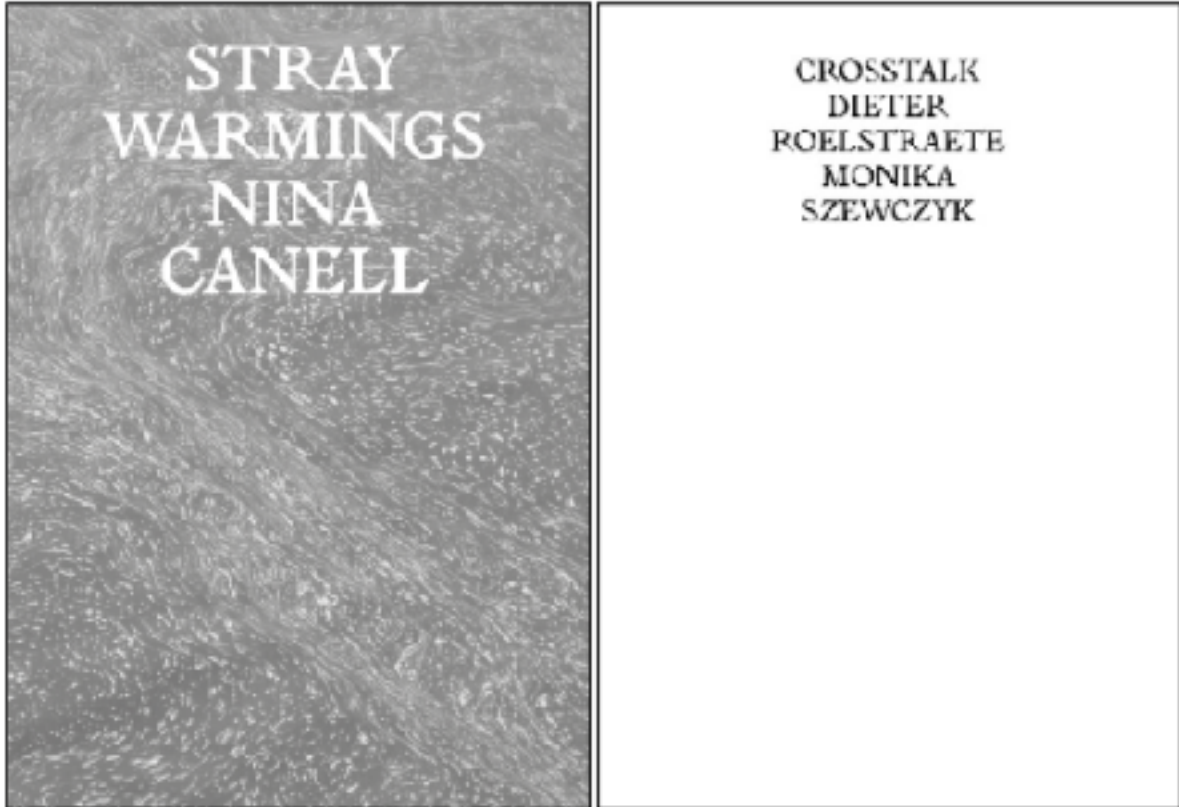


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does not mean we cannot use it, of course. I'll tell you what made me think about invisibility in Nina's work. It all started with the corners. I've had this hunch that she pays particular attention to corners in installing her work, and when looking at the show in Midway, I pointed to the culmination of her copper array in *Softer Corner* and said something to that effect: "With Nina you really have to watch the corners." I just blurted it out, thinking out loud, though it came out with the somewhat pompous authority of a maxim. But John Rasmussen looked at me somewhat excitedly: "Well, you haven't seen the best part." And he proceeded to lead me to a corner that did not appear to be a point of focus at first glance, but upon closer inspection yielded two tiny sculptures: one a fossilized piece of chewing gum, the other a perfect concrete cast of the latter, placed side by side. They are called, or it is called, *Remembrance (Colourless)*. An ant had crawled on top of them at the exact moment that we approached, which drove home the very sculptural problem of scale with hilarious oomph. I'm tempted to say that there is something in the way Nina works that relies on, and even triggers, instinctive knowledge. I think maybe this is what you were aiming at when you brought up poetry. I read your comment as an acknowledgment of something that did not obey the usual grammar of space. But of course, sometimes when you tell an artist that their work is one thing, their instinct will be to disagree. It adds a little spice to the conversation. Nina has this quietly playful way with people, as well as insects. Noticing the ant she promptly told it to get off her work. If the poetic and the intuitive are related, which I do think they are, perhaps the poetic is more about the verbal and the intuitive is about a kind of silence. A particularly kind of full silence—the empty frame, the frequency just beyond human perception—pervades her work; which presents an interesting problem: How does one carry on a conversation about the work, keep thinking out-loud, as it were? Or am I just conjuring this "will to silence" the way Stanley Brown conjured his cube?

