

# Whitney

Doublin, 7 January 2008

Dear cooperator,

I have taken the typewriter down from the stack of boxes in the backroom in order to guarantee a certain slowness and precision here. I'm after the formality that is so easily obliterated by more recent and ubiquitous technologies, and in this spirit I write to you -- one of a small community of convalescents -- in the hope of convincing you to participate in this not because you can or can't but because you care and will.\*

From the 7th Regiment Armory building on Park Avenue in New York City -- a parallel site to the 2008 Whitney Biennial exhibition -- I aim to coordinate a series of PRESS RELEASES written by different people and issued through different distribution channels. My hope is that this will slow down, complicate, or at least draw out the reception of the exhibition. Given both the location and status -- at a vortex of critical mass -- the Whitney Biennial is immediately cannibalized by the media who surround it: reviews are typically written on the first day before the general public is invited, and each critic duty-bound to weigh in with their direct interpretations of the show. The result is that for most the exhibition is REviewed before it has even been viewed. As such, my interest is in the possibility of arranging another reading through these parallel press releases ... released neither under the umbrella of the Whitney Museum nor that of any known publication. What happens when information is released from within the show but not sanctioned by The Show? (It functions as a shadow.) (It functions as a mirror.)

Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can

Reproduce personality

And that Quality is merely

The distribution aspect of Quantity.

Journalists have conquered the book form;

Writing is now the tiny affair of the individual;

The customers have changed: television's aren't viewers,

but advertisers; publishing's not potential readers,

but distributors.

The result is rapid turnover,

The regime of the bestseller

But there will always be

A parallel circuit, a black market.

And so this letter is addressed to no one in particular, but specific to each of you for reasons I trust you understand. I suppose I am merely asking you to write as a (Wo)Man of the Crowd, a community that can still act, not because it is entitled to do so by the institutions of power, but by virtue of an unconditional exuberant politics of dedication (I quote.)

If you accept all this -- and the invitation -- you will contribute a reflective text to double as a press release. This could be a new text, an existing text, or not even a text at all. Furthermore, it might be produced remotely, or on-site with me at the Armory in the Commander's Room, a locked office accessed by a secret panel release from the Colonel's Ballroom. Your press will then be released during the three weeks following the opening of the exhibition, with the channel of distribution -- fax, word-of-mouth, trumpet, parachute etc. -- directly determined by the contents of its message. Normal press releases are, of course, typically compressed into a series of literal sound bites on a single sheet of paper and designed to be easily re-purposed -- copied, pasted, combined and inserted back into other media streams. This model might as well be our point of departure too.

I hope that my formula of 'disinterestedness plus admiration' will seduce you (I I I I I I I I quote) and that the various non-textual qualities of this missive fill in some of the gaps in explanation. If so, we ought to continue this discussion by email or telephone (see below). Please try to get in touch within the next week.

For now,



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\* And what do you do? You just SIT there. (I quote)