

Proxy Gallery

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http://ospace.otis.edu/proxy_gallery

Kathrin Burmester: Packing the Library

April 1-30, 2014

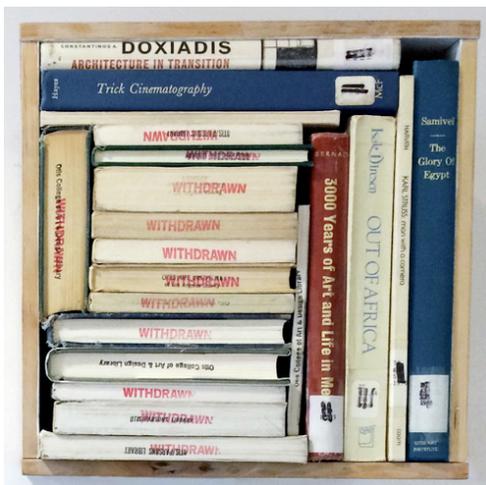
Reception for the artist: Wednesday April 23, 2014, 6:30-7:30 pm

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PROXY Gallery is pleased to present the solo exhibition *Packing the Library* by artist Kathrin Burmester.

The Gallery is packed to capacity with books that have been deaccessioned from the Millard Sheets Library at Otis College. A list of all the books that fill up the space will be available during the exhibition; upon de-installation the books will be donated to the book collection in the Graduate Fine Arts building on Jefferson Boulevard.



Packing the Library is more than a visualization of capacity. It is a gesture of taking from one place and adding to another, inserting a pause or an interruption to the flow of things in order to throw new light into assumptions and omissions. The deaccessioned books from one part of Otis College are re-acquired in a different way turning the process of circulation into one which never returns to the point of departure, but rather shifts form into content in both

spacial and temporal terms. In this action, Burmester transforms the library as a system into books as objects.

To work with books as objects is to recognize their irreducible materiality and, beyond their intellectual content, their persistent need for space on both sides of this performative procedure: lack of space is one of the reasons the books have been deaccessioned to begin with,

while in the gallery all the air space is taken up. We see the word WITHDRAWN stamped on the pages, and the library call number, now erased. Paradoxically, the insistence on the materiality of books reduces their content to pure sign, and then re-signifies it through rejection as outdated, inappropriate, or superfluous, a surface without depth.

The tight packing of books as objects also casts Proxy the Gallery adrift, to meet its own material origin as a box: through the lack of empty space, the installation collapses the boundaries between content and frame transforming the objects/books and the gallery/box into one thing.

By exhibiting the detritus of a library Burmester allows a look at another classification system that is radically other than the Dewey Decimal System: the withdrawn books are now declassified and launched into a different kind of circulation, first as art exhibition and then as unclassified property of the Grad Fine Arts unofficial book collection. The work exposes a system of values, and also the history of a system of values.