

Dear friends, colleagues, collectors and former students of Nan Hoover

Allow me to make some brief observations about Nan Hoover's art and the task of cataloguing her oeuvre. I can report on the first volume of Nan Hoover's Catalogue Raisonné, which was published as an e-book in November 2017. It covers Hoover's artistic estate, which is managed by the Nan Hoover Foundation. Based on this work I will venture to anticipate what is yet to be accomplished.

When thinking about Hoover's career, the most fitting characterization for me is the term transnational. Because the conceptual basis of her work went beyond national interests. Particularly in her performances she reached out to very different nationalities and institutions. She began her artistic career as a painter, who also produced drawings and sculptures. She continued to consider herself a painter: "who used different brushes from time to time." Nevertheless, the most important change in her artistic orientation and practice came with her experimentation with the video and photo camera. A move historically significant. The importance of light and the limitations of the camera encouraged her to incorporate the performance aspect of her work, and at the beginning also a painting as backdrop, into a time-based, tightly controlled illusionistic space. Her movements before the camera gave the viewer visual cues and utilized spatial aspects such as framing, depth of perception and object recognition to instil a sense of tension despite the simplicity of her means.

As with most scholarly catalogue raisonné projects, this one relied on a great deal of pro bono work on the part of Hoover's friends, former assistants and students. With this first

volume the NHF's holdings are presented to a specialist and hopefully also interested, general public. It contains 988 individual entries and offers images of most of the works and some documentation courtesy of the Nan Hoover Foundation. It is my hope that this volume will generate more activities and work loans. Particularly, the effort to list versions of some of her installations and innumerate her extensive performance work and that genre of photography called stills, will hopefully serve to increase the general public's knowledge of Hoover's broad artistic repertoire. Another impetus is to provide younger scholars with new research possibilities. For Example, Hoover's collaboration in theatre and dance performances. In particular Susanne Linke's Hamlet Scenes (1996) comes to mind. The e-publication also offers for the first time a review of the reception history of Hoover's work, along with biographical information, lists of publications, exhibitions and performances. A PDF-file can be downloaded from the e-publication page of the university of Oldenburg, or by means of a link to this depository provided by the NHF website. [oops.uni-oldenburg.de/3382/](https://oops.uni-oldenburg.de/3382/)

The catalogue encompasses Hoover's work in several mediums and thus affords a rich fabric for assessing her artistic legacy.

The NHF has

- approximately 60 paintings, dating from 1968 to 1974
- 527 drawings, dating from 1986 to unfinished pieces in 2008
- 187 videotapes, dating from 1974 onwards. They include video performances, videotapes of performances and video and light installations and/or environments. Of the latter - often interactive spaces - photographs and plans document additional authorized works in the NHF's possession.
- As far as we know the 7 films - one for use in an installation - represent all the films Hoover produced.
- 170 photographic works, dating from 1974 onwards are also in NHF's possession. They include video and photographic stills many related to the 105 performances listed in the first volume of the catalogue raisonné (see pages 55-60)

- There are also a few objects, collages and montages dating from the 1970s onward.

It is my sincere hope that an author with a scholarly background can be found for the second volume of Nan Hoover's Catalogue Raisonné. I think I can speak for Dr. Renate Petzinger, too, when I offer our professional advice.

Aside from Hoover's works in twenty public collections<sup>1</sup>, which are already referenced in this first volume, I expect that the second volume will contain further public collections - particularly where Hoover held a performance or was given a solo exhibition - and will shape our understanding of the quality and extent of her work. For example, our knowledge of the bronzes and photo objects might be increased. In the private sector, I would anticipate locating more of her paintings and drawings and with that perhaps revise some of the tentative dating of the drawings in the estate. The reproduction material in Hoover's estate should assist this process. It is also to be expected that some institutions will have press releases, inventories for exhibition items and copies of published reviews not contained in the estate documents. This additional information will help to solidify and presumably influence ascriptions made before these materials were known. My hopes are that newer questions will provide new contexts for some of the works and that they may be included in new relationships with Hoover's contemporaries or even provide inspiration for new tendencies.

At present I anticipate a third volume, which will collect the addenda that the first two volumes have engendered and thus complete the process of compiling an authorized catalogue of Hoover's works while her contemporaries are still alive.

Thank you for your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> [..\.\Oldenburg\public collections included in CR-1.doc](#)