OPEN ENGAGEMENT
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This type of event would not be possible without the support of many individuals and institutions. I would like to thank the following for all they have done to help make Open Engagement happen.

First and foremost, I need to extend my gratitude to the Open Engagement planning committee. This core group of people worked closely with me for over a year (and some of them for the past two years) to realize this event: Lexa Walsh, Mack McFarland, Alfy Drozd, Ariana Jacob, Sandy Sampson, Sara Rabinowitz, Katy Asher, Garrick Imatani, Stefan Ransom, Harrell Fletcher, and Jason Sturgill. Their dedication, patience, and hard work is what drives this conference.

A special thanks is due to planning committee member Crystal Baxley who has worked with me tirelessly for the past two years on Open Engagement, and whose passion and dedication help make this all possible.

Many thanks to Portland State University, without the generous support of this institution we would not have been able to make this happen. I also want to thank the individuals within PSU who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the Art Department for Open Engagement. Thank you to Xavier Oberlander, Karen Hensley, Patrick Rock, Ellen Wack, Lis Charman, and our Department Chair Bill LePore for all of their hard work and support.

I owe a great deal of thanks to Nicole Lavelle, the design force behind Open Engagement: Art and Social Practice. Her work on this project has been far reaching and has created a vision that pays tribute to all individuals involved in this effort as well as to the spirit of this event.

My sincere thanks and appreciation goes out to all the Open Engagement volunteers and interns.

The spirit of Open Engagement is made possible throughout the neighborhoods of Portland thanks to all the generous hosts who are housing our out of town presenters. Thank you all for your hospitality and personal support.

Thank you to the local businesses and cultural institutions that have been so supportive of Open Engagement: The Ace Hotel, The Portland Art Museum, Pacific Northwest College of Art, TriMet, PSU Bike Hub, Sellwood Cycle Repair, Hollywood Cycling, Portland Bicycle Tours & Rentals, Kerr Bikes, Pedal Bike Tours Rentals, Waterfront Bicycle Rentals, The Portland Soup Company, Fressen Artisan Bakery, Basta Italian Restaurant and Bar, The Candlelight Lounge, and Pinball Publishing.

My deepest gratitude to all of the Open Engagement presenters for allowing your work to enter this conversation.

Thank you,

Jen Delos Reyes
Founder and Director, Open Engagement
INTRODUCTION

Open Engagement is a free annual conference on socially engaged art. Directed by Jen Delos Reyes and planned in conjunction with the PSU Art and Social Practice students and a dedicated planning committee.

Each year the conference themes are directly related to the current research and inquiry of the students in the Art and Social Practice program at Portland State University as well as the interests of the planning committee. Students, faculty and committee members work together to select the featured presenters, who then also become faculty in the Art and Social Practice MFA program.

What follows here is a series of questions that the planning committee are asking about the five conference themes as well as a discussion on the two summits that will take place at Open Engagement on art and education and art and social practice in the museum. We hope that these questions and discussions will assist in sharing our thoughts around the conference we have organized. We look forward to having all of your voices join this conversation.

The Peoples + Publics stream during OE will focus on ideas of Democracy, Group Work, Participation, Audience, Folk, Activism. What questions are you currently asking around these ideas?

CRYSTAL BAXLEY How do you operate in a democracy where all of the voices feel like they are heard and still make progress to move forward into action? How do you sustain this process over a long period of time?

ALLY DROZD So for me the questions become about how the group decision making process is determined in the first place (by the group or lead by one person?) and what does that process look like? That process then has to be used to lay out the road map for how the democracy will proceed. If the group is small then it is easier for everyone’s voice to be heard and incorporated into decision making.

CB What is the critical breaking point between interaction and participation? How much importance are we putting on this, and why? What does it mean when artists travel all over the world to do “site-specific” projects when they don’t have any connection to the regionalism of that area? How do we as artists remain respectful and proactive where ever we are, and not just turn those “folk” ideas into another form of commodity?

ARIANA JACOB How can we think about people as collective entities as opposed to individuals and still be both personal and just?

JEN DELOS REYES Can social art serve as the impetus for meaningful social change?

JASON GARLAND STURGILL By calling something art, does it make it exclusive and inaccessible to some audiences?

MACK MCFARLAND Why participate? I don’t subject myself to other forms of crowd sourcing, so why make an exception for art?

GARRICK IMATANI I also wonder how a creative action might function and open up the dialog of democracy if it abandoned an art-educated spectatorship and critical feedback loop? My other question is: how does our historical understanding of agency affect our perception of the disconnect between studio practice and political praxis?

The Social Economies stream during OE will focus on ideas of: Experience Economy, Education, Social Marketing, Networking, Technology. What questions are you currently asking around these ideas?

JDR What is the role of social art in museum audience development?

SARA RABINOWITZ What could be the role of a museum or gallery be to a neighborhood?

JDR Can art and social practice strategically be used to gain greater interest in contemporary art amongst people who might not otherwise engage with art?

SR How can technology be used to disseminate and collaborate with a larger network? What is lost and what is gained when in person or physically is lost in connecting through technology?

GI Does the rhetoric around ‘social networking’ and ‘experience economy’ have implications on our practices in terms of perpetuating a type of industriousness or re-invigorated ‘culture industry’?

GI What are all the interesting ways in which others coming to the conference are using these tools as an integral part of their practice as artists and educators?

CB What is the connection between art and social practice artists and ideas about education? It seems that a large number of socially-engaged artists are interested in education, specifically types of education that operate different than that found in our school system. Why this focus? What is it doing, and who is it really for?

The In Between Spaces stream during OE will focus on ideas of Transdisciplinarity, Field Work, Urban/Rural, Defining and Naming. What questions are you currently asking around these ideas?

JDR How are others defining the term Art and Social Practice?

GI I’m wondering what role pedagogy plays in seeking/needin definition and terminology? I’m also genuinely curious if there is anything that can be considered as not being ‘in between’ anymore?

JGS Why do we need to define things as Art?

SR How are makers establishing models for transdisciplinary groups to come together? How might the research and making that happens here extend beyond the art world?

KATY ASHER How can artists work within neighborhood associations to gain greater interest in contemporary art? What art and social practice strategies could help the neighborhood associations increase community participation in the creation of neighborhood culture?

SR As cities like Detroit and Cleveland are being re-imagined from the once urban to the rural, how are populations, real estate, and jobs changing? Does art provide the platform for this re-imaging?

SR How can artists make work sensitive to a site that they do not live in?

GI Since so much work involves working with people and publics, is the field drawing on the research in other disciplines within the social sciences in an adequate way? Or, on the flip-side, is it overly dependent on the precedent set within those disciplines as they currently exist?

The Tracking + Tracing stream during OE will focus on ideas of: Histories, Documentary and Documentation. What questions are you currently asking around these ideas?

JDR How does the need (or perceived need) for documentation impact how ephemeral and socially engaged artworks are produced?

SR What are methods of documentation, especially in ephemeral projects that may produce a new experience in their representation?

JDR Looking back through art history many of the moments in art that are in the trajectory of socially engaged art practices have had a political moment or activist motivation. What is our current moment(s)?

The Sentiment + Strategies stream during OE will focus on ideas of: Feelings, Advice, Slowness, Generosity, Friendship. What questions are you currently asking around these ideas in art?

AJ I am interested in how we give presence to emotional experiences, including the warmer side of emotions, in ways that resist being read as cliché and that allow for open ended meaningful and unpredictable readings.

AD It seems that emotional information is not welcome or valid in intellectual and academic realms. Is this because feelings are qualitative and it is difficult to communicate them quantitatively?

JDR Why place value on time spent as a way of measuring the success of socially engaged art?

KA How long does it take to know a place or the people in that place? How long does it take to make meaningful relationships?

JDR How does friendship play into the analysis of an artwork?

JDR Is audience participation an act of generosity?

SR How can art be used to create friendship and why might this be important in our cultural climate?

GI Why do these words make some artists and art critics cringe at the thought of their use in an artwork?

There are many graduate programs developing around the country with a focus on public or social art making. What do you think is driving this shift?

GI I believe a cynical response would be to say that it is merely a symptom of the increased professionalization of the studio art practice similar to that of the growing number of PhD programs in Studio Art. In other words, that it functions somehow as a way to employ people and add greater specialization to the field. I do think it is a symptomatic response to market conditions
but not in the same way. I think it is a response to the pervasive capitalism that has come to dominate our daily lives. There is a growing understanding that we have a certain ethical responsibility that overrules our postmodern detachment to ultimate truth or right/wrong action. When it becomes clear that everything, including our educational institutions, are engines of the economic and political reality we live in, there is a need to rethink the ways in which we are promoting or resisting certain forms of capitalist enterprise.

This, of course, includes art and its engagement in the civic realm. Intersections with economics, ethics, social work, political science, etc. become key and require carving out a space to do that work in a manner on par with other disciplinary or interdisciplinary studies.

Al I think it makes sense that there is an interest in studying social and participatory art in university - these types of practices are becoming pervasive and feel active and intuitively appropriate to the conditions of our lives. But I think the result of becoming arts academics who focus on socially engaged work is what many people who enter these programs are intending.

GI I do think it represents more of a political engagement, but I don’t think there will be much consensus on a set of best practices within the field. I can’t help but compare Art & Social Practice to the emergence of New Genres-type programs that went through a similar kind of establishment and differentiation process from the disciplinary divisions within studio art that used to be so dominant. As an educator, I’d selflessly love a set of guidelines, vocabulary, strategies, etc. that I could leave with that I feel are shared by others but that might not be realistic or advantageous.

MM With the summit I hope to move past thinking of these programs as coming from the “institutions” and rather looking at what say Suzanne Lacy is doing at Otis with Public Practice. My experience in education is that the chair of a department has much more to do with the type of program than the administration of a college.

