

**IN//WITH//FOR
THE PUBLIC**



HOW
DO YOU
RESPOND
TO A
SPECIFIC PROMPT
OR CONTEXT
WHILE
STAYING
CONNECTED
TO
YOUR
BROADER
PRACTICE
?

HOW DO YOU
BUILD
ALLIES?
?

HOW DO YOU STAY
GROUNDED
IN YOUR COMMUNITY
WHILE HAVING A
WIDE REACH?

IN//WITH//FOR THE PUBLIC

SONIA GUIÑANSACA

GREGORY SALE,
JOHANNA K. TAYLOR &
DR. LUIS S. GARCIA

ELLEN SEBASTIAN CHANG

CONSTANCE HOCKADAY

SUSANNE COCKRELL

JULIA MELTZER
of CLOCKSHOP

MIKE BLOCKSTEIN &
REANNE ESTRADA
of PUBLIC MATTERS

DAVID ALLEN BURNS &
AUSTIN YOUNG
of FALLEN FRUIT

FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ

JENIFER K WOFFORD

SZU-HAN HO



Kenneth
Rainin
FOUNDATION

HOW DO YOU
EXPAND
THE
EXPECTATIONS
FOR
PUBLIC PRACTICE
?

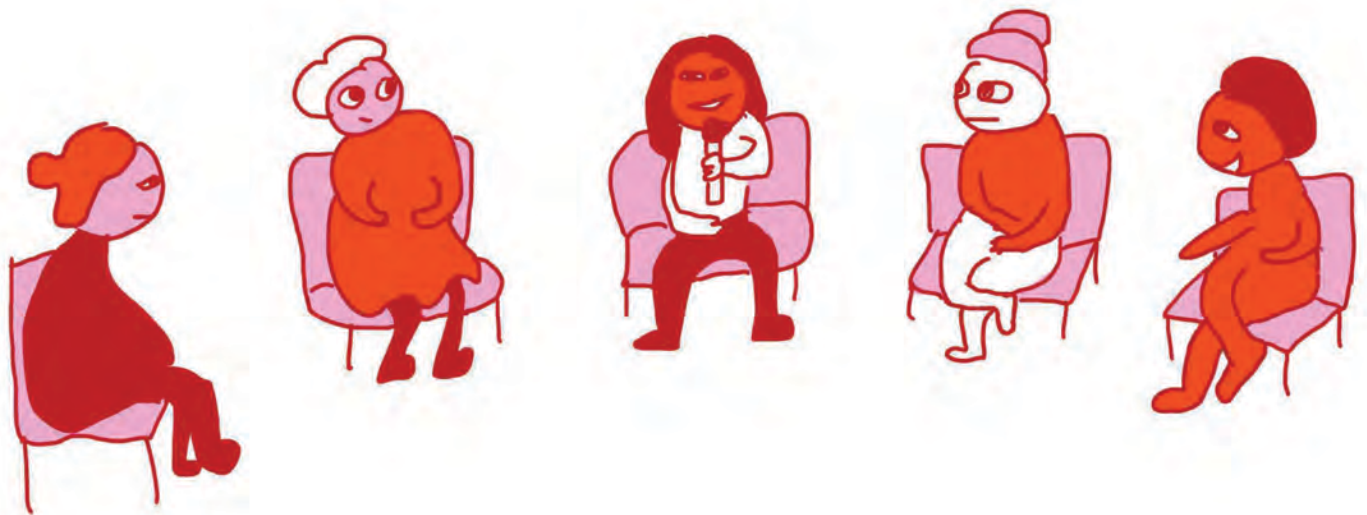


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** **CHRISTINA LINDEN**
Introduction

- 6** **SONIA GUIÑANSACA**
Requiem of Instructions for the Artist/
Creative to Reflect on

- 10** **GREGORY SALE, JOHANNA K. TAYLOR &
DR. LUIS S. GARCIA**
Relationships as Material for an Arts
Practice

- 13** **ELLEN SEBASTIAN CHANG**
An Invitation

- 18** **CONSTANCE HOCKADAY**
A Reason to Leave the House

- 22** **JULIA MELTZER**
of **CLOCKSHOP**
The Bowtie

- 24** **SUSANNE COCKRELL**
Digging in the World

- 26** **MIKE BLOCKSTEIN & REANNE ESTRADA**
of **PUBLIC MATTERS**
How Do You Expand the Expectations for
Public Practice?

- 32** **DAVID ALLEN BURNS & AUSTIN YOUNG**
of **FALLEN FRUIT**
The Fruits of Our Labor

- 36** **FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ**
Being Grounded in Oakland Feeds
My Artist Power

- 38** **JENIFER K WOFFORD**
Insights on Applying for Things and
Getting Rejected.

- 40** **SZU-HAN HO**
WHAT IS PUBLIC

- 42** **RESOURCES**

- 45** **BIOS**

INTRODUCTION

Having in the end, and despite all the impossibilities, drawn near Relation and acknowledged our presentiments of how it works, now we must disindividuate it as a system, stretch it to the mass that bursts forth just from its energy, finding ourselves there along with others.

— Édouard Glissant, from *Poetics of Relation*

The existing discourse on public or social art is, at this point, quite long. Framed by examinations of generosity and exchange, engagement, conversation, dialogue, commoning, participation, intervention, emancipation, action, site-specificity, culture-building, relational aesthetics, revelry, risk, power, artificial hells, new institutions, and public servitude, a wide variety of practices from around the globe have been espoused, compared, and critiqued. For each outline of promise and possibility, we encounter a number of critical positions that acknowledge both good and bad intentions, unacknowledged privilege, failed collaborations, squandered resources, and the violence of exploitation, disappointment, and abandonment. We wish to acknowledge important critical positions, but also to inspire and empower current and future generations of artists to develop creative, ethical, and sustainable ways of engaging with the public. For this publication, we began by recognizing that it takes practice to do this work well, and so we have reached out to a number of artists who have first-hand experience navigating the complex landscape of making art that engages with the public.

In the 2019 "We Need to Talk About Social Practice," one of the most frequently read pieces on *Art Practical*, artist manuel arturo abreu reformulates a critique of social practice in contemporary art, arguing that "[m]eaning is created socially, in a network of contemplation and action. Focalizing art's social component is at best redundant and at worst exploitative of the marginalized communities from which it so often draws." On the note that imbalanced distribution of power and resources have often come into play in the works critiqued, abreu echoes arguments Claire Bishop has developed over several decades. The particular exploitations called out in the article hinge, at least some part, on the preposition at play in this formulation: "from which it draws" suggests a cultural vampirism, not without foundation in certain cases. On the point that focusing attention on the public and social possibilities of cultural production is redundant, however, I ask whether the redundancy at play exceeds that at the core of representation in art, overall. Are social or public practices any more redundant than painting? Questions about how we allow room for reciprocity and ask for greater accountability for public art projects fall outside of the scope of abreu's article, because the writer prefers to propose that direct action take place outside of the field of art, inherently also suggesting a limitation on the scope of what art can be. Can we retain a critique of what has come before, but reframe the possibilities for the future in order to hold space for the project of shifting culture rather than limiting its scope? *In/With/For the Public* calls on a different

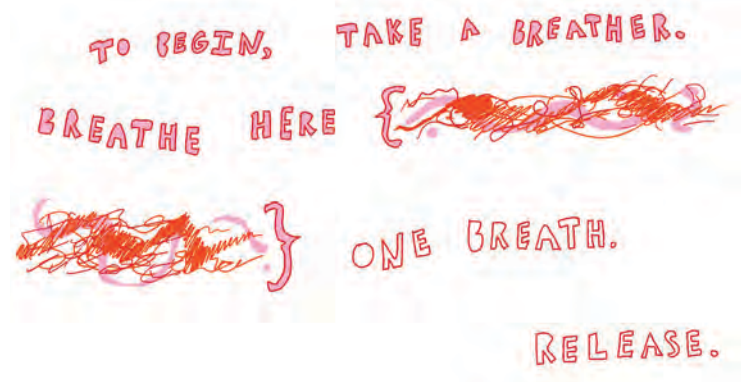
set of prepositions. It brings together reflections from a small selection of artists who refer to their own practices as public, social, participatory, interactive, collaborative, and/or under the rubrics of civic engagement, place-making, or devised art. It looks for possibility in these fields, asking first and foremost how we might expand the expectations for public practices.

This publication has been produced by *Art Practical* with the support of the Kenneth Rainin Foundation on the occasion of the 2020 *Exploring Public Art Practices Symposium* at the Oakland Museum of California. The symposium is organized as part of the Rainin Foundation's Open Spaces Program in order to showcase artists who are creating powerful and engaging work that shifts the field of public art practice. Some of the artists who contributed to this compendium are presenting at *Exploring Public Art Practices* this year; some have been a part of the Rainin Foundation's Open Spaces Program or have presented in previous symposia; and some have not been formally affiliated with Open Spaces, but have relevant perspectives that the *Art Practical* staff found important and inspiring. The mission of the Rainin Foundation's Open Spaces Program is to support temporary place-based public art projects in Oakland and San Francisco that engage communities, demonstrate artistic experimentation and energize public spaces. As a platform in its tenth year, *Art Practical* connects diverse regional voices and amplifies underrepresented perspectives from the Bay Area and broader West Coast. As such, all the practices represented here are rooted in California or nearby regions of the western United States. This compendium does not pretend to be comprehensive. It is intended to supplement the discourse of the symposium by shedding light on the various processes that are involved in the logistical inner-workings of public practices.

Dispersed throughout the amazing contributions produced for this volume, the reader will find hand-drawn illustrations produced by *Art Practical* Publishing Assistant Will Betke-Brunswick, who is also currently an MFA student in Comics at California College of the Arts. Some of these illustrations reiterate the prompts from which we invited contributors to choose as they composed their submissions. Beginning with "How do you build allies?", these prompts were devised to encourage artists to provide specific advice as they composed their reflections in writing, through illustrations, diagrams, collages, or recorded conversations. Together, we hope these responses might help us find ourselves there, along with others, and with energy.

REQUIEM OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ARTIST/ CREATIVE TO REFLECT ON

*Dedicated to
the queer, migrant, gender nonconforming, femme, Indigenous
creative expanding and reflecting on their public art.*



I am writing this as I listen to my favorite playlist featuring Kate Bush and Rihanna. “Running Up the Hill” is currently playing. I am in LA. My heart is heavy, but there is a puppy here. The palm trees are swaying, I anticipate rain soon. 2019 was heavy. Blame it on Saturn’s Return or Mercury in Reggaeton. Blame it on the government. Blame it on the nostalgia for home. Blame it on _____.

I am showing up to this page with a decade plus of experience in social justice and cultural spaces. I’ve done local and national community organizing in the immigrant rights movement and work in cultural spaces to create infrastructure for marginalized artists. I am a poet. I am migrant. I am formerly undocumented. I was raised in Harlem, NY, and for the past six years, I’ve been bi-coastal between Oakland/LA and NY. I am Kañari, from Cuenca Ecuador. The majority of my creative output has been in collaboration with my queer/trans/gender nonconforming chosen family who are also artists and cultural workers. My family is mixed status and working class. Access notes: I have chronic back pain and PTSD. I am in my thirties. Naming all of this, and leaving out some things so you know how I arrived at these answers, which are mostly questions reflected back to you. I am always wondering how I can be a better cultural maker.

Take as much as you want of this; recycle what you may not need or whatever does not apply to you. Things for you to consider and think about: How did you arrive at this particular moment? Where are you coming from? How may you take up space? How do you show up into a space? What’s your background? Where does it hurt? What are you envisioning for yourself next year? Why are you an artist? What does “public art” mean to you?

Make a list of the communities you are part of:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This can be based on locality, trade, discipline, politics, identities, etc. You are not limited or pressured to 3. Name as many communities as you are part of. Some of these communities overflow into the other. That is okay, too. Everything is fluid, but be intentional. Don't just list random communities for the sake of listing. Really think: What communities are you really part of and committed to? And why?

Now, identify people within those communities that know you very well. Write their names in the space below:

These are folks who know your values, and who will check in with you if you stray away from those values. These folks are kindred. They are chosen family. These are the folks who you have had meals with, who have seen you ugly-cry, who you respect, and who you have shown up for, too. These are folks who you have mutual and regenerative relationships with, and it is not extractive. These are folks who will celebrate you and push you to grow and reflect. These are folks who will hold you accountable to your values.

If you have paused because you do not know your values, make a list of them here:

As you work on these lists, memories shared with these folks might come up for you. Invite them in. Let them sit on your shoulder.

