

## Seth Kim-Cohen Artistic Statement

Decidedly, those of us who make art in 2009, do so in a post-material environment. This tendency probably started sometime prior to 1972 (and Lucy Lippard) – possibly in 1656 with Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, or 1632 with Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*. Clement Greenberg notwithstanding, art has always overflowed its means and materials as much, if not more, than it is contained within them. It's just that since the late-60s, art has copped to its fluidity, dispensed with dams and allowed itself to flood the expanded field.

Almost all of my work is situation-specific, meaning that it takes into account not just the site of exhibition, but the conditions and conventions of a particular encounter. Rather than activating materials and giving them form, I seek to activate relationships: between myself and a spectator, between a spectator and an object/text/sound/environment, between two or more spectators. Would it be presumptuous of me to suggest that I also seek to activate a relationship between a spectator and his or herself?

Form is that which has already been carved out of the strata of experience by the influence of culture, ideology, and habit. The work is merely a catalyst, highlighting certain features of certain forms and nominating them as germane to a given situation. The "craft" of my practice, lies in the framing of the experience, to include specific effects and exclude others; what Herbert Muschamp once described as "the spontaneous organization of individuals around the act of paying attention."

Rather than center the art encounter on an object, my work seeks to root around in a broader notion of experience. The space and time of encounter is not limited to the location and period of direct experience. The "work" of my work often gets done sometime after and outside the exhibition or performance, when, in some moment of casual connectedness, a sinewy association might coalesce. What I am after is something resembling a conversation – a conversation not simply satisfied with the here and now, but with an abiding interest in its history: what allows it and what follows from it.

Practically, my work often confuses the category of the work itself with its supplemental materials. This allows the work to leak into the world and vice versa. The presence (or absence) of documentation becomes a crucial

question. More often than not, I am content to leave the responsibility of archiving the work in the hands (and heads) of those who have encountered it. Like a friendship or an affair, the truth exists only in the impressions left on, or in, the participants. In this sense, my "mark-making" takes place, not on paper or canvas, but on the palimpsest of individual memory, intellect, and emotion.

On the other hand, I also make recorded work in audio, video, and text. Recordings are already documentation. Yet the events they document are often conspicuously obfuscated. Shuttling between the past of the apparently recorded event and the present of the recording creates productive temporal and semantic disjunctions which invite recursivity and reflection, complicating the selfassuredness of media and our relationships to it. These works all carry a common, invisible caption: "Nothing is so obvious that it's obvious."

- New York, January 2009