In the same way that art and social practice is being institutionalized in art education, art institutions are also beginning to focus their attention on these ways of making. The Portland Art Museum is bringing together some of the people who are beginning to implement changes in museums that make this way of working more integrated into that experience. What do you think is the role of the institution (if any) in supporting and integrating artists who work in this way?

JDR I think that one of the roles of the museum is to help establish a serious discourse around these ways of working and to fully integrate this work into the museum. I think that there is a lack of seriousness in a lot of this work. Also, so much of this type of work becomes relegated to one offs, or not seriously connected to the museums collection or primary goals. I think that part of this is not knowing how to integrate this type of work, I hope that through this summit there will be a dialogue that can help this situation.

CB I want the museums to be an active part of developing the new forms of working that are emerging in the contemporary art world and I think that Social Practice can not be ignored as a part of that.

GI I think the museum has shown that it will always be responsive to the ways in which artists are working. You could take that negatively or positively. I prefer to be optimistic and to think about how creative civic actions could open up the museum to more closely align itself with the spirit of civic responsibility I spoke about before. However, I want to be clear that I don’t think this requires some sort of abandonment from traditional practices either. If anything, I think representation of this type of work should be in proportion to its ability to re-invigorate and shift the history of the field. The museum should aim to be a democratic lens in this regard.

KATY ASHER investigates how audiences create new meanings and place themselves in groups, and facilitation of participatory events. She recently co-founded Portland Stock, a monthly public dinner event and presentation series which funds small to medium-sized artist projects in the Portland area. Past collaborations include work with art groups Redux, The M.O.S.T. and The Committee. Katy has spoken at the Art & Social Practice program at Portland State University and a BFA from the Pacific Northwest College of Art. She has exhibited work and organized events at apexart in New York City, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art Time-Based Art Festival in Portland, OR, and the Melbourne International Arts Festival in Melbourne, Australia, as well as at the Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair and Margaret Lawrence Gallery Melbourne, the Portland College Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, the Portland Art Museum, Reed College, and Igloo Gallery in Portland, OR.

CRYSTAL BAXLEY is a firm believer that everything will be ok. In 2010 she helped to organize Shine A Light at Portland Art Museum, Making Things, Making Things Better, Making Things Worse at Portland State University. She will graduate with a BFA from Portland State in 2011.

JEN DELOS REYES is an artist originally from Winnipeg, MB, Canada. Her research interests include the history of socially engaged art, group work, and artists’ social roles. She has exhibited works across North America and Europe, and has contributed writing to various catalogues and institutional publications. She has received numerous grants and awards including a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Grant. Jen is the founder and director of Open Engagement, a conference on socially engaged art practice and herself speaking widely on Art and Social Practice at conferences and institutions around the world. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Portland State University where she co-directs the Art and Social Practice MFA.

ALLY DROZD wants to do and make things that help people relate to and respect one another and therefore not hurt each other. Ally believes that in a world that often seems dominated by cynicism, apathy, and fear, demonstrating and representing how to be nice to people and take care of one another is really important.

HARRELL FLETCHER received his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and his MFA from California College of the Arts. He studied organic farming at UCSC and went on to work on a variety of small Community Supported Agriculture farms, which impacted his work as an artist. His work has been shown at SF Museum of Modern Art, the Berkeley Art Museum, the Wattis Institute, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in the San Francisco Bay Area, The Drawing Center, Socrates Sculpture Park, The Sculpture Center, The Wrong Gallery, Apex Art, and Smack Mellon in NYC, DiverseWorks and Aurora Picture show in Houston, TX, PICA in Portland, OR, Signal in Malmo, Sweden, Domain de Kerguehennec in France, The Royal College of Art in London, and the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. Fletcher has work in the collections of MoMA, The Whitney Museum, The New Museum, SFMOMA, The Berkeley Art Museum, De Young Museum, and The FRAC, Brittany, France.

GARRICK IMATANI is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores connections between the physical and cultural within movement, landscapes, and history. His most recent collaborative exhibition at the University of Oregon involved floating the Willamette River in a transparent hand built canoe and construct a monument island between the cities of Eugene and Portland as means of paralleling myths in national popular folklore with artistic legacy. Garrick resides in Portland, Oregon where he is an Assistant Professor of Art at Lewis & Clark College. He received his MFA in Visual Art from Columbia University and is the recipient of several grants, awards and fellowships, including the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Payson Governors’ Fellowship.

ARIANA JACOB makes artwork that uses conversation as a material and as subject. Her work explores experiences of interdependence and disconnection, questions her own idealistic beliefs, and investigates how people make culture and culture makes people. Recent works include a conversation space inside a tent for people to discuss the American tradition of breaking with tradition, a series of original serenades made by musicians in conversations with selected visual art, and an interactive poster project where visitors can write and take away posters. She collaboratively produces Portland Stock, an ongoing public dinner party and democratically awarded artist grant, with Katy Asher and Amber Bell. Ariana holds an MFA from the Art & Social Practice Program at Portland State University. She has exhibited work and organized events at apexart in New York City, Beutsonsalon in Paris, France, The Portland Institute for Contemporary Art Time-Based Art Festival in Portland, OR, and the Melbourne International Arts Festival in Melbourne, Australia.

SARA RABINOWITZ is a cultural worker whose practice is shaped by collaboration. Her work often results in an invitation for new relations to emerge through interactive furniture, installations, symposiums, and performances. Most recently, Sara has taken up anchoring in preparation for a midwestern hunt of the Osage Orange tree. Sara currently resides in Eugene, Oregon where she is the Visiting Professor in Fine Arts at the University of Oregon. She received her BFA in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

STEFAN Ransom was born in 1981 in Portland, Oregon. He received his BA from Eckerd College and is currently attending the Pacific Northwest College of Art MFA in the Visual Studies program. Aside from Stefan’s involvement with Open Engagement as the Conference Documentarian, he is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores tangential curiosity in pop culture and the ways that people relate to or use new technologies.

SANDY SAMPSON has been: painter, shop owner, analyst, shopping & paper goods clerk, bar tender, teacher, interviewer, gardener, hitch hiker, maid, ski lift operator, warehouse worker, slide librarian, fast food worker, box packer, direct care provider, among other things and in no particular order. Right now parenthood and casual pedagogy are her main occupations.

JASON STURGILL is an artist whose creative trajectory spans the worlds of curation, graphic design and commerce. He creates work that addresses these areas in a way that makes viewers confront ideas of empathy, philosophy, production, and their daily lives. Jason is currently a candidate in the MFA Art and Social Practice program at Portland State University. He lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

LEXA WALSH was born near Philadelphia as the youngest of 15 children. She has lived, worked, exhibited and toured in the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, the Pacific Northwest as well as across Europe and Asia. Her work is situated in performance and direct engagement, investigating everyday activities as tools for community and relationship building. The work is informed by her upbringing, extensive travels, community work and experimental music and performance projects. She is currently an MFA candidate in the Art and Social Practice program at the PSU. For Open Engagement 2010, Lexa was a special projects coordinator, in 2011 she is managing food and special events.
**SCHEDULE**

**FRIDAY MAY 13**

9 AM  
REGISTRATION + COFFEE AND PASTRIES  *Art Building Registration Table, 2000 SW 5th Ave.*

9 AM - 2 PM  
CENTER FOR GENOMIC GASTRONOMY  *Zack Denfeld and Cathrine Kramer - Outside of Art Building*

10 - 11 AM  
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND PANEL  *Shattuck Hall Annex*

11 AM - 1 PM  
OPENING RECEPTION: OPEN ENGAGEMENT SOCIAL ECONOMIES EXHIBITION  
Curated by Katy Asher  *Littman Gallery, Smith Memorial Union*

11:30 AM - 1 PM  
GETTING TO KNOW YOU(TUBE)  
Crystal Baxley and Stefan Ransom  *Field Work, 1101 SW Jefferson St.*

12 - 12:30 PM  
LUNCH

12 - 1 PM  
FRINQ: COMMUNITY GARDEN LUNCH  *Sara Wolf-Newlands and Freshman Inquiry Class  
PSU Community Garden, SW 12th Ave and SW Montgomery St.*

12 - 5 PM  
TEMPORARY LIBRARY OF SENTIMENTAL OBJECTS  *Kerri-Lynn Reeves and Daniel Wong - Field Work*

1 - 2:20 PM  
PABLO HELGUERRA  *Shattuck Hall Annex*

2:30 - 4 PM  
PARALLEL SESSIONS

- **PEOPLE + PUBLICS**  *Julie Perini and Amy Harwood - Autzen Gallery, Neuberger Hall*
- **TRACKING + TRACING**  *Big Car's Year in Fluxus - AB 320*
- **SOCIAL ECONOMIES**  *Andrew Wilson - Littman Gallery, Smith Memorial Union*
- **INBETWEEN SPACES**  *Xhurch, 4550 NE 20th Ave.*
- **INBETWEEN SPACES**  *Project Grow - City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave.*
- **INBETWEEN SPACES**  *Christine Hill - AB 200*
- **DESIGN PANEL**  *Gary Roznac, Nick Bastis, Pato Hebert  
Moderated by Sara Huston - White Stag Building, 70 NW 4th Ave.*

4 PM  
CONVERSATION BETWEEN TED PURVES AND ELYSE MALLOUK ON LANDFILL  
*Field Work, 1101 SW Jefferson St.*

5:30 - 9 PM  
PUB DISCUSSION SERIES  
Tracy Candido, Chelsea Haines and Eric Steen  *Coalition Brewery and Migration Brewery*

9 PM - 10:30 PM  
LATE NIGHT DINER  
Becca Lofchie  *Field Work, 1101 SW Jefferson St.*
9 AM  
**REGISTRATION**  Art Building Registration Table, 2000 SW 5th Ave.

