on William Kentridge, I decided that my next project for this class should be on a topic I felt equally passionate about. What had to be different though, was the presentation form. After five years of non-stop university education, I very much feel the need to have my work result in something else than 'just' another paper, read by 'just' a couple of people. I thus decided to go for the spoken word, instead of the written one.

Intrigued by my first walk through the List gallery showing Christian Jankowski's work, I went to the lecture Jankowski presented mid October and subsequently to almost every event related to his work. It thus felt natural to choose for a gallery talk on Christian Jankowski's work, which not only allowed me to do more in-debt-research on his work, but also conveniently locate the project outside of the classroom.

I consider this project as a valuable exercise in conducting research as well as in guiding a group through an interpretation-rich environment. I do not feel the gallery talk should be considered as a presentation in the strict sense of the word, since a lot of attention will be paid to interactivity and discussion amongst the participants.

I hope to succeed in conveying my enthusiasm for Jankowski's art, as well as, in providing a critical viewpoint on his working method, his art and the reoccurring themes.

## Evaluation

Writing this paragraph, just an hour after finishing the gallery talk, I am still riding the energy wave it gave me. I am extremely grateful for the effort everyone did to come out in a snowstorm to join me in walking through Christian Jankowski's retrospective. My overall feeling is one of contentment, relieve and excitement. I feel content, because I had the impression people were getting something out of it – maybe just a pleasant feeling, a good laugh, an hour of not thinking about thesis presentations, and I hope more... I feel relieve, because the talk was given as a final project and thus concludes the work related to this class. I feel excitement, because I loved giving the talk and can't wait to do it again.

Since a critical assessment is useful to improve my future endeavors, I have also been thinking about what I felt went wrong and why or how the gallery talk could be treated differently. If I would do the talk again, I would pay more attention to not rushing into questioning participants for interpretations. Whereas, I have seen the work a couple of times before and I have had the opportunity to spend time looking for meaning, most of the participants have never seen or thought about the artwork before. I believe I made that mistake when discussing the first two pieces; *The Hunt* and *Shamebox*, and tried to change that approach afterwards. Maybe I would also decide not to talk about every artwork in the gallery, but to select a smaller amount of art pieces for the group to contemplate about. It would allow the participant to give the artwork the time it demands and to think about it, before going into discussion. Since I chose the first approach, I had to calculate how much time we could spend on every piece in the gallery and I must admit that my initial calculations weren't realistic. During the talk, I noticed that we could never keep up with the timing I had imagined, so I decided to end the talk with *The Day we Met* (the karaoke box) and not to push the group forward to see the last two pieces. This decision made the group miss out on two great works – especially *Matrix Effect* is wonderful – but I feel everyone received enough information to be able to 'get' those piece by themselves and there are still gallery brochures to turn to for some minimal explanation.

## Sources

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