

MILLET GRID  
AFTER JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET, GLEANERS (1857), 2006  
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ROSIKA DESNOYERS

# MILLET MATRIX I

2208 AVENUE MARCIL  
MONTRÉAL

2 AU 18 DÉCEMBRE 2010

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UN PROJET DE COMMISSARIAT EN DEUX VOLETS DE DAVID TOMAS  
A TWO-PART CURATORIAL PROJECT BY DAVID TOMAS

DESNOYERS' PROGRAMMED AND ERROR-BASED APPROACH TO PAINTING CAN BE UNDERSTOOD TO ADHERE TO LEWITT'S LATE 1960S UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLANNED YET INTUITIVELY GOVERNED NATURE OF A SYSTEMS-BASED CONCEPTUAL ART. HER FOCUS ON ERRORS HIGHLIGHTS NOT ONLY THEIR ARBITRARY, CAPRICIOUS AND SUBJECTIVE ORIGINS, BUT ALSO THEIR SYSTEMIC, PROGRAMMATIC AND CONCEPTUAL POTENTIAL. THIS POTENTIAL IS ALIGNED WITH LEWITT'S DEFINITION OF CONCEPTUAL ART, AND YET IT IS THROUGH A POSITIVE RE-ARTICULATION OF ERRORS THAT DESNOYERS IS ALSO ABLE TO UNDERMINE ONE OF THE KEY SENTENCES OF LEWITT'S INFLUENTIAL 1969 'SENTENCES ON CONCEPTUAL ART.'

SENTENCE NUMBER 8 READS AS FOLLOWS: "WHEN WORDS SUCH AS PAINTING AND SCULPTURE ARE USED, THEY CONNOTE A WHOLE TRADITION AND IMPLY A CONSEQUENT ACCEPTANCE OF THIS TRADITION, THUS PLACING LIMITATIONS ON THE ARTIST WHO WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO MAKE ART THAT GOES BEYOND THE LIMITATIONS." NOTE THE SUBTLE DISTINCTION LEWITT USES TO NUANCE HIS DISCUSSION OF LIMITS: "WHEN *WORDS* SUCH AS PAINTING AND SCULPTURE ARE *USED...*" (MY EMPHASES). IN AN IMPORTANT SENSE THE QUESTION OF DISTINCTIONS AND LIMITS REVOLVES AROUND WORDS AND THEIR USE. THIS INCLUDES, OF COURSE, HOW ONE USES WORDS LIKE PROGRAM AND AUTOMATIC. FOR THEY CIRCUMSCRIBE MEANING AND, IN DOING SO, THEY DELIMIT WHAT CAN BE INCLUDED AND WHAT CANNOT BE INCLUDED IN A WORD'S USE. HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF ETYMOLOGY, THE STUDY OF A WORD'S EVOLUTION OVER TIME AS DEFINED BY THE SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF ITS EVERYDAY USE. THUS IT IS IN TERMS OF THE QUESTION OF LIMITS AND A LEWITTIAN VERSION OF CONCEPTUAL ART THAT ONE CAN APPRECIATE THE BASIC SINGULARITY OF DESNOYERS' PRACTICE: ITS CAPACITY TO PRODUCE A *PAINTING*—THE SAME *IDEA* OF A PAINTING (ONE THAT IS BASED ON ERRORS) IN A POTENTIALLY ENDLESS FASHION—BY WAY OF A DISPLACEMENT IN ITS PROGRAMMED PROCESS OF PRODUCTION, SUCH THAT IT EXISTS BEYOND ITS TRADITIONAL LIMITS AS DEFINED THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE USE OF ITS PRIMARY RAW MATERIAL: PAINT.