9 AM - 2 PM  
**CENTER FOR GENOMIC GASTRONOMY**  Zack Denfeld and Cathrine Kramer  -  *Outside of Art Building*

9:30 - 11:50 AM  
**PORTLAND ART MUSEUM SUMMIT**  -  *Portland Art Museum*  (See page 7 for summit details)
Hammer Museum, Walker Art Center, Portland Art Museum, Bureau for Open Culture, Portland State University, Berkeley Art Museum, National Gallery of Victoria

10 - 11:30 AM  
**PARALLEL SESSIONS**

**PEOPLE + PUBLICS**  Creative Migration  -  *Autzen Gallery, Neuberger Hall*

**PEOPLE + PUBLICS**  Sarah Rodigari and Brett Cook  -  *AB 135*

**SOCIAL ECONOMIES**  The Cake and Eat It Collective  -  *Littman Gallery, Smith Memorial Union*

**TRACKING + TRACING**  Edie Tsong, Borderland Collective: Jason Reed, Ryan Sprott, Joey Fauerso and Jenny Browne  -  *AB 260*

**SENTIMENT + STRATEGIES**  tART Collective  -  *AB 320*

**INBETWEEN SPACES**  Deanna Pindell, artSpa  -  *AB 240*

**INBETWEEN SPACES**  James Reed and Agents of Change  -  *Field Work, 1101 SW Jefferson St.*

12 - 12:30 PM  
**LUNCH**

12 - 1 PM  
**FRINQ: COMMUNITY GARDEN LUNCH**  -  Sara Wolf-Newlands and Freshman Inquiry Class
PSU Community Garden, SW 12th Ave and SW Montgomery St.

12 - 5 PM  
**TEMPORARY LIBRARY OF SENTIMENTAL OBJECTS**  Kerri-Lynn Reeves and Daniel Wong  -  *Field Work*

12:30 - 2 PM  
**FRITZ HAEG**  -  *Shattuck Hall Annex*

2:30 - 4 PM  
**PARALLEL SESSIONS**

**PEOPLE + PUBLICS**  Conflict Kitchen (Dawn Weleski), Joseph Del Pesco and Christian Nagler  -  *Autzen Gallery*

**PEOPLE + PUBLICS**  PSU Social Practice MFA Low-Res Panel with Harrell Fletcher and Rick Lowe  -  *Shattuck Hall Annex*

**TRACKING + TRACING**  Fereshteh Toosi, Olivia Robinson, Joanna Spitzner, Dara Greenwald, Josh MacPhee, Valeska Populoh and Exploratorium: Marina McDougall and Jordan Stein  -  *AB 260*

**TRACKING + TRACING**  Narrative, Remembering and Engagement: David Osborn  -  *AB 200*

**SOCIAL ECONOMIES**  Stephanie Diamond  -  *Littman Gallery, Smith Memorial Union*

**INBETWEEN SPACES**  Queer Explorers Club  -  *AB 320*

4:15 - 5:30 PM  
**ART AND EDUCATION SUMMIT**
CCA, PSU, OTIS, MICA, Queens, UCSC, Emily Carr  -  *Shattuck Hall Annex*  (See page 7 for summit details)

5 PM  
**TRUE STORIES**
Organized by Helen Reed  -  *Portland Art Museum, Whitsell Auditorium, 1219 SW Park Ave.*

5 PM  
**OCCUPATION PREOCCUPATION**
Candlelight Lounge, 2032 SW 5th Ave.

6 - 8PM  
**ALYSHA SHAW: BALKAN DANCE PARTY**
Candlelight Lounge, 2032 SW 5th Ave.

7 PM  
**BUREAU FOR OPEN CULTURE**
Field Work, 1101 SW Jefferson St.
SCHEDULE

SUNDAY MAY 15

9 AM    REGISTRATION  Art Building Registration Table, 2000 SW 5th Ave.

9 AM - 5 PM   CENTER FOR GENOMIC GASTRONOMY  Zack Denfeld and Cathrine Kramer  -  Outside of Art Building

10 - 11:30 AM   PARALLEL SESSIONS

PEOPLE + PUBLICS  Amelia Winger-Bearskin  -  Autzen Gallery, Neuberger Hall
PEOPLE + PUBLICS  Julia Cole and Sean Starowitz  -  AB 320
TRACKING + TRACING  Petra Kuppers  -  AB 200
SOCIAL ECONOMIES  James Rojas  -  Littman Gallery, Smith Memorial Union

12 - 12:30 PM   LUNCH

FOLK SONGS OF INVISIBLE PORTLAND  Claire Cronin  -  Outside of Shattuck Hall / Park Blocks

12 - 1 PM   FRINQ: COMMUNITY GARDEN LUNCH  Sara Wolf-Newlands and Freshman Inquiry Class

PSU Community Garden, SW 12th Ave and SW Montgomery St.

12 - 5 PM   TEMPORARY LIBRARY OF SENTIMENTAL OBJECTS  Keri-Lynn Reeves and Daniel Wong  -  Field Work

12:30 - 2 PM   JULIE AULT  -  Shattuck Hall Annex

2:30 - 4 PM   PARALLEL SESSIONS

PEOPLE + PUBLICS  Jennifer Van Winkle  -  AB 260
TRACKING AND TRACING  Lynn Lu, Matthew Slaats, Julie Perini  -  AB 240
INBETWEEN SPACES  PLAND  -  AB 200
INBETWEEN SPACES  Landmarks and Language in Transit, Carmen Papalia and Jason Sturgill
INBETWEEN SPACES  Trimet bus parked on the park blocks, between Smith Memorial Union and Neuberger Hall
INBETWEEN SPACES  Panel organized by Nolan Calisch, featuring Fritz Haeg and Harrell Fletcher

Wealth Underground Farm, 14019 NW Newberry Rd., Portland

ART + EDUCATION TOPICS  Paul Wittenbraker, Rozzell Medina, jesikah maria ross  -  AB 320

2:30 - 7:30 PM   WE WERE HERE

Dawn Weleski and M. Callen  -  Various Locations

4:15 - 5:30 PM   ART + EDUCATION SUMMIT

CCA, PSU, OTIS, MICA, Queens, UCSC, Emily Carr  -  Shattuck Hall Annex  (See page 7 for summit details)

6 - 8:30 PM   GROUP DINNER AND FINAL PANEL

JULIE AULT, FRITZ HAEG AND PABLO HELGUERA

Moderated by Rick Lowe  -  PNCA Commons

9 PM - LATE   DANCE PARTY  Boxxes  -  330 SW 11th Ave.
MUSEUM SUMMIT

What do institutions do for artists interested in more public and participatory forms of practice? And what do such artists do for institutions? Exploring key projects at the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive, the Hammer Museum, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Portland Art Museum, and the Walker Art Center, a range of directors, educators, curators from these institutions, and artists Harrell Fletcher, Mark Allen, and James Voorhies together talk about the pleasures, perils, and purposes of recent collaborations with and across museums and social practice artists.

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Allen
Artist (Machine Project)

Lawrence Rinder
Director (University of California Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive)

Allison Agsten
Curator of Public Engagement (Hammer Museum)

Sarah Schultz
Director of Education (Walker Art Center)

Alex Baker
Senior Curator Contemporary Art
(National Gallery of Victoria)

Jason Sturgill
Artist

Harrell Fletcher
Artist (Portland State University)

Michelle Swinehart
Artist

Ariana Jacob
Artist

James Voorhies
Curator (Bureau for Open Culture)

Christina Olsen
Director of Education (PAM)

Lexa Walsh
Artist

Jillian Punska
Family & Artist Program Specialist (PAM)

ART+EDUCATION SUMMIT

This summit includes students, faculty, and alumni of the California College of the Arts (CCA), Emily Carr University of Art and Design (Emily Carr), Maryland College Institute of Art (MICA), Otis College (OTIS), Portland State University (PSU), Queens College, and University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC).

SATURDAY, MAY 14 · 4:15 - 5:30PM · SHATTUCK HALL ANNEX

Program representatives will deliver 15-minute presentations that focus on their approaches and philosophies, followed by a Question and Answer session. What role do students play? What are the politics of collaboration in your department? What experience is required since many undergraduate programs do not focus on Art and Social practice? What are core points of your curriculum? How do students progress through your program?

PARTICIPANTS

MICA
Kenneth Krafchek Faculty

QUEENS COLLEGE
Jose Serrano Community Organizer for Queens Museum

OTIS
Sara Daleiden Faculty

UCSC
Dee Hibbert-Jones Faculty

Bill Kelley Jr. Faculty

Dustin O’Hara Student

Consuelo Velasco Faculty

Helen Park Student

Booseul Kim Alumni

PSU
Molly Sherman Student

Jen Delos Reyes Faculty

Harrell Fletcher Faculty

CEA
Ted Purves Faculty

EMILY CARR
Susan Stewart Faculty

MICA
Kenneth Krafchek Faculty

OTIS
Sara Daleiden Faculty

UCSC
Dee Hibbert-Jones Faculty

Bill Kelley Jr. Faculty

Dustin O’Hara Student

Consuelo Velasco Faculty

Booseul Kim Alumni

Jules Rochieille Sievert Alumni

SUNDAY, MAY 15 · 4:15 - 5:30PM · SHATTUCK HALL ANNEX

The room will be split into six roundtable discussions. Three questions will be displayed, and there will be 15 minutes to talk with the people at your roundtable about these three questions. Once the 15 minutes is up, we will visit each table to hear a (three minute maximum) recap of the discussion that was had around that question. This session is open to the public, and those who are interested need only to come in and sit down at one of the roundtables to participate.

SCHEDULE

9:00 AM
HE SAID/SHE SAID A frank conversation between artists and institutions about what went wrong, right, and sideways in their collaborations.

Mark Allen, Allison Agsten, Harrell Fletcher and Alex Baker

9:45-10:45 AM
CREATING THE PLATFORM How are institutions working to create the conditions that make possible more public and social forms of art, practice, and participation at their institution? A three-way conversation with Lawrence Rinder, Sarah Schultz and James Voorhies

10:45-11:15 AM
A MUSEUM LABORATORY FOR STUDENTS & EMERGING ARTISTS MFA students and the Portland Art Museum stage Shine a Light.

