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# Franz West: Clamp, 1995

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Franz West, **Clamp**

# Franz West, **Clamp**, 1995

Kröller-Müller Museum; Sanneke Stigter

The **Clamp** is an environment that is based on the artist's former studio with the actual floor of his studio included. Colourful objects made out of painted plaster and papier-mâché are placed in and around the **Clamp** as well as benches and tables made in a style that is typical of West. The visitor can make himself at home in this 'environmental collage' and make a telephone call: the walls are covered with pages from the local phonebook. **Clamp** is an object-based installation characterized by interactive as well as site-related aspects. The history of the exhibition shows that important initial features have changed gradually or even disappeared. It became apparent that loss of memory and lack of documentation on the actual role and nature of both the tangible and less tangible components that constitute the **Clamp**, could have led to permanent loss of specific aspects of the installation. The research focused on the history and development of the work, as well as documentation combined with the practice of reinstalling the work to obtain a better understanding, and develop a better way of managing the artwork.

Documents of the exhibition history show how the **Clamp** has changed over time. The installation has been put together freely on every other occasion, changing its constellation, which is according to the artist's ideas. The biggest change appeared after the first show. At that time the visitors could actually use the telephones that were provided within the **Clamp**, but this feature was never seen afterwards. The role of the telephone within the work is obviously an important one considering the fact that some of the works are called 'Telephone sculptures', there are phonebook pages on the wall, and the public was welcome to make a telephone call. The note on a Post-it in the museum archive stated that West had changed his instruction that 'two telephones' had to be part of **Clamp**, because nowadays everyone has a mobile phone. Further research unearthed a different text that was used during the second exhibition of the **Clamp** and that does not mention the telephones. The disappearance of the actual telephone(s) and the explanatory texts from the installation, the history of the walls that had weakened severely once they were cut with a jigsaw before transport to Otterlo and the reinforcement of the original floor panels, have all had a big impact on the character of the **Clamp**. The walls and floor can only be installed according to a certain layout without weakening the material any further. The original floor tiles were fixed upside down permanently, so that the paint stains referring to the artist's studio can no longer be seen. These alterations have had a big impact on the use and experience of the **Clamp**, but were not documented by the museum before. Detective work in the archives has uncovered new and interesting information. This has helped to answer some questions raised at the beginning of the project and made it possible to reinstall the work according to the ideas of West. Conservation treatment has been carried out on several objects and preventative conservation measures have been taken to ensure that the various materials do not have a damaging effect on each other. Supportive constructions are fabricated for the transportation and storage of the fragile components and guidelines for handling and installation have been developed. The installation is thoroughly documented and it will be investigated how best to incorporate the information within our registration system.

The conservator needs to understand the physical and the less tangible aspects that constitute an installation, in order to consolidate the functionality of the artwork. A sound documentation is needed that foresees future conservation and installation problems. The artist's ideas should be clearly defined and the different forms in which an artwork may have existed should be documented.

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Phil Collins, **they shoot horses**, 2004
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Olafur Eliasson, **Notion Motion**, 2005 | Photo: Hans Wilschut

Carlos Garaicoa, **Letter to the Censors (Carta a los censores)**, 2003
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Pierre Huyghe, **Two Minutes Out of Time**, 2000 | Photo: Peter Cox

Greg Lynn & Fabian Marcaccio, **The Predator**, 1999 | Photo: Gregg Lynn Studio

Gustav Metzger, **Liquid Crystal Environment**, 1965-66 (Remake 2005)
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Bruce Nauman, **MAPPING THE STUDIO II with color shift, flip, flop & flip/flop (Fat Chance John Cage)**, 2001
@ ARS, NY and DACS, London 2005 | Photo: Tate Photography | Co-owned by Tate (T11893), Pompidou Centre Paris, Kunstmuseum Basel

Nam June Paik, **One Candle**, 1988 | Photo: Axel Schneider

Tino Sehgal, **This is Propaganda**, 2002
No photograph available as the artist does not allow any documentation of his installations.

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