

UNSTABLE INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY 10 YEARS AT THE BLUE OYSTER

8 September - 3 October 2009

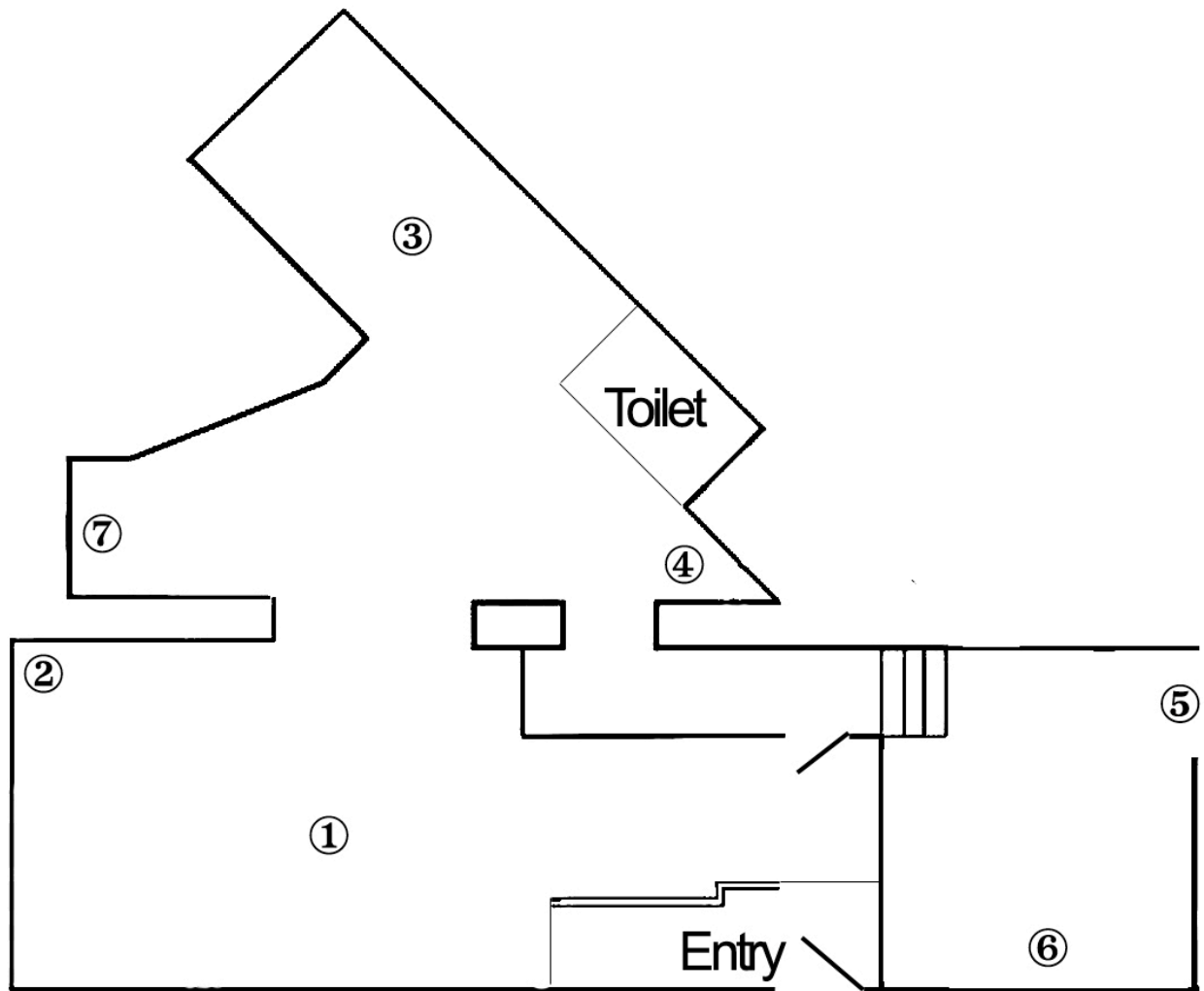
Old, New,
Borrowed, Blue: 10
Years at the Blue
Oyster (2009)
publication cover



Curated by Ali Bramwell, *Unstable Institutional Memory: 10 Years at the Blue Oyster* uses as a starting point a group of iconic works produced by Hannah Beehre, Steve Carr, Richard Crow & Michael Morley, Julian Dashper, anonymous and Margaret Roberts for the Blue Oyster over the course of its history. Instead of attempting a faithful restaging, Bramwell has asked the artists responsible to reprise their original works in some negotiated way, in full knowledge that a return to the same starting point is impossible in every case. The exhibition compels the artists involved to consider the sensation of incomplete memory and the distance between now and the moment that specific work was first made. Posing a challenge to try and re-inhabit thoughts and objects through the distance imposed by time, this process suggests a way of understanding more clearly what has changed and what has remains the same. The works selected and solicited are in many ways inadequate place holders for a recovered or reconstituted history, sitting in the space between memory and actuality, the past and the resent, and at odds with aspirations for completeness and coherency.

The publication *Old, New, Borrowed, Blue: 10 Years at the Blue Oyster* dabbles with this problem of memory and remembering and the role that storytelling/myth making has in how we filter and value those memories. Here the collection of events and personalities that constitute the history of the Blue Oyster have been sifted through a selection of personal accounts and collective narratives, then strained through the gaps in archival records. Wry examinations of the evolution of the space from artist run and grass-roots to something more professional and reliable, intermingle with divergent recollections and ideals for the future. The publication provides accounts of significant defining moments and events in the lifespan of the project space and more sweeping historical perspectives, both attempting to define, but never quite isolating, the zest of the Blue Oyster.

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- ① Margaret Roberts, *SHIFT* 2009 (after *NEW WALLS* 2001)
- ② Richard Crow & Michael Morley, *Mr White* 1999
- ③ Hannah Beehre, *Inflatables* 2001/2009
- ④ Steve Carr, *ALEXANDER* 2009 (after *The Steve Carr Experience* 2001) Duration: 10 min 6 sec HD transferred to DVD courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett
- ⑤ Anonymous, *Elision* from *The Hawthorne Experiment* 2005/2009 animation and manipulated sound file
- ⑥ Julian Dashper, *CV Performance* 1999/2009 courtesy of the artist and Sue Crockford
- ⑦ Blue Oyster ten year exhibition chronology