Harrell Fletcher, Lexa Walsh, Ariana Jacob, Michelle Swinehart, Jason Sturgill, Jillian Punska and Christina Olsen

11:15-11:30
REFLECTIONS: Kirsi Peitomäki, Associate Professor of Art History, Oregon State University, probes questions and pulls threads from the morning’s conversations.

11:30-11:50
QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS
Julie Ault is a New York based artist and writer who independently and collaboratively organizes exhibitions, publications, and multiform projects. She often assumes curatorial and editorial roles as forms of artistic practice. Her work emphasizes interrelationships between cultural production and politics and frequently engages historical inquiry. Upcoming projects include No-Stop City High-Rise: A Conceptual Equation, in collaboration with Martin Beck for the 29th Bienal de São Paulo, and recent work includes collaborating with Danh Vo on the publication Where the Lions Are, (Basel Kunsthalle, 2009). Ault is the editor of Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material (Four Corners Books, 2010), Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985 (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), Felix Gonzalez-Torres (steidl/dangin, 2006), and is the author of Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita (Four Corners Books, 2006).

Fritz Haeg works between the urban ecology initiatives of Gardenlab, including Edible Estates; the domestic social activities of Sundown Salon and Sundown Schoolhouse; the designs and scores of Fritz Haeg Studio, including occasional buildings and even parades (though his currently preferred clients are animals); and other various combinations of building, composting, cultivating, dacing, designing, exhibiting, gardening, housekeeping, organizing, talking, teaching, and writing. His home base since 2001 is part suburban and part geodesic dome in the hills of Los Angeles.

Haeg studied architecture in Italy at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia and Carnegie Mellon University. He is a 2010-11 Rome Prize fellow, a frequent MacDowell Colony fellow, and National Design Awards nominee. He has variously taught in architecture, design, and fine art programs at Princeton University (2012), Cal Arts, Art Center College of Design, Parsons School of Design, and the University of Southern California. Haeg has produced and exhibited projects at Tate Modern; the Whitney Museum; The Guggenheim Museum; SALT Beyoglu, Istanbul; The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Casco, Utrecht; Mass MoCA; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; the Wattis Institute; the Netherlands Architecture Institute; The Indianapolis Museum of Art; the MAK Center; the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT, among other institutions. The Sundown Salon Unfolding Archive (Evil Twin Publications) was released in 2009, the expanded second edition of Edible Estates: Attack on the Front Lawn (Metropolis Books) in 2010, and Roma Mangia Roma will be released by Nero Publications in 2011.

Pablo Helguera (Mexico City, 1971) is a New York based artist working with installation, sculpture, photography, drawing, and performance. Helguera’s work focuses in a variety of topics ranging from history, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, ethnography, memory and the absurd, in formats that are widely varied including the lecture, museum display strategies, musical performances and written fiction.

His work as an educator intersected his interest as an artist, making his work often reflects on issues of interpretation, dialogue, and the role of contemporary culture in a global reality. This intersection is best exemplified in his project The School of Panamerican Unrest, a nomadic think tank that physically crossed the continent by car from Anchorage, Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, making 40 stops in between. Covering almost 20,000 miles, it is considered one of the most extensive public art projects on record.

Pablo Helguera performed individually at various museums and biennials internationally. In 2008 he was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and also was the recipient of a 2005 Creative Capital Grant. Helguera worked for fifteen years in a variety of contemporary art museums. Since 2007, he is Director of Adult and Academic programs at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.


Bureau for Open Culture is a curatorial and pedagogical institution for the contemporary arts. We work intentionally to re-imagine the art exhibition as a discursive form of education that creates a kind of new public sphere or new institution. Exhibitions take shape as installations, screenings, informal talks and performances and occur in parking lots, storefronts, libraries, industrial sites, country roads, gardens and galleries. They respond to the issues of these situations, operating in real time. In doing so we generate platforms for learning and knowledge production that make ideas accessible, relevant and inviting for diverse audiences. This model encourages overlaps of art, science, ecology, the built environment, philosophy and design. Form, content and site are underlining points of critical inquiry for Bureau for Open Culture.

To realize this work, we initiate and cultivate collaborations with institutions such as Bennington College, Columbus College of Art & Design and Mass MoCA. Our exhibitions function, in part, as explorations of the specific social, economic and political conditions of the locations in which we work. Bureau for Open Culture brings together emerging and established artists and researchers from national and international contexts with local constituents, interweaving inquiries intimately into the fabrics of communities. We embrace the less than predictable, welcome the less than established and are drawn to the not always fully prepared.

Our range of expertise as curators, educators, communicators, designers, organizers and writers allows Bureau for Open Culture to comprehensively make all aspects of its exhibitions. The knowledge we produce is disseminated widely in digital and printed mediums. Free whenever possible. Our publication series is integral to this work. The books expand through original essays, commissioned texts and re-prints of theoretical writings the ideas investigated in the exhibitions.
These ongoing projects will take place throughout the conference

**PRESENTERS**

**A**

**ALLISON AGSTEN**
Museum Summit • Curator of Public Engagement, Hammer Museum

**MARK ALLEN**
Museum Summit • Artist, Machine Projects

**KATY ASHER**
See BIOGRAPHY, page 3. Exhibition Curator, Autzen and Littman Galleries

**JULIE AULT**

**AUTHENTIC ENTHUSIASM**
Varinthorn Christopher and Avalon Kalin

Authentic Enthusiasm is a design collective that adver-
tises love. Created by artist/designers Varinthorn Chris-
topher and Avalon Kalin in 2010, AE collaborates with families and friends— and some commercial enterprises too — in unconventional ways. AE advertises what they genuinely love with authentic enthusiasm for people who love to support. To propose a project or find out more, go to authenticenthusiasm.com

For “Notes On Poster For Open Engagement,” conference participants are given special Open Engagement posters that invite them to sketch their lectures, or take notes during a panel discussion or workshop, in a large blank area on each poster. Once used, these posters are then collected and exhibited in the same rooms the lectures and panels are being held in, and are eventually digitally archived.

**B**

**BAD AT SPORTS**
Ongoing interviews
Various locations

**LOWE MAINLAND PAINTING CO.**
Off site

**TRYST**
Sarah Thacher and Joe Edelman

Text-message-based discussion
Various locations

**BIG CAR’S YEAR IN FLUXUS**
Various locations

**A LIMITED TICKET ENGAGEMENT**
Dillon de Give

Various locations

**MY Constellation**
Sydney Cooper

**EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GAIN FROM THE EXPERIENCE**
Nicole Lavelle

Newsprint poster

is particularly interested in using food and humor to ex-
plain her interests in how we relate to one another and
how we can work together to improve society. She will receive her BFA in 2011.

Stefan Ransom is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores tangential curiosity in pop culture. He is cur-
rently attending the Pacific Northwest College of Art MFA in Visual Studies program.

Crystal Bailey and Stefan Ransom invite you share your favorite Youtube videos live at the Candleight Lounge in an experien
t they’re dubbing “YouTube Jukebox.” Youtube, the world’s most popular online video community, connects
millions of people worldwide to watch and share original videos. Your video requests can be funny, how-to, musical, educational, etc. whatever you’re into on Youtube. Just fill out a video request slip to have your Youtube highlights
projected in the bar. GTKY is an event-based project that brings people together to show, share, and have conversa-
tions about Youtube. You can check out previous GTKY events at www.gettingtoknowyoutube.tumblr

**ALISON BEATON**
See GARY ROZNAK and ALYSON BEATON

**BIG CAR COLLECTIVE**
Jim Walker, Tom Streit and Shauta Marsh

Big Car is an Indianapls-based collective of more than 30 visual artists, writers, musicians, and thinkers who work together to explore the notions of people and place and the unique aspects of community that connect them.

Big Car engages artists and non-artists in projects that bring art and beauty to their lives — all while striving to challenge and surprise new audiences.

Big Car collective is performing, facilitating, document-
ing and posting 2011 Fluxus events in 2011. Many of these will happen in Portland during Open Engagement.

The collective invites public participants in joining its members in performing brief “event scores” created by artists associated with Fluxus — a neo-dada art move-
ment (or non-art movement) that began in the 1960s.

This is an art history and education project as collective artists and others reenact and enact these scores for and with audiences. This project also links what is happening now in interactive and social-practice art to what Fluxus artists accomplished.

A crucial part of the project is documenting each of the events and posting all 2011 at www.2011fluxus.tumblr.com.

**BROC BLEGEN**

Brog Blegen’s multidisciplinary art practice engages in strategies of intervention, performance, piracy, and re-
circulation to consider issues of cultural production, eco-

||

- **confetti newspaper**
- Rodrigo Marti
- Available at Registration

- **bhqfu teach for amerika exhibition**
- Curated by Mack McFarland
- PNCA

- **peoples + publics exhibition**
- Curated by Katy Asher
- Autzen Gallery

- **social economies exhibition**
- Curated by Katy Asher
- Littman Gallery

- **transformazium**
- Transformazium Activity Book
- Various Locations

- **bad at sports**
- Ongoing interviews
- Various locations

- **the emely**
- Remote Web Audio Walks
- Online

- **lower mainland painting co.**
- Off site

- **tryst**
- Sarah Thacher and Joe Edelman
- Text-message-based discussion
- Various locations

- **big car’s year in fluxus**
- Various locations

- **a limited ticket engagement**
- Dillon de Give
- Various locations

- **my constellation**
- Sydney Cooper

- **everyone has something to gain from the experience**
- Nicole Lavelle
- Newsprint poster

Driven by a desire to live in interesting and challeng-
ing artwork but faced with a need for economy, Blegen’s do-it-yourself ethic led him to re-fabricate the artworks he loves. (While he makes them with great care and at-
tempts to maintain the original artists’ vision and crafts-
manship when possible, they are not to be confused with the real thing). By circumventing the art market and

**Shuttle Service**
Carmen Papalia
Shuttle leaves from Shattuck Hall Annex and goes to Field Work

i am grateful you bring your sorrow to me
Lori Gordon
Poster

**Shuttle service**
Carmen Papalia
Shuttle leaves from Shattuck Hall Annex and goes to Field Work

i am grateful you bring your sorrow to me
Lori Gordon
Poster

Crystal Bailey considers collaboration, conversation, and facilitation to be foundational practices in her work. She

is particularly interested in using food and humor to ex-

- **shuttle service**
- Carmen Papalia
- Shuttle leaves from Shattuck Hall Annex and goes to Field Work

- **i am grateful you bring your sorrow to me**
- Lori Gordon
- Poster

Crystal Bailey considers collaboration, conversation, and facilitation to be foundational practices in her work. She

Crystal Bailey considers collaboration, conversation, and facilitation to be foundational practices in her work. She
apartments in San Antonio. Using art to bridge sociocul- tural borders and provide space for these largely unheard voices, this collective and reciprocal process has brought forwardDeepening -understand the community, identity, and community, while speaking to art's ability to function not simply as an end product but also as a practice in self-realization, cultural exchange, and community building.

