

ALEXIS DAHAN
“We serve selected texts”

November 1st-23rd, 2013

Opening: November 1st from 6 to 8pm

Located in front of DIA Art Foundation
345 west 22nd Street
(between 10th and 11th Avenue)
New York, NY 10011

Hours: Wednesday–Saturday from 1–5pm



NEW YORK– “We Serve Selected Texts” is a temporary public installation by Alexis Dahan that will appear in Chelsea’s gallery district November 1–23, 2013 on 22nd Street. Appropriating the iconography and rituals of the American hot dog cart, the installation invites the audience to participate in the exchange of commerce and ideas by purchasing a curated selection of philosophical and theoretical texts from a customized menu of offerings. The non-profit installation was made possible with the help of Anonymous Star Project Space.

From Claes Oldenburg’s “The Store” (1961) to David Hammons’s “Bliz-aard Ball Sale” (1983), Rirkrit Tiravanija’s “pad thai” (1990) and beyond, artists have incorporated elements of commodity culture, engaging audiences in public spaces and using everyday commercial transactions to raise questions about art, value, and authorship. With “We Serve Selected Texts,” Dahan points to the exchange of ideas within the all-American fast-food culture by utilizing the iconic New York hot dog cart as its departure.

Unbeknownst to casual onlookers, the stand appears as an authentic hot dog cart, complete with two canvas umbrellas, vendor permit, full menu, vendor and flashy advertising posters. In a variation of the Situationist tradition of détournement, Dahan has substituted the food on the menu with a wide range of philosophical and art historical text excerpts. The cart’s branding and visuals now promotes “Art Theory & Philosophy”, listing the authors’ names and simple slogans.

The selected philosophers were chosen for their devotion to the understanding of Art and the artists were selected for their longstanding relationship to philosophy. The viewer is then invited to select a writer or text from the menu; and for \$1, he or she will receive a uniquely stamped scroll of hand-made Japanese paper with the selected text. By paying for the printed text, the viewer has the choice to either discard it (as one would a hot dog wrapping) or to savor and collect it, giving the piece as intrinsic value as a precious object.

“We Serve Selected Texts”

MENU

Heavy Theory and Statements \$1

AUTHOR / TITLE	WORD COUNT	DATE
1. Martin Heidegger / “set-up”	366	1950
2. Joseph Kosuth / <i>Elite and Mass</i>	293	1982
3. Eva Hesse / <i>A month after May 68</i>	100	1968
4. Gustave Courbet / <i>The first modern ?</i>	217	1855-1861
5. Lucio Fontana / <i>Nature but...</i>	136	1946
6. Manzoni, Sordini, Verga / <i>Saturday Night</i>	185	1957
7. Yves Klein / <i>Let’s kill all the birds !</i>	189	1961
8. Buren, Mosset, Parmentier & Toroni / <i>F#\$% Painting</i>	95	1967
9. Theodor Adorno / <i>Spirit is needed</i>	280	1970
10. G.W.F. Hegel / <i>Anticipation</i>	216	1818-1829

11. Balthazar Gracian / <i>The Society of Spectacle</i>	143	1647
12. Vladimir Jankelevitch / <i>You’re not so special</i>	107	1964
13. Auguste Herbin / <i>Self destruction</i>	183	1949
14. Henri Michaux / <i>Text is not enough</i>	162	1972

Lighter Excerpts \$1

AUTHOR / TITLE	WORD COUNT	DATE
15. Felix Gonzales-Torres / <i>Pleasure of Text</i>	233	1993
16. Wassily Kandinsky / <i>Competitive Pricing</i>	119	1910
17. Ed Ruscha / <i>Art Politics</i>	163	1977
18. Carl Andre / <i>Enough Photography already</i> ...	155	1972
19. Georges Bataille / <i>What goes on at night</i>	188	1957
20. Walter Benjamin / <i>High Flaneur</i>	323	1927-1934
21. Sigmund Freud / <i>“Do you party ?”</i>	366	1886

Offering both “heavy” and “light” menu options, Dahan allows the audience to create a well-balanced diet of ingredients. Much in the same way that fast food does not offer a complete diet, this updated “menu” is by no means intended as a complete canon of philosophical thought nor a representation of each writer’s complete body of work. Rather, each text offers a dialogue about a certain element of the whole installation, from the way it appears to its specific location.

These bridged texts are given an imaginary title – each now standing on its own, re-contextualized for public consumption. The texts are in dialogue, referencing the nature of art production and art reception, as well as the viability of the installation itself.

“We Serve Selected Texts” is organized as a self-sustaining, non-profit operation, engaging with the system of capital in the most transparent way. Every dollar raised covers the price of the Japanese hand-made paper and general upkeep of the stand: a playful gesture, a provocation, and hopefully, a forum for discussion. Results from this exercise will be compiled in a publication to be released in 2014.

After two days of operation the DIA Art Foundation invited the installation to be moved in front of 345 west 22nd Street.

Thank you and come again!

A native of Paris (b.1982), Alexis Dahan has lived and worked in New York since 2005. Dahan became German painter Hermann Amann’s assistant at age 20 while studying literature and philosophy in Paris and Siena, Italy. In 2007, he opened a studio in Union Square where he organized French artist Laurent Grasso’s first US show entitled “Electric Palace.” In 2012, Dahan was the subject of an acclaimed solo exhibition “The Lover’s Body Parts are Separated” (2012) at Half Gallery, New York, and “The Sky Is Shaped By Its City Buildings” (2013) at Rook & Raven Gallery, London. He will present new work as part of a group exhibition at Dickinson Gallery, New York, to open December 17th, 2013.

Anonymous Star Project Space is dedicated to provide art presentations related to social and political domains in order to alter art experience. Please visit www.fdcinc.org for further information.

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