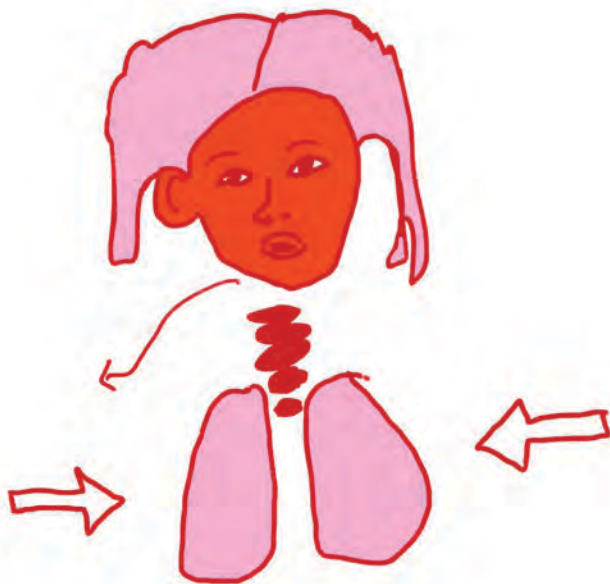
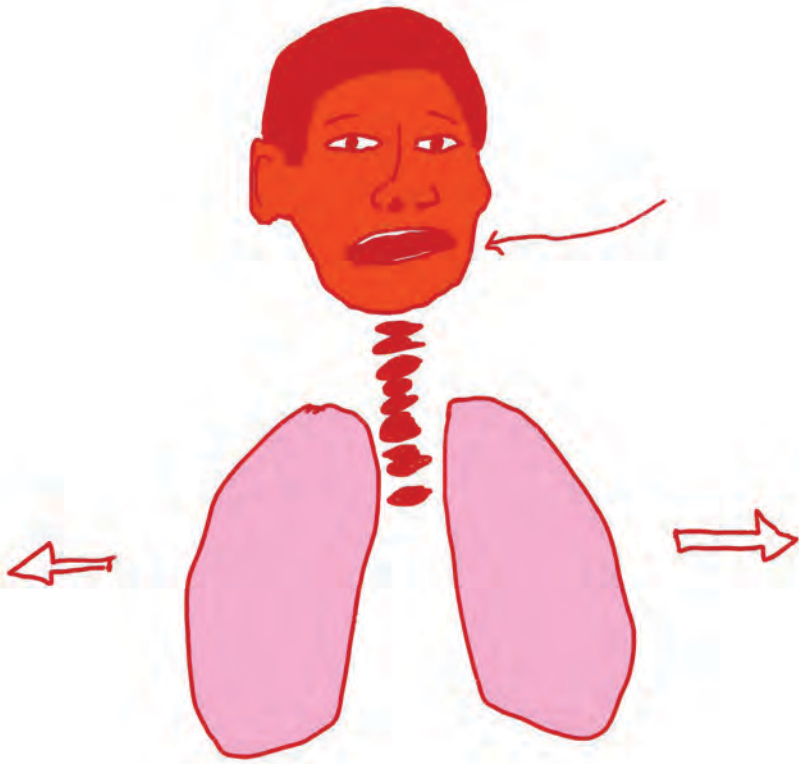


Sometimes, many times, we are doing national work, and it may feel like we are not responsible to a specific community. "National" does not mean the absence of a local community. National means the presence of many local communities. Touch base with a range of folks across the country to advise and keep you grounded. We are part of a beautiful and ever growing ecosystem of artists and cultural workers—there are plenty of folks to reach out to.

Whenever you are doing work/projects in relation to a community you may not be part of, it is your job and responsibility to bring in a person from that community. By not bringing in a person/people of that community you are taking away a communities autonomy, taking away their agency to self define. If you are not bringing in a community member in a thoughtful way then you are appropriating and doing such an injustice. There is power in collective work. Take time to build intentional and real relationships with said community members. There are no boxes to check off. This is not just a quick task on your to-do list. As cultural workers, creatives, and artists, we do not parachute into a community. We build. We build. And building takes time.

You can move back, and let an artist from that community do the project. Front-line communities and communities directly impacted by said issues should drive and lead that work. Allies, move back.

If you must take on the project, bring in and adequately pay a community member/artist to advise and co-create with you. People directly from those communities should always drive the project.



RELATIONSHIPS AS MATERIAL FOR AN ARTS PRACTICE

Reflecting on *Future IDs at Alcatraz* (2018–2019)

With a shared belief that cultural problems demand cultural solutions, a committed group of arts and social justice advocates fostered *Future IDs at Alcatraz*, a year-long exhibition about justice reform and second chances. It featured artworks inspired by the format of IDs, created by individuals with conviction histories. In partnership with the National Park Service and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, the exhibition acted as a container for a series of monthly community programs, co-created with over 20 community partners. The project centered the reentry community and other justice-impacted individuals by holding civic space for stories of trauma, transformation, and resilience, for a plurality of voices and visions.

We authors of this essay are a few of the many collaborators who united our diverse expertise as artists and organizers and our experiences within and outside of the criminal justice system to realize *Future IDs at Alcatraz*. As lead artist and ally, Gregory Sale initiated and maintained the multitude of the social connections and ongoing commitments with support of the core-project collaborators Luis Garcia, Kirn Kim, Sabrina Reid, and Jessica Tully.

The success of *Future IDs* depended upon our ability to nurture and negotiate complex relationships across disparate constituencies, geographic regions, and through fraught politics and policies. These relationships were a central material to the project.

The *Future IDs* collaborators developed an evolving set of guiding considerations. They are suggestions, not commands, and are shared here for other artists and collaborators to consider as they build relationships in social practice art projects.

GREGORY SALE,
JOHANNA K. TAYLOR &
DR. LUIS S. GARCIA



Roberto Bedoya, Emiliano Lopez, and Candice Price in discussion during the Art and Justice Summit on Alcatraz. Courtesy of the Artist. Photo: Peter Merts



Future IDs artist Cirese LaBerge in the Circle of Engagement for the *Future IDs* Release Party. Courtesy of the Artist. Photo: Peter Merts

Future IDs Guiding Considerations

Sharing control with collaborators, whether artists or non-artists, is crucial: Invite project participants to help conceptualize social-aesthetic structures, to co-produce artistic components, and to direct the advocacy intention of the work.

Each artist or collective develops their own way of working: Identify the work needed to build different types of relationships. Relationship partners include key collaborators, community and institutional partners, participants, allies, thought leaders, audiences, and others.

Collaboration requires flexibility and acceptance: It would not be reasonable to expect all of the many key participants to be similarly invested. Contributors bring their own expertise that influences the work. Honor the contributions while recognizing that these relationships are in constant negotiation.

Be patient and open: Asking someone to work on a project is easy, but maintaining relationships requires being present with people and being a participant in the world on their terms.

It's going to get messy, so be prepared: Set common goals with collaborators and other partners early in the process to create a solid foundation for the project. These goals will guide the navigation of complicated challenges that could not have been predicted. Work with the consequences as one of the materials.

Aesthetics and advocacy can be competing project objectives. There is a dance in navigating the unavoidable tension between aesthetics and advocacy that requires making difficult choices. For *Future IDs* collaborators, the initial goal-setting often led to prioritizing social impact over both artistic recognition and the ease of communicating the project to media.

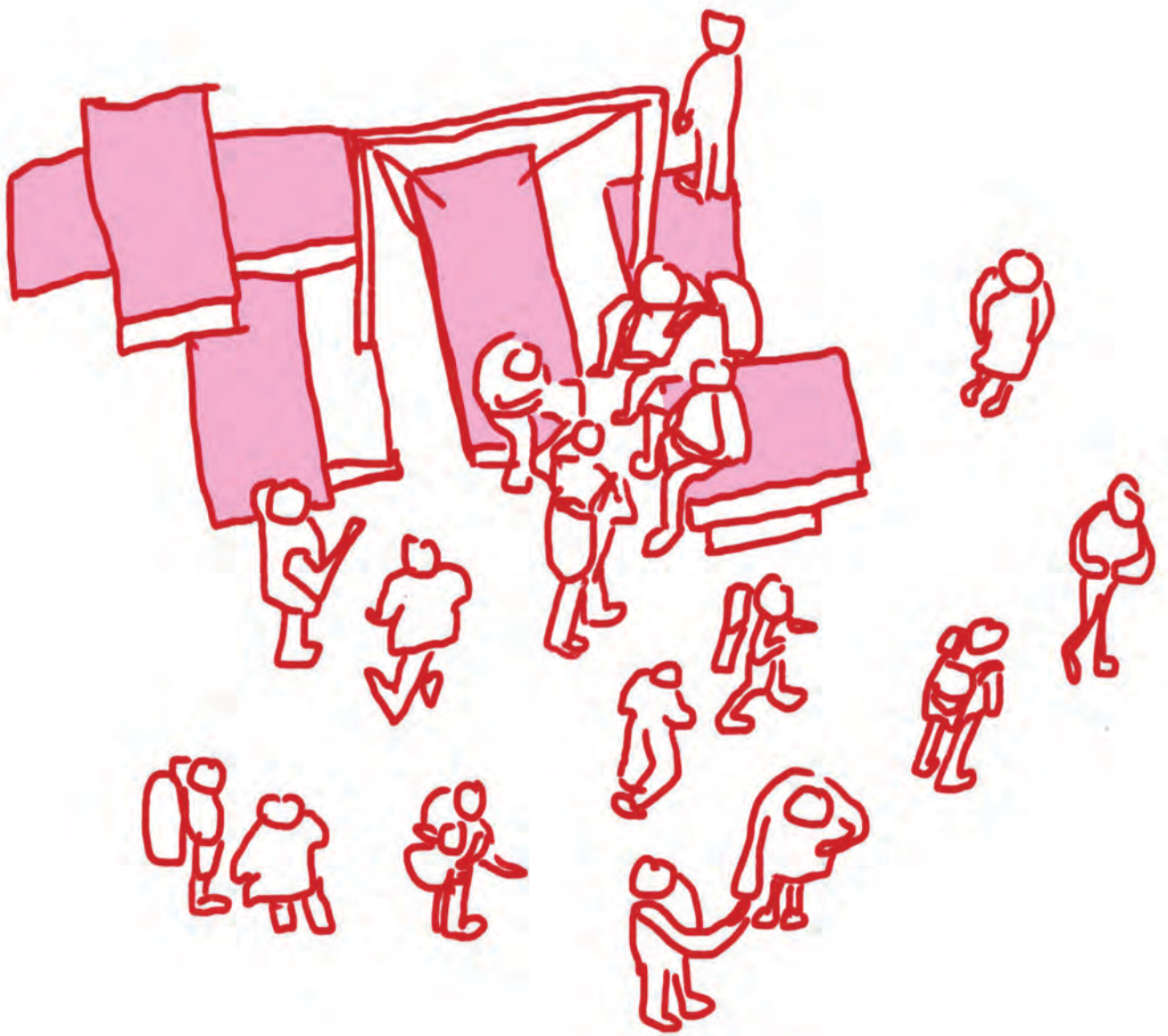
Ask yourself what it means to walk into a space ethically: Recognize the complexities of race, gender, privilege, and discrimination. Be aware that the artist and some of the collaborators come from a position of power just by leading the project.

Power is a cultural, social, political, and economic construct. Working in collaboration and forming authentic partnerships requires understanding the fluidity of who holds weight in a particular moment and its significance.

Practice hospitality, deep listening, and deep "hanging out": Deliberate on how we care as a society. Build trust. Create a space where people's voices and experiences are valued. Remember that active listening can be a difficult skill to put into practice.

Come together to create a shift in consciousness: Cultivate a culture of mutual respect and a willingness to say things that are uncomfortable or critical. Hold space for a deep level of "realness." This vulnerable emotional space means engaging in unexpected dialogue and building emotional connection.

Strive to become mutual allies of one another.



AN INVITATION

??

Before working with the public, let's recognize that we are the public. We are not separate from "them." If we are not separate from the public, what is this summons, calling or invite to create for the public? I ask myself: Does the public want or need my creative "intervening"? What am I longing for? What am I seeking? What captures my curiosity? My interests? How do I communicate the latter through theater, dance, radio, film, food, multimedia (all forms I have created in) to have a dialogue with others outside of the inner me? What forms of communication and dialogue does *my* public need and want?

Public Design? Public Control? Public vs. Private?

What does it mean for Black women to inhabit/activate/reclaim PUBLIC space when space has been historically relegated/restricted to private/domestic locations? How do the intangible assets of interiority, self- and world-care, gentle reflection, and joyfulness operate when shared in public communal, culturally affirmative public rituals?¹

The design of my path was forged hundreds of years before I arrived. The circumstances that I would navigate were set in motion in August 1955 given that I was born one day after the murder of Emmett Till (in secret, to a "white" mother and a "Black" father) and one hundred and nine days before the Montgomery Bus Boycott. I was quietly, indirectly, and directly taught that my path in the Public Sphere is designed, controlled, and legislated by Private Interests.

Choosing a creative path for my life and livelihood became a form of survival and refuge, but most importantly a means to express the complex "story" of me.

Thus, I create from the foundation of who I aspire to be as human being. The technique and forms of my creative practice are informed and in service to my historically informed past, present, and future. Questions begin each day: How I am upholding the systems that place a supremacist value on my creativity? How do I collaborate with systems and institutions that may not have any depth of understanding or the willingness to labor towards that understanding of "curated" history outside of the values of supremacy? What is the difference between creation and invention? What choices did I make today that uphold the latter or chip away at its foundation?

I create from what I have come to understand and name "The Aesthetics of Circumstances" a.k.a. making a way out of no way, "stealing" from Peter to pay Paul, and stretching a dollar until it cries or it blesses me.



Ellen Sebastian Chang. *G-O-to the D*, 1996–1997; radio play. Courtesy of the Artist.

“I know you hear me. But one day you gon’ listen!”

