

institutional critique

an anthology of artists' writings

edited by alexander alberro and blake stimson

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This book was set in Caecilia Light and Trade Gothic by Graphic Composition, Inc., Bogart, Georgia. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Institutional critique : an anthology of artists' writings / edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-262-01316-1 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Institutional Critique (Art movement). 2. Artists' writings. I. Alberro, Alexander. II. Stimson, Blake.

N6494.I565I57 2009

708—dc22

2009003619

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

preface

This anthology documents the historical development of institutional critique as an artistic concern beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present. The volume is organized into four roughly chronological thematic sections: "Framing," "Institution of Art," "Institutionalizing," and "Exit Strategies." The entries selected constitute a broad sampling spanning over four decades and representing a myriad of artistic positions. Included in our selection are primary texts and illustrations of projects by some of the best-known artists associated with institutional critique and a number of lesser-known, previously unpublished or untranslated materials and artworks. Our main task as editors has been to sift through a wealth of material for the tiny selection of texts and illustrations that would best offer a sense of institutional critique's concerns and importance. And while the material gathered in the present volume is rich, it is by no means comprehensive.

Needless to say, we are well aware that to put together an anthology of institutional critique is to *institutionalize* institutional critique and therefore is fraught with self-contradictions from the beginning. To a certain extent, many of the criticisms articulated in these writings and projects could be leveled at this very volume, and we bear full responsi-

bility for our selections and organization. But our primary ambition has been to give as rich a sense as possible of the breadth and depth of institutional critique rather than imposing a narrow outline. We have felt it particularly important to plan the volume as a guide, a resource, a base for further work and reading, as well as a self-contained book.

We are grateful to the artists and publishers of the texts and illustrations for granting us permission to reproduce their material. For clerical assistance, we are indebted to Matt Fricano and Rebecca Arnfeld. For recommendations of specific texts and illustrations and the overall scope of the project, we are obliged to Nora M. Alter, Uta Meta Bauer, Sabine Breitweiser, Ron Clark, Andrea Giunta, Isabelle Graw, James Meyer, Andrzej Przywara, and Stephen Wright. Finally, we would like to thank Roger Conover at the MIT Press, whose consistent patience and guidance throughout every step of this project made the realization of this volume possible.