NOLAN CALISCH
WEALTH UNDERGROUND FARM
Nolan Calisch is a multi-disciplinary artist and organic farmer. He managed Wealth Underground Farm, a CSA farm in Portland, Oregon. He has a B.A in film and is currently pursuing his MFA in Art and Social Practice program at Portland State University.

Nolan Calisch will host a picnic panel discuss at Wealth Underground Farm on the topic of Art and Agriculture, featuring Harrell Fletcher and Fritz Haeg. The picnic is free. Wealth Underground Farm is located at 14019

THE CAKE AND EAT IT COLLECTIVE
Cake and Eat It creates happenings, performances and visual works that deal with the underbelly of gift economy, fashion, anachron and queer identities. Cake and Eat It has given away copious amounts of free clothes, thrown fashion shows in dingey dinge holes, hosted anarchist va- mendues such as Intimate Kleptocracies and Grift Economies, tracing over templates, and generating content by using ideas, phrases and questions as a departure point. Participants can represent themselves as they wish by pointing to the communities they belong to as a means to define themselves, or by representing their identities in terms of desires and affinities and experiences.

CONFLICT KITCHEN
Dawn Weleski (co-director) joining via Skype with Sohrab Kashani (Iran) in Tehran, Hamed Alizadeh (Afghanistan) in Kabul, and Marwa Abdel Benhalim (Libya), Amado Al- fadul (Sudan), and Sarah Rifaat (Egypt) in Cairo. Conflict Kitchen is a collaboration between Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski. Weleski re-purposes found public systems as transformative social, cultural, and political stages. Her latest work includes City Council Wrestling, a series of wrestling matches where citizens and council members personify their political passions in wrestling characters, and once a Sheep Twice a Shepherd, a live sheep that acted as a roving graffiti wall led through Cairo, Egypt dur- ing the city’s revolution this winter. Conflict Kitchen is a take-out restaurant that only serves cuisine with which the U.S. is in conflict. The food is served out of a take-out style storefront, which rotates iden- tities every four months to highlight another country. Each Conflict Kitchen iteration is augmented by events, perfor- mances, and discussion about the culture, politics, and issues at stake with each country we focus on. The second and current iteration via Bolani Pazi is an Afghan take-out restaurant that serves a savory Afghan meal. Developed in collaboration with members of the Afghan community, our bolani comes packaged in a custom-designed wrapper that includes interviews with Afghans both in Afghanistan and the United States on subjects ranging from Afghan food and culture to the current geopolitical turmoil.

CREATIVE MIGRATION
Susannah Tantemappya (Founder/Director), Christopher Stidie (Creative Director), Gabriel Mindel Saloman (Red76: documentary subject/collaborator) Creative Migration (CM) is a not-for-profit organization that produces documentary films promoting socially en- gaged art projects that mobilize change. Through an orig- inal documentary web series, their programming instigates awareness, action and collective impact.

www.creativemigration.org

This panel will discuss its mission, current projects and future collaborations. Since projects that operate as “so- cial practice” are complex and contain emerging ideol- ogy, film documentation is the best method to convey the spirit of these artistic environments and strategies, CM chooses subjects that are dynamic and challenge est- ablished norms. Participants from the first web series (WHERE’S MY REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT???) and the third series (POSTERS: How Art Projects Affect) will discuss their projects in relation to art and social practice.

CLAIRE CRONIN Claire Cronin is an artist and songwriter whose work blurs the boundary between psychic and creative processes. Since 2009, a large part of her practice has been about composing folk songs that mirrors spirit and memory. Claire was born in 1985 in Los Angeles, where she continues to live. Folk Songs of Invisible Portland: Using the “new age” method of Psychometry as a paradigm, Claire Cronin will compose songs based on her impressions of Portland to be performed on the final day of the conference. By qui- etly spending time with buildings, neighborhoods, historic sites, and ephemerata, she will contact the spirit of the city and translate its messages into a short series of folk songs.

SARA DALEIDEN Art + Education Summit - Otis MFA Public Practice

JEN DELOS REYES

EJ PAGAN

JOE EDELMAN

TRYST, presented with Sarah Thacher

THE EMELY / Rosalie Schweiker

THE EMELY / Rosalie Schweiker

The Emely is a name for the need to set up an own thing. It’s a name for the place where we produce work, pot- ter about, store materials, develop ideas and invite other people to use methods, resources and concepts of con-
temporary art. The Emely started 2009 in MA studio and is now set up in various places around the UK, for example in a flat on a London council estate, a shed in Bedfordshire or a secondary school in Romford. By 2019 we want to have a permanent space for the Emely, prefer-
ably in a suburban semi-terraced house in South Ger-
many. Please see www.emely.wikispaces.com for more information.

The Open Engagement conference is taking place in Portland, the Emely will organise three special walks in London. Every evening at 8pm we will meet to promenade and discuss themes of the conference. Each walk will be hosted by an artist who will pick a theme and suggest a spontaneous route. To sign up for a walkabout, please email rosalie.schweiker@gmail.com.

EXPLORATORIUM

Marina McDougall and Jordan Stein

EXPLORATORIUM

Marina McDougall is Arts Project Director and Jordan Stein is Visiting Artist Coordinator at the Exploratorium in San Francisco. Exploratorium: Open Index #1 is a collaborative lecture that interweaves excavated stories, mini-biographies, and visual essays. Together these stories suggest the rich institutional history that surrounds the Exploratorium, round the post war science museum. Generated by a list of themes and keywords tied to the Exploratorium, San Francisco’s museum of art, science and human percep-
tion, this presentation is a series of generative strands that have largely gone uncultivated, undocumented and uncontextualized. The presentation is made up of five -minute talks so-
lisitced through an index of words circulated amongst Open Engagement participants and the wider Portland community.
EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING
TO GAIN
FROM THE
EXPERIENCE
Presenters

F

HARRELL FLETCHER
See BIOGRAPHY, page 3.

Moderator, Panel: Examining Long and Short Term Site Based Work Practices. The panel will examine Portland State University’s Flexible Residency Art and Social Practice MFA students’ site based work in relationship to variations in duration and personal commitment. We will discuss the differences between working on projects in the place where you live as opposed to operating as an outsider with a limited involvement in a project’s location and community.

FRESHMAN INQUIRY: LEARNING COMMUNITIES
Sarah Wolf Newlands / Work of Art Freshman Class
Food: Democracy, Sustainability and Art

PSU Freshmen explore food related art as an agent as social change. This food and hospitality project will engage issues surrounding democracy, sustainability, and art. Students will engage in conversation about these issues when they eat together. Throughout the weekend, attendees and guests are invited to the Portland Art Museum for theme-based tours in the galleries. Gallery walk-throughs will focus on how issues of food, democracy, and sustainability are represented in the Portland Art Museum’s collections. Students worked on other food related projects during fall and winter terms.

DILLON DE GIVE
Dillon de Give makes projects that involve small groups of people in a creative act. He lives in Brooklyn, studied film at Northwestern University, grew up in New Mexico, and was born in 1978. Currently enrolled in Portland State University’s Art and Social Practice low-residency MFA program. www.implausiost.com

In “A Limited Ticket Engagement” Dillon de Give will arrange to work as a ticket salesperson for a number of local institutions (art museum, movie theater, sporting arena etc.). In each he will request training from a regular employee, then cover that employee’s shift as a volunteer. In this way they trade places, but not wages: the employee re-enters the outside world and receives regular pay, while de Give’s work with the institution is compensated by being dubbed art. This exchange is meant to explore the idea of value as it relates to the job of facilitating cultural experience.

LORI GORDON
Lori Gordon’s work investigates the structure and power of belief, creating projects that attempt to decipher both humanity’s and her own connection with the universe. Through collaborative endeavors, she explores the distance between coincidence and intention, with an emphasis on setting up moments that deviate from the expected.

Not unlike a hug, this reassuring piece of paper carries out its purpose. For daily life; considering their relationship to routine and repetition, they eat together. Throughout the weekend, attendees and guests are invited to the Portland Art Museum for theme-based tours in the galleries. Gallery walk-throughs will focus on how issues of food, democracy, and sustainability are represented in the Portland Art Museum’s collections. Students worked on other food related projects during fall and winter terms.

J

J.P. HUCKINS
J.P. Huckins is one of twelve, he is also one in 11 million (lack him about those figures). As an artist, J.P. has made things from a variety of materials including but not limited to clay, friendship, metal, wood, bike rides, and leaves. One aspect of life that interests J.P. the most are human interactions and how these interactions can be influenced by context.

This project is an experiment in social interaction called B.F.F.A.D.W.O.E. (Best Friends For A Day @ Open Engagement). Those who wish to participate will need to email me prior to April 15th so I can send out pertinent information and survey questions before the conference. During the conference the best friends will meet and spend the day at Open Engagement, as best friends, I will have several events and activities set up just for best friends, including but not limited to: a best friend olympics, best friend confessionals, and best friend photo booth.

