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Review: Ellen Rothenberg/Sector 2337

► Installation, Logan Square, Multimedia

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Ellen Rothenberg. "elsetime," 2015 installation view, Sector 2337/Photo: Clare Britt

RECOMMENDED

At the entrance of Ellen Rothenberg's solo exhibition, "elsetime," at Sector 2337, is "Listening Station," a turntable and pile of LPs to sift through on a bench. Of the thirty or so albums (all of them circa 1960-1970) to choose from, another gallery-goer put on an album by Detroit garage rockers Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels. What songs were playing escape my memory and perhaps this was the point. Engaging in Rothenberg's other works (inkjet prints, bag assemblages, photocopies in plastic folders, etc.) relegated the sonic addition to the exhibition as a kind of background noise, something present but easily ignored.



Ellen Rothenberg. "elsetime," 2015 installation view, Sector 2337.
Photo by Clare Britt.

This wanting but not begging for engagement points at the general trend in viewing "elsetime." Each work is something of an index or a citation, provoking you with a starting point that you can choose to follow or ignore. In her bio, Rothenberg writes that her "work is concerned with the politics of everyday life," and in viewing "elsetime" I am immediately reminded of Michel de Certeau's notion of living a tactical everyday life in his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Certeau advocated creative resistance to power structures, and in the case of "elsetime" we can see such resistance to the expectations of the tidy way that art exhibitions (and perhaps, art) are meant to convey information.

We are presented with an exhibition of points of departure, an enigmatic proposal that is realized in nearly all of the works on display. "Workplace" and "Lightbulb" are both large close-up images of functional but otherwise inconsequential objects found in author Bertolt Brecht's studio. "Walking Archive: Not to be Taken" is possibly the most indicative of the indexical/citational game Rothenberg plays. Select photocopies of texts by Allen Ginsberg, Angela Davis and Stefan Brecht among others are displayed and, as the title commands, not to be taken home with you. Which is the provocation: what do we leave the exhibition with and what do we do with it when we get back home? "Elsetime" is an operation in ways to proceed forward, a challenging exhibition that provides rewards if you want them. (Chris Reeves)

Through July 3 at Sector 2337, 2337 North Milwaukee.