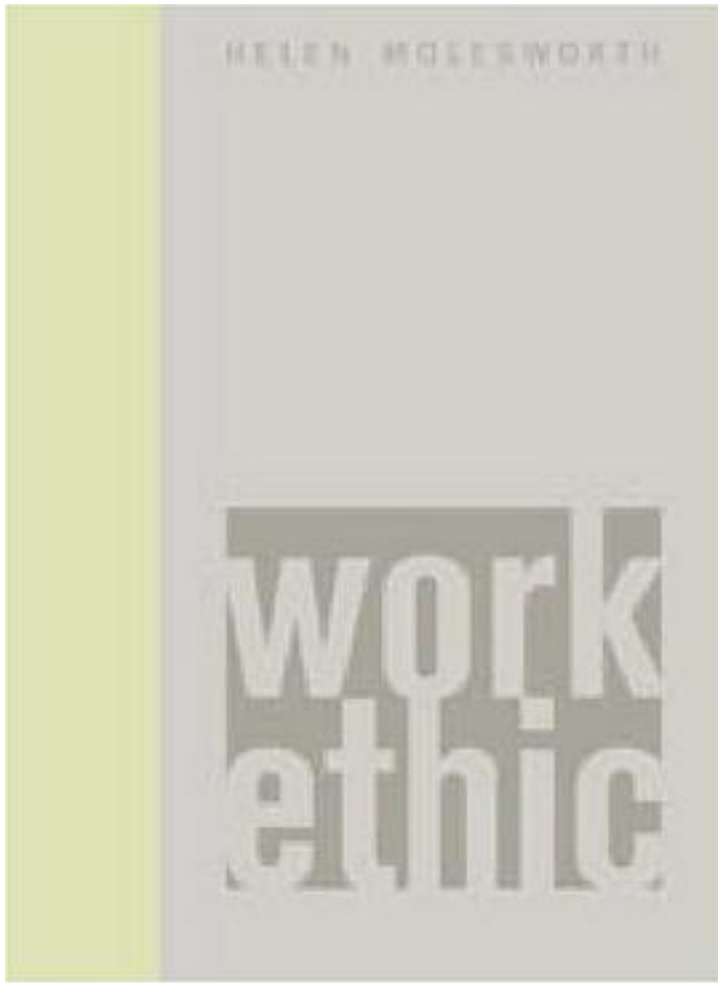


Work Ethic



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During the 1960s, artists from Alan Kaprow and Yoko Ono to Andy Warhol and Richard Serra stopped making "art" as it has been thought of since the Renaissance. They

staged performances that mixed everyday life with theatre and in yet other, often ironic ways challenged the system of marketing, display and aesthetic discourse that ascribes exceptional monetary as well as cultural values to paintings and sculpture. "Work Ethic", published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same name organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art, brings together a cross-section of such radical endeavors and opens a fresh perspective on their genesis and meaning. Most of the avant-garde interventions considered in "Work Ethic" entailed performances and other procedures generally interpreted as linking a "dematerialization" of the object with the free play of concepts. By contrast, Helen Molesworth and her collaborators in "Work Ethic" set such activities in the context of the workplace and contend that they engage issues of management, production and skill that accompanied the emergence of the information age. The result is a major breakthrough in understanding the structures and ambitions of a wide range of art making. "Work Ethic" reproduces all the diverse material - Bruce Nauman videotapes to Roxy Paine's painting machine - in the Baltimore exhibition and provides insightful discussion of each piece's history, structure and significance. Four essays introduce topics, like utopian fantasies of pleasurable work, that are of general relevance to setting the material into a postindustrial context. Throughout this catalogue, there is as well a lively dialogue on the museum's relationship to art that questions the rules of both the workplace and the art world.

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