Artists Run

Chicago 2.0

Wear a Mask
K I M S K I

Slamming Korean and Polish Food Together

Forever Friends

by Jim & Reuben

jimsandreuben.com
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**Part of the Buddy System**

**Lumpen Magazine**

Operating a Front for the Left in the Arts since 1991

960 W 31st St
Chicago IL 60608

lumpen.com

September 9-26, 2020
Just a few weeks feels like ages ago, making it even harder to imagine back to 2009 when Hyde Park Art Center presented the first Artists Run Chicago exhibition. Between then and now, the nation emerged from the Great Recession, elected President Barack Obama, and witnessed the birth of Instagram. Donald Trump became President and racial, economic, and political tensions increased.

On March 21, 2020 we were ordered to shelter-in-place indefinitely in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused people to hoard toilet paper, bringing new meaning to Puppies Puppies’ installation Toilet Paper Grid (2016) currently installed at the Art Center for the upcoming Artists Run Chicago 2.0. While the world has gone mad, it becomes clear that artists and their methods, models, and networks for organizing are greatly needed to provide alternate structures for human engagement when our current system collapses.

Hyde Park Art Center is grateful to partner with Public Media Institute and Sixty Inches from Center to create Lumpen 137, an optimistic issue on the collaborative power of artists. Conceived as a companion guide to the 2020 exhibition Artists Run Chicago 2.0, this issue both documents and provides context to the artist-led initiatives in operation between 2009 and 2019 featured in the show, while also extending beyond these spaces to address the larger Chicago tradition of do-it-together camaraderie and culture.

Artists Run Chicago 2.0 is a major Hyde Park Art Center exhibition for which roughly fifty artist-led entities (galleries, venues, artists, businesses, non-profits, public art collectives) were asked to present artwork by the artists they champion. This exhibition of mini-exhibitions samples the past decade of artists’ energy directed toward supporting other artists’ practices through exhibiting, producing, and discussing new art throughout the city. Spanning neighborhoods from Beverly to Rogers Park, Oak Park to Englewood, the exhibition identifies a diversity of operational models, audiences, and programmatic intentions that offer fodder for the next generation of artists determined to create their own place in the world.

In 2009, Hyde Park Art Center introduced the first Artists Run Chicago exhibition to survey the abundance of independent exhibition spaces directed by artists from 1995-2009. Threewalls published a small exhibition of The Artists Run Chicago Digest in parallel with the exhibition, combining three-walls’ signature phonebook-style listing of participating spaces with critical essays. It was an hypothesis to spark further debate, a translation of a moment in time for a community of artists, and a jumping-off point for further investigation.

Lumpen magazine, an artist-led publication established in 1991, has brought critical perspectives on art, music, and culture to millions of people through free distribution and without compromising its Midwest humor or humility. The magazine’s accessible format matches Hyde Park Art Center’s intention to be a gathering and production space for artists and the broader community to cultivate ideas, impact social change, and generate new networks. The Artist-run nonprofit Public Media Institute (PMI) is the parent organization for Lumpen, and PMI’s gallery Co-Prospersity participated in both the 2009 and 2020 Art Center exhibitions. For these reasons, Lumpen is the ideal outlet for the Artists Run Chicago 2.0 publication.

Valuable resources, such as maps and a directory of alternative art spaces in Chicago, are included in Lumpen 137 to help navigate the (mostly free) art activity out there. Other content includes insightful texts and images that directly relate to Artists Run Chicago 2.0: Dan Gunn and Noah Hanna separately address considerations in creating an exhibition-as-documentation of artist-run spaces; participating artists Gareth Kaye (Apparatus) and S.Y. (Gallery 062) share their thoughts on making space for artists to experiment; Bad at Sports embeds images that, when viewed with a mobile app, prompt podcast interviews with artists about working in Chicago; and Lise Mikkelsen explores Terrain, founded by dearly departed Sabina Ott. The Art Center commissioned authors affiliated with the online publication Sixty Inches from Center: Nicole Laine, Annette LaFique and Christina Nafzingr, to dive deep into synchronicities between three artist-run spaces in the exhibition. Artists and writers independent of the exhibition also contributed their accounts of the benefits and struggles of running spaces, and speculated on the future of the artist-run space.

Many people worked on this issue, bringing to light their editorial, organizational, and creative magic to make this publication possible in a shifting reality. Special thanks to Nick Wylie, Mark Stocking, Marina Reesende, Nora Catlin, Mina Taylor, Cecilia Reesende and Ed Marszewski for working hard and having total enthusiasm for the project. Tempestt Hazel generously offered her collaboration from the onset of the exhibition and Greg Ruffing for his editorial and writing skills. Keen observations from Dan Gunn and the 60 wrd/min project by Lori Waxman built on their past contributions to This Artist Run Chicago, tasked them to their commitment towards supporting artists projects over time. The team of colleagues at Hyde Park Art Center, Andi Crist, Max Guy, and Noah Hanna were essential for making sure the exhibition could reach its full potential.

The exhibition Artists Run Chicago 2.0, the corresponding public program of free events (printed in this magazine), and this publication together demonstrate the artist-run space’s creative spirit and genuine investment that artists and organizations have toward helping each other accomplish ambitious goals.
From the onset, conversations around mounting a second iteration of Artists Run Chicago at the Hyde Park Art Center were rife with questions and possibilities. At the heart of these debates was: What would a reinvestigation of such a multifarious and exploratory exhibition actually look like? Noah Hanna, Artists Run Chicago 2.0 at the Hyde Park Art Center.

The original Artists Run Chicago (2009), organized by Allison Peters Quinn and Britton Bertran, brought together contributions from over thirty artist-run galleries and project spaces in Chicago. These spaces were united under the common banner of experimentation, and recognition for the hard, often undervalued work these spaces provide to the art community at large. While these objectives remained critically important to the organization of Artists Run Chicago 2.0, new attention needed to be paid to the role of transition, and the ever-widening definition of what an artist-run space embodies and aims to attain. Such theoretical considerations pushed this exhibition to be more than just a celebration of artist-run spaces. It is also an opportunity to reevaluate structural hierarchies, community engagement, and the role of the artist in the discourse of contemporary art.

Of the spaces featured in the original exhibition, only six make return appearance in Artists Run Chicago 2.0: 65 Grand, Co-Prosperity Sphere, Devening Projects, Julius Caesar, Rootss & Culture, and The Suburban (now located in Milwaukee). The realization that nearly eighty percent of the previous participants no longer exist was often met with solemn resignation, and inquiries into what good fortune has allowed these few spaces to endure far beyond their life expectancy. While this is a viable question, it quickly became apparent that the language surrounding the artist-run space was in need of revision for this exhibition. When describing the trajectory of artist-run spaces, the consistent use of terms such as “survive,” “fail,” or “disappear,” fails to capture the reality of the ecosystem in which they thrive. Artist-run spaces are not businesses, and as such are not subjected to the timeless monitor that they must “sink or swim within the first three months.”

In our conversations with the spaces in this show, it became clear that an artist-run space never truly disappears, rather it finds itself manifest in different forms, locations, and identities, through a web of interconnected communities that bring Chicago’s artmakers and followers together. In exploring the histories of just these spaces alone, we uncovered a mosaic of mutual support systems. There were moments of property exchange, in which galleries have permanently or temporarily filled the spaces of others, ensuring the physical space remains a beacon for artistic expression. Similarly, the tremendous overlap of artists exhibiting in these spaces created opportunities to see the artist-run community as a sort of roving disconnected exhibition, evoking common themes while simultaneously encouraging observers to consider the ways each space recontextualizes an artist’s practices and engages with its own unique environment, whether it be a storefront gallery, apartment, or itinerant curatorial program.

Examining the changes of the course of ten years should not be melancholy, but a moment of reflection. A common lifeblood flows through all of these spaces, as it did in 2009 and will no doubt ten years from now.

Even with these common threads, things have certainly changed since 2009. Artists Run Chicago 2.0 (2020) brings together an eclectic selection of spaces, in which the core function of the artist-run operation is widely defined and executed. I often asked Allison Peters Quinn, my co-organizer who oversaw the 2009 exhibition, what differences she’s observed between then and now? She was quick to respond that spaces are now far more polished and objectively organized. The traditional “DIY” aesthetic has been substituted for an appearance that is far more clean and intentional. That is not to say that the underground vibe no longer exists but that spaces have learned to adapt to a changing expectation within art. The growth and sway of MFA programs, and the strict enforcement of artistic decorum taught in professional practices, as well as the integration of social media, have made marketing a critical component of what it means to be an artist in 2020. An artist or space must have a carefully curated website, social media presence, mission statement, and stack of fully captioned installation images ready at a moment’s notice. Yet despite this, spaces have found ways to expand within this intersection of capitalist marketing trends. A demand for transparency and social engagement has encouraged spaces to put to paper what they stand for and which communities they activate, resulting in a tremendous growth in structural variation. In the fifty spaces presented in this exhibition, there is a wealth of exploration and individuality. Spaces both mimic each other’s successes and build on the personal experiences that comprise their art practices.

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Artist Residencies, Collaboration, and Alternative Models of Education

Artist residencies offer a place for artistic exploration, a space where artists can work and think collectively, and potentially collaborate with like-minded individuals as well. Although this environment sounds similar to a classroom, residencies often subvert the power dynamics found in traditional academic settings. Without a type of hierarchical knowledge structure, residencies often form an alternative learning space.

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bell hooks describes this kind of learning community in Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, saying, “Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone’s presence is acknowledged... There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources.” hooks describes the authoritarian model in the classroom as hierarchical and coercive. Instead, she proposes an engaged pedagogy that emphasizes each person’s active participation. Through this, the voices, opinions, and experiences of each person, including those that have been historically marginalized, are given equal consideration and value. In accepting each person as a potential collaborator, a type of community is formed.

Artists often seek alternative modes of education and an open learning environment that does not command a privileged voice of authority. In the competitive, capitalist structure in which we live and work, it becomes necessary to actively and intentionally form the communities we want to have.

In 2018, artists Julia Holter and Olivia Block came together to write and compose a new piece titled Whenever the Breeze, creating immersive sound by combining voice, instruments, bells, and recording of wind and water. The making of this piece culminated in an album recording and a live performance at the May Chapel in Rosehill Cemetery. This dynamic, collaborative piece was created during Experimental Sound Studio’s Outer Ear Residency.
that when forming the collective, the original eight. Current member Kaylee Wyant explains the group has expanded their numbers to form the artist collective ADDS DONNA.

In their current location in Humboldt Park, and potential avenues for collaborative art have sought alternative education models and encouraged interdisciplinary experimentation, and artist residencies such as the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (founded in 1946), a nine-month program that describes itself as neither a school nor a retreat.

In accepting each person as a potential collaborator, a type of community is formed.

In Chicago, there are a number of art organizations and residency programs that have sought alternative education models and potential avenues for collaborative art making. In 2010, four artists came together to form the artist collective ADDS DONNA. In their current location in Humboldt Park, the group has expanded their numbers to eight. Current member Kaylee Wyant explains that when forming the collective, the original members “missed the rigor and the conversations they experienced at school and wanted to recruit that kind of community.” The artists originally shared a studio space, which sparked an exchange of ideas and later led to collaborating under the name ADDS DONNA as an artist persona, one that Wyant says can “exist work on its own outside of individual identities and practices.”

Along with exhibitions, ADDS DONNA’s programming through the years has included artist residencies and study groups. In 2018, their artists-in-residence included Trace Hayes and Zakkiyah Nejadah, who worked for five weeks in the gallery and installed their work for one week of viewing. This residency model aimed to invert the typical exhibition formula. In ADDS DONNA’s study groups, the syllabus is makeable and discussion is open-ended. Wyant explains that creating this kind of educational space came from the “desire to make engagement with a subject more democratic, to eliminate the hierarchy within traditional pedagogy in order to make learning more collaborative and approachable.” In these ways, ADDS DONNA can function as an experimental institution.

Currently in its 34th year, Experimental Sound Studio (ESS) promotes and supports the sound arts in different disciplines, such as music, dance, videography, and visual artists. This unique organization houses a professional recording studio and curates live public programming, sound installations, gallery exhibitions, artist residencies, workshops, and tutorials. For ESS, bringing together artists to support and spark collaboration has culminated in three different artist residencies: the Alba Residency, the Wavefront Artist Residency, and the Outer Ear Residency. The Alba Residency functions as a postgraduate sonic arts program available to students graduating from the Sound Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and provides guidance in the next steps in their art practice. In contrast to this hyper-local residency, the Wavefront Artist Residency operates as an exchange program with international artists at Soundpocket, a Hong Kong-based sonic arts organization. The weak-long Outer Ear Residency offers artists full access to all of the studio’s resources with the purpose of facilitating experimentation in the creation of new work.

Managing Director Adam Vida explains that ESS believes “collaborative projects are a key to breaking new ground and finding areas of experimentation that have yet to be explored.” All three of the residency programs at ESS are structured in a way that makes room for collaboration, as they allow participants to bring in additional artists to collaborate with. With a cross-disciplinary approach, the organization “plays a big role in pairing artists together that may not have the opportunity to collaborate otherwise. [During the residencies,] artists bounce ideas off each other and sometimes force each other out of their comfort zones.”

For the organization ACRE Artists’ Cooperative Residency & Exhibitions, collaborative projects are a major component of their purpose and programming. ACRE hosts three artist residencies in rural Wisconsin and also supports exhibitions organized by six Curatorial Fellow each year. ACRE’s acting director Kate Bowen explains how the residency and exhibitions build a space for collaborative learning and making: “The residency gives the opportunity to work, live, eat, collaborate, and experiment together, while caring for and challenging each other. The exhibitions program brings folks back together, and creates new connections in the year that follows.”