—Rosetta Hicks

Be a generous human. Share your technical skills and knowledge. Be an adult. Admit what you don't know, ask questions, be humble, don't compete, collaborate, and don't bullshit. Young people, they feel! Be responsible, and give them responsibility. Work towards trust through commitment, consistency and honesty. Have high expectations of yourself and them. Teach them to value who they are and what they bring. Pay them for their labor, or be honest in how sweat equity and volunteerism works.

My public radio work, *G-O-to the D* (1996–1997),² was based upon the 1992 stage adaption of George Bernard Shaw's *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Search of God*, working with the teenage girls of color to explore ideas of spirituality, death, and what happens after high school. This work was created from a series of interviews from the streets of Oakland, Cal Berkeley, neighbors, churches, high school parties, and protests. The teenagers were taught interview techniques and loaned high-end recording equipment through KPFA and Earwax Productions Studios. The piece was broadcast on NPR's SOUND PRINT, KPFA, and KPFK.

respect:

late Middle English: from Latin *respectus*, from the verb *respicere* 'look back at, regard', from *re-* 'back' + *specere* 'look at'

—Webster Dictionary

Around 2008–2009, Maya Gurantz and I started talking about collaborating on a project about Oakland, and how the city and history of a place change as an influx of people move in and impose their own histories. It's like that term “Columbus-ing” where the attitude of discovery has no regard or respect, nor sees the value of the inhabitants of the place. Maya suggested we recreate the 1980 video chat created by Kit Galloway and Sherry Rabinowitz, *Hole in Space*, which connected passersby in New York and LA.

In January 2015, we installed video “portals” between distinct Oakland neighborhoods that are close geographically but worlds apart socioeconomically.³ We connected Youth Employment Partnership (YEP) on International Boulevard in East Oakland, and Cole Hardware in Rockridge, with a third site for passive viewing at a restaurant located in industrial West Oakland. In East Oakland, one of the first

questions was, "Are the police looking at this?" Maya recalls the counselors at YEP asking, "Do we have a lawyer? Because anything caught on these cameras, if it's illegal, the OPD could subpoena the footage." In Rockridge, we received a number of bitterly phrased noise complaints. One person wrote us an email and said if we didn't lower the volume immediately he would *shut our project down*. A mother complained that her child slept at 7:30pm and did not care what kind of "art project" we were creating.

This is the privatized citizenship in conflict with the otherness of the public. And we were grateful when our invisible reach actually garnered curiosity, joy, and "you can see me?"s.

"We are the community and our real roles as lead artists are to understand our community's needs in order to alchemize and distill them into public performance, as well as ritualize them into private actions of healthy change."

—Ellen Sebastian Chang

House/Full of BlackWomen (2015–present) envisioned by Deep Waters Dance Theater Artistic Director Amara Tabor-Smith is my fifth collaboration with Amara and the most impactful work I have ever engaged with. The project was created as a series of site-specific Episodes in Oakland addressing the central theme, "How can we, as Black women and girls, find space to breathe and be well within a stable home?"

In 2016, five months after we received funding from Creative Capital, my family and I were evicted from our West Oakland home. I reside in Alameda with an ongoing focus on the creative public life of Oakland. It is challenging as a person not to feel bitter as I financially navigate the daily maintenance towards a stable affordable life adjacent to the city I pay creative homage to.

In 2018, Gloria (name changed) was fingerprinted and booked for "selling" small batch homemade ice cream. She served this organic ice cream as a treat during our twelfth Episode as an offering to "sweeten" the path for our audience. The *House/Full* program was used as evidence for her "wrongdoing." Undercover officers came to her home under the pretense of buying ice cream. The report detailing elements of her life (the skin color of her husband, the orisha altar in her home, etc.) all listed for the unlawful making of ice cream, leading to court hearings and yearlong probation. Another *House/Full* member and I attended the court dates with her, both as support and for an education. We asked the public defender if he had ever experienced anything this excessive for a small



Maya Gurantz and Ellen Sebastian Chang. *A Hole in Space (Oakland Redux)*, 2015; public art installation. Courtesy of the Artists.



Amara Tabor-Smith and Ellen Sebastian Chang. *House/Full of BlackWomen*, 2015–present. Courtesy of the Artists. Photos: Robbie Sweeney.

batch of ice cream, and he admitted he had not. Her probation is now over. I do not know if her record has been expunged, as of this writing. These are warnings. These are white supremacist laws reminding us of the laws that we are unaware of until they are acted upon our unrecognized humanity.

The very nature of this work that is perceived as place-making, site-specific, devised, or conjure art is symbolic in its creation to understand what is public (available) and what is private (secret): We work with veils, masks, and masquerade—as sacred protection, respected privacy, and the art of the reveal. We cultivate the root definition of Apocalypse, which means “uncover.” We welcome uncovered truth. We walk with lanterns and mirrors to express the dual nature of all things. The lantern that represents the Lantern Laws of 1713 towards the enslaved Africans and Indigenous in the nighttime because we understand that we continue to be regulated and surveilled in public spaces. We walk with mirrors to reflect back the fears, misjudgments, and erroneous beliefs of the uneducated and ill-informed.

We create as a form of insistence rather than resistance. We, *House/Full of BlackWomen*, offer financial stipends, meals, and healing circles: This is “shadow work,” quiet work, work that happens over time and space and in respectful service to the (un)recognized creative service and brilliance of countless unnamed Black women and girls who inhabit and fuel our global imaginations. Our work is a created conjured response to the ongoing designed and manufactured circumstances of a supremacist nation that has yet to truthfully credit, fully acknowledge, and financially compensate our contributions.

“Public Practice” is an invitation to develop an understanding of One and Other, through better questions, shared accountability as well as shared responsibility, acknowledging where control and gatekeeping resides in all aspects of the creative relationship. It is also an opportunity to advocate for time-based dialogues, the efforts of an open education without supremacy and towards collaborations that are activated by a shared loving excitement for imaginative creative change which takes time: real, slow, conscious time, but when the efforts of time are in **perceived lack then humility, respect, and discernment should always be in great abundance.** We are the public whether we know it or not, whether we understand it or pursue to define it. We are the Public.

1 Investigate: Black Public Sphere Collective, eds., *The Black Public Sphere* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1995. <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/B/bo3625661.html>

2 Listen to *G-O-to the D* on SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/esc-the-escape-key/g-o-to-the-d>.

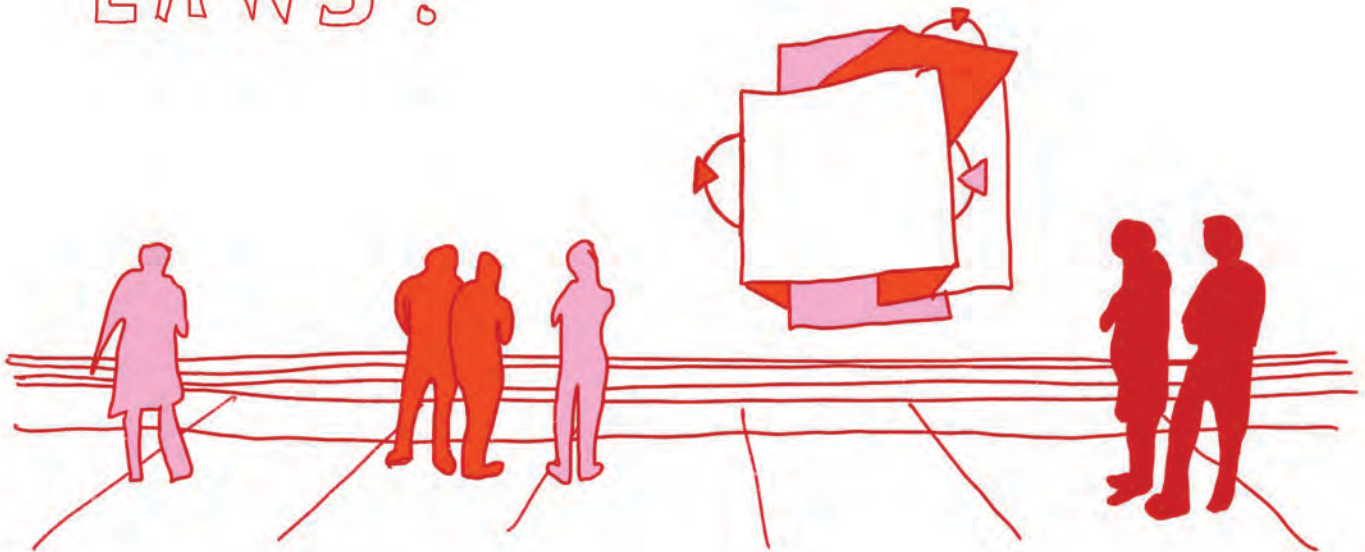
3 Watch documentation from *A Hole in Space Redux*: <https://vimeo.com/140085251>

HOW DO YOU

SUBVERT

WHILE ABIDING BY

PERMIT
REGULATIONS
AND
LAWS?



A REASON TO LEAVE THE HOUSE

Most of my work with the public has been on the water. The water is our largest public space—you know that, right? The waterways are public property, just like the streets. I found that, as an artist, I could take up a lot of space on the water in ways that I couldn't afford to on land. Not only was there a lot of space, there was something magical about being able to create ways for people to access the water. Let's be real: Boats and boating are usually associated with the yachting class and maritime industry. Creating ways for regular people to get on the water really felt like I was cracking the lock off some current cultural norm. Besides all that, the water is an intensely spiritual place with a lot of power. I see it as an exceptional wilderness that can run right alongside an urban area and bring attention to all kinds of things that are happening on the land.

What has surprised me in my work with the public is that people really are willing to take risks. They are usually more willing to travel outside of their comfort zones than most people think. They are down to look at a difficult subject or participate in an experience where there is still a lot of unknown. With most of my projects, I have tried to leave room for real stakes. I haven't always known if the systems I am building will hold up in the face of an audience. The audience can feel those stakes too, and I am grateful for their willingness to be a part of something that is unknown, unfinished without their presence so to speak. It's an important part of the work for me.

And, it's important to share this because I've come up against a lot of nay-saying, especially from producing partners—not all of them. Some of my producing partners have been incredible. I would love to shout out Courtney Fink and Valerie Imus for their work with Southern Exposure—huge risk takers and beautiful supporters of the arts. Not everyone is as brave or as flexible. From other presenters, producers, curators, and even some collaborators, there can be some nay-saying about what is acceptable to require of an audience member for their participation in a piece of art.



Constance Hockaday. *Boatel*, 2011; interactive/performative installation moored outside of New York City in Jamaica Bay Queens. Courtesy of the Artist. Photo: Tod Seelie

For example, people will shy away from even tiny risks, like if the location of your project is too far away, if it's outside of socially acceptable places for convening, or if it's out of the way from the gallery or whatever scene it is that you're a part of, people will often think that that is too great of a risk—that it's too much to ask of an audience member to travel off their well-worn paths; or, asking somebody to take off their shoes and get their feet wet and ride in a tiny boat to a floating performance structure out in the middle of the San Francisco Bay at night when it's foggy—some people might consider that to be a deterrent.

But I have actually been surprised to find that if you give an audience, the public, your friends, and your community an opportunity to experience something that is outside of what they normally get to experience—outside of what the Situationists might call a "representational reality"—something that truly does have stakes in it, even MORE people will show up than if you had offered them some pedestrian experience. For example, I built this floating hotel in Jamaica Bay, Queens outside of New York City. This was during a period of time when the Far Rockaways weren't as popular as they are now. It was an hour-ish ride on the A train, at the end of the A line. It was a risk. It was

way out of the way. And I was putting a bunch of money on my credit card in order to refurbish all of these boats and make the thing happen. I was asking people to come and sleep inside of my art project, which was made out of literal junk and found materials. I was a little nervous. I felt the need, for example, to preface the work and say, *this is not your normal hotel experience; this is an adventure, at best*. I was totally surprised though because not only did people come, but five thousand people came. It sold out every time the tickets went online, and I had to keep extending the project over the whole rest of the summer.

People were being asked to travel outside of their normal lives into this other realm, and they did it because there were stakes there for them. I think we live in a world with a lot of handrails. We live in urban areas that are overly planned—housing developments and whole areas of cities are hyper-planned. We don't really get to organically live in places, or through our living, get to create the architectures that dictate those spaces. I have this very, very strong belief that the infrastructures of our cities inform our most intimate ideas about ourselves or our most intimate ideas about what we can or what we think we can and can't do with our bodies.



When I think about the waterfront in New York City or the waterfront in San Francisco, there's not a lot of public access to those spaces. There's not a lot of infrastructure, like stairways, that go from the city straight into the water that would suggest to a human body that those are spaces for their bodies to inhabit. This is a very different thing, for instance, in Santa Cruz; there are staircases that go straight into the Pacific Ocean where the waves are crashing, and tiny children are jumping into the water with a surfboard. That kind of infrastructure, if it doesn't exist in the place where we live, we have to take the risk to create it for ourselves. We can't let infrastructure dictate our desires. We have to let the things that we want dictate the infrastructure that creates the world around us.