SARA HUSTON
Sara Huston is interested in bringing heightened awareness and reflection to passive behaviors, relationships and expectations that we develop when interacting with everyday objects. Her practice is a mix of art and design methodology in an effort to engage and integrate both disciplines in new and exciting ways.

IMAGINATIVE LABOR UNION
Julia Cole is a public artist, community strategist and educator. Sean Starwater’s artwork is based in community engagement, with a focus on the development of experimental economies. Together they are exploring a common interest in how humor, generosity and inventing magnetic alternatives can deepen public dialogue.

This engagement explores how artists produce value in the world, distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative value, and critiquing how labor intersects with social, cultural, and social economies. Cole and Starwater propose that artists integrate seamlessly into global service workforces and openly produce a surplus of unsalable, imaginative labor. Examples will illustrate how a diverse business-as-usual with charismatic, irrational, inefficient, and joyfully iconoclastic behaviors redefine the production of value. The traveling offices of the Wheel Of True Fortune Artists’ Imaginative Labor Employment Agency (WOTTAFEE!) and the Imaginative Labor Union (ILU) will then offer free counseling and union membership to all workshop participants.

INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC AMNESIA
Panel discussion featuring Dana Greenwald, Josh MacPhee, Valeska Populoh, Olivia Robinson, Joanna Spitziner and Ferehsteh Toosi

Six projects in this panel created an ephemeral and share a mission to animate lesser-known histories of Rust Belt towns in the United States. This panel focuses on recent public art projects and strategies that make visible and audible marginalized or repressed histories of specific sites. The artists on this panel combine interdisciplinary practices to contribute to the discourse and experience of public memory. Focusing on the embodied actions of people in public space, the presenters will discuss various issues of the audience as a “public” entity and memory as a performed discipline.

K

BILLY KELLEY JR.
Art + Education Summit / OTIS MFA Social Practice

K Visit Kelley’s Booth #100 at the Portland Art Museum’s Festival of the Arts. Billy Kelley is a Visual Artist and an Assistant Professor of Art at Oregon State University. He received his MFA from the University of Wisconsin and his BFA from the University of Oregon. His work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows and he is the recipient of a 2010 Mid-Career Fellowship for Visionary Practice from the California Community Foundation.

L

NICOLE LAVELLE
Nicole Lavelle is an artist and graphic designer living and working in Portland, Eugene, and various locations in America. She works on projects alone and with others, some of which are objects and some of which are not.

EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GAIN FROM THE EXPERIENCE is the pink piece of newspaper you hold in your hands. While designing this catalog for Open Engagement, Nicole experienced the content on an intimate level: page by page, column by column, word by word, letter by letter. She took notes. Her favorite note was this phrase taken from Mack McFarland’s conversation with the Bruce High Quality Foundation (page 21). “A note became a piece, a gift, for you. Tack it to a wall, send it through the mail. Put it somewhere and think about it.”

BECCA LOFCHIE
Becca Lofchie lives and works in Echo Park, LA. She studied visual art at Pomona College where she started The Late Night Diner. Her latest endeavor is roaming her adopted city of Los Angeles without a car.

The daytime is filled with opportunities to eat and be together — but those options tend to disappear with the daylight. Inspired by the 24-hour diner, the Late Night Diner serves to correct this nightly injustice. The Late Night Diner functions as a venue for multiple forms of participation: Friends, acquaintances and strangers are invited to co-host events. Previous collaborations have yielded musical performances, readings, new recipes and, on one occasion, a dance. The most important participant, however, are those who show up with an appetite. Pancakes and other breakfast staples will be served.

RICK LOWE
Rick Lowe lives in Houston. He has exhibited and worked with communities nationally and internationally. His exhibitions includes: Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Los Angeles, Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York, Phoenix Art Museum, Kwangju Biennale, Kwangju, Korea, the Kumamoto State Museum. He has a BA from the University of Houston, an MFA from the University of Southern Maine. Community projects includes: Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas; Watts House Project, Los Angeles, CA; Arts Plan for Rem Koolhaas designed Seattle Public Library with Jessica Cussick; Borough Project for Spoleto Festival
with Suzanne Lacy and Mary Jane Jacobs, Charleston, SC; Delray Beach Community Loop, Delray Beach, Florida, Anyang Public Art Program 2010, Anyang, Korea. Among Rick's honors are; Rudy Bruner Awards in Urban Excellence, AIA Keystone Award, Heinz Award in the arts and humanities; Loeb Fellow at Harvard University; Skkiehan Governor's Award, Skokie Award for Architecture, and USA Artist Award.

Nick Lowe will moderate the final Open Engagement panel discussion with Julie Ault, Fritz Haag and Pablo Hel- guera.

THE LOWER MAINLAND PAINTING CO.
Nathan Crompton, Syvian Davai, Heather Jones, Brodie Kitchen, Nicholas Perrin, Byron Peters, and Gabriel Mindel Salomon
The Lower Mainland Painting Co. (LMPC, est 2010) is a Vancouver, BC based initiative around art, labour and art labourers. Operating as a professional painting and carpentry company, the LMPC is also a conceptual artwork / performance / residency and research engine that situates the modes of labour and negotiation through which artists work and dialogue amidst shifting forms of value and broader social struggles.

The LMPC is a painting company comprised of artists, activists and philosophers, who engage in and think about the intersection of all these modes of labour as a site for formal experimentation into relationships between value and work, both inside and outside of the art world. Their project at Open Engagement will act as a vehicle for community and knowledge production, while engaging in questions of object-hood and economy that test the privileging of art as a non-earning form of labour. Open Engagement worked to find the LMPC a painting gig at a local business. There will be a public presentation based on this search for a contract and completion of the work. For more information go to www.LMPC.ca

LYNN CHARLOTTE LU
Lynn Lu is a Singapore artist trained in the U.S., France and Japan. Lynn completed her PhD in Australia; she exhibits, performs, and lectures extensively throughout Asia, Oceania, Europe and USA. Lynn teaches at Southampton Solent University and now she coordinates Chiron Studies.

A Space with Total Sonority (or what do mirror neurons have to do with Art?): Roland Barthes compares friendship to a “space with total sonority,” where “the friend – the perfect interlocutor – constructs around us the greatest possible resonance.” Why do certain art experiences violate total sonority, while others enter/exist our consciousness without leaving a trace? And what do mirror neurons (of all things) have to do with Art?): Roland Barthes compares friendship to the bowing position. The simple bowing gesture, raised to an iconic level, is meant to frame ideas of humility and forgiveness for whoever takes the opportunity to perform this act, and also whoever witnesses others performing this act. Perceiving this simple gesture of apology is complex, while engaging in questions of object-hood and economy, while perceiving what happens when these interpersonal skillsets and the permission-to-facilitate are placed into the hands of artists and art-communities. Such work, for us, seems to highlight a relational tendency found within many of the more “typical” artistic practices lurking around us.

CARMEN PAPALIA
Carmen Papalia is an artist and writer that produces socially engaged projects that are initiated by, and informed by, his body. Often based in lived experience, Papalia’s work is participatory and creates the opportunity for productive conversation. Papalia is enrolled in the Art & Social Practice program at Portland State University.

Shuttle (walking tour): “Shuttle” is a non-visual shuttle service in which the legally blind artist Carmen Papalia transports groups of people to and from a given location. Participants form a line behind Papalia – each person grabbing the right shoulder of the person in front of them. Papalia then serves as a tour guide, leading the group and passing useful information and directions to the person behind him. Participants are asked to keep their eyes closed while on the walking tour. The trip culminates in a group discussion. Landmarks and Landscapes in Transit (In collaboration with Jason Sturgill) Until the late 1970s, which marked the human rights beginnings of support for artists with disabilities by government and charity funded institutions, the words “disability” and “art” would only be considered in relation to one another when speaking of therapeutic art activities or the work of artist such as Vincent Van Gogh. Despite the goal of a fair and equal integration of individuals with disabilities into greater, mainstream culture, there still exists an ongoing dialogue about culture, politics, the absurd, and the possible.

How to Explain a Contemporary Art Audience to a Robot: From this project, we will collect public opinions about representations of art audiences. The project draws on ongoing discussions about art, meaning, and audience. Since the 1960s, cultural producers have experimented with various formats in an attempt to explore ways to meaningfully engage public space. However, while there has been an appreciation and demand for experimental and conceptual art, there remains criticism both from the audiences and the art institutions. This project intends to support public participation and opinion regarding contemporary art practices in an effort to question the role of conceptual art within today’s cultural practices.

Julie Perini will discuss her practice-based research into a type of media making she calls relational filmmaking. All types of filmmaking involve building relationships of some kind. However, some media projects set out to explore the ways that the apparatus of cinema can facilitate, hinder, or change the social relations that exist among media-makers, documentary subjects, performers, audiences, and other elements involved. Her presentation will highlight a few of the historical trends
that precede today’s relational filmmakers, including vid-
eeo artists, conceptual artists, Direct Cinema documentary filmmaking, media collectives, narrative filmmakers, and personal/experimental filmmakers.

JULIE PERINI AND AMY HARWOOD
Julie Perini is a video artist collaborating with Portland artists working against state repression, police brutal-
ity, and the Prison Industrial Complex. Amy Harwood has been involved in forest conservation since 1998, Harwood
is the co-founder of Signal Fire, an organization providing opportunities for artists to engage in the natural world.

This discussion examines questions about the intersection of art and activism. How does the synthesis of art and ac-
tivism happen? How can artists and activists functionally work together? How can the efficacy of the process and
products of these collaborations be determined? In what ways do institutions and organizations facilitate, inhibit,
or otherwise influence the creation of politically motivated or socially engaged artwork? When is it advantageous for artists to work independently of movements and cam-
paigns and when is collaboration called for? What is the role of context and venue in this conversation?

