

“spaces between,” that is, between the “art world and non-art world,” “the dominant culture and the subculture,” and “me and you,” as he told curator Carlos Basualdo in a 2000 interview. To proliferate these “spaces,” Kinmont has declared that these projects can be repeated by anyone, with or without his consent.

Kinmont himself revived *Congratulations* last March, this time sending flowers to the Amsterdam-based venue Kunstverein, a “domestic franchise” (so fitting) that had organized “Prospectus,” a traveling survey of his output, with each show focusing on a particular aspect of his practice. The exhibition’s stop at the Fales Library & Special Collections, Kinmont’s first solo show in New York in eight years, concentrated on his work’s relationship to archives and began with *Our Contract, or some thoughts on archive ownership and collection*, 1995–2011, a two-paragraph treatise painted directly on a wall. Also available as a Xeroxed handout, the text rendered transparent the terms of ownership and exhibition of his archives—photographs, bills, notes, correspondence, and ephemera that were presented in several vitrines and preserved in neatly tied and stacked boxes. According to the contract, “the archive can never be broken up to sell individual items” and if a change in ownership occurs, the owner or institution must notify the artist or his representative.

Even as the contract seemed a bit antagonistic, it raised a host of intriguing questions. One wondered, for instance, if in demystifying Kinmont’s relationship with collectors it threatened the specificity of each project. Furthermore: Is the archive the only way in which to present such radically dematerialized art? And what does it mean to have a contract that establishes ownership and the conditions of display for immaterial artworks that are meant to proliferate, with or without the artist’s consent? Finally, does allowing visitors to photocopy whichever works in the archive they wanted, free of charge, impact a collector’s proprietary rights?

Kinmont has done his homework. In 1996 he organized “Promised Relations” at New York’s AC Project Room, a show of artists’ contracts, including Seth Siegelaub’s seminal Artist’s Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement from 1971. A year earlier, he established Antinomian Press to publish material about project art; in doing so, he discovered many artists whose work involved exploring issues of labor outside the traditional support systems of the art world, such as Lee Lozano and Christopher D’Arcangelo. In 1998, Kinmont began to cultivate a long-term project to sustain himself: *Sometimes a nicer sculpture is to be able to provide a living for your family*, 1998–, an antiquarian bookselling business that specializes in rare, gastronomy-related tomes. Taking a break from so many short projects has given him time to organize his archives, draft his contract, and, most importantly, play a role in organizing his retrospectives. After the final show, it will be interesting to see what Kinmont does next, whether he will keep working with the contract to seek out a new (a third?) model between viewing and ownership.

—Lauren O’Neill-Butler

Ben Kinmont

FALES LIBRARY & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

In the late 1980s, Ben Kinmont began to make “project art.” Through a strain of Conceptualism more closely aligned with the feminist “maintenance artist” Mierle Laderman Ukeles, who cleaned art galleries in the 1970s as performance, than with Joseph Beuys (though Kinmont did call his early works “social sculpture”), he executed such actions as inviting strangers to his New York home for waffle breakfasts (*Waffles for an opening*, 1991–) and sending five bouquets of flowers to the Houston nonprofit art center DiverseWorks, one for each week of a group show (*Congratulations*, 1995–). Kinmont devised these projects to create “third sculpture,” a term he coined in the early ’90s to identify