Anytime I've given people and myself a chance to take that kind of risk, even if it feels slightly borderline illegal, the audience becomes implicated in that investigation—like the boat hotel, let's say, where nobody could really decide whose responsibility it was to regulate my art project/boat/hotel. I'm calling this a durational performance piece where we are sleeping in these boats. Is that something that a hotel would come and regulate? Not really. Or, when I did the floating peep show in the San Francisco Bay, was it illegal to sell tickets to people to take a tiny boat out to a group of other boats in the middle of the Bay and have them watch drag shows and live sex shows? I mean, who's to say? Was it a boat charter? Was I hosting an event in my private boat space? I didn't get approached by the coast guard probably because they weren't aware of what was happening, but even if I did, I would have found it to be an interesting negotiation to have in front of my audience.

So yeah, it's my rule to not play it too safe, to not ask for permission, and rather to stay focused on the story that I am trying to make or to tell. It's my rule to be extraordinary, or go overboard. As long as you are respecting your collaborators and anyone that's being represented in the work, it is important to be bold and to trust that a lot of people are really hungry for life, are hungry to live, are hungry to connect, are hungry to step outside of this predictable daily routine that we all carry out every single day in our urban areas. There are people who don't want to go gentle into the night.

I don't think you can make this kind of work if you are overly committed to the practical or socially acceptable. Yes, making work that is accessible by public transportation is important, but that doesn't mean that you should shy away from inviting people to go on a journey to your work. Honestly, sometimes the adventure in travelling to the work is an incredibly valuable piece of the work itself. If your site is deep in the suburbs, or somewhere in the Sacramento Delta, or in some obscure borough in New Jersey, I think that it's important to trust that the audience will follow you there. If you give them a compelling enough reason to go, not only will they follow you there, but they will be very, very hungry for it. And in that journey, they will become a more committed, more open, more implicated participant. That's all I can really hope for, is to be present with a group of people who want to live life—live more life.

Constance Hockaday. *You Make A Better Wall Than a Window: The Billboard*, 2016; a 20-foot neon sign navigating the Port of Oakland. Courtesy of the Artist. Photo: Neal Strickberger



Constance Hockaday. *All These Darlings and Now Us*, 2014; floating peepshow moored in the San Francisco Bay. Photo: SoEx.



Constance Hockaday. *You Make A Better Wall Than a Window: The Tour*, 2015; a guerilla performance aboard a San Francisco Bay public ferry. Photo: SoEx.



In 2014, Clockshop began a partnership with California State Parks to work at the Bowtie, an 18-acre post-industrial parcel of land along the LA River.

The land had been owned by the state for over a decade, but had been underused, neglected, and practically forgotten. Our mission is to bring temporary public art projects and interpretive programming to the site in order to educate people about the river and the future state park along its banks. Our programming was initiated out of concern and awareness of real estate speculation and the changes in our neighborhood due to gentrification. Over the past five years we have commissioned and programmed over 90 projects working in partnership with California State Parks. The work ranges from conceptual sculpture to an intensive workshop for youth that teaches them interpretation skills and reconnects them to the land and environment around the LA River.

We insist that the artists we work with spend time at the site, getting to know the rhythms, sounds, flora, and fauna at the Bowtie. All projects are temporary; vandalism is almost a given. We encourage artists to think about work that can withstand the weather and human destruction. We relish chance encounters with our public audience and also deliberate gatherings around the campfire on the night of the rising full moon. We bring Los Angelenos back to the river to show them that our river is not just concrete channel, but a lush riparian habitat full of coyotes, snowy egrets, and giant blue herons.

JULIA MELTZER

Color photos by Gina Clyne
Black and white photos by Roberto Guerra

clockshop.org





DIGGING IN THE WORLD

My artwork is most often about place, land, and people. *fieldfaring projects* (2003–2017), in collaboration with Ted Purves, asked questions about systems of critical exchange, food, and farming in the urban landscape—explorations of informal social economies and rural aesthetics. Our thinking about publics and participation in this body of work over fifteen years was directed toward ways that people come together in public contexts. We used social forms such as a shop, a barn-raising, a contest, or a tour to engage and meet people, and local communities.

I have learned what public space is by using it: the street, a storefront, a park, or a plaza. I think we reimagine what public life can be when we expand our understanding of public to include ancestors, ecological systems, and the forces that are shaping global transitions. In these times of ecological crises and deep social and political fracture, generative resistance and collective actions by artists and many others offer different stories that nourish hope and resilience, and the healing of the social body. Working with and for the public is a way to build new languages and ways of being with and for each other.

My drawing is an inquiry, a system, and a map for working in public contexts. It is also an ethos for keeping me in the flow of asking questions, listening, and digging deeper.

SUSANNE COCKRELL

DIGG
transform

name the forces
+ transitions that
disrupt + make
meaningful the time
we live in

diaphram
horizon
present

→ acknowledge people

give attention
to Place, its flows,
systems + blockages

Ext
to

ING IN THE WORLD

ing spaces of public life to attune + reconnect

FUTURALITY

prioritize
collaboration
and process

PEOPLE + PUBLICS

poetic world making, commons, communitarianism
social imaginaries, social forms, voice

make trouble
and stay with
it

LAND

who live on the land now + those who have been here before us, voice

STRATA

geological
geographic
ecological
cultural
social
histories + events
voice

stretch our attention
to context + bend
the world + what
a story can be

ANCESTRALITY

and our experience + understanding of public
include ancestors, past, present, future; connect
them to land and systems that anchor us
to each other in time + space.

HOW DO YOU EXPAND THE EXPECTATIONS FOR PUBLIC PRACTICE?

MIKE BLOCKSTEIN &
REANNE ESTRADA
of PUBLIC MATTERS

Mike Blockstein: Public Matters is a Los Angeles-based social enterprise and a creative studio for civic engagement. What that means is that we are artists who are interested in public discourse, public dialogue, and expanding and pushing the boundaries of what role artists can play. But beyond that, our work specifically focuses on the idea of addressing the trust gap that exists between institutions and residents and communities, in particular in communities of color.

Reanne Estrada: Our work has over the years spanned a range of different topics from healthy food access, to tobacco control, urban planning education, place-based narratives, transportation and traffic safety—and all of that is intentional. It has been from the very beginning because Public Matters is committed to the effort to try to embed and integrate artistic practices and creativity into areas and disciplines outside the arts. What we're trying to do is make more hospitable environments for artists and artistic practice out in the world.

MB: We're also trying to expand the notion and the imagination of what it looks like when an artist is working in or collaborating with a public institution or governmental agency. How do we make the process fun, participatory, and engaging, both for people who work within an institution, but also for people who are residents, students, neighbors, friends, and family who maybe feel a little off-put by that institution? We are trying to bring them together.

RE: It's kind of a bait-and-switch because you're not going to assume walking in that the people in these institutions are just knocking themselves over to



Celia Ramirez, owner of Ramirez Meat Market, leads a healthy cooking demo in front of her recently transformed East Los Angeles store (*Market Makeovers // East Los Angeles & Boyle Heights, 2010–2014*). *Proyecto MercadoFRESCO* was supported under a subcontract with the UCLA Center for Population Health and Health Disparities (CPHHD) under Grant No 1P50-105188-01 from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI).



Young folks from East Los Angeles & Boyle Heights promoting healthy food access and healthy eating in costume (Market Makeovers // East Los Angeles & Boyle Heights, 2010–2014). *Proyecto MercadoFRESCO* was supported under a subcontract with the UCLA Center for Population Health and Health Disparities (CPHHD) under Grant No 1P50-105188-01 from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

work directly with artists. Part of our job—part of what we have had to do over the course of our work—is to convince them of our trustworthiness to a certain degree and that the approach that we're taking, though it may be outside of what their comfort zone might be, can actually yield positive benefits.

MB: So, if you're a public health person, and you're like, "well, I have traditional ways of working, but perhaps there's an interest in doing something a little bit different," that's an opening for us. For example, we've done work around the notion of healthy food access and a process that the lexicon of public health has called a "corner store conversion." (I say that in a jargon-y way because it sounds a little bit wonky, right?) A "corner store conversion" is focused on the idea of neighborhoods and communities where you have a paucity of healthy fruits and vegetables, that well, duh, the solution is just to bring more fruits and vegetables, and then, poof, it's just magic; people magically buy them. They'll be healthier; problem solved, right? We know it's not so simple. It's actually a question of education, of culture, of norms, of habits, and that requires real engagement.

Public Matters came up with this idea of a "market makeover." A market makeover isn't just simply a transformation of a corner store and putting in healthier fruits and vegetables. It's more of a transformation about how a community, led by a group of youth from the community, embrace the idea of wanting to transform the way that they eat and what they eat. The students are involved not only in the transformation of the market, but they're learning

and they become advocates for healthy eating. And then the creative side becomes: what does that look like?

It doesn't just look like, "well, put the fruits and vegetables in the store." You have students dressed up in giant fruit and vegetable costumes, and lo and behold, they're appearing on the streets of East L.A. with a group of mariachis, or they're in the East L.A. Mexican-American Heritage Parade, or videos that they've made are showing up in the Civic Center as part of a weekly movie night. It's the unexpected; it's the creative. It's a way to demonstrate to people that this is a really different take, but it's also a structural take, where we're building a system, where we're creating partnerships amongst schools, local businesses, and institutions who are actually working together and sharing knowledge.

RE: I think one of the things that artists and creative people can bring to this conversation of collaborating with institutions is to try to reframe or reshape the way people look at results—to look at the way we evaluate what success looks like. A lot of institutions have traditionally relied on quantitative measures for success: things that you can count, for instance. Part of our job in all the different types of work that we do is to shift the perspective, so that we're looking at more qualitative concerns and really bringing it back to the root of what this is really about, which at the end of the day, is about people. Our job in this equation, as much as possible, is to center that humanness in the work that these institutions are doing. Because at the end of the day, they exist to serve their constituents.



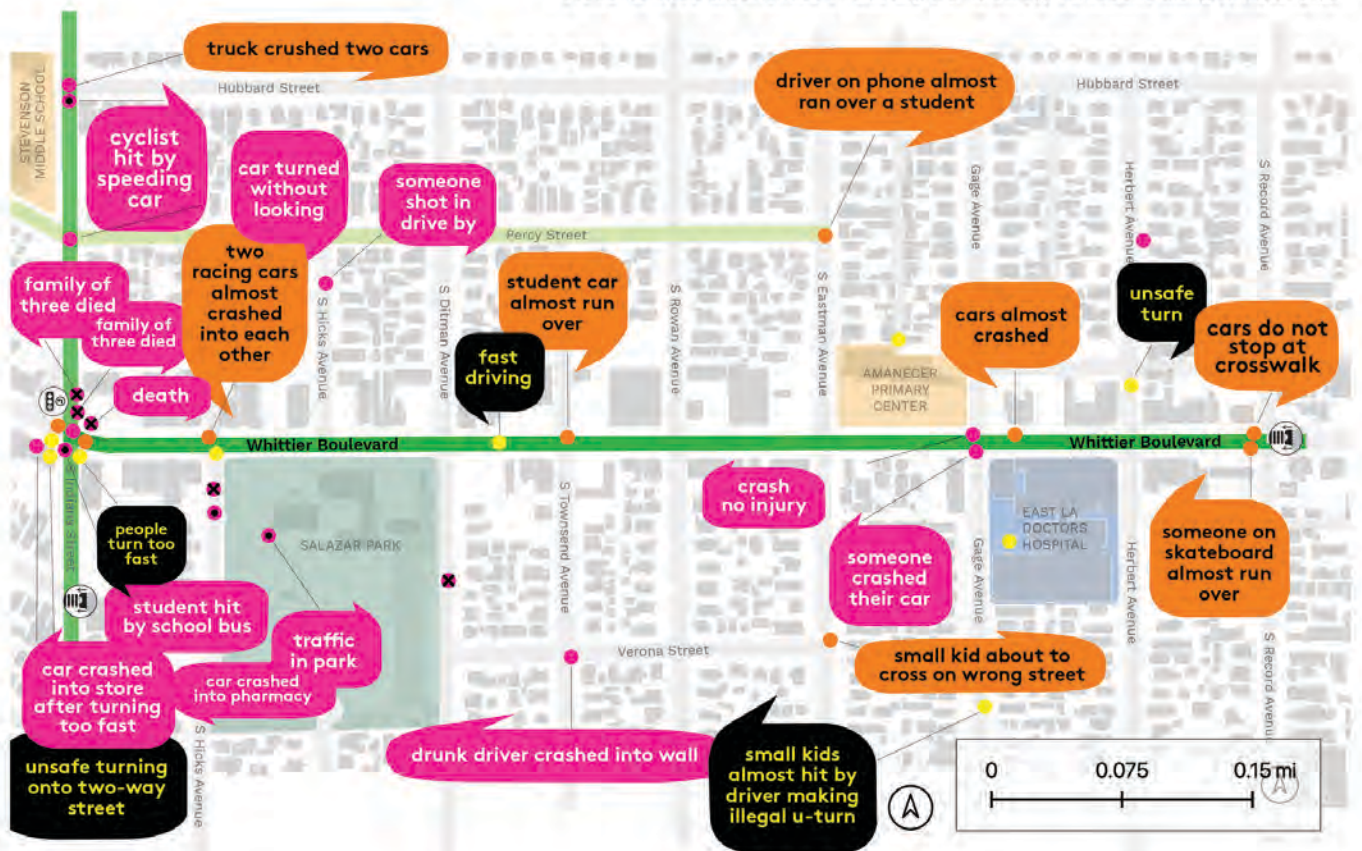
Greetings from East LA students present maps of their experiences of East LA traffic safety conditions and responses to Los Angeles County's Vision Zero Action Plan to staff from LA County Public Works, Department of Public Health, and the public-at-large at Los Angeles County Public Works. (Greetings from East Los Angeles, 2016–present.)

