

DIANA FRANSSSEN

Curator & Head of Research at Van Abbe Museum Eindhoven, The Netherlands
English translation of text accompanying O'Hara's solo exhibition / installation
De Fabriek, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. 1989.

THE FIRST STEP IN LIFE

The first step in life becomes practically immediately history. Memories stay, but, in the course of time they become vaguer. They, who keep a diary, try to fasten down impressions and try to tear away the daily simplicities from the boundaries of time and space. Diaries are in the rule not meant for a large public. For Morgan O'Hara it has become, since the early seventies, a vital part of her art to chart her life and that of others. She tried originally to make conscious for herself the time and space in which she was living. Time and space became form. A form which not only shows how things are, but also makes visible how they were and how they will become.

The hall of De Fabriek is filled with black/white painted charts. Cartographic forms, which came into being by a carefully noting of facts out of the way of living and travel experiences of friends and acquaintances. Knowledge rests on consciousness and involves a self which knows. This self interferes with the hope of objectivity in science, but is crucial for an understanding of human life, ethics and aesthetics. Facts determine in the works of Morgan O'Hara the structure of the maps, but each map has its own character as if the self of the portrayed through the structure becomes visible. Their existence recalls memories of a circle of close friends who, in harmony, can keep a dialogue going.

There are also accents in a deep red colour. These are on the one hand, put there to create a proper atmosphere for the visitor. On the other hand Morgan O'Hara wants to call attention to the fact that he/she together with the people on the portraits enjoy a great freedom of movement and speech, in comparison with the people who live in countries where red is used as a symbol of their country.

With the definition of boundaries in time and space, Morgan O'Hara, shows that, by understanding boundaries, a transgression can take place to a certain freedom.

Eindhoven, The Netherlands 1989