

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Practice vs. Object

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R.H. Quaytman, Scott Lyall, Sam Lewitt, Liz Deschenes & Miguel Abreu

Organized by Margaret Liu Clinton

Dates: March 5 – April 19, 2009

Reception: Thursday, March 5, 6:30 – 9 PM

“But I am saying that we should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of a practice. When we find ourselves looking at a particular work, or group of works, often realizing, as we do so, their essential community as well as their irreducible individuality, we should find ourselves attending first to the reality of their practice and the conditions of the practice as it was then executed. And from this I think we ask essentially different questions.”

— Raymond Williams

Opening on Thursday, March 5th, Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to present *Practice vs. Object*, a group exhibition featuring the gallery artists as well as the gallery’s founder.

Prior to the above passage from Problems in Materialism and Culture, Raymond Williams traces a line through early 20th-century art criticism that focuses on the ‘consumption’ of art and then the development of ‘taste’ for the art object. Williams attempts to restructure our engagement with “isolated artifacts” by reconsidering them as precipitates of wider artistic practices, much in the same way we would consider musical notations by a particular composer or various writings by a particular author. Put another way, he asks us to consider an object within the context of a wider body of activities. While the dissemination of graphic documentation and written description may aid in the task of presenting a visual artist’s practice, this show attempts to shape this effort within the frame of an exhibition.

Outside of a museum retrospective or an open studio it is rare to view multiple works, made over time, by one artist. Solo exhibitions often feature a contemporaneous selection of works produced by a single artist while group exhibitions gather a variety of works produced at various times by different artists under a single rubric. If in the case of the former we are encouraged to consider questions of form and concept that preoccupy the artist currently, in the case of the latter, we are encouraged to ponder how these same considerations have persisted through time or defined a particular historical moment.

How then to display objects as a means of de-emphasizing any single object’s status as *the* index of an entire practice (or artist)? By applying the filter of time.

To contrive an arc between distinct historical points, three works by each gallery artist have been distributed throughout the upstairs and downstairs galleries. In certain instances, inquiries, materials, and execution have changed. In others, we may notice a vacillation between themes and motifs. Evolutions may be prone to progress or recidivism; and in certain cases, both. While this modest presentation is neither exhaustive, nor does it claim to be representative, the ten practices simultaneously on view will underscore the contrast and congruities between each within a cumulative context.

For the final iteration of this exhibition, we will screen the 16 mm film *Morongo Pass* (1995) by Miguel Abreu. This work has been included to note one example of how artists often shift into or between separate, but related, fields. The repositioning of artist into the role of dealer, curator, art handler, registrar, critic, educator, collector, student, art advisor, etc. is not rare but in considering the resulting effects on what and how we produce, we might better understand Williams's concentration on practice over object.

Screening date: Sunday, April 19, 7PM

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:

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Gallery hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM

Subway: F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street; J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street