Founded in 2010, ACRE was formed “by a group of artists and co-conspirators, with the goal of providing an alternative to the traditional institutions that serve artist and art communities.” Bowen says. “As emerging artists in a world full of collapsing institutions, I think what the founding artists needed most was each other. The structure of ACRE’s residency program is a direct response to traditional education models, it is designed to reshape the way we learn and distributes knowledge through a collaborative environment. What artists need most are other artists—in addition to money, space, and time.”

In the essay “(Extended) Footnotes on Education,” (ex-flux, 2010), author Florian Schneider states, “Our only teachers are those who tell us to ‘do with me,’ and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.” Schneider is proposing that a top-down model of knowledge distribution doesn’t work effectively because it discourages critical thinking. By working collectively, knowledge sharing can become horizontal. With everyone working on an equal plane, participants are positioned in a way that gives everyone the power to initiate dialogue and critique.

Organizations like ADDS DONNA, Experimental Sound Studio, and ACRE are not just building programs that encourage non-hierarchical ways of learning and making, they are building spaces for support. They aim to facilitate a radical form of alternative education that fosters spontaneous collaboration and ideas, cross-disciplinary approaches, and community-based pedagogy. By creating work in a collaborative environment and decentralizing authority, new dialogues are able to form that engage all participants, allowing everyone to have voice and potential to challenge the traditional trajectory of knowledge and authority.
During the first iteration of Artists Run Chicago in 2009, I was just finishing seventh grade, and little was as it is now. The Liberal optimism found in 2009 from the Obama election to the end of the financial crisis and the dangers of post-recession growth have revealed themselves. Climate change is no longer a punchline for jokes about Gore. It is here, it is real, and it has a gun to the head of everyone under 80 years old. The intervention is back in the crosshairs where it belongs, and the values of an increasingly financially unsustainable contemporary art world are being questioned.

How do we as artist-curators and curator-artists develop empathic and meaningful social experiences at the end of our world? It hasn’t ended yet, but shouldn’t we be prep- ping? When the empire crumbles, will we be ready to rebuild without looking for the corresponding shapes and pieces from the past to reconstruct another model that never worked, or will we find new combinations and arrangements ahead of time?

The future and imagination have been foreclosed and expropriated by capital, and an increasingly stagnant present finds itself to be defined by the speed of communication and corporatized insistence on “disruption.” In this scenario, can there be an avant-garde, or are we sprinting towards the future on a treadmill, garnering fatigue for our efforts but unable to gain any ground ahead of where we currently run? How can we imagine the future when the present is our running part- ner—when the present is not the now, but actually tomorrow. Futures are being sold and traded in the art world capitals of London, New York, and Hong Kong, while we are still here, trying to figure out what personal- ized austerity measures we can impose on ourselves to survive the week we pay rent for ourselves to survive the week we pay rent for our apartments, studios, and spaces in some of our cases, we condense all three together to save money at the expense of comfort and space, and at moments, sanity too.

Capital and its forces need not dream of tomorrow, because they already bought it and the day after on credit. So where are we to resist? How do we skip ahead and break the loop? As precarious artists, we are uniquely positioned to imagine the future in a manner that capital cannot—while finance flattens the distinction between tomorrow and today with 24/7 global trade, shipping, freeport, and military operations across time zones, it doesn’t sootheay a future that is much more than copied and pasted models from the past into the empty spaces that lie ahead. Artists, on the other hand, have to dream, sootheay, and read patterns in the firmament that haven’t already been targeted by patented algorithms. We need a way out of the loop, and if the speed of cultural and economic production now turns the clock, the best way out is to stop, close our eyes, and make a wish, or to take a nap and dream a little bit, maybe sleeping through the next opening.

Looking for an exit, maybe we can find some help from the late Mark Fisher’s idea of the “Weird and Eerie,” which he defines as that which comes from outside. If we can’t find a way out, maybe we should lock onto those things that seem to come from that troublesome “beyond” we are look- ing to reach, and follow them to the cracks they slipped in through. Looking towards the outside, I cannot think of any better exam- ple than The Twilight Zone episode “The Big Tall Wish.” The episode follows Bolie Jackson, a haggard, down-and-out boxer and survi- vator rather for a young boy named Henry, as Jackson prepares for a fight that could be his come-back match. His son Henry has a strange penchant for making wishes that seem to always come true, to the benefit of those he loves. Before the fight, Henry offers to use “The Big Tall Wish,” if needed, to make sure Bolie comes out on top. Henry’s mom tells Bolie that it’s no laughing matter for Henry to use “The Big Tall Wish.”

During the fight, Jackson is knocked out and Henry watches the TV, wishing for his dad to win. When Jackson comes to, he looks down on his opponent, who has been KO’d, yet Jackson cannot shake the doubt of having been defeated just moments ago. When he comes home and expresses his disbelief to his son, Henry tells him that Jackson doubts the power of the wish, it won’t be true anymore, to which Jackson angrily responds that Henry should grow up and stop wishing. The episode then ends with the typical outro: “Mr. Bolie Jackson, who shares the most common ailment of all men, the strange and perverse disinclination to believe in a miracle, the kind of miracle to come from the mind of a little boy, perhaps only to be found in… the Twilight Zone.”

While the cynical nature of neoliberal discourse will differentiate wishes from action, we know they need not be mutu- ally exclusive. Rather, the choice of acting is in itself a form of wish making. The act of making an art object or an exhibition is, at its best, a wish as well. Wishes are waves in which to put into the world that which we feel is lacking, in order to articulate something better than what we had before. So let’s start looking for a way out, and to do that, we need to ask some questions (of which only the most general are pres- ent here): what are the unfulfilled prom- ises of Contemporary Art? Where is its holiness most resonant? Are we satis- fied to let Too-Big-To-Fail institutions load the way, when at their best they appropriate the groundwork, discourse, and alternative forms Artist-Run Spaces have been pioneer- ing, and at their worst, they too a weak line with insipid and uninspired shows that tell us to stop wishing and to let the status quo run its course? How much is our labor as cultural producers worth, and how do we convince the public of our worth as artist-run spaces?

It seems we are caught between the alter- natives of needing to make the Big Tall Wish and build enough solidarity and actual work around it to see its reification, or to just accept the knockout. I currently don’t have any precise wishes to put forward into language, because this wish is communal in every way. Rather, I hope this serves as a primer to let ourselves know that the wish will exist in dreams, and maybe lead a way out into the beyond, and the future that Capital has been obscuring with its shadow. But if the conversations don’t start in Artist Run Chicago, I am afraid the knockout might be inevitable.

As precarious artists, we are uniquely positioned to imagine the future in a manner that capital cannot.
Yollocalli Arts Reach, a youth initiative of the National Museum of Mexican Art, began serving youth in 1997. Yollocalli thrives to provide youth with opportunities for creative growth and development that strengthen their voices, supports their agency, and makes them successful makers. Projects are developed by contemporary artists whose practice is relevant and accessible to youth and their cultural practices.

By collaborating with local and international artists, Yollocalli is a space for intergenerational making, where both the teaching artists and youth are able to learn and make with each other. This drawing by Yollocalli youth artist Emmanuel Ramirez and Yollocalli staff Whitney Ross shows a maze about how Yollocalli became a youth-led, artist-driven, intergenerational, magical space from Pilsen to Little Village. From the purchase of a building by the museum to the development of the Yollocalli youth council, to being recognized nationally as an award winning youth program, to moving to new homes, Yollocalli’s paths have one thing in common—the love and honor of being a part of this unique, creative space and culture.
Chicago's artist-run spaces are key players in the creative ecosystem. They stretch down all avenues in the city, and beyond into the sprawling suburbs. Whether they are found in old storefronts, auto shops, backyards, or basements, some hold their space for decades while others reconstruct or retire. Succumbing to the rise of rent and the heavy financial responsibilities that come with running an alternative venue can play a large role in the changing of spaces or changing of hands. Artist-run spaces go through fluctuations, especially those who persist for a few years. Some turn into non-profit gallery spaces, while others host a few pop-ups or begin satellite locations. Others simply shutter.

Deciding to close an artist-run space shouldn't equate to failure. The conditions for closure—or change—are endless. The eventual ending of DIY spaces don't eradicate the work that was done. And often, the spaces simply exist in a new form. For Ciera McKissick of AMFM, that's exactly what happened.

For over a decade, Ciera's project—whose original form was a web magazine—has developed and transformed into various models. Originally from Milwaukee, Ciera has always been drawn to art communities. "I do believe it to be my life's work to support artists, build connections, and offer space and platforms to help elevate artists' work, voices, and stories," she says. After releasing several issues of AMFM, she simultaneously began working pop-up events and organizing her own programming around Chicago, curating art and music shows at Cultura in Pilsen, and also running The Jazz Series, which traveled to different locations like Stony Island Arts Bank, Soho House, and the Chicago Art Department.

In 2015, Ciera opened up a physical space for AMFM, where she could combine event planning, art, and music. "I was wanting to have more autonomy over space and overhead, and to do more, so I was really excited when we got our first space, which we crowdfunded on GoFundMe," she explains. The 1,000 square foot gallery space worked as a venue, and had resident artists, a shared studio space, and a music production studio. There's a show every night of the week in Chicago, whether it's music, art, theatre, or performance, but a space like AMFM brought together all facets of Chicago's creative communities to one physical location. Ciera was able to curate and direct art exhibitions and music shows, plus everything in between.

Ciera says AMFM was different than most. "We were DIY, but appeared more established. I had a plan, but I was teaching myself things and learning along the way. I didn't expect it to blow up like it did, and so fast."

After a year of running the gallery on her own, Ciera decided it was time for a team. "We needed someone to handle the bookings, the books, and actual numbers Financially, to be extra hands and present at all the events, the marketing, etc.,” she explains. "An obvious challenge in running a space is trying to make rent month after month, plus pay for utilities. We did more shows than we needed to, some less vetted, to make sure we stayed booked and could hit our numbers for the month to ensure we could pay rent."

The displacement of arts spaces impacts the entire city. "When you take the soul out of a neighborhood, that's when it's gone too far," says Alma Weiser, Director of Heaven Gallery. "We cannot forget that cities are about culture." As a result, she began Community Arts Wicker Park (CAWP), a group of stakeholders looking to purchase the Lubinski building and create a permanent art fixture. "The center will focus on collectives, wellness, and house arts organizations committed to showing 60% ALAANA [African American, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Native American] artists," Alma explains. "We know that historically Chicago has been intentionally segregated, and now we want to help reverse that intention toward integration. We want to create an art center that addresses multiple community needs of surrounding arts organizations and small businesses."

Running an alternative gallery is incredibly laborious and involves investments in money, time, commitment, and resources. Curating, working with artists, and organizing promotional efforts are all emotionally and mentally intense, which can ultimately take a toll on the individual or team running the space.
Eventually, AMFM had to close its gallery doors. Due to racial tensions and complaints from a few neighbors, Ciera said the closure took a toll on her and the arts community. Ciera had quit her full-time marketing job to run AMFM and invested all of her efforts into the success of the project. Around this time, The Dojo, another artist-run space in Pilsen, had also closed.

Where commercial galleries tend to represent more established artists, DIY spaces don’t have barriers to entry—they can open the floor for experimentation, more creative control, and encourage the curatorial process. “I think that these types of spaces are crucial to the community and artists of color,” says Ciera. “You’ve heard from a lot of people that the closing of AMFM and a bunch of other DIY spaces, particularly those that work with a lot of black and brown artists, that it was the end of an era.” And for many artists, alternative and DIY spaces are where they often get their first shows. She says that spaces like AMFM are “essential and allow artists to have a launching point to cultivate their careers because, in order to elevate, you have to start somewhere.”

Another South Side gallery, Produce Model, operated in Pilsen from 2015 to 2019. Directed by Javier Bocuro and curators Maggie Crowley and Guillermo Rodriguez, the space was located on 18th St. in an old storefront that welcomed the surrounding community and hosted dinners, parties, screenings, and art shows. In a concluding post, Produce Model stated on Instagram that the gallery’s core mission will still exist “mainly as an idea,” and that viewers can expect to see them “soon,” but they won’t know “when or where.” This message is similar to many other artist-run spaces, where the closing is hopeful, positive, and assures the arts community that the gallery won’t evaporate forever. They almost never fully die, but simply take on new forms.

In the case of Threewalls, which began in 2003 with a group of friends running a DIY space, the gallery transformed into a completely new beast. In 2016, the staff at Threewalls was let go and a new base was established—an itinerant non-profit model that programs and sponsors exhibitions and events. Threewalls is a clear example of how artist-run spaces can remodel and morph into something entirely foreign from their original foundation.

Many artist-run galleries take on a more nomadic approach to navigate changing real estate, personal gallery space interest, and community. AMFM is in this wayfaring form at the moment. “I finished up our major projects and took some time off to figure things out, reconfigure, and we have sort of returned back to our roots of popping up around the city for events,” says Ciera. Although it’s not as regular or frequent as before, AMFM currently partners with the Chicago Park District, Saatchi, SAIC, and Red Bull for larger events.

Working behind the scenes, Ciera said she’s ready for the next iteration of AMFM, and to introduce the new forms that the decade-long project has become. “I definitely want another space, a bigger space, an institutional type of space, a building I can call my own, so that I can lay the groundwork and be more sustainable,” says Ciera.

Artist-run spaces have always been a strong heartbeat in the city. It’s a fiercely vibrant, ever-changing community where some galleries thrive and others dwindle. Nevertheless, they exist. The lifespans of DIY spaces don’t eradicate the work that was done. And often, the spaces simply exist in a new form.
Are you a Foreign Artist?

