

SELECTIONS FROM THE SEMI-PERMANENT COLLECTION

The Semi-Permanent Collection was begun in 1979 to supplement the Museum's program of temporary exhibitions and to provide support for contemporary artists through the purchase and public exhibition of their works. In keeping with the policy of the Museum, the Collection is devoted exclusively to the art of the last ten years--works in all media which have been created within a decade to their date of acquisition. Works are acquired through gifts and through purchases made possible by the Museum's Accessions Committee. Priority is given to works that directly relate to the Museum's exhibitions and programs. Currently, the Collection numbers almost 125 pieces and represents a wide range of styles, conceptual approaches and artistic practices. The current installation is the first one in which a large portion of the Collection has been exhibited.

The idea of maintaining a collection raises complex issues for any contemporary art museum and for The New Museum in particular. How does a collection with its inherent notions of permanence, affect the Museum's relationship to the elusive and constantly shifting notion of what is contemporary? How does the Museum grapple with questions of the perceived authority implied in its acquisition of particular works? How does it interpret its mandate toward care and protection of the Collection, when the Collection itself is a changeable group of works?

One function of the Semi-Permanent Collection is to suggest concepts that might be considered in relation to the Museum's other exhibitions. The current installation suggests a range of themes. For example, how is history approached differently in the work of Rene Santos, Aimee Rankin, and May Stevens? How is the relationship between art and commerce addressed by Hans Haacke, Louise Lawler, and Art Parts in "Museum Notions"?

The Semi-Permanent Collection is intended to be an evolving body of works that points toward significant issues of the recent past while remaining actively engaged with the art of the present.