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**Selling Yourself and Not Your Art**

medium: *performance (video also available)*

duration: *approx. 2 hours*

date: *2003 (video completed in 2008)*

"Selling Yourself and Not Your Art" was a performance held at New Langton Arts in San Francisco, CA. It was an investigation into what specifically makes artists successful. The artists spent months researching self-help literature and listening to self-help audiocassettes. For the event, they hired an instructor from the Dale Carnegie School of Sales and Management in San Francisco to tailor a workshop for artists to help them improve their "sales technique".

The nature of self-help literature suggests that certain kinds of behavior are responsible for the success or failure experienced by the individual. It is not gender or race discrimination; it is not socio-economic pressure; it is not the widening wealth gap. Rather, it is one's inability to smile sincerely or the weakness of their handshake or the unflattering way they dress that keeps them from getting ahead.

The evening-long performance began with Fletcher and Reichert delivering an essay on the history of "self help literature" in the United States. This lecture was read dryly without a hint of skill in presentation delivery or public speaking. The essay was followed by the Dale Carnegie instructor's more animated presentation called "How to Sell Yourself and Not Your Art."

At first the audience, comprised mostly of artists, resisted the information, which included 'the importance of wearing professional attire to your interview with a gallerist', and 'how to cater to the interests of the prospective gallerists rather than touting your capabilities as an artist'. Throughout the evening the emotions in the room shifted as the audience began to feel uncomfortable about compromising artistic integrity and content for a desire to succeed.

Finally the audience buckled, as the Dale Carnegie instructor won them over to her way of thinking fueled by the idea that these techniques might actually help them to improve their artistic careers.