

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) presents Ben Kinmont: Prospectus, an exhibition of projects by the artist that explore the boundaries between artistic work and everyday life, on view from September 1, 2012, through May 2013.

Somewhere between Conceptual art and “social sculpture,” the work of Ben Kinmont (born 1963, Vermont) is based in real-time exchanges like meals, conversations, and gestures. It also takes form in the materials that document their action: broadsides, sketches, photographs, contracts, transcripts, and correspondence. Often Kinmont invites others to repeat his projects, with or without his participation. In this way the material presented in Ben Kinmont: Prospectus also operates as an open invitation for reactivation.

“Ben Kinmont’s work constantly evolves with input from a wide range of artists and contributors, like a contemporary open-source platform,” says Frank Smigiel, SFMOMA associate curator of public programs. In advance of this exhibition students in social practice at California College of the Arts conducted a set of interviews to reactivate one of the works on view, for example, and local high school students will take part in another reactivation as part of SFMOMA’s Open Studio, bringing artist-designed activities into the classroom.

The ephemera and archival material in the exhibition relates to three of Kinmont’s projects, selected specifically for the SFMOMA presentation. On becoming something else deals with artists whose practices have led them from the art world out into other activities and professions. Moveable type no documenta considers the possibility of moving from the world at large into the art world, asking if we can transfer meaning from our everyday lives into something we might also understand as art. Promised relations examines artists’ contracts and the ways these documents record and manage the circulation of conceptual and social projects like Kinmont’s, both within artistic circles and beyond.

The exhibition was organized by Smigiel with independent curator Christina Linden. Prospectus is the continuation of a travelling survey initiated by Kunstverein, Amsterdam, with additional exhibitions at Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, and Fales Library at New York University, New York. As part of Prospectus: San Francisco, additional projects by Kinmont are also on view from September 5 through October 5, 2012 at Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco. The exhibition will be on display at SFMOMA in the Koret Visitor Education Center, and the full archives will be available for viewing and handling by appointment in the SFMOMA Library and Archives. Three open sessions will make these materials available to SFMOMA visitors on Free Tuesdays: October 2, November 6, and December 4.

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