**MAPPING TRAFFIC SAFETY ALONG
EAST LOS ANGELES COLLISION
CONCENTRATION CORRIDORS**

WHITTIER BLVD

BETWEEN INDIANA ST & RECORD AV

Students' lived experiences of existing traffic safety conditions along Whittier Blvd



Traffic Safety Mapping Activity with community members' contributions along five East LA Collision Concentration Corridors. (Greetings from East Los Angeles, 2016–present.)

Whether it's traffic safety or public health, you're working with people. The more that we can shake things up so that that becomes the primary point—the springboard for how we start to make change—there is a more meaningful and significant possibility for long-term changes.

MB: This idea about expanding the boundaries and expectations for public practice is also about a reset of traditional structures and hierarchies and power dynamics. There are plenty of cases where there are projects where basically a community is either the recipient, or they're basically just asked to provide things without any sense of reciprocity, right? There's a big difference if somebody is the subject of something versus somebody who becomes the one who actually sets the stage and tempo of how that happens.

RE: When Public Matters looks at how to approach this, we approach our work from a systems thinking perspective and really look at the different instituent* parts: the institution is a part; community members are a part; maybe government officials or a whole range of people are part of the equation. When we do our work, a big part of that lift is really in the creation of space for each of these instituent parts—each of these actors—to be able to contribute in a way that feels meaningful and authentic. The way that we do that is to make sure that everyone is recognized for the expertise that they bring to the conversation. When we're bringing together folks who work in transportation planning, like engineers or traffic safety, they're bringing their expertise about the process of doing that work. At the same time, we're bringing community members who are the experts in being the people who use those streets and who live in these neighborhoods that are impacted by traffic safety issues. From the very beginning, what we try to do is to, as much as possible, create a more level field of engagement, so that people can talk and inform each other, thinking and creating together essentially.

* The term *instituent* came to our attention from an article Sue Bell Yank wrote about Public Matters almost a decade ago, "Tactical Organizing: The Instituent Art Practice of Public Matters." It felt appropriate. She came to it via Irit Rogoff's article "Turning," which in turn quotes a series of essays by philosopher Gerald Raunig, "Instituent Practices: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming." Sue Bell Yank identifies Public Matters as an 'instituent practice' in the sense that it crosses social and disciplinary boundaries and resists regulatory ossification, creating "'instituting events' that bring together a diversity of constituent practices (as in community organizations, schools, governmental entities, universities, individuals), and this plurality counter the closure of the processes at work. As Raunig describes, 'The various arrangements of self-organization promote broad participation in instituting, because they newly compose themselves as a constituent power again and again, always tying into new local and global struggles.[12]'"

MB: What Reanne is talking about is also this idea of reciprocity, where local knowledge and community knowledge and expertise is just as important as professional expertise. It's really about changing certain hierarchies and power dynamics inherent within the way institutions generally work. As a specific example, what we're referring to is some work around Vision Zero in Los Angeles County, where we brought together a group of transportation engineers who certainly have all the knowledge about street safety engineering, how to create safe streets, but lack the local knowledge and specificity of what's actually happening on the ground. We created an exchange where they were working directly with a group of high school students from East L.A. who shared what they know, what their families know, what they live, and what they experience around street safety with engineers who otherwise only look at datasets that are generated by the state. They lack the local knowledge and input, so we created an environment where there's a mutual exchange, not only just in the conversation, but they're also teaching students about ways to mitigate and implement street safety. It's a true exchange of knowledge and ideas that hopefully is generative.

RE: We always hope and strive to make sure that these occasions for exchange are not just transactional. Because what we're interested in doing ultimately is to try to spark relationships between the people who are in these institutions and the constituents they serve on the ground. That gives greater accountability, and at the end of the day, it's perhaps more effective for longer term change.

MB: One other thing we wanted to touch on is that within all of this, we need to maintain our artistic and creative spirit/vitality, which is really based around the idea of experimentation and play. And this is where we are constantly pushing with boundaries. Part of that is a really simple thing: it's basically the idea that if you're trying to get different results of structural, social, or behavioral change, or improve results, you have to do things a little bit differently. As artists, we also have to be able to make sure that within the work that we're doing, we have the room to kind of push on those boundaries a little bit by bringing that spirit of whimsy and play. That's actually part of our strategy of how we work with and engage with communities and residents.

RE: One of the other things that I'd like to bring up is what else artists can bring to the table. Often, in a lot of cases, artists are being potentially brought in as problem solvers—people who can design solutions. I don't think that that's necessarily the best thing always because then what you're doing is you're missing out on the true value that artists can bring to



Elders from Silver Lake Adult Day Health Care Center "flash" drivers with yellow parasols and a message to take it easy and slow down in Tagalog ("Dahan Dahan") in Historic Filipinotown (*Temple Street Slow Jams*, Vision Zero LA Outreach & Education with Los Angeles Department of Transportation, 2017).

a discourse. That means not just finding the answers to your question, but maybe figuring out what questions you should be asking to begin with. That's something that an artist's critical and creative perspective can bring to a collaboration with these institutions and different groups.

One of the things where we get a little bit hamstrung is this notion of efficiencies. We often equate efficiencies with effectiveness, and I'd like to push back a little bit on that and ask people to consider whether that's always true. A lot of the work we do is, I would say, probably not that efficient. It takes a lot of time. There's a lot of sweat equity. Relationship building requires a lot of emotional labor. That's not so easily accounted for in the ledger books. At the end of the day, we should rethink how we measure what success is—or maybe not success, but what progress or advancement really looks like.

MB: As we ask these questions about what's effective and what's progress, one of the things that we always ask ourselves—and I think is important for others to ask of themselves—is this question about what an authentic public engagement looks like. To us, it's what we've talked about: the notion of reciprocity; of something that's creative, that's playful, that people actually want to take part in; that looks and feels like it actually is from the place and from the community; that it reflects the values, the aesthetics, the cultures, the norms, the habits of that place because it's really driven by the people who inhabit the place and all those values and customs. If we are to go back to that question about the bait-and-switch and how we as artists managed to work and navigate within this terrain, what we're also trying to demonstrate is

that as artists, we're also creative thinkers who can think on a systemic level; who can think about how to build partnerships, how to build relationships, how to create a structure that ideally can endure; and that it still has this level of authenticity and engagement at its heart.

And really, that's about leaving open the possibility for exploration.



Temple Street Slow Jams flyer, featuring members from Asociación Nacional Pro Personas Mayores and Los Angeles Walks (Vision Zero LA Education & Engagement with Los Angeles Department of Transportation, 2018).

HOW DO YOU
WORK WITH

PUBLIC
PARKS

AND

SPACES?



THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

DAVID ALLEN BURNS &
AUSTIN YOUNG
of FALLEN FRUIT

Our artwork is always about people and place. Public collaboration, participation, and engagement in public spaces are at the core of our art practice and an integral part of the projects we create, such as the *Public Fruit Jam*, *Lemonade Stand*, *Fallen Fruit Magazine*, and *The Endless Orchard*. Fruit and public spaces are both a part of culture. We are interested in the rituals of everyday life and how our memories are connected to place and also to simple objects, like fruit, that are both familiar and symbolic.

Our works are often serialized public projects that activate a temporary community and celebrate everyone. They are varied in scale and impact, and do not require prerequisite knowledge or particular skills—everyone is welcome and is invited to participate. We are guests to communities we don't live in, and it's surprising how much great work can be done when you are an outsider. It lends a different perspective to everyone. One of the unique qualities of collaborative artworks is that they allow all participants to become equal. Regardless of age, gender, cultural differences, language preferences, we are sharing in an activity or experience of place that uses the subject and the material to transform everyday meaning and create new cultural understanding.

The purpose of art is not to provide answers or solutions to other people's problems, but to deepen the understanding of other people and the world around us. The public means everybody and not one way of looking at the world.

The *Public Fruit Jam*, a well-documented public participatory project that invites everyone to collaborate on making fruit jams to share with family, friends, and strangers without using recipes, and instead, by a negotiation of flavors. Often, a person will end up sitting next to another person or family they don't know and start to share stories about family and history. People may discover there is a common bond through food and culture.

Another example is our *Lemonade Stand*. In exchange for a glass of lemonade, we ask everyone to draw a "self-portrait" onto a lemon using black markers. These hand-drawn portraits are then photographed with the participant, and all of the lemon portraits are photographed another time without the artist creating a group snapshot of the public in one day. Instead of being a child's investigative exercise in capitalism, *Fallen Fruit's Lemonade Stand* explores our quality of character in the public realm.



David Allen Burns and Austin Young / Fallen Fruit. *Lemonade Stand*, 2014; public participatory project. Courtesy of the Artists.



David Allen Burns and Austin Young / Fallen Fruit. *Fallen Fruit Magazine*, 2019; public participatory project at Victoria and Albert Museum, London; PDF download. Courtesy of the Artists. (Image: previous page) Detail from *SUPERSHOW*, 2019; *Portrait of David* (found object), repeat pattern *Spektro Completo* created for Orto Botanico in Palermo, Italy. Commissioned by the PDC Design Gallery, Los Angeles, California, 2019.

The more fun you can have, the more fun it is. In fact, we think we should lower our expectations for outcomes and be present in the moment.

Fallen Fruit Magazine brings together public participation, local histories, and story-telling. Using strategies of collage, a temporary team of culture advocates use fruit as a symbol, object, and/or subject to create original editorial content in a one-day a site-specific contemporary culture magazine. Each edition is unique and is editorially focused on topics and subject matter that is historically meaningful to the neighborhood and/or region. A final PDF is available for download.

For *The Endless Orchard*, Fallen Fruit distributes free-of-charge bare-root fruit trees. We encourage the planting of these trees in either public space or on the boundary of private property. Each recipient signs an adoption form promising to care for the tree and initiating a relationship with it. Everywhere you go, there is local. What's important about community-based public practice is creating works of art or projects that explore the nuances and complexities of what a "public" is in a geographical way.

We are contemporary artists. Maintaining the integrity of these participatory artworks is essential to us when working with different institutions who often see public programming as being for children, causing parents to view them as daycare. Recognize this, and still create great work. We have a philosophy and core principals which keep our projects grounded and consistent. Some of these ideas are about dismantling hierarchy, and traditional ideas of teacher vs. student, which we definitely do not follow. We are hosts. We are not experts. There is no right way to do something. We can't control an experience. We can't control outcomes. We must let go and be present in the moment. Asking questions and listening is the best way to connect to people. This is how we learn and research for our exhibition projects. If we can find community through a shared common experience, we can form new bonds that transcend the limitations of time, and space, and politics. We believe that we have enough in this world to polarize us as a population. Let's create experiences that bring people together. We believe in everyone. In this, we find the richest results. Our philosophy at its core is about sharing. Fostering community. Forging bonds. Fruit is beautiful. Aesthetic. Sweet.

Fallen Fruit is an art collaboration originally conceived in 2004 by David Burns, Matias Viegner and Austin Young. Since 2013, David Burns and Austin Young have continued the collaborative work.

HOW DO YOU

THINK
THROUGH

PROTECTION & SECURITY
OF YOUR PROJECTS?

HOW DO YOU WORK

NATIONALLY

WHILE

REPRESENTING

THE LOCAL?

WHAT INSIGHT
CAN YOU OFFER

AS AN ARTIST
WORKING ON

SELECTION
COMMITTEES?

BEING GROUNDED IN OAKLAND FEEDS MY ARTIST POWER

I am an artist disruptor who collaborates with social movements and national organizations around the country who are working for racial, gender, and climate justice. I'm also the founder and president of the Center for Cultural Power. We organize artists and culture-makers who are directly impacted by systems of oppression and who are working towards solutions with large impact.

I was born and raised in Oakland, and Oakland has shaped my artistic practice. Whether it was the graffiti in the streets, the Black Panthers, or growing up in a hood that was very Black and Latinx, my local conditions had a tremendous influence on me. In the 1980s and 90s, Oakland was a place that was artistically thriving, but it was also a very hard place to grow up in. I witnessed a lot of trauma and violence in my life—violence that was due to systemic racism and inequality. I witnessed the effects of the crack cocaine epidemic in my community. I remember looking out my window and seeing brown kids getting jumped into gangs on my block. I grew up feeling afraid to walk around my own hood, and developed hyper vigilance because there was constant violence all around me. Like many working-class people of color, my family was forced to live in a neighborhood plagued by violence, police brutality, food deserts, and pollution.

Today, Oakland is still my home, yet the city has drastically changed. My childhood experiences in Oakland inspired me to be an agent of change, with a focus on art and culture. There is not a single week that goes by when I'm not on a plane, helping to shape a national strategy or speaking about my work. I stay grounded through self-care, therapy, and plant medicine. Staying grounded means healing from injustice and from the violence I witnessed as a kid. I was lucky that I didn't use systems of coping that were self-destructive. I lost a lot of friends to drugs, violence, and mass incarceration. My way of coping was through art, like listening to weird music, reading a lot, and creating—creating ALL the time, because that allowed me to have a voice, to imagine something different, and to process my human condition. Art allowed me to create my own reality in my imagination and that transported me into another world.

