



CONVENTION

An installation proposal for TIAF 2011

David K. Ross

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An installation proposal for the 2011 Toronto International Art Fair

Since the Toronto International Art Fair began at the turn of the millennium, visitors to the event have been missing something. Hiding behind a temporary wall at the western end of the Fair is a long narrow space dominated by the impressive presence of some two hundred linear feet of empty art shipping crates and boxes. I would like to propose that visitors to TIAF 2011 be allowed to view and experience this storage space.

For *Convention*, all art storage crates and packing materials will be handled and stored as usual, with the same logistical systems employed as in past fairs. However, one key element would be added to the TIAF 2011's storage strategy: the installation of carpet in the crate storage area. Typically, TIAF visitors are guided through the grid of exhibitors' booths by a 'pathway' of blue-grey broadloom. For *Convention*, this carpet will be extended from the exhibition areas and routed through two pre-existing access points in the temporary wall which delineates the far western edge of the Fair. This carpet will guide visitors' footsteps into, along, and back out of the crate storage area. Walking next to the long row of stacked and packed crates, TIAF patrons will experience a monumental 15,000 cubic foot testament to the organizational prowess of the Fair in the form of a found sculptural assemblage, an inadvertent exhibition comprised of residual art transportation materials.

The mass of assembled crates and associated packaging materials provides an alternate index for the exhibition because every gallerist in the exhibition is represented by their crates. The crates also show us, with their labels, where the works have come from, and potentially where they may be travelling to; for some crates their next stop may be the home of the very person viewing them.

Convention is thus a spacial intervention and a temporary, temporal detour for visitors to the Fair. The project provides an opportunity to promenade out of intense zones of commerce and into muted areas of storage. *Convention* opens up a unique opportunity for visitors to be *at* the Fair, but not *in* the Fair; a licence to enter an *espace trouvé*. While partaking in *Convention*, a visitor's only contact with the 'buzz' of the vendors' booths is the familiar haptic sense of the plush carpet underfoot and the Fair's particular sonic ecology. The Fair's dominant sensations — its socially and economically charged aspects, its smells, its effects and affects — become both distant and somehow more sharply focused once visitors shift into the storage area's parallel pedestrian environment.

Lurking behind closed doors and walls of every exhibition space, art fair, gallery and museum in the world are unseen spaces which, while workaday in nature, hold deep fascination for the general public. *Convention* provides an extraordinary opportunity for TIAF 2011 visitors to experience one of these spaces first hand.

David K. Ross, January 2011



View of entrance to storage area at TIAF 2010. For the 2011 version of TIAF, *Convention* would begin at the white curtain.

...visitors to the event have been missing something.



Proposed view of *Convention* for TIAF 2011 showing carpet installed in crate storage area.

... a licence to enter an espace trouvé.



Proposed view showing *Convention* at TIAF 2011

...a monumental 15,000 cubic foot testament to the organizational prowess of the Fair in the form of a found sculptural assemblage...