White Columns

Website Press Release

Looking Back / The 7th White Columns Annual

Selected by Richard Birkett

Participating artists include: Yuji Agematsu, Julie Ault & James Benning, Lutz Bacher, Martin Beck, Kaucyila Brooke, Moyra Davey, Disband, Fat Lava, Peter Fend, David Grubbs and Susan Howe, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Rockwell Kent, Zoe Leonard, Bjarne Melgaard and Leo Bersani, Alfred T. Palmer, Sam Pulitzer & Bill Hayden, Sabine Reitmaier, Amy Sillman, Jason Simon, Sam Lewitt, Gareth James, among others (list currently in formation.)

'Looking Back' is the seventh installment of the White Columns Annual. The exhibition is now an annual fixture on White Columns' calendar. Each year, an individual or a collaborative team (e.g. an artist, a curator, a writer, etc.) is invited to make an exhibition at White Columns based on their personal experience of looking at art in New York in the previous year. For the seventh 'Annual' exhibition, White Columns has invited Richard Birkett, the curator at Artists Space to make the selection.

In a very straightforward sense, the 'Annual' exhibition hopes to reveal something of the complexities involved in trying to negotiate - and engage with - New York's constantly shifting cultural landscape. The format of the exhibition inevitably encourages highly subjective and deeply personal responses to the realities of viewing art in New York. The 'Annual' exhibition series hopes to illuminate aspects of the specific, yet highly idiosyncratic routes – geographical, intellectual, historical, social, etc. – that individuals follow in an increasingly expansive and fragmented cultural environment.

Through the re-contextualization of artworks encountered in other circumstances and contexts, the exhibition hopes to establish – albeit temporarily – a new 'narrative', a conversation, of sorts, amongst artists and artworks, that seeks to illuminate and/or explore certain underlying tendencies, conditions, or connections that perhaps might otherwise have remained elusive or obscured. In re-thinking the (fairly) recent past the exhibition hopes to provoke something akin to a sense of deja-vu, establishing a scenario that is at once both reflective and forward thinking.

There are no restrictions as to what type of work can be included. 'Looking Back' seeks to eliminate any categorical or hierarchical distinctions we might place upon artworks (e.g. based upon the circumstances in which they were originally seen, or the seniority of an individual artist, etc.) These works might have been originally encountered in exhibitions at institutions, galleries, and not-for-profit spaces, or at performances, readings, during visits to artists' studios, or online, etc.