My local reality made an imprint on me that shaped my artistic practice and activism. Oakland was a city just like many other cities. My lived experience was also a state-wide condition, and even a national condition. I believe that the local conditions, especially of people impacted by oppression, allow them to have a comprehensive perspective of not just what the problems are, but also what the solutions are. This is why we have to listen to people who are closest to the pain. As impacted people, many of us live at the intersections of racial violence, gender violence, climate chaos, and economic inequality. Yet, that



Favianna Rodriguez. *I am Healing for Myself and for Past Generations*, 2019; collage. Courtesy of the Artist.

also leads us to a powerful understanding of the world and interlocking systems of inequality. My experience as the daughter of immigrants growing up in Oakland allows me to connect with people facing similar conditions. I leverage my local knowledge and my strategies of resilience to be able to scale models that can have a national impact.

In order to do national work, I first had to build my confidence and my voice, share my story, and move with authority and self-awareness. My migrant family didn't have access to healing mechanisms and that had a negative impact on them. I work on my own mental and emotional wellness by working with coaches and psychotherapists, and by paying attention to the needs of my body. I invest in myself and in unlearning the systems of oppression that have caused harm to my community. I had to unlearn my own internalized stuff in order to be able to speak from a place of power, and trust that my art and leadership were going to be able to mobilize and inspire other people. I learned how to assess social and political problems through the lens of my lived experience.

What's amazing about doing national work like I do now is that I can visualize solutions and propose big ideas.

I love working in the realm of ideas. I love to imagine a big solution to a big problem, like cultural inequality. I like to play in that space precisely because I'm an artist, and my lived experiences give me the tools to speak from a place of knowledge. I recognize that it takes years for national concepts to translate into local policies, but all great ideas take time. We have to start somewhere and dream big.

Art is critical to my healing because when I can tell my story, I'm able to be witnessed, able to be acknowledged and seen for what I've experienced in my life, the wonderful stuff and the suffering as well. It is my hope that in telling my story, I am able to inspire somebody else to do so as well. That's how I can impact generational change: to create safe spaces for people to break the silence, shed shame, and move towards healing and justice. It's important for me to embody and model the kind of transformation that is needed for true leadership. In order to cultivate a revolution of the imagination, I have to do my own work so that I can prune the thoughts that limit me—the thoughts that are the product of a colonial cis white male patriarchy—so that I may think expansively about what's possible.



Insights on Applying for Things and Getting Rejected.

Jenifer K Wofford

Competitive opportunities are not about awarding some universally agreed upon notion of "quality". There's no such thing.

They're about whether your agenda and experience as an artist meshes well with the agenda of the selection committee. Contending with rejections can be daunting, but it's 100% the reality of a professional artist.

An application is a craft that needs to be honed like any other skill—with practice, repetition, trial and error. It gets better and easier each time.

I've been both accepted and rejected for opportunities many times. It took time to figure out my shortcomings and my strengths as an applicant. I definitely learned a ton from being a juror.

Based on being on both sides of the process, here are some step-by-step suggestions.

First:

Do your homework: compatibility matters. Be real about the application you intend to submit for. Does your experience or proposal seem like a good potential match for the gig?

Next:

Make your materials a joy and a breeze to get through. PLEASE.

How to do this? Read and respect the criteria and format guidelines for the application! Good God! It's so frustrating watching fellow artists shoot themselves in the foot so unnecessarily by ignoring this basic expectation.

Assume that everyone on the committee is tired, cranky, impatient, and looking at a huge stack of applications. Jurors are trying to do right by you, but they are often bleary-eyed after reviewing piles of work, and become justifiably impatient with meandering, disorganized applications.

They are selecting artists based on specific criteria. Make it as easy for them as possible to see how your 100% non-annoying proposal fits this.

So:

- * Don't lie about yourself or your work.
- * When there's a specific prompt, respond to it.
- * Write coherent, concise descriptions of your work and your proposal.
- * Respect word counts.
- * Respect video time limits. Edit accordingly.
- * Image files -> consistent quality and size.
- * All files labeled and numbered according to the exact format requested.
- * Recommendation letters -> ask at least a month in advance.
- * Have a trusted/experienced friend review your application honestly and critically.
- * If you can't handle any of this, take a workshop or hire a grant writer.
- * Make sure to profusely thank anyone who helps you. IMPORTANT.

After you get accepted:

Hooray! Pay attention to what you did well.

After you get rejected:

Yes, it will happen! Feeling disappointment is real, but getting disheartened is pointless. Learn what you can from the process, and don't give up after a couple of rejections.

Despite your best efforts and qualifications, the selection committee won't always agree that you're the right fit. No biggie. On to the next one.

Healthy perspective is important!

Reality check: even highly experienced artists receive only maybe 15% of the opportunities that they apply for. 5-10% is more common. Think of your one rejection as simply a necessary step on the path to improving your odds on the next application.

External validations and competitions are part of a system that has only as much power over your sense of self as you allow. If it's a system you don't need or like, don't participate. If it's a system you do need, then learn how to flex your practice and your application abilities to respond to its realities.

Know that your creativity and your art practice are always a separate thing of joy, and that you can and will keep making and sharing things, regardless.

WHAT IS PUBLIC

ENCRYPTED EMAIL > protonmail.com SECURING YR
EMAIL > https://ssd.eff.org/en/glossary/pgp ENCRYPTED
MESSAGING > signal app & wire app SECURE PRIVATE
WEB BROWSING > duckduckgo & mozilla firefox PRIVACY/
ANTI-TRACKER BROWSER EXTENSION > ghostery.com &
eff privacy badger ANONYMOUS BROWSING > tor FACT
CHECK > politifact.com & factcheck.org DIGITAL PRIVACY
AT US BORDER > https://www.eff.org/wp/digital-privacy-
us-border-2017 ENCRYPTED CHATS & FILE SHARING
> balboa.io DATA DETOX > https://tacticaltech.org/
news/data-detox-kit/ ONLINE HARASSMENT > https://
onlinesafety.feministfrequency.com/en/ HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDERS IN HOSTILE ENVIRO > https://www.
frontlinedefenders.org/en/programme/digital-security
FIGHT AGAINST GVT SURVEILLANCE > https://pack.
resetthenet.org FEMINIST CYBERSECURITY > https://
hackblossom.org/cybersecurity/ LIBRARY FREEDOM >
libraryfreedom.org GUIDE TO BEING A DEFENDANT >
tiltedscalescollective.org ACTIVIST/IMMIGRANT/YOUTH
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS > https://cldc.org/know-your-
rights/> ANTI-OPPRESSION RESOURCES > http://aorta.
coop/resources/ WORKING ARTIST WAGES > https://
wageforwork.com ART SCHOOL & CULTURAL EQUITY >
http://bfamfaphd.com/ FREELANCERS UNION > https://
www.freelancersunion.org/ CONSENSUS DECISION
MAKING > https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/
consensus PROTECTION FROM MIC & CAMERA HACKS
https://www.activistpost.com/2015/09/how-to-protect-
yourself-from-microphone-and-camera-hacking.html

WHAT

IS

PUBLIC

RESOURCES

This is a list of resources for artists who are interested in working with the public or have a public practice and might not know where to start. There are funding and fellowship opportunities, exhibitions, education programs, permitting information, databases, and further information about public art. They are organized by region, expanding from the Bay Area to California to the United States. Descriptions of resources are drawn directly from the organizations' websites.

This list was originally compiled by Courtney Fink as part of research for the Rainin Foundation's Open Spaces Program, and been amended by *Art Practical*. It is not comprehensive, but is meant to serve as a starting point.

BAY AREA

CENTER FOR CULTURAL INNOVATION

<http://www.cciarts.org/>

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001. Its mission is to promote knowledge sharing, networking, and financial independence for individuals in the arts by providing business training, grants, and incubating innovative projects that create new program knowledge, tools and practices for artists in the field, and conditions that contribute to realizing financial self determination.

Funding | Education Programs | Resources

CITY OF OAKLAND: PUBLIC ART

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/public-art-in-oakland>

The City of Oakland's Public Art Program commissions original works of art for public spaces throughout Oakland. The program enriches the city's visual environment, integrates the creative thinking of artists into public construction projects, and provides a means for citizens and visitors to enjoy and experience cultural diversity. Public Art projects are funded through a 1.5% allocation from all eligible City of Oakland capital improvement projects and eligible grant revenue.

Public Art | Permits | Resources | Exhibition

CITY OF SAN JOSE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?nid=4195>

The City of San José Public Art Program (SJPA) seeks to build community through artworks and exhibitions that define creative placemaking: expanding the community's access and engagement to public space and impacting the economic and visual dynamics of the city.

Public Art | Exhibition

FOR-SITE FOUNDATION

<http://www.for-site.org/>

The FOR-SITE Foundation is dedicated to the idea that art can inspire fresh thinking and important dialogue about our natural and cultural environment. Through exhibitions, commissions, artist residencies, and education programs, we support the creation and presentation of innovative art about place.

Public Art | Exhibition | Education Programs

SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION

<https://www.sfartscommission.org/>

The San Francisco Arts Commission is the City agency that champions the arts as essential to daily life by investing in a vibrant arts community, enlivening the urban environment and shaping innovative cultural policy.

Funding | Exhibition | Public Art

SF BETTER STREETS

<https://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-furniture-overview/public-art/>

This website is provided by the City and County of San Francisco to assist San Franciscans to make street improvements in their neighborhoods, shopping districts, and workplaces. The site provides information on street improvement project types, the City's permitting process, maintenance responsibilities, and applicable codes and guidelines.

Permits | Resources | Public Art

SF COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM

<https://www.sfccg.org/>

Since 1991, the Community Challenge Grant/Neighborhood Beautification Fund of the City and County of San Francisco has partnered with hundreds of community organizations to support community-led neighborhood improvements. The program provides public funding for community-led transformation efforts that enhance beauty, facilitate community participation and stewardship, and strengthen neighborhoods.

Public Art | Funding

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING: PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC ART (POPOS)

<http://sf-planning.org/privately-owned-public-open-space-and-public-art-popos>

Privately-Owned Public Open Space (POPOS) are publicly accessible spaces in forms of plazas, terraces, atriums, small parks, and even snippets which are provided and maintained by private developers. In San Francisco, POPOS mostly appear in the Downtown office district area. Prior to 1985, developers provided POPOS under three general circumstances: voluntarily, in exchange for a density bonus, or as a condition of approval. The 1985 Downtown Plan created the first systemic requirements for developers to provide publicly accessible open space as a part of projects in C-3 Districts. The goal was to "provide in the downtown quality open space in sufficient quantity and variety to meet the needs of downtown workers, residents and visitors."

Permits | Resources | Public Art

STUDIO FOR PUBLIC SPACES

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/publicspaces>

The Studio for Public Spaces is based in the Exploratorium, the innovative museum of science, art, and human perception. The Studio builds on the Exploratorium's tradition of active, inquiry-based learning experiences, carrying this practice outdoors and into the public realm. Working in public spaces—from the urban core to the city edges—they create exhibits and environments that encourage play, exploration, creativity, and social connection.

Public Art | Blog | Exhibition

CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL

<http://www.arts.ca.gov/>

Advancing California through the arts and creativity.

[Funding](#) | [Resources](#) | [Blog](#)

LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE'S CIVIC ART PROGRAM

<https://www.lacountyarts.org/experiences/civic-art>

The LA County Department of Arts and Culture's Civic Art Program (Civic Art) provides leadership in the development of high quality civic spaces by integrating artists into the planning and design process at the earliest possible opportunity, encouraging innovative approaches to civic art, and providing access to artistic experiences of the highest caliber for the residents of LA County. Working with leading artists, emerging public artists, County departments, and communities, Civic Art creates artwork, design, public engagement activities, exhibitions, temporary art, and event-based programming for new and renovated facilities throughout LA County. Civic Art has also commissioned work for capital projects for public libraries, parks, pools, community centers, jails, and health centers.

[Public Art](#) | [Blog](#) | [Resources](#)

LOS ANGELES NOMADIC DIVISION

<http://nomadicdivision.org/>

LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division) is a non-profit organization founded in 2009 committed to curating site-specific public art exhibitions in Los Angeles and beyond. LAND believes that all people deserve the opportunity to experience innovative contemporary art in their everyday existence, to enhance their quality of life and ways of thinking about their community. In turn, artists deserve the opportunity to realize projects in the public realm, unsupported through traditional institutions. LAND brings contemporary art outside of the walls of museums and galleries, into our shared public spaces and unique sites, in Los Angeles and beyond.

[Public Art](#) | [Exhibition](#)

SPARC: SOCIAL AND PUBLIC ART RESOURCE CENTER

<http://sparcinla.org/>

SPARC's intent is to examine what we choose to memorialize through public art, to devise and innovate excellent art pieces; and ultimately, to provide empowerment through participatory processes to residents and communities excluded from civic debate. SPARC's works are never simply individually authored endeavors, but rather a collaboration between artists and communities, resulting in art which rises from within the community, rather than being imposed upon it.

