



**Renée
Green**

**CC
VA**

Pacing

6

Camino Road



Renée Green

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

Renée Green Pacing FAM Case

Institution (Building)

Institution (Building) is an invitation to artists to consider the institutional behaviors and practices of the CCVA at Harvard University. In repeated visits over the course of two years, artists engage through an expanded form of exhibition with various facets related to the archive, architecture, and history of the Carpenter Center. Their work manifests in anything from

exhibitions, events, and installations to interventions, tours, and publications, taking shape and changing during the residency. Institution (Building) seeks to critically and thoughtfully recover the history of this institution and situate it within broader contexts of contemporary art, culture, and the extraordinary legacy of the Le Corbusier building.



Standardized Octagonal Units for Imagined and Existing Systems (S.O.U.s), 2002.

Forms of Organized Complexity

Notes on Renée Green's *Pacing* at CCVA

Gloria Sutton

Pacing, the purposefully capacious title chosen by Renée Green for her two-year project at CCVA, suggests a reappraisal of the role or position of the artist-in-residence writ large. This is not an effort to add to the list of artist occupations that have emerged since the 1990s—chief among them being “artist-as-curator” or “artist-as-researcher.” In stark contrast, her strategic use of the moniker Free Agent Media (a.k.a. FAM) as the authoring tool for her projects since 1994 registers Green’s deep understanding of art’s complex relationship to the culture industry and complicates the tendency to read “the museum,” “the academy,” or “the market” as the only designated institutions for the production and reception of art. Instead, FAM contextualizes the broader media ecology in which Green’s works, writings, and ideas circulate.

To this end, *FAM Case*—the first iteration of *Pacing* starting on October 27—takes shape in the display case located on Level 0 of the Carpenter Center with a selection of FAM printed matter: books, bulletins, printouts, public lecture notices, screening programs, exhibition announcements, and other ephemera. In addition to conveying the 22-year history of Green’s deployment of Free Agent Media to publish, exhibit, and circulate, this display also performs a media archeology—outlining emerging and obsolete media formats and the



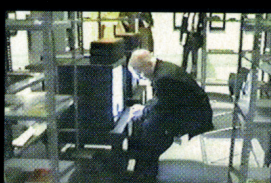
THE DIGITAL



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Renée Green and Kunstraum / Kulturinformatik der Universität Lüneburg

analog and digital forms through which they have taken shape. The selected ephemera and materials are only a sampling. However, in this concentrated display, we see Green's keen ability to formally and conceptually collage several disparate histories and taxonomies in order to reveal overlapping cultural and social complexities—essentially, her working methodology that would promptly be taken up by many others in the field of contemporary art.

For example, in the archive-like installation *Import/Export Funk Office* (1992) Green draws our attention to hip-hop and its related culture, and via video, sound, printed matter, and a variety of sculptural elements, among them a shelving structure resembling a library, Green focuses on how both were translated and transmuted in a variety of different contexts in the United States and Germany. A main component of the video materials documents Green's exchange with Diedrich Diedrichsen, a cultural critic then based in Cologne and editor of the German music magazine *Spex*. Green and Diedrichsen engage in conversation among themselves and with others in New York, Los Angeles, and Cologne; other participants include Greg Tate, Arthur Jafa, Joe Wood, and Andrea Clarke in New York; Brian Cross (B+), Medusa, Koko, G-Money, George Lipsitz, and others in Los Angeles; and Ingo in Cologne. Displayed in different locations and contexts, *Import/Export Funk Office* can occur in different media and formats and be expanded and updated with new material, as when Green created *The Digital Import/Export Funk Office* as a CD-ROM that also exists as a website, in her 2010 *Early Videos* installation, or, present in the *FAM Case*, as a print.

As the problems and possibilities for language and media are long-standing subjects for Green, which the artist has rigorously framed in terms of translation, travel, and cultural transfer within her signal artworks, *FAM Case* provides a unique opportunity for new audiences to trace some of the itineraries in which her work has circulated through the years. In addition, even for those well versed in her practice, the specific histories conveyed in these materials—names of organizations including research centers, museums, international exchange programs, and publishers—simultaneously convey the shifting nomenclature (“hosting,” “commissioning,” “archiving,” “collecting”) given to processes of exhibition-making, display techniques, and models of collective authorship by various international organizations that Green has interfaced with since 1994. Though Green is an American-born artist, her work has been more frequently





exhibited outside of the United States. The resulting exhibition catalogues and publications that reviewed her exhibitions, screenings, talks, and other public events are often in various languages, a polyglot point that Green usually foregrounds in her oeuvre, and as a result, the majority of books and catalogues stemming from her exhibitions and projects are bilingual. Some of these examples are included in the Carpenter Center's *FAM Case*.

