

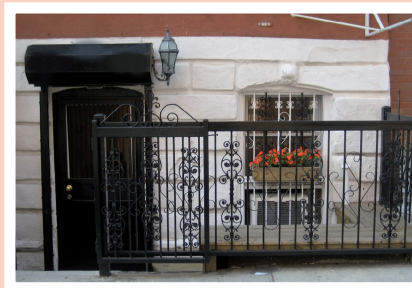
NEW YORK

NY1 **WITHDRAWING TO THE DRAWING ROOM
THE ARTIST'S INSTITUTE**
163 Elridge Street, New York NY 10002
theartistsinstitute.org

The Artist's Institute was initiated by curator Anthony Huberman in September 2010, and occupies a small space in New York's Lower East Side. The project is integrated within Hunter College's graduate Studio Art and Art History programs, and functions as part think-tank, part exhibition space. Curator at Artists Space in New York, Richard Birkett, discusses the project with Huberman.

RICHARD BIRKETT The Artist's Institute is a fairly generic, formal title, yet it has a semantic specificity that is intriguing. From a personal perspective, working as I do at Artists Space, the apostrophe in The Artist's Institute takes on added importance. How does the name relate to the nature of the project?

ANTHONY HUBERMAN The starting point for the project was the specificity of a relationship between a learning institution and the process of exhibition making, and in this regard the term 'institute' is very useful. The word plays a role in both these contexts; in the academic, 'research institute' sense, and as a moniker for an organisation that exhibits contemporary cultural practice. In trying to create a place that swivels between those contexts, the term helpfully suggests both speculative, private research, and active public showing. The placing of the apostrophe is important as we are talking about a single artist. The idea is to commit ourselves to thinking about one figure and one position for an extended period of time. It is a clear address of a person, not a theme, prioritising a scale of one-to-one interaction. For a period from Sep-



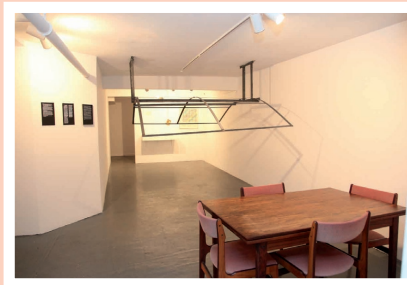
tember 2010 to January 2011, this person is Robert Filliou, and then following that for six months our focus will be Jo Baer.

RB In relation to a recent history of art projects that have taken on pedagogical formats, The Artist's Institute seems to invert that trend - it's an educational structure that's pushed towards the concerns and methodologies of exhibition making.

AH So much of what 'curatorial practice' is invested in is taking works and ideas and decoding them, de-complicating them. It's a direction that's needed because the conventional gallery context is inherently not a discursive one. For me it's the reverse; it's starting with an educational institution, and giving it an exhibition department - taking a place of talking, learning and explaining, and reprogramming it towards acts of recoding and re-complicating. There's an insistence

on an encounter with artwork, and it's exhibition, as crucial to the process of talking about art.

RB You mentioned the importance of scale. This seems formalised within the project, in that there are different tiers of activity, operating at different scales and paces. There is the presentation of work by Robert Filliou operating at a meta-level, and at the other extreme the minutiae of regular events at the space creating another momentum.



AH Those gear shifts are productive. Feeding from the long-term display are three programs of activity: in weekly, graduate seminars at Hunter College there is a process of research into, and testing of, a set of issues raised by Filliou, his work being used as a lens through which to think about contemporary art. A group of curators, artists and writers meet monthly to follow an equivalent research process. Produced from these two sites of investigation are public manifestations ranging for example from the display of a painting for three weeks, to a lecture on Charles Fourier. The public follows the research process not through witnessing it in discursive mode, but through a mode of exhibition making and presentation. The focus of the project is not its methodology, but about how productive of a lens is Filliou to apply to the contemporary world. Is the trajectory produced by this process a good one? Does it enrich the way people think about his position, and the concerns that he stands for? A set of ideas associated with an artist has a life of its own - what we can do as curators is not to extract it from that life, to press pause and display it, but to be steered by it. Scale is very important. The project's mode of address is not "Dear World, we are proud to present...", it is "Dear Richard, let me tell you about...". In following the life of an idea, we are essentially telling a story, and this occurs more effectively on an intimate scale. In the art world people are often trying to 'one-up' each other in the 'dining room' politics. The Artist's Institute is an attempt to withdraw to the drawing room, where the scale allows for conversation that is productive. The goal is not to talk about how great the drawing room is; the goal is for that which is generated to be interesting and of quality.

NY2 **PAUL GABRIELLI - GENERALLY**
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February 2011 - March 2011
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Paul does not communicate much of anything about his work. This is not the nowdefault gesture of deferral, but, rather, a commitment to the hyper-discreetness of