DEANNA PINDELL
Deanna Pindell addresses deforestation and water qual-
ity issues, while examining inter-relationships and social ecology. Her completed and current remediation projects,
public art and sculptural installations incorporate a practical and poetic perspective with a social and political
professional experience includes; faculty at Olympic Col-
lege and other venues, curator and gallerist, performance.
Goddard MFA-IA 2011.

Consider our relationships to the flora and fauna on our planet ... not just the “charismatic megaflora” (whales and polar bears) but the goofy gerty “unloved others” (fungi and bacteria). How can art serve a non-human au-
dience? Do animals, or plants, or microbes, have a sense of aesthetics? This open discussion will begin with a look at numerous examples of art made by human artists with/ or for non-human species, and a consideration of critical is-
sues. How might humans explore, understand, and col-
aborate with the non-human sensibilities of our entangled inter-species world?

PLANO
Produce Liberating Art through Necessary Dislocation
Co-founders: Erin Elder, Nina Elder, Nancy Zastudil
PLANO is an off-grid residency program that supports the development of experimental and research-based projects in the context of the Taos mesa. PLANO finds its inspira-
tion in a legacy of counterculturalists who – through both radical and mundane activities – reclaim and reframe a land-based notion of the American Dream.

PLAND authors a discourse in the spirit of exchange, and literal and figurative definitions of "residency." In Jan Verwoert words, PLAND will "inhabit the space we open up through our voice, our discourse, to spend time in this space, furnish it and turn it into a place for living..." looking at what residency is and what it proposes. Because of PLAND’s sensibility of sustainability, self-determination, collaboration, and site-specific community-building, and to emphasize empathy and deep respect for a specific place, the discussion takes place, and takes as its central case-study, the Portland residence that hosts PLAND dur-
ing Open Engagement.

VALESA POPULOH
See INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC AMNESIA

PROJECT GROW
Project Grow is a space where people engage in urban farming as art-making, advocating for food justice and the pursuit of passions. Composed of a thriving art studio and urban farms, PG hosts lectures, coordinates a free school, and is a movement against the segregated system for adults with disabilities.

Project Grow artists will spend four days of fieldwork inter-
acting in the community with local children and families and "making art work" through a series of workshops and activities that culminate in a transdisciplinary discussion and exhibit. Through this exhibit, these elected to represent the public will in turn become represented by those who have histori-
cally not been given the privilege to even represent them-
selev. PG artists will exhibit findings on May 13th as well
as facilitate a discussion hosted at City Hall about "rep-
resentation." This discussion will be moderated by Kevin
Kecskes of PSU, Associate Vice Provost for Engagement,
and Director for Community-University Partnerships.

PUB DISCUSSION SERIES
Tracy Candido, Chelsea Haines and Eric Steen
Tracy Candido and Chelsea Haines are two creative edu-
cators based in Brooklyn, NY who met while attending the MA program in Visual Culture Theory at NYU, where they both graduated in 2009. Eric Steen is a homebrewer and a teacher at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

The Pub Discussion will take place after the seminars on May 13 at local Portland pubs, at which the public is invited to engage in an open discussion regarding issues presented during the conference.

The Pub Discussion Series will act as a bridge between the intellectual environment of the conference and the informal culture of the pub. Discussion moderators Tracy Candido and Chelsea Haines will collect ballasts at the conference for which the public will list topics to be dis-

QUEER EXPLORER’S CLUB
Chairman, June 2012, by S. Raus.
The Queer Explorers Club is a service technical guild.
Their job is to investigate the in-between spaces of gen-
der and identity. Membership is moving and role-based.
They meet to tell stories, make art, share candle-lit din-
ners and adventure into the night, exploring the androgy-

TRANS-MONUMENTAL Invites the gender-queer community of Portland to think creatively, subversively and collabora-

tively about the mapping and public commemoration of queer experience. This installment of the GEC’s ongoing project will celebrate the coming wave of transmemory in the United States by exploring the dynamic reaches and boundaries of formal cartography and playful iconoclasm.

Participants will join members of the GEC for a cross-

ROCKET SHIP
Rocket Ship presents: Rocket Ship!
Brette and Robin met in Regina, Saskatchewan while attending the University of Regina. Their friendship was forged around a love of breakfast, art and talking shop. They have been involved in Open Engagement since Re-
gina ’07. In 2010 they formed Rocket Ship and now work together investigating friendship and community.

Rocket Ship wants to meet you! They will be seeking out all participants of Open Engagement in an attempt to be-

SARAH RODGARI
Sarah collaborates across a range of mediums to create per-
cise and interactive installations and events. She is a

ROBERT WOOD
Robert Wood is an artist and activist with over 20 years of experience with a social justice focus. He has been involved in life and death issues at the borders of the United States and Mexico. He is a farmer and social justice leader and has been involved in the struggle for immigrant rights in the United States. He is a co-founder of the National Farm Worker’s Union and the American Commonwealth. He currently resides in Yogyakarta, Indonesia where he is working on a project to establish a community radio station.

MARINA MARCAZZI
Marina Marcazzi is an artist who works with public art and community arts organizations. She is a member of the Transgender and Gender Dysphoric Community of Portland and has been involved in the city’s community art scene for over ten years. She currently works as the Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator for the Portland Art Museum and has had several solo exhibitions in the Pacific Northwest.
SARAH SCHULTZ  
Museum Summit - Walker Art Center

JOSE SERRANO  
Art + Education Summit - Queens College

ALYSHA SHAW AND JENNY LUNA  
Alysha Shaw and Jenny Luna are artists based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Shaw’s work includes performance, video, installation, writing, and music. Luna’s musical repertoire includes Jazz, Americana, Balkan and Middle Eastern music, and pop. Shaw and Luna have collaborated together in Balkan and Middle Eastern music projects since 2007.

SONG FOR A DREAMY DAY  
WSPR will periodically break from the music to broadcast live artist talks from PSU’s Field Work location. WSPR – Street Radio for the People.

JOANNA SPITZNER  
See INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC AMNESIA

ERIC STEEN  
See PUB DISCUSSION SERIES

SUSAN STEWART  
Susan Stewart is a trans-disciplinary artist whose current work is concerned with the relational, ecological, and political aspects of the social body. Change Without Notice (2009) is an exhibit of immersive video projections, which consider notions of social sustainability within the context of environmental crisis.

JASON STURGILL  
See BIOGRAPHY, page 3.

THIS IS WHAT I AM THINKING, THIS IS WHAT I AM DOING  
Jason Sturgill has created this gift of a notebook and pencil for conference goers to record their thoughts, as well as reflect on the very act of contemplation and implementation. Scout Books courtesy of Pinball Publishing.

MICHELLE SWINEHART  
Michelle Swinehart grew up on eleven acres in Ridgefield, Washington. She has a Bachelor’s degree from Whitman College, a Master’s in Teaching from Lewis and Clark College, and a pending Master’s in Fine Arts from Portland State University. Her work explores conversation as a medium of everyday living practices.

During Open Engagement, Michelle Swinehart will record an audio survey with conference presenters and participants. The aim of the survey is to explore the themes of the conference through a set of questions. A series of questions illicit shared ideas or responses about social practice? How can brief conversations document Open Engagement? The survey will be recorded throughout the conference at various locations and compiled into a podcast for your listening pleasure.

Michelle Swinehart is the Open Engagement announcer.

LEXA WALSH  
Lexa Walsh has lived, worked, exhibited and toured in the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, Europe and Asia. Walsh was a recipient of the CEC Artslink Award and the Gunk Grant, and has done several international artist residencies and projects. She is currently resident artist at Portland Art Museum.

FOOD CART SONGS  
Walsh is working as artist in residence at Food Carts, to get to know their processes and experiences, exchange recipes and write songs about work with their owners/workers. The songs will be played at participating carts during lunch on Friday, May 13th.

DAWN WELESKI AND M.CALLEN  
M. Calen is a multidisciplinary artist and poet whose work explores intimacy in the public sphere. Using a variety of materials and genres, including performance art, poetry, and songwriting, she explores how people can succeed in embedded in the daily environment. Projects include a series of sunset videos displayed in storefront windows, a song-along shared online, and a neon sign that roams throughout the city of Pittsburgh.

We Were Here is a tour of private encounters throughout Portland, Oregon where intimately connected friends, lovers, and relations first met. Over the course of a day, sets of Portland residents will return to these places to share the story of their relationship with the public while dancing to their favorite song. By reuniting sets of people at the place of their first encounter, We Were Here celebrates everyday public spaces in Portland neighborhoods as sites where stories of these fateful places form a nuanced and intimate notion of the city’s identity.

ANOREW NORMAN WILSON  
Andrew Norman Wilson has worked as a curator for Artists’ Television Access in San Francisco, a video editor for Google at their headquarters in Mountain View, a researcher for the labor union UNITE HERE, and a video editor for filmmaker Craig Baldwin. He will complete his MFA degree at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2011.

The Virtual Assistance project began with research geared towards unpacking the relational system of Get Friday, a virtual personal assistant service based in Bangalore, India. Get Friday typically provides remote executive support, where a largely American client base is assigned a “virtual” personal assistant. Andrew Norman Wilson is a part of that client base, paying monthly fees for a primary assistant who works out of the Get Friday office in India. His “assistant” is a 25-year-old male Bangalore resident named Akhil. In paying for this service, Wilson is attempting to lighten his work load, but rather to attempt collaborative projects and even reversals of the normative outsourcing flow under a corporate contract arranged for one-way command. Akhil’s use of the service has been a method of engaging with, understanding, and reacting to an economy of or in der with, the help of Akhil, how to back into the corporate veneer, revealing limitations, histories, biographies, networks, power, desire, and more.

The Virtual Assistance Powerpoint is an exercise against the limited expressive potentials of both the presentation of project documentation and PowerPoint as an artistic medium.

