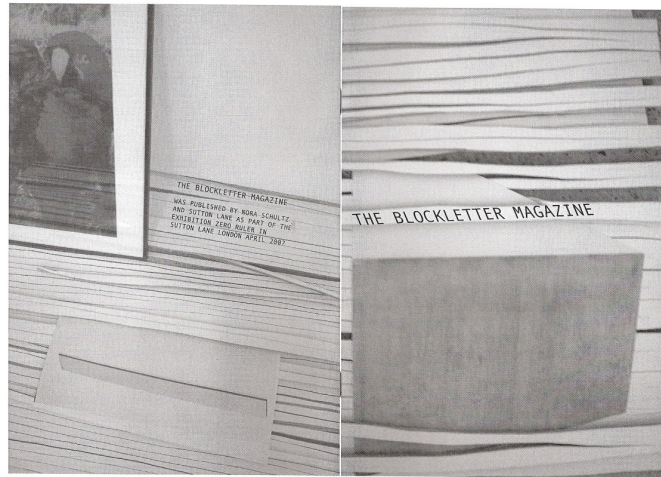


Nora Schultz

Sutton Lane, London, UK
21 April to 24 May 2007

Reviewed by Charles Danby



Nora Schultz, *The Blockletter Magazine*, 2007. Courtesy the artist and Sutton Lane

The Blockletter Magazine was one of two publications produced by Nora Schultz in conjunction with her exhibition *Zero Ruler*. Its Xeroxed pages informed a low-fi sentiment central to the work in the gallery, while its full frame images, showing interior glimpses of both studio and gallery, hinted at a typographical language of ciphers derived from architectural detail above text. The mannered documentation of the magazine had a schematic and loose-knit chronology, marking the continuous ambiguity between action and outcome that typified the fluid nature of Shultz's work.

Leading into the first gallery were a series of eleven photographs. Small in size but immediately striking, they were mediated by

a palette of mid-tone silvers and greys. Each was a frame in a linear time sequence, and each showed a sheet of aluminium, shaped or reshaped, into a number between zero and ten. Feet, hands and legs were visible in most of the photographs injecting a haphazardness of interaction that accentuated the very visible stressed tension of the folded and twisted metal. The work was curious, playful, and emphatically performative, and while the shapes created were rudimentary, they were clearly decipherable as numbers.

The temporality of these changing structures further unravelled as a consequence of their reflective surfaces. Light cast onto the metal gave the appearance of rippled water,

in places making its edges appear to disappear in a camouflage of surface and shadow. Each number was reliant on the one preceding it and while folds and creases became the scars of re-manufacture, the camera shutter remained the sole witness to the transformation of the work. What Schultz created was a marginal set of narratives that courted precariousness by reconstructing a relationship with the temporal.

Elsewhere were minimal interventions of a very different photographic order. *Material Replacement (a)* was unorthodox in its construction. Its three skewed and cut photographic sections formed a unified fragment that astutely offset the architectural details photographed in each from their formal context, oddly invoking a Modernist sentiment that brought formal concerns to the fore.

To the right of the gallery was *X-Tables*. A construction of slight manufacture, it lay somewhere between architectural intervention and bespoke furniture design. Assembled from thin metal rods, it occupied, divided and delineated the space around it. In contrast to its incisive design, marks and disruptions across its surfaces were visible on close inspection. Here again, Schultz introduced minute and almost invisible discrepancies that unsettled and destabilised the work, instigating a restlessness that demanded a continual alteration in its viewing.

The second gallery was a short walk from the first, and its works bravely undercut the formalism that governed the first gallery. Pushed to the edges on three sides, the works all sat on or rose up from the floor, affording them a physicality and gravitas that cut sharply against the light ethereality of the first gallery.

Two large works on paper, *Perspective Drawing (1) & (2)* ran almost the full height of the walls,

complimenting a third work *Corner Panorama*. Loosely hung, these works bowed at their base resting on or just above the floor. They engendered a sense of landscape with haphazard and sporadic pencil marks that created loose-knit diamond shapes whose contours embraced a cartographic language akin to that of ordinance survey maps. The closeness or otherwise of lines on such maps dictates the height of the ground, and in *Corner Panorama* the paper was crumpled creating a physical equivalent to any notion of mapping proposed through drawn line.

Nestled in the clutch of the crumpled paper was the twisted zero from the countdown sequence of sculptural numbers. While conceptually and physically it retained an aspect of all the numbers in the series, as an object it was inanimate and residual. It also appeared deceptively large in relation to the scale remembered and perceived from the photograph, highlighting the artful nature of Schultz's deft transposition of works or parts of works between pieces.

On the floor to the right was a four part text-based work. *Block Letters* was set away from the wall but zigzagged along its length. Each section was v-shaped and freestanding with the text on the left panel mirrored on the right. The final work, *Extendable Plate* became almost invisible. A black line half a foot wide reached from floor to ceiling. Like other works by Schultz it shared a sense of being disclosed or betrayed by slight intervention. Here a section of black granite was propped just away from the wall. It was only through the reflective surface that the densely laden black ink of paper strip below revealed itself and its material properties. What emerged was a rich vein of ideas that in Schultz's hands were rewarding in their manufacture and continually playful in their interchange.