Lori Waxman

When I told Lori about an idea I had to get art writers to generate press to aid artists with their O-1 visa applications, I did not dream that she would volunteer herself. It was a perfect fit with her fifteen-year-long project, 60 wrd/min art critic, where she writes reviews live, in 25 minute increments, for any artist who wants one. The performative element doesn’t really hit home until you actually witness it, watching Lori’s words and thoughts form before your eyes on a 50-inch monitor connected to her laptop, with the artist’s submissions nearby. Apparently self-consciousness is not a problem, nor is noise, as was evidenced in her smashing through one set of reviews in the midst of a full blown disco party, then joining in the dancing afterwards.

Li-Ming Hu

So here’s how it works. I set up an office in an art space, artists bring me their work, I write reviews fast, and then afterwards everything gets published. The idea is to provide reviews for people who want that sort of feedback, whatever the reason, and especially in cities and towns where there is a scarcity of art writing. Also, to make a normally discrete and obscure profession public and transparent. One need not be a professional artist to apply—one can be a retired homemaker taking watercolor classes for the umpteenth time, a priest with a conceptual landscape painting practice, or twelve-year-old twins who like to draw fauna and flora (these are all real examples from past iterations). For this version of the project, which took place over the course of three Saturdays in February at the Co-Prosperity Sphere, Li-Ming and I made the review slots open only to foreign artists who needed to gather reviews for the express purpose of putting together their visa applications. It’s a real need, and the project as a whole is trying to serve the critical needs of artists, so why not. Plus, as a foreigner myself, though one lucky enough to have found a nice American guy to marry, I am extra sensitive to the precarities of being from somewhere else and wanting or needing to stay here.

Are you a Foreign Artist?

Sungjaae Lee

Love it or hate it, disco was a pleasure-seeking global music phenomenon to be reckoned with. And was it ever hated, especially locally, where on July 2, 1979, the White Sox baseball team managed to fill (and nearly ruin) their stadium by offering cheap tickets to anyone who brought with them a disco LP to blow up. New Zealand artist Li-Ming Hu fills the windows of the Co-Prosperity Sphere—debuting a promising exhibition program that more galleries with big storefront windows ought to copy—with a fabulous array of documentary images, glittery props and a six-minute video exploring the origins of “The Day Disco Died”—or didn’t. What better way to prove the significance of a form than to try to destroy it? Hu, who stars in the video, has fun swinging on mirrored balls of all sizes, pumping a limp purple plush bat, and, in her trade-mark gesture, wearing a simple paper mask of the people she’s investigating. Here, it’s DJ Steve Dahl, the frustrated rock radio host who came up with the Comiskey Park gimmick, and there’s nothing lo-fi about seeing his schlubby head atop Hu’s cool, petite body. It’s as uncanny as Freud on the dancefloor. Shake that.
I have always found it strange that place names reoccur from city to city, country to country. Really? Can’t town planners show a little more originality? The coincidences do provide for all sorts of artistic exploration, however, and Efrat Hakimi’s exhibition “Zion,” curated by Avi Lubin at Hamidrasha Gallery in Tel Aviv, is no exception. Hakimi chose her subject well: there is Zion, Illinois, just north of Chicago, where Hakimi currently lives. There is Zion National Park in Utah, one of the great national parklands, set amid the state of Mormonism. And there is the first Zion, the hill on which King David built the ancient citadel of Jerusalem, origin of the term Zionism and the practice of referring to present-day Jerusalem as Zion. How this all figures into one exhibition owes much to contemporary modes of storytelling: through narrative and exploratory video footage, archival research and photography, and the culling of choice facts from often convoluted histories. The coincidences are always surprising, sometimes startlingly profound. Plus, there’s promise of more: with dozens of Zions across the globe, Hakimi could just keep on going.

Haerim Lee
At the artist’s request, a letter in support of her O1 visa application was written instead of a review. This was necessary because one of her recommenders had to pull out suddenly due to an institutional conflict.

Guanyu Xu
What’s it like to live a secret life? To need to live one’s true life in another country, far away from disapproving parental eyes? Guanyu Xu presents these overlapping realities with the help of his camera, recording through documentary and staged photographs his life as a gay man in the United States; himself and other men in intimate domestic environments; pavement or plants or architecture that caught his eye. So far, so good—Xu’s pictures fit squarely in the tradition of Wolfgang Tillmans and Nan Goldin. But then he goes home, to his parent’s apartment in Beijing, a place where nothing is out of order and everything is heteronormative. Worlds collide: in “Temporarily Censored Home,” Xu takes over the apartment while mom and dad are out and fills it to the brim with the images of his other life. They hang from the ceiling, spread out over the sofa and tables, cover the fridge and the windows, even jut out into doorways. And then, just before mom and dad come home again, Xu packs it all neatly away, into the literal and proverbial closet—though not, of course, before taking enormous hi-resolution photographs of his makeshift installation.

Eunhye Shin
What makes millennials comfortable? Since I haven’t got a clue, I’ve watched two experimental videos by Eunhye Shin that offer partial answers to the question. “Make Yourself Comfortable” poses its titular query to four Berlin-based artists, while “Molka (hidden camera)” sets up a secret camera in a women’s bathroom stall. Bits of narrative appear on the screen and there: the Berliners talk about their language issues and about living away from home for the first time, the women do or don’t use the toilet. (Maybe they knew about the camera? Two of them seem to be looking for it.) The true source of millennial comfort exists elsewhere, however, in the formal devices Shin employs. The Berliners get fragmented into biomorphic shapes, disappearing into a perfect blue screen. The women get pixelated on the opposite half of a split display, dissolve into rectangulars of neutral color. Being bits of people never looked so comforting.
Leticia Bernaus

In “Not Exactly Love,” a series of simultaneous videos, Leticia Bernaus caresses a dead fish, a big beautiful shell, brown-gray fur, a large side of meat, a bag of trash, a dead bird, and green grass. It’s not too much of a stretch of the imagination to imagine a person experiencing real love for any one of these things (honestly, it’s not), but nevertheless that is not quite what Bernaus is doing. Her gesture is faultlessly gentle, seemingly endless, mesmerizingly patient—she is not being a lover here, she is being a caretaker, and she is doing it through the touch of her fingers. But caretaking what? Not an elderly relative or an ill child, but rather the things of the earth, rendered somehow inanimate. That’s where we live, folks, on a planet full of all sorts of things, extraordinary and not, being decimated one by one by one. At this point, it’s starting to seem like the best we can do might be to caress them gently after they die.

Catalina Tuca

Some people just arrange things better than others. The rest can improve through lessons in ikebana and like arts. I don’t know what training Catalina Tuca did or didn’t undertake, but her work of the past decade proves her to be profoundly more accomplished in this area than all but the most skilled painters of Dutch still lifes. Tuca doesn’t just position objects in meaningful compositions, she also finds them: in Medellin, Colombia; in the Mapocho neighborhood of Santiago; in the Suginami part of Tokyo. Maybe they come from the trash, maybe from thrift stores, maybe from donation—any which way, Tuca intuits how to put them together in a newly symbolic or aesthetic configuration that tells a story about the place from which they came. If only she’d come to my neighborhood one day, I’d like to know what it has to say.

Maryam Faridani

The only social media that remains unfiltered in Iran is Instagram. That makes it the go-to source for expats like Maryam Faridani, who are seeking news and information from home. The difference with Faridani is that she gives as good as she gets, maybe better. Since 2018, this weirdly profound digital artist has produced dozens of—for lack of a better term—editorial cartoons that she puts up as stories on the site. They comment on the daily news, whether it’s the suspicious death of former president Rafsanjani, the smuggling of tomatoes into the country disguised as cauliflowers, or the mysterious smell that permeated Tehran for days. What do Faridani’s gifs look like? Many feature her face, more or less obscured behind cute little animals, torrential waves, diagrams, headlines, and other randomly coherent items. They’re bizarre, unkempt, clever, critical, utterly contemporary, very silly, and totally their own thing. If this is what happens when newspapers fall to censorship and bankruptcy, maybe there’s hope yet.

Pegah Pasalar

I can’t watch Pegah Pasalar’s short film, “Saturday.” I mean, I watched it, but it hurt too much. A family goes to the beach, one of their small children drowns, and since the film is finely shot, the tragedy is unbearable. I don’t think this is only because I have small children, or because I know someone whose young child died in a pool, but perhaps it is. Pasalar’s equally well-made “Phenomenology,” in which a young woman (the artist) dresses herself in a roomful of clothes, starting with a dozen panties and bras, moving on through pants and shirts, all the way to a long, black abaya, entrances with its cinematic cleverness. Because the film was actually shot in reverse, as an undressing, the clothes fly magically up to her body, as if she were not just a female done in by the strictures of conservative religious requirements, but a superhero with a secret identity: Clothing Woman! Underneath that abaya and that frown, she hides, unbeknownst to all but always there, ready to save the day. If only she could have saved that little kid.
“Cherrie and Matthew” is a dance, and a film of a dance, in which the two titular people do many of the same motions. They swing their arms, wave their hands, reach high, sweep with brooms, kick, bend, etc. Some of these gestures are familiar from contemporary dance, including pieces by Trisha Brown and Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker. Others come from the work that Matthew does in his day job as a condominium maintenance worker. This makes sense: Brown, de Keersmaeker and others of their generation were interested in vernacular movement, and vernacular movement is what Matthew must do every day, no matter how repetitive it gets. The radicality of Yu’s performance is her direct collaboration with the everyday person, rather than her theatrical citation of their labor. Both worker and dancer speak, contribute, act, and analyze. It wouldn’t have happened without Cherrie and it would be nothing without Matthew. “Why the hell not,” Matthew responded to Cherrie’s initial invitation. Indeed.

It can take me hours to prepare a meal that my family consumes in fifteen minutes. That’s okay, not everything in life must total an equivalent end product. Many such unequal-seeming equations explain the output of Hyun Jung Jun: elaborately lumpy candles, an endless list of active verbs, eggshells that sprout nasturtiums. She has cut and markered hundreds of shiny little strawberries in a rainbow of colors, written words in a carpet of dirt, tenderly enlarged old grocery lists. Cats lurk in her paintings, of course, because cats are both otherworldly and totally quotidian, marvelously languid and terrifyingly fast. How it all fits together is how it all fits together: not everything can or must make perfect sense. Two hours of cooking does not equal two hours of eating. Except when it does.

The world has been digitized. This is true of people’s attention, attracted this way and that by phone and desktop apps; money, funneled evermore through cryptocurrency; statistical analysis, which can compute information greater and faster; and even human communication, arbitrated by social media and voice-activated software. But has the world been improved? Amay Kataria’s artworks use sophisticated computer coding, interactive software, and more to interrogate the seemingly intractable place of technology in the world today. His grandest proposal takes data visualization to a whole new level: a doomsday clock counting down the time until a disastrous two-degree rise in global temperature is no longer avoidable. Kataria envisions this hi-tech timer front and center in Times Square, in Tokyo’s Shibuya district, on the Eiffel Tower, proposing that what got us into this mess in the first place, if used judiciously, might get us out, just in the nick of time.

A woman crosses the road with a tire. A woman interviews people about their financial debts. A woman tries to stop the passage of time. These could be the first lines in a riddle, and in some sense they are, of the riddles that are the deceptively simple gestures and tools of Angeliki Chaido Tsoli. Tsoli repeatedly seeks what has become so tragically hard to achieve in our dystopian times: some kind of balance. In her attempts, she is sincere, generous, friendly, and also a little bit absurd. At d·frL8r gallery recently, as the opening event of the venerable performance space’s 10 year anniversary celebrations, Tsoli flew from her native Greece to Chicago, trekked across the cold city with a suitcase, greeted everyone in the gallery personally, gave them each a commemorative sticker, unpacked and built and hung a flag, and hung also a Polaroid that documented the final moments of a past performance project. How do we keep a moment alive, she asked? And she answered: by documenting it, sure, but also by sharing it with others.
Imagine the therapeutic participatory sculptures of Brazilian modernist Lygia Clark, her so-called relational objects, and cross them with the junk combinations of Robert Rauschenberg, then pass them through the sieve of forced migration and its obligation that one be ready to pack up and go at a moment’s notice. Do that and you might, if you’re very lucky, end up with Noa Ginzburg’s marvelous “Extra Ocular Objects.” Three of these impermanent constructions will be on display at the Langer over Dickie gallery, and the intrepid visitor will not simply look at but with and through them. “EOO Number Five,” a hanging clump of ribbons, twine, crocheted yarn and sequin threads, is my favorite of the lot, especially when a person sticks their head into the mix, extending the sculpture to the length of their body, funneling their eyesight through two suspended viewfinders, allowing the EOO to transform into a puppet, a mask, a kinetic construction, and themselves into a performer. What do they see? You’ll have to try it to find out.

Anna-Sophia Vukovich

Sometimes everything’s up and then everything’s down. Some days I swear I even feel sideways. At Erin Stump Projects in Toronto, Anna-Sophia Vukovich’s “Where is your/The Compass” provides visual aids for keeping track of emotional coordinates, your own and the world’s. In the center of the gallery, a steel structure modeled on a weather vane offers four bars on which to hang your choice of seven hand-painted signs, whose friendly geometric language will hopefully provide a visual symbol of the moods you are sensing. Life feeling too chaotic? Try the handful of red arrows scattered in every direction on an azure background. Loneliness lurking everywhere? That black circle suspended on a grey ground seems just right. Things looking up? The single black arrow rising on a slight tilt, that’s the one. Real weather vanes measure what’s happening in the air at any given moment, and I suppose Vukovich’s could too, depending on the sensitivity of its participants. But it could also be aspirational, marked by our hopes for how the wind might change. Way finding meets way seeking.

