WITHDRAWING TO THE DRAWING ROOM
THE ARTIST’S INSTITUTE
163 E 14th 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 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-

JANUARY 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 recording 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.

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NY1 - Richard Birkett
NY2 - Walter Benjamin Smith

AGENDA

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NY1 - Paul Gabrielli - GENERALLY
Visible Exports
February 2011 - March 2011
14A Orchard Street, New York NY 10002
invisible-exports.com

Paul does not communicate much of anything about his work. This is not the default gesture of deferential, but, rather, a commitment to the hyper-discreteness of