

**T**ime and time again, despite everything, artists engage in regular acts of generosity, hospitality, and exchange. Recognizing this sense of conviviality, Ajay Kurian initiated No More Presence, an ongoing project with a simple premise: two friends — artists, writers, curators, engineers, scientists, etc. — exchange gifts over a period of six weeks. What form this takes, and how it can be shared with an audience, is often unclear.

At its most basic, to exchange means to send and to receive, which seems simple enough: I give and you take, then you give and I take, and so on. But it starts to get interesting when things get lost in the mail. Intentions inevitably malfunction, responses tend to over-compensate, and relationships gradually form as a result of this ever-expanding web of slight misunderstandings. One might say that good friends know each other, but great friends know that they don't know each other at all.

Soon enough, an additional layer of interference becomes clear: people have quite different conceptions and expectations as to the nature of a gift. As they accumulate, gifts begin to contain within them the traces of past experiences with past exchanges and quickly grow to defy any notion of balance, measurement, or evaluation. A gift will inevitably exceed and break apart its own economy. When set into motion, gift exchanges take on unruly lives of their own, and *No More Presence* is about setting the stage for those exchanges, pouring the wine, and following the gifts wherever they go.

Over the course of four winter days are four gift exchanges, each one taking very different forms. There is Ajay Kurian and Anicka Yi (a sculpture), Matt Keegan and Josh Tonsfeldt (a map), Uri Aran and Liam Gillick (some doorknobs), and Amy Granat and Jacob Kassay (a film and a soundtrack).

This exhibition stands between a public and a private conversation: it interacts with the world but respects the intimacy of an exchange between friends. In Kurian's words, it is to jump into the tangle of the gift as never fully present.

No More Presence is in residence from January 6th to 9th, 2011.