Sam Thomas

Sam Thomas is a Pakeha, a white New Zealander, and in this solo exhibition at Bowerbank Ninow in Auckland he made a number of sensitive sculptural gestures in acknowledgment of that complex reality. Intensified by its exhibition in 2019, the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook’s landing in the port of Gisborne, “Pakeha Gifts” features a handblown glass chandelier in the shape of a bunch of yellow and green plantains, and a wall hung with forty cast-recycled-aluminum patu (a short Maori club). The installation remakes important local trading objects into elegant replicas, but in that translation much that is not always so tidy comes to bear: the fate of forty brass patu made for but never re-gifted to the Maori by Cook’s boatmate Joseph Banks, the massive Tiwai Point aluminum smelter owned by the multinational Rio Tinto, the relationships Thomas himself has with artisans, and the availability of raw materials in the places where he lives. This has always been the basis of world trade: materials, relationships, obligations, currency, transformation. The radicality of Thomas’s version is the thoughtfulness with which he acknowledges his own place in that economy.

Millie Mac

I have long been jealous of the Victorians, whose every book was bound by marbled endpapers. The bubbly swirls, the murky depths, the irrational curves—what better way to approach and depart from the other worlds contained within the pages of a great book? In her “Ranbu” series, Millie Mac has created a painter’s version of this lost literary treasure, bound by a white canvas frame rather than cloth-bound boards. Using acrylic paints mixed to varying degrees of viscosity and eschewing a brush for the tools of palette knife and gravity, Mac creates strange and wondrous panels as gaseous as they are liquid, as luminous as they are cavernous. No wonder that she has borrowed the Japanese word for “wild” as her series title. But the chaos is ultimately controlled, encased in layers of thick glazing, which present a surface as smooth as a ceramic plate—and you’re allowed to touch!
Most of us do not give a whole lot of thought to the functional objects that we encounter in the kitchen, at the library, at the doctor’s office. Dier Zhang does, with a wry sense of humor that refuses to take anything for granted. In “Comfort Touch,” a deceptively simple zine, she pairs gynecological instruments with the kitchen tools they resemble—think forceps and tongs, speculums and can openers—setting off a domino effect of feminist deconstruction. Why are the metal objects made and marketed for women so violent? One wonders if female designers might have imparted a more comfortable touch. In “Make/Use,” Zhang tests that theory out, allowing liquid resin in plastic bags to harden in specific places, taking on the shape of a corner that needs a wall hook or a row of books that needs a stopper. The results are uniquely harmonious and individualized meldings of object, need and site, as those gynecologists, with their bayonet shaped vaginal retractors, certainly never managed.

Jack Hogan
I have always loved looking at maps. And cows. So Jack Hogan’s video, “Cows and Flies,” pleases me immensely, for how it explores the flattening and distortion of the spherical world created by reducing it to two dimensions; for relaying beloved stories about the absurdities of adults and language; for spending real time with a herd of cattle and making a one-to-one photographic print of them and then putting a herd of humans underneath it; for trying to draw longitude and latitude lines by stringing colorful ropes across a field in a grid; for acknowledging that the drone technology that allows them to film a farmer’s field from above is the same technology that allow for all kinds of new surveillance and extraction; and for far too many sensitive and unexpected observations to do justice to here, even in a massively run-on sentence. But not for the flies, no not for the flies. The cows never seem to mind them, though I always do. One wonders what the herd thought of the drone overhead, with its incessant buzzing.

Farah Salem
Landscape has long been considered a genre of art making separate from others—portrait, history, the nude. Not so in the performances, videos and installations of Farah Salem, where landscape is revealed in all of its intricate connections. “Mirage” emulates the Kuwaiti children’s game “Bar/Bahar,” in which players shift their body position based on which word is called out—bar means desert, bahar means sea—only here it is Salem’s body that is being transformed, and with the added elements of actual sand and water, ceremoniously poured into her voluminous skirts by the audience. In “Caustic,” Salem wanders the Arizona scrublands in a black abaya, then uses a bucket of bleach to transform it into something more at one with the dusty hills. The five painted abayas she and other performers wear in “Disclosed” have been transformed to better match their environments, too: a ship for the ocean, fronds for a palm grove, small yellow flowers for the desert. The body—the female body, at least—and its surroundings are one.

Adnan Faysal Altunbozar
What is the space of desire in a world of online dating, chat sites and digital porn? In “Interior Irruptions,” his solo exhibition at Amazigh Contemporary, Adnan Faysal Altunbozar offers the curious viewer a chance to enter an anonymous erotic encounter—quite literally, beginning with the poster announcing the show, which mimicked a certain kind of ad found on Instagram. Having DM’d for the address and hours, take the elevator up and find the very first artwork on view: a pair of spiky steel conches at the end of an extra-long keychain. Follow the chain and find a key to a door to an apartment. Turn it to explore what’s inside: prints of a man’s arm tattooed with a depth gauge—a nod to the outdated average-man stats according to which architecture used to be sized, and a very different nod to the not-so-average-man stats for fisting. A bright blue table holds a cluster of large jars—the kind for selling protein powder to bulk up men to meet some of those stats—remade in delicate ceramic, some with bulging veins. Two smartphones, elegantly mounted on a tripod, scroll the deeply intimate text “SOON I WILL BE IN YOU,” letter by letter, which is how it sometimes goes. Slow can be good. One thing at a time can be good. The whole city lies out below the gallery’s thirty-third-floor glass window-wall, while way up above an encounter not of desire but about it is happening.
Dan Miller  

Chicago has a long history as a city of magic, or rather a city of magicians. Artists Dan Miller and Aaron Walker slip seamlessly into this lineage with “Handkerchiefs and Flowers,” a spy exhibition at Roots & Culture that skillfully performs a series of tricks on the unsuspecting audience. Some of these feats are architectural: a room vanishes where there was one, two triangular closets mate-

Sahand Heshmati Afshar  

A maker of delicate and idiosyncratic objects that often reference food, the body, and their containers, Sahand Heshmati Afshar is also the holder of a fine sensibility about cultural appropriation. It is perhaps not entirely unexpected then, that when invited to host a dinner at 6018North as part of its Justice Hotel, a program of events organized on social justice themes, he would balk at simply presenting Iranian food for the taking. Because too much has historically been for the taking in terms of Iranian heritage, as evidenced in Afshar’s “Oi Toilet Papers,” an installation that projects a slide image of Persian artifacts in the famed collection of the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute above a globular arrangement of toilet paper rolls. It’s a shifty situation, in other words, and the twelve-plus guests at Afshar’s “Kolompah” dinner were not going to get off easy. Instead of the cultural commodification they were expecting, they got lettuce, raspberries, popitas, engraved copper plumbing fittings and salt, plus black tea to enjoy. It could have been so much worse.

Xu Han  

If our tears are fake, if we cannot be seen, are we still human? In her experiments, Xu Han poses these and other questions about the mysteries and assumptions that lie somewhere near the core of our understanding about what it means to be a person. For “Cocooned” she lived inside a giant handknit body-stocking, emerging only after twenty-one days of drinking through straws, being unable to speak, not caring how she looked, having severely limited vision, and needing immense amounts of help. Does any of that make her less than human? It may ironically have made her more so, by certain measures.

Sara Abbaspour  

What can a photograph really tell us about the people and the places delimited by its frame? If we no longer believe that the camera offers a window on a particular truth, nevertheless we continue to hope that in the accumulation of images, even sometimes in between them, others sorts of truths might be revealed. An ongoing portfolio of black and white pictures by the Iranian photographer Sara Abbaspour offers emblematically more than a simple description of its subjects—a boy twisting at a roadside, a young woman and her mother in the mirror, two women perched moodily on a rooftop at night, an empty lot, a boy lying across a sofa back, shadows at the top of a set of stairs, the bottom half of a man sitting in a living room, forlorn women on a bus. Shot in the artist’s home country of Iran, the images taken individually are many and where we come from. Indeed, the very accumulation of images, even sometimes in their frame? 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Isabella Dampney
Lately I have been depressed about the state of the world, and precious little makes me smile. So thank you, Isabella Dampney, for cracking me up with a series of oil paintings that probably shouldn’t make me feel any better yet nevertheless do. Comedy is for sadness, and it turns out that what mine requires is your picture of a male dog named Jerry adrift in a yellow, white and light blue abstraction of Niagara Falls. (Is it piss? It’s not, but it is.) Also your portrait of a different canine at the wheel of a navy blue sedan, a fire hydrant in the distance, a totally sincere word bubble coming from the pup, who exclaims, “This is new to me, I’m here to listen.” Indeed, it is, and indeed, I am. I am here to listen, because I don’t know what the hell else to do, as the school bus (of the world) drives off the cliff, as it does in one of your paintings. Help! And thank you for the help. I need it. We all do.

Zhiwei Pan
If the number of brushstrokes needed to create a believable image of a lemon is inversely proportional to the skill of the artist who painted it, Zhiwei Pan has expertise to spare. “Shy Couple,” a wee oil by the classically trained Chinese painter, could make you salivate, and after breaking down and squeezing a glass of lemonade, you might be refreshed enough to notice just how few gestures actually compose her canvas. Likewise pictures of an avocado, an orange and an angry Smurf (yes, one of those little blue guys, probably Grouchy). Cleverly, many of these come complete with dabs of paint straight from the palette, and the astute viewer can put one plus one together to understand the deftness with which Pan combines colors to create realistic forms. Not that Smurfs are realistic, but still!

Theo Macdonald
Work. It just sucks sometimes, doesn’t it? And most of us have to do it in order to eat and to pay the rent, regardless of our very high-quality university degrees. Ideally, though, the skills and concepts learned through those degrees, as well as through equally necessary autodidactism and independent experimentation, can help us to deal with our workplace miseries. Theo Macdonald achieves this and then some in “Time Theft,” a six-minute slide show of photographs taken in the basement of the retail shop where he has worked for the past sixteen months. According to the voiceover, he has to wear a gas mask down there because of what management calls “toxic dust,” and he also has to endure racism, dishonesty, faulty plumbing and wiring, outsourcing, and other grotesqueries of corporate commercial culture. The source of this wretchedness appears, based on the merch in storage, to be an art store, so it is ironic that Macdonald has turned to art making in order to exhume, transfer, and otherwise process his experiences. I suppose it’s either that, stand-up comedy or the Department of Labor—but then he’d probably be out of a job.

Pelenakeke Brown
The disabled Samoan artist Pelenakeke Brown works with what is given and pulls from it what is needed and true. Her artist book, “grasp + release,” redacts her own medical files, leaving legible words of her own choosing from which she composes a series of found poems, including the glorious passage: “It was/ her/ resistance/ revealed.” Blackouts normally mean censorship, removal of information, but Brown reverses that to make them revelatory and additive. It is a remarkably positive practice she achieves elsewhere, too, and through a surprisingly broad array of tools and approaches. Her portraits of people are composed through conversations about and drawings of their hair rather than their faces. Her writings employ the standard keyboard but use its strikes to create rhythmic patterns and its commands to forge rich and literate flows of ideas. “I press/ enter return/ enter return/ I am yet to return.” I will never look at medical records, hairdos, or the keys under my fingers in the same way again.

LORI WAXMAN ARE YOU A FOREIGN ARTIST?
A Nokia camera phone held by Party Crasher is pointed at the floor and slowly pans up and to the right, to point to Famous Artist from Los Angeles, directing the other artists.

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
She a, she a pirate, kinda Rastafari.

Artist Lease Holder:
giggles nervously

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
...and then like YO, she bring a computer...

Camera pans gradually counter-clockwise around room with artists sitting roughly in a circle, around a pile of disassembled furniture.

Another small group is off-center, half-heartedly noodling improvised noise on random instruments and non-music making objects.

Conceptual Painter:
No, take sketches.

Party Crasher:
Try to get everyone in fifteen seconds. Say something clever, something clever, big finish, three seconds...

Neo-Expressionist Painter:
Apparently we should always behappy and...

Camera pans slowly to the left and back around, to show same group improvising noise, now a tiny bit louder, more aggressive, and erratic after the first few rounds of cocktails.

Neo-Expressionist Painter:
Go big finish go big finish!

Party Crasher:
Alright, you've got three seconds...

Conceptual Painter:
(softly) Your Mom.

Party Crasher:
Two more seconds...

Conceptual Painter:
(even softer) Your Dad.

Camera fixed on center of room on Famous Artist from Los Angeles, beginning vague ceremonial speech with flash bulbs going off intermittently.

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
I don’t know. Look, do me a favor everyone’s doing everything each other, HYBRID STYLE (bows head).

Crowd:
Alright.

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
New Midwest City HYBRID HEART MIND ONE STYLE, YEA!

Camera pulls back: In the center of the room, Famous Artist from Los Angeles, awkwardly yet passionately playing bass hooked into smallish amplifier, while Artist Lease Holder watches carefully. Camera views a plant sculpture (plant on white pedestal) with Famous Artist from Los Angeles and Local Artists standing behind it.

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
(trouncing)
Cold lock man.

Conceptual Painter:
Boy or Girl?

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
You are boy.

Artist That Makes Literally Nothing:
Hey Hey.

Artist Lease Holder:
Maybe you can play some music?

Camera on Famous Artist from Los Angeles playing bass again louder and more expressive. (Getting drunker.)

Crowd (singing):
Find it, get it, get some Chanel jackets..

Party Crasher: Yes Sir

Camera angled down facing Famous Artist from Los Angeles sitting on floor sloppily painting the pristine white pedestal blue green gray.

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
Get me a little more, man.

Local Museum Curator:
You alright?

Unpaid Assistant:
I got this blue.

Artist That Makes Literally Nothing:
I'm not trying to grab that one.
Famous Artist from Los Angeles is finding it harder to paint pedestal and beginning to lose coordination.

Local Museum Curator is crouched, laptop on knee, furiously typing in the background.

Artistic Lease Holder:
You think Local Museum Curator is busy right now?

