

DREAM REVISION ENDEAVOR

Becky Brown
Annette Cords

May 13 – June 18, 2022

Opening
Friday, May 13, 6–9 pm

Dream-Revision-Endeavor is a two-person exhibition featuring the work and collaborations of Becky Brown and Annette Cords. The title is an English adaptation of the German compound word *Traumneustartversuch*—describing the effort to continue a dream one had just before waking up. It is itself a revision of the more literal translation *Dream-Restart-Experience*, which served as the title of the artists' related exhibition in New York City last year. At that moment in the pandemic, they reflected on "restarting," and the dreamlike experience of moving quickly between one reality and another. One year later, we keep stopping, starting and restarting again, each time a "revision" of the previous attempt.

We continue to face personal and public choices about how to move forward. Patterns of communication have been disrupted, making space for change. In the spirit of such revision, Brown and Cords create new alphabets for Raft of Sanity, with the hope that reimagining letters can breathe new energy and meaning into familiar language. These typefaces are inspired by The Raft's unique gallery space—one is drawn from linear elements of its floorplan, and the other is based on the structure of its original wooden columns. The results are nearly opposites: thin, choppy lines and irregular shapes vs. thick, solid forms anchored by symmetrical base and peak. These opposing features come together in a new wallpaper design by the artists, which tests legibility: how does content survive—or thrive—amidst formal clashes and variations?

Like much of Buffalo, 1255 Niagara Street has a history of manufacturing. In response—and connecting to their own studio practices—Brown and Cords developed an alphabetic index of words related to acts of making, each paired with an opposite word that suggests un-making. These word pairs loop and zigzag across immersive wallpaper installations while, similarly, opposites, word play and formal variation recur in each artist's individual works. In fabric and thread, paper and paint, text is integrated into their complex visual compositions: Cords' tapestries interlace traditional weave structures with glyphs, text, and images. Brown's paintings give physical presence to artifacts of online/on-screen culture while questioning their value.



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As the artists' wallpaper reframes and punctuates their artworks, multiple experiences coexist: reading and seeing; understanding and misinterpretation; the pleasure of accumulation and the desire for structure. *Dream-Revision-Endeavor* contains two levels of awkward, accidental poetry: what is "lost in translation" from one language to another, and the merging of multiple words to convey a single, if nuanced, phenomenon. That is: a "transformation" between states, and a "collaboration" between words. The artists commit to both transform and collaborate, embracing the awkward and the poetic—all necessary practices for our collective revision-endeavor.

Artist Bios

Becky Brown was born in Manhattan and now lives in Buffalo, NY. She received her MFA from Hunter College and teaches at SUNY University at Buffalo. Between painting, sculpture, and installation, she reinvents found images, objects and texts, questioning whether unlimited access to information and communication actually brings us deeper knowledge or human connection. Solo and two-person exhibitions include Arts+Leisure Gallery (NYC), PS122 Gallery (NYC), the Handwerker Gallery (Ithaca, NY) and Fort Gondo Complex for the Arts (St. Louis, MO). Group exhibitions include The Drawing Center, Queens Museum, Freight+Volume Gallery and A.I.R. Gallery (all NYC), the Buffalo Institute of Contemporary Art (Buffalo, NY) and Religare Arts Initiative (Delhi, India). Her installation "No, said the Fruit Bowl," in the kitchen of an abandoned home on Governors Island, was described in the New York Times as "machines vomiting as if in a bulimic's nightmare." She has been an artist-in-residence at MacDowell, Yaddo, Jentel, and the Edward Albee and Saltonstall Foundations, among others. Her writing has been published in *Art in America* and *The Brooklyn Rail*.

Annette Cords was born in Northern Germany and raised in Hamburg. She received her MFA in Painting from the University of Pennsylvania. Since then, her practice has evolved to span installation, sculpture, and textiles. Her work explores the possibilities of mark-making, examines language systems and vernacular styles, and asks how we process and interpret visual information. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include PS122 Gallery (NYC), InLiquid Gallery (Philadelphia), Project:ARTspace (NYC), Kang Contemporary (Berlin), New York Public Library (NYC), and Villa Rosenthal (Jena, Germany). Her work has appeared in group shows at venues including the Queens Museum, Flux Factory, The Drawing Center, Kentler International Drawing Space, and Montreal Centre for Contemporary Textiles. She has been the recipient of grants and residencies, including a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, an Open Sessions Residency at The Drawing Center, and a grant from the ArsVersa Kunst-Stiftung.

Becky Brown and Annette Cords met in the inaugural Open Sessions program at The Drawing Center in 2014 and have been collaborating ever since. Projects have been shown at The Drawing Center, Project:ARTspace, PS122 Gallery, Flux Factory and the Queens Museum.