Broadly framed, *Pacing* is indicative of Green's continually expanding practice as an artist who has been at the forefront of her generation's more socially and politically engaged and project-driven art production for more than 25 years. Like the spaces for encounter and contemplation, sound units, and screening scenarios that Green has produced in museums, galleries, theaters, gardens, and other public spaces since the early 1990s, the encounters that unfold through Green's *Pacing* at CCVA encourage the viewer to make connections and draw linkages across historical periods and between topics and discussions that may at first appear far afield but find common ground at the intersections of architecture, music, film, literature, poetry, and philosophy that Green creates in her discreet artworks. By offering us a process of examining and distillation through both proximity and distantiation, *Pacing* is not a reductive or revisionist project. Rather, it remains generative, offering an unfolding critical model of engagement that puts into relief current habits of skimming and scanning.

This recognition of her percipient as someone who is not bound by disciplinary labels is also evincive of Green's larger commitment to illuminating circuits and systems of intellectual, imaginative, and artistic exchange that move transversally between institutional frameworks. And more to the point, *Pacing* offers us space and time to question the parameters and definitions of those very structures—the built environment as well as social institutions—all the while suggesting new modes of being.

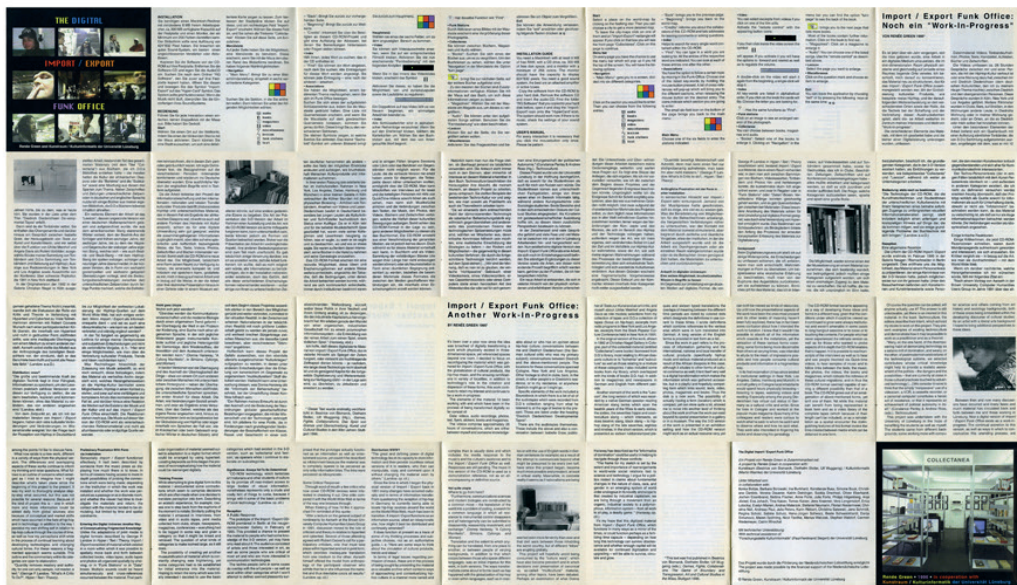
While intentionally diffuse and porous, Green's projects take shape through specific material forms in relation to geographic, cultural, and temporal conditions. Films, videos, sound works, photographs, prints, sculptures, banners, and structures designed for viewing, listening, and reading converge within the complex spatial installations that she produces and exhibits internationally. Most recently, *Pacing* in Cambridge encompasses and reflects upon the arc initiated earlier in 2016 by a series of solo exhibitions: *Spacing* in Lisbon (January–March), *Placing* in Berlin (June–September), *Tracing* in Lake Como, Italy (July–September), and *Facing* in Toronto (October–November).



FAM Vitrine, 2007.

