Barbara Wien
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"OP's," the artist coated stretched linen with layer upon layer of white gesso and one heavy coat of oil paint, then scattered dirt and detritus collected from his studio floor across the still-tacky surfaces. The results are high-contrast, low-relief monoprints marked by powdery black sprays and smatterings of debris—shards of glass, insects, torn bits of paper, pieces of string, chips of paint, and whatever else the vacuum sucked up. Energetically launched over each painting, Fougeirol's Dada-esque dust propulsions combine the chance procedures of Jean Arp's collages with the scavenged materials of Kurt Schwitters's *Merz* pictures. Because the dust and debris are dispersed from a fixed position over each painting, the dark material accentuates the texture of the underlying monochromes. Ridges and peaks of white paint are entirely blackened on one side while remaining pristine on the other. Elegant gray wakes that fade gradually across the compositions give a great sense of momentum, showing how the dirt dispersed over, around, and between various superficial obstacles.

Topographical without being representational, the dust paintings initially seem to describe a world either much greater or smaller than our own. At once vertiginously expansive and claustrophobically myopic, they alternately suggest distant galaxies and mold spores. This dizzying back-and-forth between micro and macro is ultimately overcome by the presence of identifiable objects embedded in the painted surfaces. Semi-sunken into the paint and coated with dirt like artifacts awaiting careful extraction and classification, dustpan treasures—including bent staples and a thumbtack—help to establish the paintings' printerly, fossil-like one-to-one scale. Though less useful in terms of establishing a sense of relative proportions, odd bits of colorful matter—a piece of pink tape, shards of green glass, a scrap of blue plastic—interrupt the vaporous dust trails and force abrupt reconciliations between the paintings' atmospheric effects and their tactile crusts.

The two largest paintings on view were installed against a floor-to-ceiling backdrop made up of eight enormous sheets of bleached black linen. Made by dipping variously folded and crumpled pieces of fabric into baths of bleach, these emulsive sepia-toned tapestries suggest messier, paintless versions of Simon Hantaï's 1960s "*pliages*" (foldings). Installed as a kind of wallpaper intended to disrupt the white-cube exhibition space, the bleached linen works (all untitled, 2015) pair well with the dust paintings. Shown together, the black-on-white and white-on-black compositions corroborated Fougeirol's fascination with forces beyond his control, whether specific chemical processes or the universal laws of nature (gravity, flow patterns), and described a cyclical, pointedly random process of renewal.

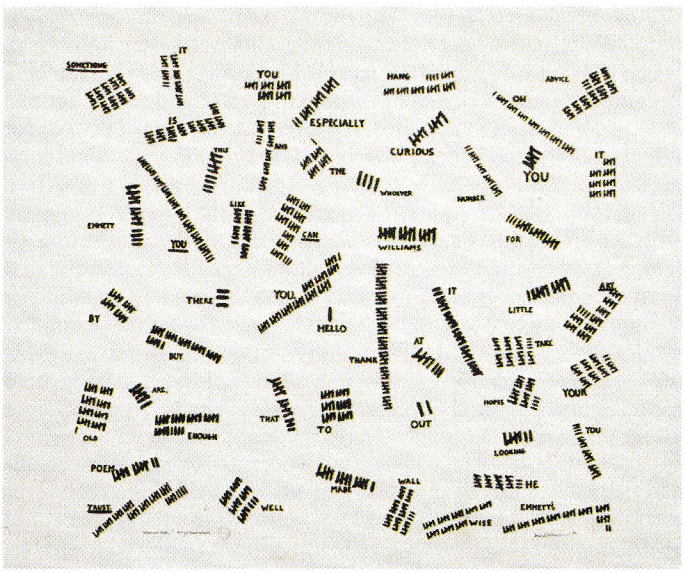
—*Mara Hoberman*

BERLIN

Emmett Williams

GALERIE BARBARA WIEN

Barbara Wien began working with Emmett Williams in 1991, and she has continued to collaborate with the artist's estate following his death in 2007. Her "gallery and art bookshop" makes an appropriate venue for the Fluxus pioneer's written and visual work. A writer, editor, performer, visual artist, concrete poet, and chronicler of Fluxus—"a non-historian recounting the history of a non-movement," according to critic Gauthier Lesturgie—Williams has published a multitude of texts, anthologies, poetry collections, and artist's books. This show focused (though not solely) on his collaborations with fellow Fluxus artist A-Yo and the musician Yo-Yo Ma. With self-declared "Rainbow Artist" (referring to his colorful palette) A-Yo, Williams shared not so much working methods as what he called a "universal humor."



Emmett Williams. *Hello Out There . . .*, 1989, silk screen on cloth, paint. 58 × 70¼".

The exhibition featured drawings and prints from the 1950s alongside two lighthearted text/image canvases from the 1980s, the latter posing puzzles to the reader by delivering personal messages from the artist that had to be decrypted via numbers and color codes. Also on view were Gertrude Stein–inspired stamps (*when this you see remember me*) in Latin, and Japanese letters made in collaboration with A-Yo between 1959 and 1965. But the two central bodies of work were monoprints on paper from the "Book of O" series, 1958; and *Incidental Music for Yo-Yo Ma*, 1978, shown here for the first time in its entirety with both graphical and musical elements. "The Book of O" is basically an extension of the poem "o in motion," from Williams's first book of poems, *konkretionen* (Concretions), published in Darmstadt in 1958. Williams created it by repeatedly pressing the *o* key of the typewriter while moving the paper in all directions so that the letter meanders around its surface. For "The Book of O," Williams achieved a similarly handmade movement by dipping a rubber stamp in paint and applying it to the canvas, against which he then pressed paper (reportedly trampling on it) while the paint was still wet. The results are poetic, suggestively titled abstractions that are far more Informel than Concrete, allowing the letter to shift through various more-or-less anthropomorphic figurations.

Incidental Music for Yo-Yo Ma also has its origins in Williams's time in Darmstadt, where he was able to initiate performative collaborations with avant-garde composers associated with the famous international summer courses there. Williams composed the score by applying a special technique he developed during a residency at Harvard University, where he used a Xerox machine to duplicate and enlarge documents endlessly to the point of electrostatic dissolution. The first page of the score shows a close-up of a blank piece of staff paper's five sets of five parallel lines, copied and enlarged several times. In the second sheet, only four staffs are left, with random dots and marks swirling around in the space between them. Over the course of nine pages, the blank staff paper is increasingly enlarged, until the horizontal lines have been pushed out of the picture and only the visual disturbances remain as splatters of visual noise. When he performed this score in 1980, Ma started by playing Bach's Suite No. 1 in G Major. The cello was plugged into an electronic device so that the sound became gradually distorted by electronic waves, the music slowly dissolving as pictured in the photocopied graphs. The presentation at the gallery included a recording of the performance along with Williams's score and two black-and-white photographs by anthropologist Robert Gardner, who witnessed and documented the event. A set of Japanese bast mats—an addition to the original material, provided by the gallerist—were an invitation to experience the musical experiment horizontally and to physically indulge in the floating decomposition. Williams's analog methods of playfully transmuting forms and meaning are still refreshing in the digital age.

—*Eva Scharrer*