

Nestor Krüger's *Monophonic*: bringing down the walls

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Gordon LEBREDT

Included with Nestor Krüger's exhibition mailer from Goodwater: an additional and obviously related sheet, listing—FOR SALE—one Tannoy fifteen-inch Monitor Gold dual-concentric speaker with crossover and cabinet—all for \$2,000. It also told me, supposing that I might be interested in such an item, to call John at 647.406.5052. Of course, I was somewhat perplexed given that the announcement proper—or what I took to be the announcement proper—appeared overshadowed by the skill for the speaker and cabinet.

Moreover, adding to my confusion was the fact that what appeared to be the title of Krüger's exhibition—"MAILER"—could have been construed as a "performative," that what I held in my hands—a mailer that, at once, tautologically declared itself as such—was *itself* the exhibition. So you can understand my bewilderment over what came down to the contradictory draw of a double call: on the one hand, a call that announced the "taking-place" of a non-event, since I had, perhaps, already received it, already had it in hand and, on the other, a call to call John—John Goodman no doubt—about a certain piece of hardware that might be found at the Goodwater gallery and that might have something to do with the exhibition that had, perhaps, just taken place.

A few days later, on my way to an appointment in the east end, I happened to pass by the Goodwater gallery. Having not yet visited the new space on Queen, I wasn't sure of its precise location. As I rode by, a quick scan of the storefronts just east of Parliament proved fruitless. However, one boarded-up façade did catch my eye. Or so I thought, because it didn't register at that precise moment. It was only later—a few seconds at most—that it struck me as odd simply because, at the time, my sole reason to be passing by Goodwater was to have some reproductions made at a nearby printing facility. Now there would be nothing extraordinary about this trip save for the fact that what I was



Nestor KRÜGER, *Monophonic*, 2007. Plywood, spruce framing, speaker unit, construction remnants, carpet, gallery furniture, etc. 11.5 x 2.2 x .914 meters. Exterior of Goodwater, 234 Queen Street East, Toronto showing entrance to corridor. Photo courtesy Goodwater, Toronto.

having reproduced was a rendering of an earlier proposal of my own, something I was, only recently, compelled to return to: an exterior façade of a gallery whose windows were, in effect, muzzled. This sign, then, the one that I thought I might have missed, that I might have in passing only imagined, a fabulous coincidence that, as far as I was concerned, was too good to be true, now possessed the logic—and the *topos*—of the dispatch. From the moment I opened the mailer, the mailer that, not by chance, bore the title "Mailer" (an appellation that could refer not only to the thing that it is but also to the sender, the one who, or the thing—the addressing or mailing machine—that posted the missive and its callings), I found myself already—ineluctably, symptomatically—on its trajectory, its projection, as it were.¹

Sure enough, on the following weekend, when I arrived in front of what I believed to be the correct address, my expectations were confirmed: not only were the windows of the gallery covered in raw, construction-grade plywood but the main entrance door appeared to have been replaced or simply concealed by the same material. There were no obvious signs as to whether or not this was the correct address, and the overall impression

one got of the façade was of something temporarily off limits to the public. Indeed, a sign reading "Authorized Personnel Only" would not have been out of place; rather, the only inscription to greet one's arrival was a hastily scrawled piece of graffiti that read, "ass hole in hear" (sic).²

Setting my perturbations aside, I chanced to venture inside and immediately found myself in a dark chamber or vestibule, at any rate, in a narrow space not much wider or higher than the door I had just come through. The only sources of illumination were two commercial fluorescent lighting strips mounted diagonally on the spring-loaded door that had automatically closed behind me. As my eyes adjusted to the low light level, it now became apparent that this corridor extended almost the full length of the gallery interior. Moving further along its confines toward what I thought must be another door allowing access to the exhibition space proper, I was met by a wall or wave of sound. I'm not sure that such figures best describe the experience. Suffice it to say that this mass of sound was felt as much as heard. Emanating from a speaker at the far end of the corridor—our Tannoy, fifteen-inch Monitor Gold advertised on the posted supplement—this sound-matter, vibration

or pulse—seemed to be without measure, that the only thing containing it was the corridor, the sound-box or resonator understood as either an extrusion formed by the radical displacement of the front door or, inversely, as a projection or extension of the speaker cabinet.³ In effect, then, one was reduced to waiting for the note to take the measure of itself (the point at which it exhausted itself and silence, if only momentarily, returned), in a space that is nothing more than an extension of the threshold: an interim or intermediary annex, a detachable appendix. Now the term "annex" can refer to a territory, specifically to the incorporation of one territory or domain into another. Which introduces into the proceedings, here, the issue of property, of certain proprietary rights. One could say that Krüger's apparatus, his annex (that which is added to something at the end), is the last, the terminal point or destination of a series of relays beginning with the poster, the mailer bearing the title *Mailer* that could also be called a placard. As you may well know the word "placard" can also refer to a small tag bearing an owner's name. It follows that Krüger has thus sent, has destined, his tag—a proxy for his signature—in order to set it to work in (or as) the space temporarily annexed as his