[Public Art](#) | [Exhibition](#) | [Resources](#)

NATIONAL

A BLADE OF GRASS

<http://www.abladeofgrass.org/>

ABOG provides resources to artists who demonstrate artistic excellence and serve as innovative conduits for social change. They evaluate the quality of work in this evolving field by fostering an inclusive, practical discourse about the aesthetics, function, ethics and meaning of socially engaged art that resonates within and outside the contemporary art dialogue.

[Fellowship](#) | [Publication](#)

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS PUBLIC ART NETWORK (PAN) YEAR IN REVIEW DATABASE

<http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/public-art-network/pan-year-in-review-database>

The Americans for the Arts Public Art Network (PAN) Year in Review annually recognizes outstanding public art projects that represent the most compelling work for the year from across the country. Two or more public art professionals serve as jurors to review hundreds of project applications and select up to fifty projects to include. The PAN Year in Review is the only national program that specifically recognizes public art projects and is an excellent advocacy and educational tool for those who are impacting their community through public art. Recognized projects are available in the Online Database, and information about past presentations can be found on the Annual Presentations page.

[Public Art](#) | [Resources](#)

ARTPLACE AMERICA

<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/>

ARTPLACE AMERICA is a collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions. ARTPLACE envisions a future of equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities in which everyone has a voice and agency in creating contextual, adaptive, and responsive solutions. Their mission is to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development.

[Resources](#)

BURNING MAN ARTS

<http://burningman.org/culture/burning-man-arts/>

Through art grants, mentorship, and art management programs, Burning Man Arts supports the creation of impactful, interactive artwork around the world and in Black Rock City, home to the seminal Burning Man event. The mission of Burning Man Arts is to change the paradigm of art from a commodified object to an interactive, participatory, shared experience of creative expression.

[Funding](#) | [Public Art](#)

CENTER FOR ARTISTIC ACTIVISM

<https://artisticactivism.org/>

The Center for Artistic Activism is a place to explore, analyze, and strengthen connections between social activism and artistic practice. Artistic activism is more than just an innovative tactic, it is an entire approach: a perspective, a practice, a philosophy. Their goal is to make more creative activists and more effective artists.

[Education Programs](#)

CREATIVE CAPITAL

<https://www.creative-capital.org/>

Creative Capital supports innovative and adventurous artists across the country through funding, counsel, gatherings, and career development services.

[Funding](#)

CREATIVE TIME

<http://creativetime.org/>

Founded in 1974, Creative Time commissions and presents public art projects internationally which are innovative, site-specific, and socially engaged often in vacant spaces of historical and architectural interest.

[Public Art](#) | [Exhibition](#)

CREATIVE WORK FUND

<http://creativeworkfund.org/>

The Creative Work Fund invites artists and non-profit organizations to create new art works through collaborations. It celebrates the role of artists as problem solvers and the making of art as a profound contribution to intellectual inquiry and to the strengthening of communities. Artists are encouraged to collaborate with nonprofit organizations of all kinds.

[Funding](#)

FORECAST PUBLIC ART

<http://forecastpublicart.org/>

Forecast Public Art is a non-profit arts organization based in Minnesota that connects the energies and talents of artists with the needs and opportunities of communities, guiding partners in creating public art that expresses the community's sense of place and pride. Offers funding for Minnesota-based artists.

[Public Art](#) | [Funding](#) | [Resources](#)

FRACTURED ATLAS

<https://www.fracturedatlas.org/>

Fractured Atlas empowers artists, arts organizations, and other cultural sector stakeholders by eliminating practical barriers to artistic expression, so as to foster a more agile and resilient cultural ecosystem.

[Resources](#)

NATIONAL CON'T

MORE ART

<http://moreart.org/>

More Art engages in a constant critical reflection on the role and boundaries of public art and socially engaged practice. Underlying every one of their projects is a profound desire to expand the traditional scope of public art beyond aesthetic considerations and into the social sphere. Amid the current debate over the realistic implications of the concept of "art as social practice," More Art believes that to produce works that both challenge viewers and engage the community, while addressing important and contentious topics, often boils down to finding a balance between art and praxis. Offers fellowships for New York-based artists.

Public Art | Resources | Education Programs | Fellowship

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES

<https://nasaa-arts.org>

All fifty states and the six US jurisdictions (American Samoa, District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands) have state arts agencies. Visit NASAA's state arts agency directory to learn more about your own state arts agency.

State arts agencies increase public access to the arts and work to ensure that every community in America enjoys the cultural, civic, economic and educational benefits of a thriving arts sector.

Resources | Funding

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, ART WORKS

<https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/grant-program-description>

Art Works is the National Endowment for the Arts' principal grants program. Through project-based funding, they support public engagement with, and access to, various forms of excellent art across the nation, the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, learning in the arts at all stages of life, and the integration of the arts into the fabric of community life. Projects may be large or small, existing or new, and may take place in any part of the nation's fifty states, the District of Columbia, and US territories.

Funding | Resources

NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

<https://www.nefa.org/>

The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) works to cultivate and promote the arts in New England and beyond. Their programs support artists across many forms of expression and many geographies, connecting them with collaborators and communities, fueling creative exchange and public discourse, and strengthening the creative economy.

Funding | Public Art

NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS (NYFA)

<https://www.nyfa.org/>

NYFA provides the concrete resources that working artists and emerging arts organizations need to thrive. It is a regional platform for an array of practical resources for working artists and emerging arts organizations. They provide fiscal sponsorship, grants, professional development programs, and listing of employment, organizational, and artist opportunities. Offers funding for New York-based artists.

Resources | Funding | Blog | Publication

NO LONGER EMPTY

<http://www.nolongerempty.org/>

No Longer Empty curates bold, site-responsive exhibitions in unconventional locations across New York City. They foreground art as a catalyst for community-led conversations about place, and commission diverse artists at all stages of their careers to expand their practices through site-specific works.

Public Art | Exhibition

PROJECTS FOR PUBLIC SPACES

<http://www.pps.org/>

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Since its founding in 1975, PPS has completed projects in more than 3,000 communities in forty-three countries and all fifty US states and are the premier center for best practices, information and resources on placemaking.

Public Art | Resources

PROJECT ROW HOUSES

<https://projectrowhouses.org/>

Project Row Houses is a community platform that enriches lives through art with an emphasis on cultural identity and its impact on the urban landscape. We engage neighbors, artists, and enterprises in collective creative action to help materialize sustainable opportunities in marginalized communities. Offers fellowships for Houston-based artists.

Public Art | Fellowship | Exhibition

PUBLIC ART ARCHIVE

<http://www.publicartarchive.org/>

The Public Art Archive™ (PAA™) is a free, online and mobile database of completed public artworks worldwide. Launched in 2009, the growth of the PAA is made possible through a variety of initiatives. Through gathering the documentation about public artworks into one central repository, the PAA supports the standardization and the adoption of best practices in cataloging diverse public art collections.

Public Art | Resources

PUBLIC ART DIALOGUE

<http://publicartdialogue.org/>

A membership-based organization devoted to public art. PAD was founded on the premise that dialogue is the essential element in all effective public art endeavors.

Public Art | Resources | Publication

PUBLIC ART FUND

<http://www.publicartfund.org/>

Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

Public Art | Exhibition

REBUILD FOUNDATION

<https://rebuild-foundation.org/>

Rebuild Foundation is a platform for art, cultural development, and neighborhood transformation. Their projects support artists and strengthen communities by providing free arts programming, creating new cultural amenities, and developing affordable housing, studio, and live-work space.

Public Art | Exhibition

TIMES SQUARE ARTS

<http://arts.timesquarenyc.org>

Times Square Arts collaborates with contemporary artists to experiment and engage with one of the world's most iconic urban places. Through the Square's electronic billboards, public plazas, vacant areas and popular venues, and the Alliance's own online landscape, Times Square Arts.

Public Art | Exhibition

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

MIKE BLOCKSTEIN *of* PUBLIC MATTERS

Mike Blockstein is a visual artist and educator with a long track record of expanding the boundaries of the arts. He is Co-Founder and Principal of Public Matters, a Los Angeles-based creative studio for civic engagement that uses socially engaged art to leverage greater inclusion, public participation and transformative change. Founded as a social enterprise in 2007, Public Matters develops and implements proactive education and engagement strategies that transform the culture, practice, and experience of civic participation in communities of color. These strategies aim to address the trust gap between institutions and agencies and historically marginalized neighborhoods and communities. He developed and co-leads Public Matters' leadership development initiative, Urban Futures Lab.

Mike's work addresses art's role in civic life, working with diverse groups and institutions of varying scale to reflect on, understand and shape their physical, social and political geographies. His work draws its roots and inspiration from his time with Southern Exposure where he formerly served as Executive Director. Mike is also a rare visual artist with a Masters of Public Administration from Harvard's Kennedy School.

DAVID ALLEN BURNS *of* FALLEN FRUIT

David Burns is a life-long Californian and native of Los Angeles. He earned an MFA in Studio Art from UC Irvine and a BFA from California Institute of the Arts. David is a co-founder of Fallen Fruit, a contemporary art collective that uses fruit as a material for creating art projects that investigate the boundaries of public spaces, including urban geographies, historical archives and bi-located geographies. Prior to his work with Fallen Fruit, David was core faculty in two programs at CalArts from 1994 to 2008. Currently, David is faculty in the graduate program for Fine Art at California College of the Arts in San Francisco. David's curatorial practice investigates narrative structures in contemporary art with notable exhibitions for the journal Leonardo at MIT; the Armory Center for the Arts and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. Concurrent to the development of his career in contemporary art and academics, David has also built expertise in corporate branding strategy, advertising and media as a technical consultant for notable projects with Mercedes Benz, Discovery Channel, SEGA Gameworks and others. David's work activates the nuances of social spaces, public archives and cultural indexes by creating works of art that are expressions of people and place and reframe conventional concepts of the real-world with shifts of meaning in real-time.

ELLEN SEBASTIAN CHANG

Ellen Sebastian Chang, a legendary figure in Bay Area performing arts, is a director and arts educator whose career spans fifty years. Her current projects include an ongoing collaboration with AfroFuturist Conjure artist Amara Tabor Smith and the Deep Waters Dance company's *House/Full of BlackWomen*, a multi-year site-specific dance theater work that addresses the displacement, sex trafficking, and the creative well-being of Black women and girls in Oakland, California. Sebastian Chang was the cofounder and artistic director of *Life on the Water*, a national and internationally known presenting and producing organization at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center from 1986 through 1995. Sebastian Chang is also the creative director of *The World As It Could Be: Human Rights and the Arts Education Program*. In 2013, she was the consulting producer for the HBO production *Whoopi Goldberg Presents Moms Mabley*; and collaborated with Amara Tabor Smith's Deep Waters Dance Theater in the creation and direction of "He Moved Swiftly But Gently..." a tribute to black queer choreographer Ed Mock. Sebastian Chang was the proud co-owner and general manager of FuseBOX Restaurant, created by chef Sunhui Chang in West

Oakland, California. During its run, FuseBOX was cited as one of the top ten restaurants by San Francisco Bay Guardian and San Francisco Magazine. She is a recipient of awards and grants from Creative Capital, MAP Fund, A Blade of Grass Fellowship in Social Engagement, Art Matters, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, NEA, Creative Work Fund, the California Arts Council, and the Zellerbach Family Fund.

SUSANNE COCKRELL

Susanne Cockrell came to visual art with a background in experimental dance and theater. Early influences include Judson Church, eastern philosophy and medicine, and undergraduate studies in anthropology and environmental science. Her works craft intersubjective encounters that build upon symbolic gestures and the poetics of daily life, often in relationship to landscape and connection to place.

For the past ten years, Cockrell has focused her practice on creating large-scale commissions for museums and public spaces under the rubric of Fieldfaring Projects. Her collaborative projects ask questions about systems of critical exchange, food and farming in the urban landscape, and explorations of informal social economies. Recent projects have been supported by the Contemporary Art Center Cincinnati, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Confederation Arts Center, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and the Creative Capital Foundation.

REANNE ESTRADA *of* PUBLIC MATTERS

Reanne Estrada is a visual artist based in Los Angeles. Her poly-disciplinary arts practice includes individual and collaborative works that have taken her across the U.S. and to the Philippines, South Korea, Italy, and Argentina. She is Co-Founder and Creative Director of Public Matters, a social enterprise engaged in collaborative, creative acts for public good, and is one-third of "Mail Order Brides/M.O.B." a Filipina-American artist girl gang. Her work explores how bodies negotiate their identities, navigate shared and at times contested spaces, and reimagine their power within and outside existing systems.

Her Public Matters adventures have addressed healthy food access through *Market Makeovers* with the California Endowment's Healthy Eating Active Communities and UCLA Center for Population Health and Health Disparities; tobacco control through *The Truth About Flavor* with Truth Initiative; youth development and urban planning education through *Greetings from East LA* with USC Sol Price School of Policy, traffic safety through *Slow Jams* with LADOT Vision Zero; access to green space through *Pedal to Parks* with Los Angeles State Parks Partners, and neighborhood storytelling through *Hidden Hi Fi* with the Pilipino Workers Center. Reanne has an A.B. in Visual and Environmental Studies from Harvard University.