DIETER ROELSTRAETE: I'd like to pick up on your question of continuing the conversation—of keeping discourse flowing, so to speak, of *telecommunication*. A sculpture consisting of a tone generator tuned out of the reach of human hearing: the despondent, wilting antenna in a work like *Strays*, a smattering of disjointed copper tubes, of the kind that we customarily assume to contain either fluids and gases or electric wire and telephone cables... 'Communication'—or the lack, even impossibility thereof—does seem to be a recurring concern in her work, which is one reason why I think it's not so inappropriate to talk about the work in poetic terms—poetry is perhaps the one mode of language that is not directly subservient to communication: words scattered on a page, like objects in a room. Rather than express or communicate meaning, you could say they conjure a certain *atmosphere* (I like the verb 'conjuring' by the way—it's the right verb to invoke in a discussion of Nina's work). Now I've talked about the physical, material conditions of communication as a form of *connection* elsewhere in relation to Nina's work, namely in my observations concerning the profusion of cables and cabling in her art. Cables, threads, wires, as symbols for both connecting and communicating; cycles and circular movements; indeed, the very notion of re-cycling and transformation—these are all elements that are addressed quite literally in her practice, and there's a nicely paradoxical charge inherent in the image of the cable as that which both promises unprecedented mobility and forever ties us to the land, to the ground, to the elements. The cable, as you well know, completely freaks me out.

MONIKA SZEWZYR: Oh yes!

DIETER ROELSTRAETE: I hate cables—they make me feel like a modern-day Laocoon. They always get mixed up, you're always getting stuck in them, and this becomes all the more ironic (not in a philosophically interesting way though) when these cables belong to the very machines that are supposed to

enhance mobility, to put us in constant contact with the world. Anyway—I'm going off on a tangent here. But then again, tangential thinking may be exactly the kind of thinking that looking at Nina's work requires. In any case, there is definitely something in the work that speaks to our contemporary condition of mobility-mad paralysis. The blackout performance involving a collective of collectors,¹ for instance, is really about coming to a complete and utter standstill—about disconnecting people rather than connecting them, as the motto of a once thriving telecommunications behemoth has it. Would you agree that, if the work is meant to communicate anything at all, it is primarily the fragility or even fatality of all communication? Perhaps this is also what one can see "behind" the glass pane inside the empty frame.

MONIKA SZEWECZYK: That's certainly a tempting thought. I am writing this as I glance out of our window at a giant telephone pole. You'll recall that my mother told us not to move close to such a strong electromagnetic force and regardless of whether or not she overstated the case, on certain evenings, when the neighborhood gets quiet, I can hear the wires buzzing with activity on our T-shaped totem of communication. It's a white noise that I would love to eliminate. Nina, on the other hand, seems to enjoy constructing or deconstructing spaces where this noise exists, just out of, or right on the edge of, human sensory perception, of actuality and imagination. Here perhaps is where extra-sensory perception kicks in. And this is perhaps best felt when there is a frame of some sort for it. Those collectors must experience something of this sort as they come to know for certain that nine other households, out of sight (and previously out of mind), are experiencing a similar suspension of white noise. The quiet is so beautiful when the power goes out in a home that it is sometimes difficult to remember to panic. And one might feel a shy sense of camaraderie with all the other dark spaces in the neighborhood. (That camaraderie can now be confirmed via mobile phone, but I still remember when the

phones also went out as the power did.) You touched upon the multitude of material conductors that Nina brings forth in the gallery. I would add that she also somehow sculpts the forces that do not have a material substance, even if they cannot be separated from physical conductors here and there. So this is not just a matter of the invisible, with which we started out, but also the intangible and the inaudible as well. *Sleep Warnings*—what a strange combination of words, which do indeed speak of that scattering you ascribe to poetry. And also, of temperature, weather, atmosphere... all of which are things at the edge of tangibility that are difficult to verbalize and (maybe therefore) also to feel. Rather than the fatality of communication, maybe we have to consider its fragility...

DUSTIN PURLINE PARTI: Of its precariousness—in the literal sense of something that is (I'm quoting from an online dictionary here) "not securely held or in position," something that is "dangerously likely to fall or collapse" (as opposed to the more theoretically fashionable notion of precarity understood as the condition of economic uncertainty dependent on something that is made to look like chance—although it wouldn't be unreasonable to read the semantic side-effects of some of her work in those terms). Precariousness as a quintessentially sculptural quality, in other words—act as a balancing act, not just in sheer material terms, but also in terms of saying neither too much nor too little. In this regard, and also with regards to your observations about the "meteorological" dimension of Nina's work—its free-wheeling, light-footed quotations from the language of thermodynamics and entropy—a term that I've been meaning to bring up is that of compression: the notion of the art work as a concentrate—the vanishing point in the middle of a widening web of concentric circles that operate as force fields of materiality and meaning. Which is exactly what I hear echo in a sonorous quote by Steven Connor that Nina shared with us in Minneapolis—reflecting on the marvel of copper, cables, and wiring, Connor speaks of an "infinite force moving through near-infinite littleness."² It's not a bad characterization of what she does as an artist, really: striking the balance between two infinities. It just about fits this room.

1 I refer here to "Nina Lund Flux Electricity" by Dieter Puschmann, from "To Let Stay Projecting An ARtist Of Branch Or A Lay By Not Chopping It Off," published by Mook and Walter König Books, 2010.

2 <http://www.cadison-studio.com/wlan/welairin.html>.

3 The interactive "Black Light (For 10 Performers)" is further dissected in the above mentioned essay.