

FURTHER READING:

2008 and 2009 have seen times of great change for the RM project: an end of an era downtown; closing one gallery, and beginning of another; a trip to Europe, a new co-director; even a new baby. And as the pages of this book will no doubt attest, Auckland has become a remarkably more engaging place to exhibit and experience art in, than some of those lonely days on the fourth floor of Achilles House.

In our discussions surrounding these changes, we found that there were a number of other project spaces and models that had become hugely influential on our thinking. Spaces that we had visited, heard about or read about, but which all had a great presence in our thoughts. What follows (in order of publication date, not preference) are selections from texts that had been prominent in our discussions, from before we opened the new gallery, as well as more recent discoveries.

From *MESS HALL: What It Is (After the First Year)* Dan S. Wang, Mess Hall Website

Date not noted, but likely 2004

<http://www.messhall.org/wimh.html>

...For those who participate in the keyholder group, it itself is a type of project different from all other Mess Hall projects: collaborative, ongoing, cumulative, open-ended, regularly and sometimes intensely conflictual, profoundly social, simultaneously theoretical or even dreamy, while also concrete in the least glamorous ways imaginable. Articulating what keyholder status is and means will be a Mess Hall project for as long as Mess Hall lives. It is also a fundamental project, in the sense that its directions, successes, and failures can easily affect all other Mess Hall projects.

...In its first year Mess Hall hosted or produced at least seven projects which either were or included exhibitions of varying duration. They consisted of widely divergent media and concern, and ranged from two days to six weeks long. There was no effort to link exhibitions to each other thematically or conceptually. All recurring themes were more a reflection of the keyholders' shared interests than proof of any deliberate curatorial statement. The commonality is only that all the exhibitions were and are exhibitions, and because of that Mess Hall can be accurately thought of as a space for exhibitions. But far from presenting shows in predictable fashion, taken as a whole Mess Hall's displays demonstrate a governing belief that the exhibition form is

not yet exhausted, and in fact is only beginning to be exploited. Given the frequency of exhibition programming, it must be admitted that Mess Hall bears the imprint of those who trained and work in the realms of visual culture and, yes, visual art. But given the range of content, the diversity of exhibitors, and the way Mess Hall generates a viewership through scheduling events rather than through staffing regular open hours, there is always embedded within Mess Hall an implicit critique of not only conventional museum and gallery practices, but also of most so-called alternative exhibition venues. The artists, curators, activists, and neighborhood folk whose exhibitions we help realize all necessarily contribute to the ongoing implying of this critique, insofar as their shows are considered in relation to all the other shows.

...Many events involve presentations of one sort or another: screenings, lectures, readings, listening parties, how-to demonstrations, etc. More than a few of Mess Hall's events from the past fifteen months fit into no category but their own: for example, a no-cash, clean-out-your-closet swap day, a weekend celebration of Eighties speed and thrash metal complete with vintage fanzines on display, and a hands-on deejaying tutorial. Some events are programmed as series, and some are singular, one-time-only happenings. Some events happen around a meal, the most regular of which is our bi-monthly Sunday brunch. Some events are conducted by a notable visitor but others do not require a focus on an individual. Events can be scheduled either during the run of an unrelated exhibition, which helps to enlarge a show's viewership, or as complements to a related exhibition, which helps to deepen that project.

From *Ten Points*,
Mess Hall, Mess
Hall Website
2007

WE DEMAND CULTURAL SPACES
RUN BY THE PEOPLE WHO USE
THEM.

WE CREATE THE SPACE TO
REMIX CATEGORIES,
EXPERIMENT AND LEARN WHAT
WE DO NOT ALREADY KNOW.

MESS HALL EXPLODES THE
MYTH OF SCARCITY. EVERYONE
IS CAPABLE OF SHARING
SOMETHING.

WE DEMAND SPACES THAT
PROMOTE GENEROSITY.

THE SURPLUS OF OUR SOCIETIES
SHOULD BE CREATIVELY
REDISTRIBUTED AT EVERY
LEVEL OF PRODUCTION AND
CONSUMPTION.

MESS HALL FUNCTIONS
WITHOUT HEIRACHY OR FORCED
UNITY.