DR. LUIS S. GARCIA

Dr. Luis S. Garcia is a social-service administrator and re-entry advocate. He is Director of Programs & Services at the Weingart Center in Los Angeles, supporting LA's Skid Row community and helping the homeless transition to permanent housing. He holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership for Social Justice from Loyola Marymount University. His research focuses on creating spaces for communities affected by homelessness and incarceration, sharing stories and deepening relationships through transformative community partnerships. Garcia received his high school diploma while incarcerated in the Los Angeles County jail and went on to earn a MSW in Social Work from the University of Southern California. He is a *Future IDs* core-project collaborator and is currently working with scholar Johanna K. Taylor on a *Future IDs at Alcatraz* project evaluation.

CONTRIBUTORS CON'T

SONIA GUIÑANSACA

Sonia Guiñansaca is an internationally award winning queer migrant multi-disciplinary artist, poet, cultural organizer, and social justice activist from Harlem by way of Ecuador. They emerged as a national leader in the undocumented/migrant artistic and political communities, co-founded and helped build some of the largest undocumented organizations in the country, coordinating and participating in groundbreaking civil disobedience actions in the immigrant rights movement. They have also founded some of the first creative artistic projects by and for undocumented writers/artists. For the past decade, they have worked in both policy and cultural space leading efforts to build national infrastructure and equity for migrant/qpoc/artists of color. They were formerly the managing director of CultureStrike, where they led national efforts on projects on migration, climate, and equity. Guiñansaca self-published their first mini-poetry chapbook on December 2016 called *Nostalgia and Borders*. In Spring 2020, they will release their 2nd chapbook called *#PapiFemme*. In 2020 they are launching Alegria Press, a publishing house for undocumented (formerly undocumented) writers. Guiñansaca has been a VONA/Voices, Poetry Foundation, and BOOAT Fellow, has performed at the Met, Brooklyn Museum, the Highline, Joe Pubs, Lehmann Maupin Gallery, and featured on NBC, PBS, Pen American, the Poetry Foundation, Interview Magazine, and UK's Diva Magazine, to name a few. Their migration and cultural equity work has also taken them to London, Ecuador, and Mexico to advise on migrant policy and art projects. For more information: SoniaGuinansaca.com IG/Twitter: @TheSoniaG

SZU-HAN HO

Szu-Han Ho's work in performance, sound, and installation explores the interwoven relationship between bodies and sites of memory. She frequently approaches this through diverse modes of collaboration, such as collective action, structured improvisation, and group composition. Recent projects include *MIGRANT SONGS*, a choral performance art piece incorporating stories and songs of human and nonhuman migration; *BORDER TO BAGHDAD*, an exchange between artists from the US-Mexico border and Baghdad, Iraq; and *Shelter in Place*, a sculptural installation and performance inspired by her family's history in Taiwan. Szu-Han lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico and is currently an associate professor in Art & Ecology in the Department of Art at the University of New Mexico.

CONSTANCE HOCKADAY

My work is about creating portals that get people closer to the water/nature and closer to that feeling of belonging in a place (preferably the place where they live). I have most often looked to the water as place for hosting social sculptures and immersive experiences. The shoreline is a place where many human and non-human interests collide. It is an in between space, a place that requires negotiation, which is why I like to use the shoreline to bring attention to cultural phenomena happening on land. Sometimes I make floating installations and performances that highlight the loss of cultural space on land (a la gentrification or the affects of general systemic violence). Sometimes I create visual art and installations that help me understand the social psychology and democracy of our time. More broadly though, I am interested in understanding how we can better negotiate space. I am interested in collective responses to disaster and the future. I was raised in South Texas, five miles from where the Rio Grande River dumps into the Gulf of Mexico. My marine biologist father taught me how to survive in our landscape. For this I am infinitely grateful. In a sense, most of my work is trying to re-create the kind of experiential education he provided me; it is a meditative labor, a practice in hope, and most importantly about an embodiment of the experience of possibility.

JULIA MELTZER of CLOCKSHOP

Julia Meltzer is a filmmaker and the founding director of Clockshop, a non-profit arts organization in Los Angeles. Clockshop believes in the power of contemporary art to connect people to the land on which they live and imagine its possible futures. Through commissions of new artworks and programs Clockshop expands the dialogue around politics and urban space by working collaboratively to catalyze larger institutions. Meltzer's film and video work has been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Los Angeles Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Sharjah Biennial, and toured with the Sundance Film Forward Program. Her most recent films, the feature documentaries *The Light in Her Eyes* (2011) and *Dalya's Other Country* (2017) were broadcast on POV on PBS. Meltzer is a recipient of a Rockefeller Media Arts Fellowship, John Simon Memorial Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and was a Senior Fulbright Fellow in Damascus, Syria.

FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ

Favianna Rodriguez is an interdisciplinary artist, cultural strategist, and social justice activist based in Oakland, California. Her art and praxis address migration, economic inequality, gender justice, sexual freedom and ecology. Her practice boldly reshapes the myths, ideas, and cultural practices of the present, while confronting the wounds of the past. Favianna's works serve as a record of her human experiences as a woman of color confronting interlocking cultural traditions and biases, while embracing joy, freedom, and complexity as an antidote to the life-long impacts of systemic inequality. Her signature mark-making embodies the perspective of a first-generation American Latinx artist with Afro-Latinx roots who grew up in working-class Oakland, California during the birth of the internet, and in the midst of an era of anti-immigrant hate and the war on drugs.

As part of her practice, Favianna leads art interventions around the United States. Her artistic modalities include social practice, visual art, arts advocacy, and institution building. Favianna collaborates deeply with social movements to co-create visual narratives and cultural strategies that are resilient and transformative. In addition to her expansive studio practices, she is the president of the Center for Cultural Power, a national arts organization that empowers artists to dream big, disrupt the status quo, and envision a truly just world rooted in shared humanity. In 2016, Favianna received the Robert Rauschenberg Artist as Activist Fellowship for her work around immigrant detention and mass incarceration. In 2017, she was awarded an Atlantic Fellowship for Racial Equity for her work around racial justice and climate change. In 2018, she began organizing with artists in the entertainment industry through 5050by2020.com, an initiative launched by Jill Soloway to build intersectional artist power."

GREGORY SALE

Gregory Sale is an artist and Associate Professor of Public Practice at Arizona State University. His projects organize frameworks of engagement for individuals directly affected by the justice system, connecting them with communities and encouraging reciprocal dialogue and mutual learning. These projects include *It's not just black and white* (2011) at ASU Art Museum and *Future IDs at Alcatraz* (2018-19) for the iconic prison-turned-national-park in San Francisco Bay. His work has received support from Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Creative Capital, A Blade of Grass, and Andy Warhol Foundation. He was awarded artist residencies at Yaddo, MacDowell, Headlands, and Montalvo. Previously he served as visual art director for a state arts commission, curator of education for a university art museum, and public art project manager for a city agency.

ART PRACTICAL

Art Practical's mission is to build community through contemporary visual arts discourse and cultural dialogue.

Founded in 2009, *Art Practical* is a visual arts publishing organization based in San Francisco that is people-forward and equitable. We publish with passion, rigor, and integrity through initiatives that include online arts discourse, podcasts, books, educational programs, and public events. As a platform, *Art Practical* embraces these many forms to connect diverse regional voices and amplify underrepresented perspectives from the Bay Area and broader West Coast.

Published by California College of the Arts since 2014, *Art Practical* is committed to educational partnerships and continues to provide professional development, financial support, and mentorship to those coming next because it will take more than us to make the art world we hope to see.

JOHANNA K. TAYLOR

Johanna K. Taylor is Assistant Professor at Arizona State University where she leads Herberger Institute's Creative Enterprise and Cultural Leadership MA program. She previously worked over a decade as an arts administrator and programmer. She holds a PhD in Public and Urban Policy from The New School. Her research explores questions of cultural equity through the intersection of art, community, policy, and place. Her book *The Art Museum Redefined: Power, Opportunity, and Community Engagement* (Palgrave, 2020) explores the need for museums to disrupt organizational hierarchies by sharing decisionmaking power with artists and communities. She is currently working with scholar Luis Garcia on a Future IDs at Alcatraz project evaluation.

JENIFER K WOFFORD

Jenifer K Wofford is a San Francisco artist and educator whose work plays with notions of hybridity, authenticity, and global culture, often with a humorous bent. She is also one-third of the Filipina-American artist trio Mail Order Brides/M.O.B.

Her projects have been presented locally at the Berkeley Art Museum, YBCA, and Minnesota Street Project, and further afield at DePaul Museum in Chicago, Silverlens in Manila, and Osage in Hong Kong. Wofford is a 2017 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. Her other awards include the Eureka Fellowship, the Murphy Fellowship, and grants from SFAC, Art Matters, and CCI. She has received public project commissions from SFAC, Southern Exposure, and the Asian Art Museum.

Wofford teaches in Fine Arts and Philippine Studies at the University of San Francisco. She received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and her MFA from UC Berkeley.

AUSTIN YOUNG *of* FALLEN FRUIT

Austin Young is originally from Reno, Nevada and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. His study at Parsons in Paris, France laid the foundations of a career in image-making that has spanned traditional painting and portrait photography, culminating in his signature use of nuanced visual language and pop-culture iconography. In many ways, he is more accurately described as an image-maker: his projects illustrate the sublime qualities of character that make celebrated people unique. His trademark style and techniques have captured a broad palette of musicians, artists and celebrities including Debbie Harry, Leigh Bowery and Margaret Cho, among others. Austin (austinyoung.com and [austinyoungforever](https://www.instagram.com/austinyoungforever) on instagram) often confuses personality and identity issues confrontationally and unapologetically in works that split gender roles, stereotypical constraints and socially-constructed identities.

KENNETH RAININ FOUNDATION

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation is a private family foundation dedicated to enhancing quality of life by championing and sustaining the arts, promoting early childhood literacy, and supporting research to cure chronic disease.

In/With/For the Public

www.artpractical.com/issue/in-with-for-the-public

This publication is supported by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation and is a supplement of the *Exploring Public Art Practices* symposium at the Oakland Museum of California. The symposium is part of the Rainin Foundation's Open Spaces Program, which funds temporary place-based public art projects in Oakland and San Francisco that engage communities, support artistic experimentation, and energize public spaces.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mike Blockstein of Public Matters
David Allen Burns of Fallen Fruit
Ellen Sebastian Chang
Susanne Cockrell
Reanne Estrada of Public Matters
Dr. Luis S. Garcia
Sonia Guiñansaca
Szu-Han Ho
Constance Hockaday
Julia Meltzer of Clockshop
Favianna Rodriguez
Gregory Sale
Johanna K. Taylor
Jenifer K Wofford
Austin Young of Fallen Fruit

PUBLISHED BY

Art Practical (artpractical.com)



WITH SUPPORT FROM



© 2020, Art Practical and its contributors.
All rights reserved.

Art Practical
California College of the Arts
1111 8th Street
San Francisco, CA

OMCA at 50 Community Conversations: Exploring Public Art Practices

Saturday, January 25, 2020
Oakland Museum of California
1000 Oak St, Oakland, CA

ART PRACTICAL

Christina Linden, Interim Executive Director
Vivian Sming, Head of Publications, Education, and Programs
Leila Weefur, Audio/Video Editor in Chief
Fiona Ball, Managing Editor
Addy Rabinovitch, Operations Manager
Deanna Lee, Editor
Ashley Stull Meyers, Editor
Anton Stuebner, Editor
Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly, Editor
Marissa Deitz, Audio Editor
Deanna Lee, Copy Editor
Rose Linke, Copy Editor
Will Betke-Brunswick, Publishing Assistant
Emily Markert, Publishing Assistant
Sam Soon, Publishing Assistant

DESIGN

Sam Soon & Vivian Sming

ILLUSTRATIONS

Will Betke-Brunswick

The cover image is based on a photograph of the Kenneth Rainin Foundation's pilot public art project called *Light Up Central Market* in 2014. The installation, *Block by Block*, was designed by Marisha Farnsworth of Hyphae Design. Photo: Stephanie Secret.



SONIA GUIÑANSACA

**GREGORY SALE,
JOHANNA K. TAYLOR &
DR. LUIS S. GARCIA**

ELLEN SEBASTIAN CHANG

CONSTANCE HOCKADAY

SUSANNE COCKRELL

**JULIA MELTZER
of CLOCKSHOP**

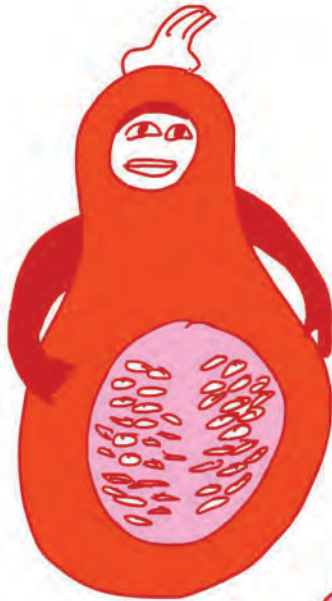
**MIKE BLOCKSTEIN &
REANNE ESTRADA
of PUBLIC MATTERS**

**DAVID ALLEN BURNS &
AUSTIN YOUNG
of FALLEN FRUIT**

FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ

JENIFER K WOFFORD

SZU-HAN HO



**Kenneth
Rainin
FOUNDATION**