Party Crashers:
He left, he got a cab.

Group:
(laughs)

Camera frantically panning around ground.

There’s a peach, there’s a peach there you could mix.

.stripes and/or Photo-realistic Painter:
He’s in touch with his yogo.

Unpaid Assistant:
What color?

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
No, that looks good… let me finish this (mumble mumble).

Unpaid Assistant:
Now?

Camera same angle, wider shot Famous Artist from Los Angeles, slowly rubbing paint randomly on pedestal with wide brush, turning everything grey-green.

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
love to put it together eh.

Unpaid Assistant:
Come with a…

Famous Artist from Los Angeles, struggling to turn over pedestal, puts arm on not-turned over pedestal to rest, head down, ready to fall asleep.

Unpaid Assistant:
It’s ok, whatever you do is fine, you know what, I’m gonna…

A coat is placed over Famous Artist from Los Angeles and Unpaid Assistant is consoling Famous Artist from Los Angeles.

Party Crashers:
There’s a peach, there’s a peach there you could mix.

Unpaid Assistant:
You can mix colors.

Party Crashers:
No, there’s a peach you can mix, um something.

Fiber and Materials Studies Artist:
Wait Wait Wait!

Famous Artist from Los Angeles:
I don’t need it!

Famous Artist from Los Angeles is encouraged to try to paint the pedestals again.

Party Crashers:
There’s a peach, there’s a peach there you could mix.

Unpaid Assistant:
You can mix colors.

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No, there’s a peach you can mix, um something.

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Questions in Time: Looking Back and Ahead Together

Annette LePique

A Carbonell, Daniel Harter, Anna Hessel, Megly McInry, and Uijin Yoon; gesso, ink, wood, 2017, 96 x 96 x 96 inches. Image courtesy of Artists Run Chicago.

Looking back, looking ahead, together.

In our current moment, Chicago’s artists and creators find themselves exhausting-ly entrenched within the gig economy, where artist-run spaces and projects commonly exist in liminal zones of financial and programmatic instability. Neoliberalism’s acceleration has only illuminated how the endeavor to make and create within the art economy is demarcated by racial, class, and technological isolation, and the exclusionary cost of many MFA programs, the growing scarcity of funding, and the fleetingness of social capital within the attention economy. Uncertainty and anxiety permeate our current moment. We live in a constant state of reckoning. How can one meaningfully create and work while maintaining a constructive and reparative critique of one’s own complicity within systems of oppression? Is there a roadmap for advocacy? Is such change even possible?

I do not know the answers to these questions. However, I do believe that there is something—a hint, a clue, a discovery—to be uncovered within an examination of time and how it has shaped us, for better or worse. How have we met the changes that have formed the years since the early aughts? Where can we go in 2020 and beyond? I shift the focus of my questions to artists and arts communities, in order to illuminate how we have met scarcity and continue to face our own complicity and investment in inequality. It is through this people-powered lens that I intend to explore the growth, resilience, and advocacy of the makers and thinkers of this city. I intend to delve into how Chicago’s ecosystem of art and artists has changed over the last decade. Where are we now, where have we been?

In order to understand this interplay of time, anxiety, change, and art, I spoke to Eric May of Roots & Culture and Alden Burke and Stephanie Koch of Annas about the struggles, successes, trials and tribulations of their spaces. Roots & Culture has been a part of the Noble Square and West Town communities for more than a decade, and Annas is heading into their second year of programming and artist residencies in Pilsen. I asked May, Burke, and Koch the same questions as a means to pinpoint moments of interchange, convergence, and divergence between Roots and Annas. I hope that providing a forum for two spaces at different moments within their lifetimes depicts how artists in this city have met, critiqued, and overcome the challenges we face. As I hope for the artists’ words to speak for themselves, it is my intent for the conversation below to embody the generosity and reciprocity of Artists Run Chicago. It is also my hope that this piece illustrates how their respective vision, creation, and determination are what give this city its beating, achingly alive heart.

Interview

with

Eric May

AL How do you create and conceive of Roots & Culture’s multi-faced approach to programming; the CONNECT and Double Exposure proposals, alongside exhibitions and openings? How has the process changed in the last ten years?

EM CONNECT is the older of the two programs; though it has also evolved the most. In our earliest days (2006-2007) I did most of the curating, though I felt that it would be appropriate to mix things up and invite outside curators to propose shows, so that was our first submission-based program. And for the most part, it simply ran like that for about eight years. Emerging curators would propose shows, and we’d run one or two of them per year.
I’d like to think that the work we do at Roots at least suggests an alternative, redistributive model to the insecurity of the art economy.

AL What are some challenges, learning experiences, and successes Roots and Culture has encountered over the last ten years? How do you envision Roots & Culture within the cultural landscape of Noble Square and Chicago?

EM Ugh, of course the major challenge is always money. Receiving our 501(c)(3) status the same year as the market crash was a tough one. Even in the current (supposedly) strong economy, it doesn’t seem like foundations and government agencies have really heeded callis to a be a era of robustly funded small to medium organizations. We’ve had to rely mostly on the generosity of our community to stay afloat—to this day our spring benefit and individual donations account for 75% of our revenue. On one hand, it’s never enough to do everything we’d like to, but on the other, it’s heartwarming to feel so loved!

I’ve never lived down when Martine Lyons called us the “suburban curatorial residence,” which kicked off in 2016. After the 2017 season, our programming committee evaluated who the residency was serving. The first two residents were both women of color. And taking into consideration the current moment of assessing representation and equity, we identified a need to prioritize opportunities for historically underserved people.

Double Exposure was launched at the onset of 2008, when we were granted a non-profit status and began behaving more like a proper institution, establishing a board of directors and mission-specific programming. Serving emerging artists has always been our focus and we saw a lack of high-profile opportunities for artists at that stage of their careers, though we like to keep the term “emerging” as inclusive as possible and avoid dichotomy by age or educational background. Group shows seem to be the springboard for many early career artists—which can be great, but are often confined by space limitations and the conceit of the curatorial springboard for many early career artists—so we wanted to offer something meatier. We had more staffing resources, I could envision more flexibility and thoughtfulness in their vision of this world, maybe artists can find more flexibility and thoughtfulness in their housing choices.

AL Where will Roots & Culture go from here? What’s next?

EM After 13 years, our program is running on what a collaborative exhibition looks like: a bygone era of robustly funded small to medium organizations. We’ve had to rely mostly on the generosity of our community to stay afloat—to this day our spring benefit and individual donations account for 75% of our revenue. On one hand, it’s never enough to do everything we’d like to, but on the other, it’s heartwarming to feel so loved!

I’d like to think that the work we do at Roots at least suggests an alternative, redistributive model to the insecurity of the art economy, where the art world, middle to upper class people with art degrees, has the privilege to pursue this precarious career path. And whether seeking an “authentic” artist lifestyle or limited by scarce paychecks, many artists look for affordable rents in lower income neighborhoods. But it was ultimately a choice for most artists to live in these neighborhoods, where they either make more than $75,000 a year or who live there did not have that choice.

I’d like to think that the work we do at Roots at least suggests an alternative, redistributive model to the insecurity of the art economy, where artists can co-create opportunities and straight-up cash for their local communities provide a model for a more equitable, sustainable art economy, and we know we have more work to do. In a broader vision of the world, maybe artists can find more flexibility and thoughtfulness in their housing choices.

AL How has gentrification impacted your space and programming? How has Roots & Culture negotiated being both a communal space and, like all cultural producers, a potential agent of the gentrification process? How do you navigate those challenges?

EM I can’t say that gentrification has impacted us, per se. I mean, the rental market has gone up, but the neighborhood, at least, in our relatively privileged position, has not impacted us to the point of discussing relocating or anything.

I think about how we might contribute to gentrification though. The gallery is located on a commercial corridor with a 40-year history of being home to DIY art spaces. We chose this location intentionally. Of course, we have neighbors, and a lot of them are fancy commercial establishments. However, much of the east side of Noble Square, from the highway up to Division, is a housing cooperative that dates to 1970, with many original occupants. It’s a largely African American community. I can admit that we have not done enough to engage them into the space. For several years, my

friend, artist Mike Wolf lived in the base- ment at R&C while he was working on his second exhibition at the gallery “He’s Not A Beginner Here.” Part of the mission of the show was an effort to increase accessibility to the space, including for the immedi- ate neighbors. He offered open mic events that were very successful at engaging folks from the coop. I lament that we haven’t been able to carry Mike’s torch with his project. This is a weak excuse, but we just don’t have the human resources to establish and main- tain outreach with the coop’s community. We need another Mike Wolf.

We largely chose our neighborhood for its centrality and accessibility to public trans- portation and major roads, so that we could be accessible to wide ranging communities. Our demographic is not neighborhood-spe- cific, but rather a community of shared culture, interests, and values.

I honestly believe that most of the art economy is complicit in gentrification. A significant and dominant demographic of the art world, middle to upper class people with art degrees, has the privilege to pursue this precarious career path. And whether seeking an “authentic” artist lifestyle or limited by scarce paychecks, many artists look for affordable rents in lower income neighbor- hoods. But it was ultimately a choice for most artists to live in these neighborhoods, while either making more than $75,000 a year or who lived there did not have that choice.

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AL How do you both create and conceive of Annas’ multi-faceted approach to programming: the collaborative residencies, events and happenings rooted in community building prac- tices, and ongoing programs alongside Annas’ exhibitions and openings?

EM When conceiving Annas, Stephanie and I wanted the space to be a living, breathing representation of what we are curious about: collaborative making through flexible, process-based structures. That meant creating a multifunctional concept that unifies and responds to what we learn during any program that Annas works on. To achieve this, we consider Annas as a site, a collective, and a person.

As a site, the spatial design of Annas is malleable, and transforms to the needs of its program. It is both studio and gallery, dining room and institution. As a collective, Annas is a growing network of collaborators, each of whom recognize that Annas might be through their own capacity to imagine, produce and facilitate what Stephanie and I never could. For example, the focus on inti- macy building over dinners grew out of the first cohort (Carolines Dalberg, Marialarner, Azakea Henderson, and Maggie Wיג)’s interest in what a collaborative exhibition looks like started with The Double Kitchens. For more info on Annas, or to participate in an upcoming iteration of Doodle Jam, please visit annaschicago.org. The program that Annas works on. To achieve this, we consider Annas as a site, a collective, and a person.

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Last year, we like to think of Annas as a person in itself. To us, Annas is someone who constantly finds inspiration and energy in the people they are surrounded by, someone who wants to involve friends into their home and get to know each other ever deeper.

But Annas is also someone who is curious and adventurous, exploring the communities and happenings in Chicago. Annas is someone who wants to learn from new environments, contexts, and expertise.

For Stephanie and I, a driving programmatic philosophy during this whole process is to listen to Annas and let the space tell us what we need, what can be challenged, and who to reach out to along the way.

AL What are some challenges, learning experiences, and successes Annas has encountered over the last year? How do you both envision Annas within the architectural landscapes of Pilchuck and Chicago?

SK A lot of what Alden and I think about are the constraints that make art production difficult, particularly for emerging makers, and to think of those constraints as generative prompts: lack of funds, supplies, and studio space; maintaining energy and creativity while balancing multiple hustles and everyday stress and relationships; and time management, as in dedicating time to an ideal of productiveness. Those challenges that are organized in artists and friends, and the ways we have created Annas, manifested in our activities as a mixture of motivations, as in our first year, like budgeting and funding and not overextending ourselves; and checking in and conversations and expectations between each other, our residents, and collaborators.

Directors of independent spaces know the sense. Because of the innate structures of the project and the low to no funds, you’re the director of the space, but you’re also the social media intern, custodian, accountant, fundraiser, manager of development, art handler, and preparator. You wear all the hats.

And additionally, by nature of what Annas is, this is a self-reflexive, improvisational, and focused on attending to the human-scale. We’re constantly evaluating, responding, and rebuilding. That requires a level of energy and attention that, if we’re not careful of ourselves and each other, can burn us out. We have burned out a few times. We took a month off to rest. We don’t have a regular paid administrative infrastructure that could add some ease. There are some constraints, like the physical space and its limitations, but for each program or residency cycle, a lot is built from scratch.

Of course, Annas faces the challenges that all art spaces face, like money, time, and power. But on an everyday level it feels impossible to imagine, in a really exciting way. But that’s a roundabout answer. We do have a calendar and plan for 2020, and within that we hold space for collaborations, tangibles and potentials that may come our way. And when creating that calendar, we discussed questions within Annas’ values (collaboration) and in our personal practices (for Alden, educational models and a studio practice, for me, institution-building as a curatorial practice) that we want to explore, and how can we fold that into our 2020 year. In the short-term, we’re focusing on our 2020 residency fit beginning January and running through July and thinking through and with the six residents. How can collaboration hold across distance? And we’re doing that work through a syllabus beginning with the simple question: “What is reading?” “What is writing?” Annas’ residency is a way for Alden and myself to practice what we’ve been individually interested in, inquiring with the interests and works of our residents.

But now with a year of experience, we’re starting to pick our head off the 600 square feet and are, with greater focus, considering what it means to be Chicago-based, what does a space in Pilchuck is a huge asset, and we felt a sense of comradery and alignment with the other like-minded spaces that was important for us as we were learning what Annas and we have what Annas and I bring.

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For a few intoxicating days, Chicago becomes the epicenter of the art world—and with it comes a dense gravity. Community, Spectacle, Academia, and the ultra-polished opportunities The Fairs seem to promise are all squashed into a few square blocks of this beast of a city. It’s exhilarating and terrifying.

As artists, we not only strive to make great work, but we also long to share our work—to engage in the Great Art Dialogue—be seen—be heard. This desire pulls on us, teases us, even breaks us, and it is never as disruptively felt as in the full presence of the Global Art Market.

