



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAVIDE BALULA

1. Turn West / 2. Form a Circle with your Mouth / 3. Let the Sun Set In

25 January - 2 March 2013

Davide Balula sought permission to enter the Guggenheim museum in New York City during hours that are typically reserved for non-viewing. His intention was to measure the slope and curve of Frank Lloyd Wright's arcing wall. Visitors to the museum will recall that this architectural element is usually not a point of focus, but rather a plane on which to align objects of culture that become the focal nodes of one's aesthetic experience. After deliberation, permission was granted to the artist, and he entered the museum. The works on display are manifestations of the artist's measurements. Each is an exact replication of a fraction of the wall.

Part I: Standing on the Beach

As I type people pass by me in vectors determined by the space we're all in. I am sitting on a circular stool with a rectangular computer in my lap. They pass me going one of two directions, up or down, though this looks like left or right. The path they walk spirals, but that's not obvious in the steps it requires them to move through my visual field. Within five or six feet of me they walk, sometimes closer; occasionally gaining or dropping speed. Very few come to a full stop. I can only witness a fraction of their total movement, and it looks flat, a straight passage—but I know it isn't. I know a curve can be composed of nothing but straight lines, and depending on one's proximity to the bend, it is more or less visible. I know it all depends on my (seated) position relative to their (moving) positions relative to the space we're all in, which is famous for its corkscrew design.

There are pictures by Picasso on the walls today. They are all flat and rectangular; some are thicker than others, a few boast rather sumptuous frames. The incandescent gallery lights built into the museum's ceiling are approximately a meter away from the wall. They shine down on his paintings and drawings at an acute angle and cast thin shadows beneath their frames. If not for these shadows shaped like the humps of gently rolling hills, the wall's curve would be nearly imperceptible to someone standing five to ten feet away and staring straight ahead. It is a bit of an optical illusion: you know the wall is curved, but the moment you focus your eyes on the flat object hanging upon it, the curve straightens out.

I am sitting still in a pedestrian space designed for upwards and downwards flow and I am looking at a stretch of curved white wall. I am staring. It takes concentration and real effort to not be distracted by the nudes flanking my point of focus. Some passersby observe me observing the wall and they pause and look at the wall and then look back at me and then at the wall again and then they continue walking. What do they see? What don't they see? What do they imagine they see? The bulbs' illumination is warm and it spreads across the curved wall like a thing without true edges, fading into shadow before running into an abutment.

An old riddle comes to mind, "what is the longest straight line in nature?" The answer can't be literal because there are no straight lines in nature. Perspective is the key. The answer is the horizon of the ocean, which like this wall is actually an arc in a much larger circular formation. But it sure looks like a straight line when you're standing on the beach.

Part II: Tea and **Part III: Like a Childhood Memory** will be divulged at the gallery during the run of the exhibition.

- Charles Schultz

Davide Balula was born in 1978, and currently lives and works between Paris and New York. He has held solo shows at Frank Elbaz, Paris; Fake Estate, New York, and Confort Moderne in Poitiers among others. He also recently staged performances at Night Gallery, Los Angeles; Pompidou Museum, Paris; and Performa, New York, and was part of numerous group exhibition including, the Pompidou Museum, Paris; Eleven Rivington, New York, Thadeous Ropac, Paris, MassMOCA, MOCA Miami, MAC/VAL, Vitry Sur Seine, Songwon Art Center, Seoul, Fondation Cartier, Paris, Bieledefer Kunstverein, Germany. This exhibition will mark his Los Angeles solo debut.

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