

WHITE BOX is a not-for-profit arts organization located in the heart of the Chelsea art district in New York. The organization fosters a synthetic and non-ideological approach to contemporary art and art education. The White Box exhibition space promotes a diverse cross-section of contemporary art by showcasing the work of new and established artists in conjunction with outstanding guest curators and scholars from around the world. To complement its exhibitions, as a means of linking contemporary art with current aesthetic and ethical issues, White Box presents an ongoing, innovative program of educational events for students and adults, including seminars, lectures, readings, performances, film and video screenings, and field trips here and abroad. White Box maintains close associations with an international network of galleries, institutions and independent curators, and serves by virtue of its location and its focus as counterforce to the commercial art environment that nowadays is so dominant.

White Box's mission is to foster knowledge and promote broad appreciation of contemporary art. Compared, however, to other, more established New York not-for-profit arts organizations, White Box takes a discernibly pro-active stance. By introducing art projects that are not only aesthetically stimulating but thought-provoking and challenging, White Box gives direction and exposure to new ideas, fresh approaches and insights that can make current art and curatorial practice vital guideposts in today's uncertain social and cultural climate. Equally, White Box's projects serve to bridge the social, ethnic and racial divisions of New York's diverse communities by promoting freedom of expression, tolerance, and compassion.

History

Since its foundation in 1998 by a group of international curators and artists, White Box has been continuously committed to staging original, conceptually driven shows of emerging as well as established artists. Emphasis has also been placed on reintroducing underrepresented and unaffiliated mid-career artists and on theme-curated exhibitions.

Now in its fifth year, White Box's exhibition program has gained considerable profile within the international arts community and has received significant critical attention. For example, White Box has twice been nominated "Best Group Show" by the International Art Critics Association, first in 1998 for *Plural Speech* (1998), curated by Dominique Nahas, which included work by Vivienne Koorland, Lee Ming Wei and recent McArthur grant recipient Xu Bing, and the following year for a survey of two Viennese Actionists, Gunter Brus and Hermann Nitsch, which traced these artists' remarkable history of intense and provocative work from the 1960s to the present. Another 1999 exhibit that generated an enthusiastic reception in New York was *Translation/Seduction/Displacement: 12 Artists from South Africa*, which offered a critical investigation of southern Africa's current challenges, in, for example, the work of photographers Santu Mofokeng and Zwelethu Mthethwa and the textual works of Willem Boshoff.

During the 2000 season, White Box introduced its first media series, including the renowned Canadian artist, Michael Snow, highly regarded for his four-decade long career in experimental films and installations, and a site-specific White Box work by Carolee Schneemann, who over the past thirty years has transformed the very definition of art, especially with regard to the discourse on body, sexuality and gender.

Among the highlights of White Box's 2001 season were *Political Ecology: Five Artists from France*, a group show curated by Pierre Restany, the legendary art historian and theorist recently named president of the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and *After the Diagram*, curated by Lauri Firstenberg, which brought together artists and architects exploring a diverse range of new graphic and three-dimensional technologies. Included were internationally acclaimed filmmaker Atom Egoyan, David Rokeby, an artist at the forefront of the digital revolution, and

Diller and Scofidio, the architect team whose paradigm-breaking work includes the remarkable Swiss Pavilion for Expo 2002 in Geneva.

Audience

Each White Box exhibition is attended by an average of 2,500 visitors. Open every day except Sunday and Monday, visitors to White Box range from curious passers-by (often attracted by the partially subterranean galleries visible from the sidewalk) to groups of art students from out of town with their professors. Exhibitions typically run for two months and are inaugurated with openings for several hundred guests, including prominent art critics, and accompanied by seminars, lectures, readings, performances, and VIP cocktail parties for collectors and press. Philanthropy and support base

Support

White Box's commitment to innovative, challenging and historically relevant programming and its demonstrable success in fashioning interaction among artists, educators and a diverse local and international audience have undoubtedly ensured the organization an unusual degree of vitality. Yet since its establishment, White Box has relied on the unpaid services of its principals, in-kind services from various affiliated professionals, and for day-to-day functioning on an innovative and effective intern program. Its long-term stability, like that of any not-for-profit entity, will necessarily require additional financial support.

Over the past four years, White Box has received public, corporate and private foundation support from such organizations as the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Austrian Cultural Institute, Austrian Airlines, agnès b., Goethe House, the Canadian Consulate, Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, the French Consulate, Étant Donnés, Japan Foundation, Peter Norton Family Foundation, Allworth Press, D'Ars International Exhibition Program, Tek Serve, INTAR, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Mondriaan Foundation, the Netherlands Consulate, Robert Lehman Foundation, Tecnolux, and the British Council.

The organization's long-term operational stability and its ability to develop an overall program of exhibition funding will depend on more broad-based and continuous support. To assist its short and long term strategic goals, White Box has recently expanded its board, and embarked upon a development and funding plan that includes a membership drive, juried shows, a publication program and limited distribution of portfolio editions.

Press, media and advertising

As a dynamic element of each of its exhibitions, White Box works with guest curators to organize related panel-discussions and open forums, thereby regularly bringing the arts and academic communities directly in contact with the general audience. Such seminars, in conjunction with White Box's media and critical outreach, as well as its expanding network of affiliated writers and art historians, have helped generate considerable press coverage. White Box projects have been extensively reviewed and profiled in *The New York Times*, *The New York Observer*, *The Village Voice*, *Time Out*, *ArtForum*, *Art in America*, *Flash Art*, *Tema Celeste*, *d'Art*, *ArtNexus*, *Art News*, *Texte der Kunst*, *Aufbau*, *The Sun*, *NY Arts Magazine*, *CNN*, *CBS News*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, etc.

White Box lists all its events and projects in local, national and international publications and journals. 5,000 US postal and electronic press releases and invitations are distributed for each program. Subject to funding availability, White Box takes paid advertising in ArtForum, Art in America and other appropriate publications. The organization has established a distinctive graphic style and identity, soon to be reflected in White Box's extensive web site (www.whiteboxny.org), which offers visitors in-depth coverage of past, current and forthcoming exhibitions in the form of images and curatorial texts, together with special events listings and links. To further expand its outreach, White Box is currently planning the publication of White Boox, a series of curatorial, artists' and multidisciplinary books and exhibition catalogues.

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