Engagement is the lifeblood for an artist. The activation a viewer provides, a shared experience, and the transference of ideas provides fertile ground for art to thrive. Communities and artist-run spaces pop up like flowers—nurtured, fed, challenged, and directed by an often-unfelt entity. It has become the air, the currency, the cage, the glue that shapes this fertile ground into gods and golems. Am I locked in? Out? Words like “invitation,” “fee,” “cannon,” “juried,” “star,” “booth,” “record-breaking,” “private,” and “does not accept unsolicited submissions” feed like mosquitoes.

As the shadow looms closer and larger over the city, my feelings of alienation rise. Our practice comes under question. We seem to lack permission to engage. Looking for a point of exit/entry becomes frustrating (if not futile) as money makes stakes high in this brave new world.
It is called “ROOM,” in reference to where it takes place, and the conceptually important space needed in an art world that is both474 fraught and transparent way, we aim to connect our work and our selves with old friends, and engage new ones in the ever-evolving global art community. We called it a “pop-up instal-
ation,” as branding norms dictate, but it feels Our plan was to tackle the practical to understand the conceptual with which we started. We were told only four people are even allowed to throw a party? Maybe even a local gallery willing to throw a party? Maybe even a local gallery willing to open up to art. But it’s also a way to ask questions, to create a space. We realized there was a parasitic pattern, and we saw an example of this. Some were denied access to the elevator. We were asked to take everything they wanted within the confines of their own room. There we sat like tarsus, melded wings and all, had no roof too close to the sun for comfort of all invested. It was made clear that we lacked the appropriate permission to be there. It became obvious that our role as artists was to produce, not to participate. We let this sink in as our day dragged on. Our beacon of a room became our own prison cell. Quarantined away from the action—tolerated, but barely. We never get a single call from the front desk announcing a visitor. Tourists tell us that they were discouraged from coming up. “Illegal.” Not part of this. Some were denied access to the elevator. There was a polarization happening—pro fair and anti-fair—and no in-between. Those who ignore it, and those who buy in. There was a moment when the stands were put up, and we realized what was happening and all the art, especially local art, and we didn’t hear anything about the artist. Most of them seemed to be going dormant for the weekend. We are open to our work. With our work and our selves with old friends, and proud and transparent way, we aim to connect our work and our selves with old friends, and engage new ones in the ever-evolving global art community. We called it a “pop-up installation,” as branding norms dictate, but it feels Our plan was to tackle the practical to understand the conceptual with which we started. 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HOW TO START & RUN A DIY ARTSPACE

1. BE PRESENT
2. FOLLOW THROUGH
3. COMMUNICATE
4. LEARN

PARTICIPATE = DUES

FIND A SPACE

AGITATOR CO-OPERATIVE GALLERY

HANG UP ART

ART THAT AGITATES

- Or campaigns to provoke, dialog and promote diversity
- While respecting each others self identity

EXHIBIT

THOUGHT-PROVOKING

SCHEDULE

BE ON TOP OF THAT GOOGLE CALENDAR!

HANG

- Spackle
- Paint
- Measure
- Drill

HOW MANY CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERS DOES IT TAKE TO

* change a lightbulb
* clean the toilet
* do the dishes
* throw out moldy food

FIND YOUR 100 TYPE OF CRAZY

(DIFFICULT PEOPLE = CHALLENGING PEOPLE)

HOST

- exhibitions
- lectures
- artist talks
- music
- performance
- workshops
- pop-ups
- anything that upholds our mission

AS A SIDEWALK
- AN ATTIC
- A FENCE
- YOUR SCHOOL
- YOUR ROOM
- THE INTERNET
- A GALLERY

COMMUNITY

"IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME"

NON-PROFIT

ALL THE PAPERWORK

MAINTENANCE IS A VIRTUE

* HUSTLE EVERY DAY
* FUNDRAISE
* HAVE YOU SEEN OUR PATREON?

GROUP TEXTS

GROUP MEETINGS

GROUP HUGS

AGITATOR GALLERY

AGITATOR GALLERY

agitatorgallery.com
Public Access was a multi-use project space in Humboldt Park (3306 W. North Avenue), collaboratively run by Abbye Churchill, Keeley Haftner, David Hall, and Greg Ruffing. The space was active from 2016 to 2018, during which time we organized exhibitions, public programming, performances, film screenings, readings, artist talks, music events, and other public events. There was a hoped-for play on the concept of Public Access TV, and its historical ability to generate “non-commercial” content positioned toward rarified and cult values. We were seeking to enable discursive platforms through less conventionally attenuated forms. As someone else once said, the objective is not necessarily to make gold, but to become golden. Public Access was, after all, a promise of fetish. The space received one 5-star Google review as a gallery, and one 1-star review as a printing store with disappointing hours.

Public Access was a mandate for care, and vigilantly monitor our complicity in the dynamics, representation and appropriation, and reckon with important questions about power, politics, and the cultural cache of the block. In another sense though, the fact that it didn’t immediately translate as an art gallery was also a small way of limiting its gentrifying potency, and disappointing any landlord who hoped our presence would inherently catalyze the cultural cachet of the block.

Artist-run culture still unfolds in broader social and spatial contexts—our modified warehouses, storefronts, back units exist within the daily flow of neighborhood lives and spaces. Just as the arts might reckon with important questions about power dynamics, representation and appropriation, so too should we keep an eye on the hyper-local footprint of our spaces of production, and vigilantly monitor our complicity in the profit schemes of greedy developers and real estate speculators.

The personal pixie dust I sprinkled on Public Access was a mandate for care, be it for artists or for the space itself. In my own practice, I care with my labour, and as a Canadian artist, I am used to (and indeed, expect that) artistic labour is paid for. In Canada, Canadian Artists’ Representation (La Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC)) is the non-voluntary W.A.G.E. equivalent, which any institution receiving funds from the Canada Council for the Arts is obligated to honour. It has a straightforward fee structure that leaves no uncertainty as to what artistic labour is minimally worth. In the US, no such system exists, as a result of a lack of successive governmental support going back nearly 40 years.

Public Access had no source of funding other than the pockets of the four artists who founded it. But each of us did as much extra paid and unpaid labour as we could so that, in spite of our inability to provide artist fees, at the very least our artists incurred no major extra costs. For me, this meant driving
I wanted to create a space within Chicago that engaged the local community with artists and arts organizations from around the world, while also acting as a site of production and studio for us all individually. That meant ensuring that the group shows I curated included a mix of artists from outside of Chicago as well as inside, and across stages of their careers. I invited curators into the city to co-curate works—as with Daisy Nam of the Carpenter Center, and our show based on (and including) Dara Birnbaum’s 1979 video “Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry”—I wanted to lean into that complexity of making-space and thinking-space and presenting-space, and jumble it all up a little. This is the advantage of artist-run spaces everywhere: you can muddle it all up. And perhaps the advantage of artist-run spaces in Chicago in particular: you're encouraged to.

The publishing program added another layer to the space's ever-growing list of hyphenates. Artist-run space, studio, performance space, storefront, and now bookstore. I imagined the publications created by the gallery as little emissaries, ambassadors of the space dutifully proliferating the ideas contained within our walls into corners unknown. At the same time, I brought in publications, poems, zines, posters, pins—much—from internationally distributed artist publishers, bringing the outside in as we were sending our inside out.

The ambition of Public Access is the energy I crave and feel limitless joy to discover in any artist-run space: copious complexity, fueled in equal parts by passion, labor, collaboration, and a desire for community. An outstretched hand beckoning, an unfurling, a declaration.
Terrainists and Their Commercial interests drive action at the apex of a hierarchy that relegates most artists to its base as individualized cultural workers. Endowed art institutions with corporate structures, rich board members, and donors propagate top-down power. Artists reluctantly inhabit and readily challenge this so-called art world. Artists make spaces of their own to show art—and to cultivate and sustain conversations and friendships, community and careers. These spaces come and go, along with the people who establish and participate in them. Each one has its own personality and trajectory, and none escapes the vagaries of time.

Anyone who cares about art knows that there’s not enough space for artists to make and show work. Studios bulge with unseen art, revelations of performance artists are neglected, and sonic feats of poets and musicians go unheard. Acute shortage of space constrains opportunities for all artists, and especially recent arrivals to art-making or Chicago. Competition is structural, and ferocious. Like a day at the beach, Terrain and similar spaces offer a reprieve from the grit and grind of life as an artist.

By the time I met Sabina and started going to openings in 2013, Terrain had taken root in the Chicago art community. Through the changing seasons, I’d walk the five blocks to her house and find loads of regulars and newcomers laughing, eating, drinking, and talking together—and yes, partaking in art that might be perched on the roof, suspended from the porch, hanging in the tree, alighted on the lawn, or resonating in the mind.

Like others, I showed up at Terrain because Sabina was my friend and I was sure to chat with her. Whatever my mood when setting out, I knew I’d be energized by the whirl of an opening. Terrain had an extra attraction for me as a social anthropologist, who writes about contemporary art and artists, their underpinnings and dynamics. Artist-run spaces give artists relaxed de-institutionalized places to be themselves and foment fun.

Commercial interests drive action at the apex of a hierarchy that relegates most artists to its base as individualized cultural workers. Endowed art institutions with corporate structures, rich board members, and donors propagate top-down power. Artists reluctantly inhabit and readily challenge this so-called art world.
With each Biennial, the tide of Terrainists rises, and along with it, the number of people who experience art in friendly environs. The enthusiasm of artists and their audiences around the Terrain Biennial, and the dedication of its voluntary organizers and participants, continue to demonstrate that whether in Chicago, Dhaka, London, or unincorporated rural Texas, artists acting together have the power to create space for art and community.

My favorite one was an installation where people could leave items that had a personal meaning to them and they were having a hard time parting with it. A memory place.

Jen Feasley

My family loved the surprise and wonder when we walked to school or took a stroll through the neighborhood. We would pause and take it all in and sometimes take pictures. My kids loved the house with pieces of telephones stuck in the dirt.

Amy Henderson

Terrain for me is Sabina, a warm, loving, smart, funny and sizzling artist and friend. She gave me my first show in Chicago, she gave me a chance with all her great heart and soul. She gave her home as a place to meet, to talk, to laugh, and of course one of the most important things—to eat.

• Nelly Agassi

During my time working with the imitable Sabina Ott, the experience opened me up. It allowed me to question the boundaries of my practice, ultimately eliciting an important shift and expansion of my work. For this I will always be profoundly grateful to the generosity and spirit of Terrain.

• Karen Azarnia

Sabina saw the Terrain project as a way to jumpstart (or continue) the idea of reciprocity in the Chicago art community. It was a gathering place for artists, and an extension of core ideas in her work—gestures of generosity, nurturing, unconditional love—and it satisfied her desire expressed even more through other artists’ work.

• Anna Kunz

As much as it is a public exhibition, Terrain Biennial is also a significant collaboration opportunity with hosts. I’ve described it as a love letter to the individuals who have chosen me for their site homes. It is a conversation that builds deep friendships and spiritual bonds and has profoundly impacted my work in Chicago and beyond.

• Melissa Potter

As an artist and curator, producing shows for Terrain Exhibitions and Biennial has been an amazing platform for community-building through interactive public art. Each project in its own way has facilitated conversation and collective engagement around reclaiming public space as safe space, radical acts of occupying space or merciful acts experienced while traveling space. For me, Terrain has provided me the opportunity to experiment, create and collaborate with a diverse group of art practitioners.

• Sadie Woods

Before Sabina’s death in 2018, she and her husband, co-founder John Paullett, planned with friends for Terrain’s transition to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With its incorporation as a nonprofit organization, a home-grown community was reborn as a legal entity.

The Founding and running Terrain became integral to Sabina’s life as an artist and art collective. Its growth benefitted from Sabina’s expansive digital presence, through which she knitted the community of Terrainists even closer by posting about their exhibitions and successes. She made opportunities for artists and in turn, created a community. In doing so, she modeled how artists can reimagine their resources and devise ways to use them in support of themselves and each other. By mobilizing artists into voluntary communities, artist-run spaces such as Terrain transform visibility and credibility into social and cultural capital for their participants.

As Sabina’s own art practice turned to large-scale installations, the Terrainists she championed showed up for her too, for example, helping to construct and install major exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center and Hyde Park Art Center. And when Sabina’s time was running out, the demographically diverse community of artists that she dreamed possible sardined itself into the small lot at 704 Highland for a farewell fanfare.

To round out ethnographic observations and reflections on my own experiences and research about Terrain, I asked artists to send me a quotation about their Terrain experiences. Those who responded created projects for Terrain, were regulars at openings, and are themselves hubs connecting Terrainists and other ecosystems of artists.

With each Biennial, the tide of Terrainists rises, and along with it, the number of people who experience art in friendly environs.
Way back in 2009, I attempted to write a history of artist-run spaces in Chicago using Alternative Spaces in Chicago, the 1984 exhibit at Chicago’s Museum of Contempo­raneous Art, as a jumping-off point. Curated by Lynne Warren and Mary Jane Jacobs, Alternative Spaces in Chicago chronicled the previous decade’s significant alter­native spaces. As a plucky recent MFA grad, I compiled an exhibition on each artist-run space for the "Artist-Run Spaces: A Brief History Since 1984," which ran in Lummis’ cousin maga­zine, 0.121x578 p., the first long-term exhibition of this genre at Hyde Park Art Center. In addition, I wrote an essay on each artist-run space for the "Artist-Run Digest," published by ThreeWalls and Green Lantern Press in 2009, that stands as a document of ARC 1.0.