The process of writing—as subject, literary technique, and aesthetic form—continues to play an integral role in Green’s endeavors. Notably, *Other Planes of There: Selected Writings*, a substantial collection of the artist’s writings penned between 1981 and 2010, presents Green’s reflections on her own artistic practice and, simultaneously, her incisive critiques and prescient observations that track the rise of critical practice within contemporary art more broadly considered. Her underlying subject—the formation of individual consciousness and the fluid nature of subjectivity—remains a consistent leitmotif. Among its many riches, *Other Planes of There* offers insight into the attributes and conditions for how *Pacing* may interface with CCVA’s residency program.

First, the selected essays, film scripts, reviews, and polemics chronicle Green’s inclusion in the formation of the discourse on Contemporary Art History at the very moment this nascent specialty was establishing its own ontological narratives, territorial boundaries, and institutional legitimacy, during the 1990s and early 2000s. In doing so, Green’s writing augments the historical accounts established by critics, historians, and curators with the perspective of a differently situated practitioner and thinker, while recontextualizing the emergence and deployment of many of the key terms, such as “site-specificity,” that have since solidified into art historical parlance.



The Digital Import/Export Funk Office (CD-ROM Brochure, 1996), 2011.

Secondly, her close readings of the work of prominent figures, such as architects Le Corbusier and Rudolf M. Schindler, literary luminaries Gertrude Stein, Laura Riding, and Muriel Rukeyser, and the polymath thinkers Albert Einstein and Paul Robeson, attest to Green's long-standing consideration of the historical and institutional legacies of Modernism. More recently, Green's exhibition at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture's Schindler House (1922) in West Hollywood and its accompanying film *Begin Again, Begin Again* (2015) take up the reception and recirculation of various artistic and literary Modernisms and offer visual and aural meditations on ideas of inhabitation and architecture that trace linkages between the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Korea.

More pertinently, *Pacing* at the Carpenter Center follows on her previous engagement with Le Corbusier's architecture. In 1993, Green inhabited an abandoned apartment in Le Corbusier's Unité d'habitation in Firminy-Vert, France, a built instance of the architect's proposal for collective living, which the artist encountered as a "modern ruin"; in Green's reflections on the resulting experience, she provides an inkling of the kind of encounters that the two-year *Pacing* will offer CCVA's audiences throughout its duration: "[*Secret*] refers to the possibility to inhabit, as a material condition, in addition to inhabiting as a state of being. The title is also meant to raise questions concerning the profundity of how to inhabit places with others—living and dead, what form of social and historical circumstance is related to who can inhabit, where and how."¹

Thus, during the unfolding of *Pacing*, Green's *ars poetica* will repeatedly inhabit the Carpenter Center; as Kobena Mercer writes, "In the sense that what comes back from the avant-garde of the past is a potentiality that now has a chance to become a possibility, Renée Green's practice of 'return' opens up imaginative contact zones between cultural, discursive, and institutional sites that were previously closed to one another by historical boundaries. Now, however, ancient and future dream spaces that were once buried in the depths of the archive may possibly cross over into the sea of possibilities."²

¹ Renée Green, "Place," in *Other Planes of There* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 297.

² Kobena Mercer, "Archive and Dépaysement in the Art of Renée Green," in *Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices Since the 1980s* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 309.



Endless Dreams and Time-Based Dreams, 2010.

Talk

Renée Green and CCVA Scholar-in-Residence **Gloria Sutton**

Thu, Nov 3, 2016, 6 pm

Level 0, Lecture Hall

Pacing FAM Case is the first installment of a series of brochures to be published during Renée Green's Institution (Building) residency. *FAM Case* will be deployed in two phases: *FAM Case (1994–2000)* and *FAM Case (2001–2016)*.

Renée Green. *Pacing: FAM Case*.
Cambridge, MA: Carpenter Center
for Visual Arts, 2016.

A selection of Renée Green's publications will also be available in the Consumer Research Center/bookshop on Level 3.

Images: Renée Green, Free Agent
Media, Joshua White, Natalia Czech,
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for the Visual Arts**

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Gallery Hours Thu-Sun, 12-6 pm
Free and open to the public

Mission

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is dedicated to the synthesis of art, design, and education through the exhibition of existing works and production of new commissions. It strives to bring people, ideas, and objects together in generative ways that provide unparalleled experiences with contemporary art, ultimately enriching the creative and intellectual lives of our audiences.

Program

The Carpenter Center program fosters meaningful engagement among artists, art, and our audiences. Exhibitions, lectures, residencies, publications, performances, screenings, and informal gatherings are choreographed to create a place where visual literacy, knowledge production, contemporary art, and critical inquiry seamlessly meet.

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