

## Press Release: *Fred Sandback at the Institut Henri Poincaré, Paris*

*Early on, though, I left the model of such discrete sculptural volumes for a sculpture which became less of a thing-in-itself, more of a diffuse interface between myself, my environment, and others peopling that environment, built of thin lines that left enough room to move through and around. Still sculpture, though less dense, with an ambivalence between exterior and interior. A drawing that is habitable.*

—Fred Sandback, 1998<sup>1</sup>



We are pleased to present the exhibition *Fred Sandback at the Institut Henri Poincaré* in conjunction with the conference *On the Infinite: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*, taking place in the Institut Henri Poincaré, October 18—21, 2017.<sup>2</sup>

Fred Sandback (born 1943 in Bronxville, New York; died New York, 2003) was an iconic figure in the art of the twentieth century. Sandback’s sculptures, drawn in space with acrylic yarn, create “habitable drawings” enabled by three conditions: the physical material, the surrounding architecture, and the viewer—a “strong, immediate, and beautiful situation,”<sup>3</sup> as Sandback put it, which, though perhaps related to Minimal and Conceptual art practices, ultimately leaves both behind.

On view in the library of the IHP is the sculpture “Untitled (Diagonal Construction)”, 1987. On view in the Amphithéâtre Hermite is the conceptual work *Eight-part Sculpture for the Dwan Gallery (Conceptual Construction)*, 1969, a series of “proposals” based, in part, on the periodic table. This latter work was Sandback’s contribution to “Language III” (1969), the third of four seminal language shows held at the Dwan Gallery in New York, between 1967–70. *Eight-part Sculpture for the Dwan Gallery* has not been exhibited since 1969.

According to the Dwan press release<sup>4</sup> “Language III” emphasized concrete poetry, but also sought to register a transition within the work of some concrete poets from the previous “Language” shows, toward a more traditional three-dimensional format. The first “Language” show was entitled *Language to be looked at and/or things to be read*, but Sandback’s contribution was neither language to be looked at, nor text to be read—or “only” read. *Eight-part Sculpture for the Dwan Gallery* made a different appeal to the agency of the viewer: demanding that they themselves construct the work on the basis of pure text.

The exhibition is a joint collaboration between French and Finnish educational and cultural organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> This text was written in November 1998 and first published in *Here and Now: Fred Sandback*, (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1999). [http://fredsandbackarchive.org/atxt\\_1999stat.html](http://fredsandbackarchive.org/atxt_1999stat.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.i-n-f-i-n-i-t-y.org>

<sup>3</sup> From draft notes written by the artist for inclusion in the exhibition catalogue published by the Kunstraum, Munich, in 1975. They were first published in *Fred Sandback*, (New York: Zwirner & Wirth, Lawrence Markey, 2004). <http://fredsandbackarchive.org/texts.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/dwan-gallery-los-angeles-california-and-new-york-new-york-records-6056/series-2>