

13 Artists, and Just as Many Themes

The 13 artists exhibiting in “in.flec.tion,” at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, seem to have nothing in common. They work in a variety of styles and media — painting, sculpture, video — and share no theme.

A still from “Repetition Compulsion” a traditional oil painting of a Victorian figure in formal pose on a pedestal, by Andrew Sender, hangs near what at first seems like a simple mop and broom propped against a wall, perhaps by a careless janitor. (On closer inspection, it is an installation by Michael Brown titled “Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday,” with mop handle and bucket made out of melted vinyl records by the two singers.) Resonating throughout the space is the word “Gone!” — sternly uttered at intervals by Bryan Zanisnik’s father in “Repetition Compulsion,” a video by Mr. Zanisnik that shows frenetically edited shots of the artist in his childhood home, often trapped in small areas.

Despite these dramatic differences, the 11 men and 2 women in



LOOP-Y An image from “Repetition Compulsion”

the group have a bond. They are New York-based artists who meet monthly to critique one another’s work. At each session, one artist presents a piece and the others assess it for nearly two hours. The critiques, often intense, focus on what is and isn’t working, and why.

“Once you finish art school, you don’t really have a platform for that type of intense discussion,” said Livia Straus, the president of the art center. “Sure, you have friends coming over and saying they like it or they don’t like it. But you don’t have that intense discussion you would in a more academic environment.”

After the club had met for more than a year, Ms. Straus and her husband, Marc, co-founders of the center, offered the group a show. Curated by the artists, the show comprises one work by each of the artists and occupies the small

second-floor space overlooking the center’s current “Double Dutch” show, an exhibition of contemporary Dutch installation art.

In the spirit of the club, the artists wrote about their colleagues for the exhibition catalog — occasionally, perhaps unwittingly, recognizing commonality in their work, despite their different media. Take for instance the description of Mike Nemire’s Op Art paintings as “obviously made by an obsessive craftsman, conceptual thinker and compulsive genius” — an assessment coming from Don Porcella, a sculptor who uses thousands of small hand-woven pipe cleaners to obsessively craft his figures.

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“In.flec.tion” is on display through July 26 at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, 1701 Main Street, Peekskill. Admission is \$5, \$4 for people over 65 and \$2 for students. The museum is open Saturdays and Sundays noon to 6 p.m., and by appointment. (914) 788-0100 or hvcca.org.