



District of Columbia Arts Center

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dcartscenter.org

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

john ros, *__lineation__*

January 18 – February 17

curated by Stephanie J. Williams

__lineation__ slowed me down.

Initially entitled as ten typed underscores, _____, then creeping into a slippery space that combines the pronounceable lineation with an unpronounceable visual pause of two underscores situated prior to, and also following, the word. *__lineation__* is an intervention that in its simplicity and directness encourages contemplation. The underscores provide visual pause, an interruption that holds space around the word. It disrupts the fluidity expected when reading, by stopping the eye with a quiet space. The word lineation is a noun with active trajectory, more suggestive of how a verb might function but steadfast as a subject. It links line-making with the accumulation of line's associations.

Thinking tangentially about line, then, it is a designation of space, an interior that stands apart from an exterior, a possessive space that exposes the confines of what is ours and not theirs. It is a border, a potential wall that designates access to territory. While lineation describes traces through time, a collection of stories, it expands our understanding of place as one that is historical and therefore expansive. Our spaces were once inhabited by others and there are traces of their existence still present. *__lineation__* is a catalyst that weaves together these themes through the act of contemplative mark making so that these traces are more aptly felt. Through this work, Ros asks that we become more aware, stating, "what i love about the notion of awareness is that it goes beyond politics and class and social-strata. it elevates all willing to engage with it, no matter where they stand. therefore, the idea of awareness brings us ever closer to understanding and perhaps a more permanent solution, to issues that affect our day-to-day. awareness of ourselves and our surrounds will open up the possibility of being a more engaged citizen. a more empathetic human."

In order to tie this conversation more specifically to the site, Ros has exposed the 1989 architectural layout of the two apartments that existed prior to the construction of the DC Arts Center and created a series of typed underscore prints. These prints, executed on a typewriter, perform a physical and unmediated immediacy that further abstracts the notion of line as archive. Gordon Matta-Clark in his anarchitecture subverted the commodification of art by documenting through video and photography as he sawed through and carved out architecture. These ephemeral works pushed the power of line as something disruptive, present, and actionable. Ros' work, while tonally quieter, holds its power in its restraint and slow consideration. It is not a spectacle but a curated archive of this space and the stories experienced here.

__lineation__ uses both space and form in order to echo an ethos of awareness. Ros' aesthetic, both clean and deliberate, exposes a need to make visible that which is easily overlooked, a philosophy that extends towards the margins of the American politic. His installations are, at their base, a gift, a rare slowing down, traces of a process of true attention, and an act that rebels against a contemporary climate of fast paced convenience, exploitive consumption, and waste.