In hindsight, reading through the Pr piece, I see how inadequate it was as an effort. I delib­erately omitted very important groups and projects out of sheer naivety and a bit of negligence. I was young and attempt­ing to map what Chicago—offered as a social, intellectual, and financial place for artists. At the time, I felt that I lacked basic facts about what had happened before me. I was still that way. What is Chicago artworld lore? How is it passed down? I craved a sense of place, and doing research on artist-run initiatives gave me a deep and enduring appreciation for spaces, groups, and events that I would not have otherwise encountered.

ThreeWalls mythologizes themselves. New York has been doing this forever, in song and dance, and by naming whole schools of art after the city. Los Angeles origin myths focused on movies, so other kinds of artworld mini-institu­tion for artists is not New Yorkers, and generations of outsiders went to the beach. Subsequently immense cultural communities have been built out of New Orleans and Chicago, and publicizing LA art history, most notably The Getty Center’s initia­tive Pacific Standard Time, which began in 2011 with “Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980,” when more than 60 organiz­ations presented exhibitions and programs that reached the walls of the city at once. The Chicago scene also has its history, which involves a fair amount of change 2009. The art world and spaces have focused on many of these spaces have a kind of pedagogy and produce material records of their work and ideas. (Off the top of my head: ThreeWalls’ Phonebook directory of not-for-profit artist-run spaces, the Common Field network of independent arts-organizations, the nonprofit Spaces Online forum for artist-book publishing are good examples.) But just as many don’t have this inclination or lack the funds to do it. Nineteen ‘90s era artist-run spaces made a model out of “surfing the wave,” self-funding and occupy­ping marginal, vacant spaces. Yet from the vantage point of a generation of gig-based, economic precariousness, the marginal space looks more like a tragic or ridiculous symptom of artworld (not aesthetics) problem. Hence the post-2008 financial crisis activism of organizations (like W.A.G.E.), around Fair pay for artists in the nonprofit world. In an era where the museum hierarchy (boards/trust­ees/art directors → curator → artist) runs nonprofit spaces record alternative prac­tices, they should consider ways to make them more viable and sustainable. Perhaps making Artist Run Chicago 3.0 should be a training conference. This is really another iteration of the problem for artists—that in order to create the world they want to participate in, they have to do things other than art, namely administration, curation, art criticism, real estate, politics. Artists might have to be more than artists.
During the months of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, we collected an even longer list of past and new artist-run spaces in Chicago, through research directed by Marina Resende Santos with Cecília Resende Santos and Mána Taylor Hjörleifsdóttir. The list was compiled with the help of data from The Visualist, the Hyde Park Art Center, threewalls, the MDW Fair archives, and Hey You Made It. From there, we relied on 130 responses to an online survey from the artist-run community to update our listings of active and recently ended projects. We are deeply grateful to the artists who responded to our requests for information about their projects.

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**2020 Directory of**

**Artist-Run Projects Operating in Chicago**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[blank]haus gallery</td>
<td>3206 W Armitage Ave</td>
<td>[blank]haus.com</td>
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<td>6018 North</td>
<td>6018 N Kimball Ave</td>
<td>6018north.org</td>
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<td>AddS Donna</td>
<td>3252 W North Ave</td>
<td>addsdonna.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adler &amp; Floyd</td>
<td>3537 S Western Blvd</td>
<td>adlerfloyd.com</td>
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<td>Agp Collective</td>
<td>3325 W Wrightwood Ave</td>
<td>agpcollective.com</td>
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<td>Agitator Gallery</td>
<td>1119 N Ashland Ave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amazigh Contemporary</td>
<td>2 E Erie St</td>
<td>amazigh.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANYM F</td>
<td>events and online magazines</td>
<td>magazine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>626 W Cermak Rd, Suite 240</td>
<td>annasprojects.com</td>
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<td>Any Squared Projects &amp; Studio</td>
<td>2328 N Milwaukee Ave</td>
<td>anysquaredprojects.com</td>
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<td>Apparatus Projects</td>
<td>2639 W 21st St</td>
<td>apparatusprojects.com</td>
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<td>ARC Gallery</td>
<td>1463 W Chicago Ave</td>
<td>arcgallery.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archer Beach Haus</td>
<td>3012 S Archer Ave</td>
<td>facebook.com/archerbeachhouse</td>
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<td>Art's Art Space</td>
<td>4200 W Diversey Ave</td>
<td>artspacechicago.com</td>
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<td>Art in These Times</td>
<td>2040 N Milwaukee Ave</td>
<td>artinsitutewrap.org</td>
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<td>Art Space Chicago</td>
<td>3418 W Armitage Ave</td>
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<td>Arts of Life</td>
<td>2010 W Carroll Ave</td>
<td>artistsoflife.org</td>
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<td>Asterisk Arts Collective</td>
<td>1020 W Bryn Mawr Ave</td>
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<td>Axis Lab</td>
<td>1120 W Argyle St</td>
<td>axislab.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Baby Blue Gallery</td>
<td>2233 S Throop St, 518</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backyard Series</td>
<td>Event-based, in backyards and partner spaces</td>
<td>@backyardserieschi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad g Sports Online platform and radio show</td>
<td>badatsports.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>BASEMENT: A Project Space</td>
<td>836 W Cullerton St, Basement level</td>
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<td>Basic Studios</td>
<td>3651 W Diversey Ave</td>
<td>basicstudios.space</td>
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<td>facebook.com/bedsheetcinema</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill's Auto</td>
<td>3275 Archer Ave</td>
<td>billsinauto.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary</td>
<td>2334 W 11th Pl</td>
<td>facebook.com/boundarychicagospace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boyfriends Chicago</td>
<td>3321 W Carrol Ave</td>
<td>facebook.com/boffboyfriends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brat Trap</td>
<td>955 W Cermak Rd</td>
<td>facebook.com/bratatrap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddy</td>
<td>78 E Washington Ave</td>
<td>comradastudios.chicago.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>062 Gallery</td>
<td>1029 W 35th St</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Art Space</td>
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<td>4artspace.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Ward Project Space</td>
<td>5338 S Kimbark Ave</td>
<td>4wardprojects.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACR (Artists’ Cooperative Residency &amp; Exhibitions)</td>
<td>between spaces; residency in Steuben, WI</td>
<td>a筷子art.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams DONNA</td>
<td>3252 W North Ave</td>
<td>adams-donna.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adler &amp; Floyd</td>
<td>3537 S Western Blvd</td>
<td>adlerfloyd.com</td>
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<td>Agp Collective</td>
<td>3325 W Wrightwood Ave</td>
<td>agpcollective.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agitator Gallery</td>
<td>1119 N Ashland Ave</td>
<td>agitatorgallery.com</td>
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<td>Amazigh Contemporary</td>
<td>2 E Erie St</td>
<td>amazigh.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANYM F</td>
<td>events and online magazines</td>
<td>magazine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>626 W Cermak Rd, Suite 240</td>
<td>annasprojects.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any Squared Projects &amp; Studio</td>
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<td>anysquaredprojects.com</td>
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<td>Apparatus Projects</td>
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<td>apparatusprojects.com</td>
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<td>ARC Gallery</td>
<td>1463 W Chicago Ave</td>
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<td>Archer Beach Haus</td>
<td>3012 S Archer Ave</td>
<td>facebook.com/archerbeachhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art’s Art Space</td>
<td>4200 W Diversey Ave</td>
<td>artspacechicago.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art in These Times</td>
<td>2040 N Milwaukee Ave</td>
<td>artinsitutewrap.org</td>
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<td>Art Space Chicago</td>
<td>3418 W Armitage Ave</td>
<td>artspacechicago.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts of Life</td>
<td>2010 W Carroll Ave</td>
<td>artistsoflife.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asterisk Arts Collective</td>
<td>1020 W Bryn Mawr Ave</td>
<td>facebook.com/asteriskartscollective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Axis Lab</td>
<td>1120 W Argyle St</td>
<td>axislab.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Baby Blue Gallery</td>
<td>2233 S Throop St, 518</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backyard Series</td>
<td>Event-based, in backyards and partner spaces</td>
<td>@backyardserieschi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad g Sports Online platform and radio show</td>
<td>badatsports.com</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BASEMENT: A Project Space</td>
<td>836 W Cullerton St, Basement level</td>
<td>facebook.com/basementplains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Studios</td>
<td>3651 W Diversey Ave</td>
<td>basicstudios.space</td>
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<tr>
<td>bedsheet cinema</td>
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<td>Buddy</td>
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<td>Cleaners</td>
<td>1656 N Milwaukee Ave</td>
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<td>3319 S Morgan St</td>
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<td>facebook.com/comerio unpopular</td>
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<td>Comfort Station</td>
<td>2570 S Chicago Ave</td>
<td>comfortstationchicago.com</td>
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<td>Compound Yellow</td>
<td>244 Lake St, Oak Park, IL</td>
<td>comp Yellow.org</td>
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<td>Co-Prosperity</td>
<td>1216 W Grand Ave</td>
<td>co-prosperity.com</td>
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<td>Courgette Space</td>
<td>1216 W Grand Ave</td>
<td>courgette.space</td>
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<td>Connect Gallery</td>
<td>1350 S Halsted St</td>
<td>connectgallery.org</td>
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<td>Constellation</td>
<td>3111 N Western Ave</td>
<td>constellationchicago.org</td>
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<td>Crazy 8 Artists' Atlas</td>
<td>401 S State St</td>
<td>choking.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crazy 8 Art's Atlas</td>
<td>401 S State St</td>
<td>choking.com</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>DADS Chicago (Digital Art Demo Space)</td>
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<td>devernsprojects.com</td>
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<td>2515 E Archer Ave</td>
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<td>2100 N Major Ave</td>
<td>dock5collective.com</td>
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<td>DOCUMENT</td>
<td>1709 W Chicago Ave</td>
<td>documentspace.com</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Eat Paint Studio</td>
<td>5036 S Lincoln Ave</td>
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<td>Eco Collective Chicago</td>
<td>2042 W 21st St</td>
<td>ecocollectivechicago.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECONOLINE</td>
<td>1524 W Western, 114A</td>
<td>econolinegallery.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elastic Arts Collective</td>
<td>4200 W Diversey #208</td>
<td>elasticartscollective.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electromagnetic Pepper</td>
<td>1109 W Burwyn Ave</td>
<td>electromagneticpepper.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elephant Room Gallery</td>
<td>704 S Wabash Ave</td>
<td>elephantroomgallery.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoy the Film</td>
<td>6431 S Cottage Grove Ave</td>
<td>enjoythefilm.org</td>
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<td>Everybody Gallery</td>
<td>1726 N Western Ave</td>
<td>everybodystudio.com</td>
</tr>
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<td>Experimental Sound Studio</td>
<td>5925 N Ravenswood Ave</td>
<td>Experimental Sound Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Station</td>
<td>6100 S Blackstone Ave</td>
<td>experimentalstation.org</td>
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In 2009, the Hyde Park Art Center organized the first Artists Run Chicago exhibition to celebrate the network of spaces and projects run by artists in the city. In fall 2020, HPAC presents Artists Run Chicago 2.0. Here, we have mapped the spaces participating in each show, in 2009, and in 2020.

Artist-run spaces are volatile. They are animated by the energy of people who come through this city, and often leave it; by artists who build them out their pockets and in their homes, doing the important and joyful work of sharing art and discourse in the city. Artist-run spaces often do not, and are not meant to, last forever, but they are especially vulnerable to cultural and economic changes in the city. Where was the scene 10 years ago? How have things changed in just a decade? And how much is the scene really in one or two places, in our city of many neighborhoods and cultures? Mapping and comparing projects featured in ARC 1.0 and ARC 2.0 begins to illustrate some of these trajectories.

Land Acknowledgement:
Artists’ projects in the city of Chicago sit on the traditional lands of many indigenous nations, including the Hoocak (Winnebago/Ho’Chunk), Jiwere (Otoe), Nutachi (Missouria), Baxoje (Iowas), the Kiash Matchitiwuk (Menominee), the Meshkawhikia (Meskwaki), The Asakiwai (Sauk), The Myaamiaki (Miami), Waayaahantanwaki (Wea), Peeyankihsiaki (Plankashaw), the Kiikapoi (Kickapoo), the Inoka (Illini Confederacy), the Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe), the Odawak (Odawa) and the Bodewadmik (Potawatomi). In recognition of this, the maps of “Artists Run Chicago” show known Native American trails of the region that is now Chicago.
On June 17, Public Media Institute launched a survey to learn about the effects of the pandemic and of social distancing practices on artist-run spaces in Chicago. The survey, which was designed by Cecília Resende Santos, received 41 answers at the time of editing. The survey included 35 questions about the challenges that projects have faced, how “independence” means. It shows how these spaces are tied to communities of friends (including organizers/owners, individual donors, volunteers, artists) and neighborhoods (through educational and community programs). It seems that independent spaces can operate with flexibility, minimum resources and minimum institutionalization because they have always been driven by communities of people who care for them.

**Artist-Run Pandemic**

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Artist-Run Chicago

Here is a summary of our findings thus far. The complete results of the survey will be published online.

### Infrastructure

Almost half (49%) of the respondents operate out of their apartments, backyards, basements, and garages, and 37% occupy storefronts (many of which are residential spaces themselves).

27% of respondent’s organizations are located in large warehouse buildings, some of which are specifically dedicated to the arts. About a quarter of the responding organizations are itinerant or have no fixed location, including a few that operate solely online.

### Activities

While most (80%) of artist-run organizations that responded maintain galleries, many of them do a lot more than hang exhibitions. Half of artist projects conduct educational programs, such as workshops and classes, and almost as many houses studios for artists.

44% are event-based projects, organizing festivals and curatorial projects across the city, while another 44% operate artist residencies, 39% present film screenings as a main part of their programming, and 22% work as independent publishers or printmakers. And 50% of spaces support programs which, importantly, doesn’t fit into any of the categories above, such as experimental performance nights or the exploration of new media and technology.

