

## Maria Eichhorn on temporarily closing Chisenhale

Frontpage



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Admittedly, I am sometimes wary of institutional critique works in 2016 as they so often *look* like politics but so rarely act as such. Just when I thought institutional critique was dead, Maria Eichhorn shows up at shuts down Chisenhale! According to Eichhorn in *Artforum*,<sup>9</sup> the London gallery will be closed for the entire 5 week duration of her exhibition. If you're worried about Polly Staple's email pile-up, rest assured that Eichhorn has planned to delete all incoming emails after auto-sending a detailed response to the sender.

I find the project especially interesting in contrast to the opposite, more conventional approach to institutional critique that keeps the gallery open as if in gesture to welcome more diverse audiences. Take for example Michael Asher's 2010 Whitney Biennial contribution in which he proposed to keep the museum open all hours for a week. The project only ran for three straight days, rather than seven, as the Whitney couldn't afford to pay for the extra labor hours to keep the museum open. Michael Asher is an incredible artist in his own right, but in a time when time, labor, and worker visibility have superseded the authority of the museum in importance, Eichhorn's *5 weeks* seems like a most interesting update to the genre.

RESEARCH, EXPERIENCES, AND VARIOUS KINDS OF REFLECTION lead me to ideas. In this case, my engagement with time and the way it's defined in relation to labor led me to the creation of this piece. My show at the Chisenhale Gallery is a way of giving time back to the staff who work there. When they accept this offering, without their wages being suspended, the work will emerge. Jacques Derrida states in his book *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* (1991) that "to give time, the day, or life is to give nothing, nothing determinate, even if it is to give the giving of any possible giving, even if it gives the condition of giving." Proceeding from this thought experiment of Derrida's, I want to interrogate the possibility of suspending the capitalist logic surrounding the notion of exchange and try to make a space in life sans labor a reality, by returning time to those who lack it, or who need it.

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That the exhibition space and gallery offices are closed is just a spatial consequence of this gesture—these are, after all, the areas where the staff pursues its labor. The institution itself and the actual exhibition are not closed, but rather displaced into the public sphere and society. A sign will be affixed to the Chisenhale gate explaining all of this, and additional information will be made available on the gallery's website, its social media, and so on. An automatic e-mail reply written specifically for this exhibition will also include a message stating that all incoming e-mail will be automatically deleted and that said recipient cannot be reached until after the close of the exhibition. When the gallery's employees come back to work, there will not be a great deal of e-mails waiting to be dealt with, thankfully.