Mess Hall, Chicago, USA

www.messhall.org

From the book
2007 IAS Archive

2008

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..The IAS Archive was established in 2005. In the initial stage, the IAS Archive was to meet the demands of artists and curators to support their creation and research of art; as time has passed, however, the IAS Archive has had to redefine its dimensions of purpose as for whom and how the archiving would be made.

To meet this question, artists were given the greatest priority, since they are the actual users of the archive. We asked them to take the initiative in the archiving and let them create and complete the related materials with the IAS Archive setting only the guidelines for the selections and archive structures. First of all, we collaborated with the 'Live Archive' of Lee Mi-kyeong to determine the archive structure and its dimensions, then created a basic list for constituents materials and archive policy (directions) while working with the 'Pidgin Collective' of Lim Min-wook and Frederich Miçon.

...The IAS aims to stand for making an active archive with the help of the 'Live Archive' and 'Pidgin Collective', a radical archive that seeks out highly creative and innovative projects, a collaborative archive between artists and researchers, an open archive with a loose and intermittent network that enables public participation; in short, an experimental, flexible and evolving archive. The IAS Archive has sought and professed to unfold dynamic activities so that it is not simply a 'reservoir' of reference materials. In other words, the IAS Archive sorts, collects, applies and utilizes reference materials. To speak of it metaphorically, the IAS Archive

is a watermill that grinds and reshapes the reference materials so they can be ready for later uses.

...What the archive has produced is not so visually evident compared to exhibitions, yet it still requires much effort, time and funding, so consistent, quality-guaranteed management is somewhat difficult. As a result, archiving projects have been abandoned in their preliminary stages in many other institutions. We cannot find many public archives that meet the demands of the general public, and the IAS Archive is now in one of the most influential, reliable and unrivaled positions. This is why the Archive must continue to be determined and decisive whenever making decisions. In the new year 2008, the Archive aims to reshape its structure and to redefine its dimensions. The reference materials of the Archive are being constantly studied, discussed and examined. They are waiting to come alive again with the touch and breath of the users, so that they can again be a part of their works and memories.

Insa Art Space, Seoul, South Korea

www.insaartspace.or.kr

From **A Space of Abundance**—

Interview with Binna Choi

Domeniek Ruyters,
Metropolis M

magazine

6 August 2008

<http://www.metropolism.org/features/interview-with-binna-choi-casco/>

...Casco has shown the values and possibilities of what one might call a revised constructivist practice and a sense of collective resilience, which manifests itself at every corner of its activities and with all the people involved.

...I've experienced Casco as a convivial but critically articulated place, in which every project readopts the "office" element and the bright yellow structure...a call for the necessity to embrace more fully the untranslatable aesthetic potential of the practices we present—finding and re-finding the elusive balance between seeing and acting, thinking and doing.

...There is no intent to break with the past or expand dramatically. Casco does not appear to me to be in a phase of radical change but of intensification. The aim is to further articulate its intentions and types of practice. Let's say that it's about working with the legacy of the past to make it proliferate. I am hoping to strengthen Casco's accessibility, not in the way of making Casco spectacular but in the way of making it more hospitable. Concretely it would include a detail like improving the function of website—not making a new website but fine-tuning. Both in its physical space as well as online, Casco should be a space of abundance, which is more useable and open to appropriation by

different individuals and groups. As part of this approach, I would like to experiment with the temporality of the program, to have different projects with different time spans running next to each other: to be, in other words more (idiosyncratically) polyphonic, and also initiate more collaborative forms of research and production. An international collaborative platform.

...Forms of doing nothing, or doing less, have been ideologized as critical, political and poetical gestures against global capitalism's mega-productive and pan-territorializing gestures (mega art fairs and biennales) for the last decade. I think it is problematical when this kind of Bartleby-esque ethical stance becomes hyped and instrumentalized in this way. As an ethical stance it should stay with us, itself in a state of latency, while we once more try to create meanings and attempt to construct a new assemblage of forms as a tool in order to shape our society. In that sense, ideas of utopia and of constructive abstract modeling and performing out of our world's overflow of materials and information should play a more visible role. However, in contrast to modernist dogma, such models should always be ready to be contested and reconstructed, and to engage in a dialogue—which some artists and designers call storytelling.

Binna Choi is the director of Casco

Casco: Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht, Holland

www.cascoprojects.org