### Organization Structure

37% of artist-run platforms that responded are registered nonprofits, and 7% are registered-for-profit businesses, but the majority (56%) are non-registered, informal, and independent art spaces.

### Major Funding Sources

72% of the projects are significantly funded out of the pockets of their organizers. 60% rely heavily on in-kind support, like donated space and volunteer work.

28% are supported by foundation grants, and only 13% receive significant government funding. About a quarter of the respondents receive funds from private donors and about the same percentage had success crowdfunding to sustain their projects.

20% of spaces are substantially funded by event sales or tickets. Others detailed their funding from space rentals, artist residency programs, production contracts, an organizer’s freelance job, or Fine art print sales.

### What are the biggest challenges posed by the pandemic for your organization?

- Loss of revenue, grants and fundraising cycles that are needed to pay rent and hold on to the space
- Lack of health insurance
- “Secure employment, housing
- Real threats to those deeply impacted by isolation, no access to medical care, and the loss of income, and most importantly, the continued struggles of systemic racism
- The premise of our work is community-based, participatory, and focused on collective interaction and resources sharing. (The pandemic has been) a deep blow to the foundation of our practice and mission
- Maintaining capacity while still allowing for space and time for staff and partners to deal with the trauma
- Art is about communication and community– how can we bring that experience to people in an age of social distancing and financial hardships like lost jobs and higher priority purchases (like rent and food)?

### Do you foresee any permanent impacts to your organization?

- Closure
- Our organization has become more fragmented
- Our planned programming was years in the making (...)we may not be able to reschedule
- The impact of moving our work online has been huge. We were reticent as we consider the pandemic a way to pull together and build out a digital arm. As a result, we've been able to facilitate public performances to happen in simultaneous cycles that are needed to pay rent and hold on to the space
- Audience evaporated
- With live-streaming, we are engaging a dramatically wider community on an international scale

“We do have more national and international people engaging with our programs or online content. We suspect that as their local economies re-open they will return to being more passive social media consumers (but hope they can and will remain engaged)”

“Our practice is grounded in community interaction, without the resources to build out a digital arm. As a result, we’ve been disappointed from our community and have felt failing to our artist collaborators”

### How has the pandemic affected audience engagement and attendance to your organization’s programs?

Has your audience decreased or increased?

Has it become more local, or spread nationally and internationally?

- Increased locally, due to [our engagement] in specific discourse in the city
- Audience evaporated

With live-streaming, we are engaging a dramatically wider community on an international scale

“We do have more national and international people engaging with our programs or online content. We suspect that as their local economies re-open they will return to being more passive social media consumers (but hope they can and will remain engaged)”

“Our practice is grounded in community interaction, without the resources to build out a digital arm. As a result, we’ve been disappointed from our community and have felt failing to our artist collaborators”

If you are an artist running a project in Chicago, and would like to participate in the research about the impact of COVID-19 on artist-run spaces in Chicago, please fill in the survey at publicmediainstitute.com/covidsurvey and submit new entries at publicmediainstitute.com/map and submit new entries at publicmediainstitute.com/artistrunchicago
Outside of any programming, how are you keeping in touch with your public or community during the pandemic?

- Newsletters and social media
- We are still publishing reviews and interviews but since we stopped for 3 weeks to focus on protests and supporting BLM, we have not had any content on our site.
- We are wheat pasting messages in solidarity with Black Lives Matter
- Mostly just checking in on artists friends, but not much, really, giving time for artists to feel and go through their thing while we do the same, no pressure here for a/the production line”.
- What, if anything, will your organization take away from the pandemic for its programming and outreach? Are there any kinds of programming or ways of using digital tools you will continue after restrictions are lifted?
- Shutting down our usual arts programming and fully embracing our space as a functional resource hub will allow us to experiment with our relationship to the neighborhoods around us.
- The pandemic has shown how vital and vulnerable the art ecosystem in the city of Chicago remains.
- Since the death of George Floyd, we’ve been thinking hard about our role in the systemic problems in the art world and how to move forward and what needs to be adjusted.
- The lesson learned is that we are dependent on gathering.
- All of the virtual developments will be maintained after restrictions are lifted because we will no longer have a physical space to return to.
- I’m interested in thinking about building a micro network where artists support each other in reciprocal ways internationally.

As it becomes safe to meet again in person for larger events, we will continue to originate and include digital tools in program development, participation, and engagement. The pandemic has also provided an opportunity to consider what it truly means to serve all artists and audiences and given us tremendous opportunities to reach under served artists and audiences who in the past might not make it to a live performance, including disabled and other financially and socially marginalized persons.

What would you rather not take away from the pandemic?

- I’d rather not take away a return to the normal from before.
- I would rather not take the extreme juxtaposition of social isolation colliding with mass assembly in the streets we need our in-between spaces of social life to sustain and heal us and bring us together for contemplation, listening, and imagination.
- We would hope that this results in more options and spaces for equitable experiences and expressions in the arts, not a reinforcing of current or introducing of new inequities.
- We would hope that this opens the world up, versus carving new power structures. We hope to not take the fear and anxiety that accompanied the pandemic. We can leave that behind.

Permanent online social atomization. Public space is powerful and we need it for so many things.
**Chicago 2.0**

**Artists Run Chicago 2.0** at the Hyde Park Art Center each Thursday, September-November 2020 for live and virtual programming featuring spaces participating in Artists Run Chicago 2.0.

**Movies in the Lot (In Person)**

- **Date:** September 10th
- **Time:** 8pm - 10pm
- Join us in the Hyde Park Art Center parking lot for a socially distanced screening event! Bring your own blankets, chairs, and snacks and enjoy films and shorts curated by Nightingale Cinema and Boundary. For safety measures, space is limited, please RSVP at cmckissick@hydeparkart.org

**ADDs DONNA presents Collection Studies**

- **Date:** October 8
- **Time:** 6 - 8pm
- Join ADDs DONNA and featured artists for a virtual discussion on pieces from their collection. Artists will share materials related to the objects on display and participate in an informal discussion with ADDs DONNA curators, dissecting the material to relate it back to the artists’ practices and the larger theme of the collection.

**The Barbarians**

- **Date:** September 17
- **Time:** 6 - 8pm
- Join SLOW Gallery and Sideshow Theater Company for a staged reading of Jerry Siebert’s experimental play, The Barbarians.

**Ignition Performances**

- **Date:** September 24
- **Time:** 6 - 8pm
- Join Ignition Project Space for an evening of sound, music, dance, movement and performance art from artists who have worked at Ignition Project Space over the years.

**Ohklahoma presents Into The Groove**

- **Date:** September 27
- **Time:** 12pm
- Exhibition and performance space, Ohklahoma, presents a day long event featuring performance, sound, and video from Chicago-based artists and artists from around the nation and globe.

**Artist Run Chicago 2.0 Curatorial Talk**

- **Date:** October 1
- **Time:** 6 - 8pm
- Join us for a virtual Curatorial Talk with our Director of Exhibitions and Residency, Allison Peters Quinn and Noah Hanna moderated by our Exhibitions and Residency Coordinator, Marilesa Acuna. Learn more about the history of Artists Run Chicago, and insight about the current exhibition.

**Chuquimarca presents Tanda**

- **Date:** October 22
- **Time:** 6 - 8pm
- Join Chuquimarca for a virtual Tanda Talk. Chuquimarca’s experimental program that aims to motivate self-directed and collective learning by structuring a short term club that aids artists and makers with personal practice through collective knowledge building.

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**PRESRIPTION FOR A HEALTHY ART SCENE:**

01 A LARGE POOL OF ARTISTS THERE’S A CRITICAL MASS OR TIPPING POINT THAT MAKES A SCENE

02 TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES WHICH HELPS SUPPORT THE POOL OF ARTISTS

03 ACTIVE ART SCHOOLS WHICH FEED INTO THE POOL OF ARTISTS AND GIVE ARTISTS TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

04 Studio space that’s affordable as well as live/work law that allows artists to occupy light industrial spaces

05 Alternative spaces that give exhibition and residency opportunities for new artists and ideas

06 Adventurous art dealers who take on new artists, support artists with sales

07 Adventurous collectors who buy locally and buy new work, make their collections available to students

08 Sophisticated writers to document, discuss and promote new ideas/continuing regional development

09 Publications for them to write for

10 Newspaper critics who are thoughtful and sophisticated and talented

11 Fellowships and grants available for artists and writers

12 Accessible museums and curators who talk to each other and do studio visits with local artists

---

**by Renny Pritikin**

**Interested Audiences Who Attend All Of The Above and Read About It**

**Access To Specialized Materials Or Businesses (Such as High Tech Materials in the SF Bay Area or Film Industry in LA)**

**Social Space Where New Ideas Are Being Generated About Art, About Society, About the Role of Art**

**Hangouts/Parties/Salons/Lecture Series/Restaurants/Bars Where a Sense of Community Is Manifested**

**Articulate Artist Leaders**

**Heroes, Iconoclasts, Villains (People Everyone Love To Hate)**

**Artists in Residency Opportunities**

**Progressive Political Climate That Encourages Art As Opposed To, Say, Giuliani Using His Office To Go After The Brooklyn Museum**

**Opportunities for Artists To Get Involved in Politics**

**Opportunities for Public Art (City or Private)**

**Events That Bring People Together Scheduled Multi-Gallery Opening Nights For Example**

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More & updated information about ARC 2.0 events:

[can be found at: https://www.hydeparkart.org/events/]

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**by Renny Pritikin**
The question “how are you?” (not “how are things?” but “how are you?”) is regularly asked. The emotional state of each team member receives attention. We are all humans doing the work.

The social value of maintaining a community gathering space is prioritized.

The surrounding art community offers a critical mass of fairly compensated opportunities for artists, educators, and arts administrators.

Affordable light industrial spaces are available for rent.

A culture of collaboration and consensus drives decision making. Unilateral decisions that impact others are expressly avoided.

Volunteer labor is welcomed with gratitude, but unpaid internships are understood as replicating oppressive systems of privilege and avoided when possible.

Intersectional leadership, specifically by POC and queer artists and administrators, is promoted and supported.

Power inequity is understood as a danger to the powerful, the powerless, the organization, and the community. Hierarchies, when they arise or are inherited, are dismantled and replaced with horizontal and democratic models.
Lil' Orphi Annie

All right. Here's the last one.

Hey, where's Gina? I want to get the fuck outta here!

I'll go find her.

Ugh, drummers.

Yo, it's 5 bucks.

Gina!

C'mon! We're all loaded out and it's time to go.

But loading out is fuckin' dumb.

I know!

Of course! Gina, I love you!

Yeh ok, guy...

Gimme back my clothes later, ok, guy?

Wait, where's Gina?

Hey, this guy gave me these, I'm going to eat all of them right now, ok?

Yes! Finally out of that flesh market.

Hey this guy gave me these, I'm going to eat all of them right now, ok?

Look, you and the dog can split this beer, but that's all I got.

Support the scene.

Dude, one of the DJs is from Moldova.

Surf! Surf!

Smiiich.

What?! I just played, I'm not paying a cover!

Doom.

Don't look back, don't look back, don't look...

Babe.

Dude...

Dude. You want a beer?

Wait, where's Gina...

Doom.

Gina wait!

Ugh, gaud, I'll just drop it all off tomorrow before work.

Um Annie? Don't bother.

Somebody stole the van.

Ahhhh!!
WHAT'S LEFT FOR THE DOGS
THE SHOW
A COMIC BY DAVID ALVARADO

WHERE’S THE SHOW?!

KNOW ME, WHERE'S THE SHOW?

THE SHOW... IT'S UPRIGHT!

AYE! LOOK A SHOW!

OH, THIS IS THE SHOW!

NO, THIS IS MY APARTMENT, NOT THE SHOW!

THE SHOW IS ON THE NEXT FLOOR.

GOOD JOB! HERE THERE WERE NO SHOW!

DOOM DOOM DOOM!

GREAT! THAT’S NOT THE SHOW!

WHERE DO YOU WANT THE SHOW IN?

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

I WAS HERE! COME OVER AND LOOK!

I KNOW RIGHT! SO GOOD!

END.

Early human campsites, crucial to the species’ esocial development, also gave rise to the first art spaces (Figures 1.1-1.2). Despite countless iterations, this primitive conical model has managed to survive without sacrificing its fundamental form (Fig. 1.3), or relying on an elite patronage (Fig. 1.4). Figures 1.5-1.6 depict a generic subsistence example of this model as it might manifest today.

Fig. 1.1

Fig. 1.2

Fig. 1.3

Fig. 1.4

Fig. 1.5

Fig. 1.6
Quimby's Bookstore

We deal in outdated technology, zines, small press and comics, the unusual, the aberrant, the saucy, the lowbrow.

1854 W North Ave. Chicago
quimbys.com

CBD Elixir
Botanical Seltzer

Flower Power
I participate.
You participate.
He participates.
We participate.
You all participate.
They profit.

Text on print by the Atelier Populaire in Paris, May 1968
The Lumpen Radio Brand Assets are the beginning of a visual vocabulary developed to provide a loose framework for the initial launch of Lumpen Radio. As Lumpen Radio evolves, these assets will evolve. Notes: Use Wisely.

> home
We were once solely Bad at Sports, now we are also Bad at Reality. Join us in the augmentation of the real.

> run
Download the Bad at Reality App.

> execute
Bad@Reality is an augmented reality (AR) app where you can use your phone to visually explore interviews with your favorite Chicago artists lurking in the drawings all around you.

> process
Download it, open it, follow the AR guy, search the drawings, unlock the things. Headphones recommended.

> search
Find it in Artists Run Chicago 2.0, Lumpen Magazine, Marz Community Brewing, Bad at Sports, and graffiti near you.