AMELIA WINGER-BEARSKIN  
Amelia Winger-BearsInk is currently an Assistant Professor of Studio Art at Vanderbilt University in the area of Video and Performance Art, in Nashville, Tennessee. She has performed at the 10th Annual OPEN ART Performance Art festival in Beijing, China, The Performance Art Network PANAsia 2009 in Seoul, South Korea, the TAMU TUPADA 2010 Media and Performance festival in the Philippines and is the editor in chef of ArtArtZine.com

Choreography in every day life with Amelia Winger-Bearskin is an interactive presentation and workshop about the presentation of human intimacy in our daily lives. This workshop will be of interest to any artist who uses the body or performatance in some capacity as well as other genres of experimental performing arts. Participants will use their bodies to create interventions with architecture and other social spaces. In turn, the stories of these fateful daily actions. The movements will be broken down and re-arranged in spaces around the city through generative exercises and projects, each participant will present a short performance study project to the group at the end of the workshop.
JENNIFER VAN WINKLE
Artist and arts choreographer, Jennifer Van Winkle investigates excess, ownership, waste, play, and the environment through site-specific, large-scale, collaborative installations made with recyclables and built with shifting communities in the mid Atlantic, Midwest, South and now Oregon. Former adjunct faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University and Piedmont Virginia Community College.

Van Winkle’s passion for choreographing large-scale projects and simultaneously building and interweaving relationships, inspires site-specific, collaborative installations. She will present the forest of REPAIRATIONS which opened on March 12, 2011 at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (University of Oregon in Eugene). Van Winkle worked with university and school students and instructors to create this forest of reclaimed materials, a large atlas, toy animal boxes, and a soundscape composed of natural sounds and human voices. She will discuss their behind-the-scenes processes. A few collaborators may also present. Audience members will have the opportunity to create a component for the forest.

PAUL WITTENBRAKER
Paul Wittenbraker grew up in Indiana and studied liberal arts, experiential education, and then art at Cranbrook. At 27, he was director of the UIC A in General arts, experiential education, and then art at Cranbrook. He created a component for the forest.

CHLOÉ WOMACK AND BRENNAN BROOME
Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Chloé Womack and Brennan Broome have been experimenting in collaborative work for the past four years. The duo created O.E. Rogue as a way to give the audience a public forum to voice their opinions of the festival.

O.E. Rogue is an alternative publication covering the daily activities of the Open Engagement Conference from an outsider’s perspective. This supplement to the conference catalogue covers stories, gossip, reviews and previews of the day-to-day happenings of the 2011 Open Engagement weekend. Employing the help and participation of conference attendees, O.E. Rogue will highlight different aspects of the conference, focusing on the perspective of impartial sources. Participants are invited to contribute materials (photographs, reviews, first-hand experiences, etc.) to the piece each day. A new issue will be created and published each night and available the following day at the conference.

DANIEL WONG
Daniel Wong is an interdisciplinary artist from Lethbridge, Alberta. He is interested in collaboration and solitude and the relationship between the two.

Presented with Kerri-Lynn Reeves: The Temporary Library of Sentimental Objects is a traveling site that explores the relationships that people have with objects and the value that they attach to them. Visitors to the library may peruse its archive of collected stories of impermanence. They are encouraged to add to the collection by considering an object that they would never part with or one that they wished they had never lost and then describe it through drawing and text. In this way, the memories of their valued or lost objects are preserved and gain longevity through the sharing of them with other visitors.

X

XHURCH
Ashley Florence, Matthew Henderson and Peter Pendergrass
Ashley Florence is an MFA candidate at UNC-Chapel Hill. Matthew Henderson is a Portland resident, musician, and founder of the Xhurch, a repurposed church. Peter Pendergrass is a BFA student at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Xhurch. Residential Residency will take place from May 10th to May 17th. During the course of this week, the artists will interrogate and perform residentially to explore the potential of a re-purposed church as both private residence and communal space. The work will expand the notion of a traditional artist residency in that the artists will be providing to the space rather than the space being provided / providing to the artists. It is not specified as a project to be “completed,” but instead as the initiation of a transformative process, intended to extend beyond the residency itself.

www.residingxhurch.tumblr.com/

BRUCE HIGH QUALITY FOUNDATION
In March of 2011 Pacific Northwest College of Art curator Mack McFarland engaged the Bruce High Quality Foundation (BHQF) in an email interview as the Bruces prepared to take their free and proudly unaccredited art school, The Bruce High Quality Foundation University (BHQFU) on the road in Teach 4 Amerika presented by Creative Time, the New York-based nonprofit public art presenter. The Bruce High Quality Foundation is group of anonymous artists who have used objects and performances in a very unique and witty form of art world critique. Teach 4 Amerika is a five-week, 11-city, coast-to-coast road trip that crosses state lines and institutional boundaries to inspire and enable local art students to define the future of their own educational experience. BHQF will be exhibiting ephemera and insights from the trip at the Pacific Northwest College of Art’s Gallery 214.

MACK MCFARLAND
I read that many of you met at Cooper Union, the famously free art school, was there an experience there – or in another educational environment – that made you desire to create a school?

BRUCE HIGH QUALITY FOUNDATION
Where did you read that? We claim no biographical material about the foundation to be accurate. It might be true that many people associated with the foundation went to art schools, but it’s not our reason for starting a school. We started a school because we believe that talking to other artists is a critical component of being an artist. BHQFU is not modeled after accredited art schools.

MM OK. I understand that you can “neither confirm or deny” your origins. I wonder what part of BHQFU, in its architecture or process, provides for the kind of meaningful dialogue you are seeking, over say, starting a book club or dinner party?

BHQF Well, book clubs and dinner parties are certainly an aspect of how BHQFU has operated. The main difference might simply be that those social forums get held to the same scrutiny as the book or topic in question. Further than that though, and why we decided to create a University rather than a school, is that we are hoping to sustain a network between different social forums.

So if there is a reading group on Sundays and a dinner party on Wednesday nights and a lecture series once a month – all those independently organized events can be grounded in a more singular discussion about education itself.

MM On the BHQFU website it is written, “Blind romanticism and blind professionalism are in a false war alienating artists from their better histories.” What do you see as “better histories?”

BHQF “Better histories” is stolen from Obama’s inaugural address. We imagine, for him, it refers to a kind of pragmatic social justice. For BHQFU, it’s meant to refer to a pragmatic educational model. All artists need to talk to other artists. We need each other’s help. Critique is often a difficult experience, the highly problematic work of applying words to works of art. Running away from the fascinating collaborative thing we call human knowledge is not an option. And running full bore into the boring mechanics of commerce is also not an option.

MM What are some of The Bruce’s strategies for a pragmatic art educational model in face of “the boring mechanics of commerce?”

BHQF We should be clear, we haven’t really broken the mold in terms of how a class is conducted. If you were to come to one of our critiques you’d get an experience largely similar to many of the critiques conducted in accredited art schools. The real differences are: there are no grades, attendance is completely voluntary, and whoever is leading the discussion clearly understands his or her role as a facilitator, not as an expert.
MM Also you write that the art education and in particular the debt-model of art education possesses “a form/content problem. Arts education is divided between the practical problems of form (e.g., money: how to get it, raise it, administer it, and please the powers that control it) and the slippery problems of metaphor (e.g., education: how to learn, what to learn, why to learn.)” Can you expand upon this line of thought? Is it an issue of the metaphor or content being used? The first point is crystal clear, art school does not provide the knowledge of how to make and deal with funding.

BHQF I suppose what we’re getting at is that art school, despite its curricular relevance on self-reflexive critical thinking, pretends that its own context is a blank slate. But art school is a power structure that ought to be subject to the same scrutiny we apply to the history of painting. If we believe arts education is important, we should be interrogating its forms.

MM Is this interrogation of form utilizing the methods employed by institutional critique, or some other form of examination, i.e. how an artist historian may do an analysis on Pre-Raphaelite paintings within the context of the avant-garde? Perhaps we can look at Chris Burden’s Five Day Locker Piece (1971) as a gesture towards the type of interrogation your looking for.

BHQF We simply mean that an artist’s education ought to make some time for looking at the history and theory of arts education. It’s through that history that we begin to grasp how art has been gendered male, how it has been sexualized homosexual, how it has institutionalized the lone genius depression of anti-social weirdos with no relevance to society.

And it is through the theory of art education that we can understand how art has been instrumentalized as a tool for the rising creative business class. It’s important to us that knowledge begins with a critical evaluation of where we actually are, not the magical man’s land of the academy.

MM Obama made famous the idea of the “teachable moment.” Have you ever been in a teachable moment, either as a pupil or teacher, that has had a lasting impact?

BHQF We’d suppose that any event that has had a lasting impact must be a teachable moment. That sounds like a reasonable definition of experience. As the operation of the Foundation has expanded, as we’ve gained more attention and access within the art world, we’re constantly faced with the problem of how to contend with those situations critically and creatively.

MM Is there a shift in meaning with the work that comes from this access? Do you foresee any lasting impacts on the University due to the attention and access?

BHQF We couldn’t tell you how the meaning of the work has changed for others, but to our minds this was part of the plan and part of the work from the beginning. We’re investigating myth-making, ambition, and the construction of history – the irony of exceptionalism. So gaining access is part of the program. As for the University we know it has helped gain support and we hope to continue to use that into the future.

MM What do you gain from being anonymous? Is that hard to maintain? I know folks who know you, though they have not ousted you, how long do you feel you can keep this up in our age of transparency and Wikileaks? And what happens once your identities are known?

BHQF We aren’t exactly anonymous. We just don’t like the work of the Foundation being attached to individuals. The work arises out of a collaborative practice and it would be a mistake to attribute it to individuals. Plenty of people know a lot of the people who work for the Foundation. If someone felt it made an interesting story, we suppose we’d be annoyed. But hopefully people that actually care to think about the work would recognize that the biographies of Foundation employees are immaterial to the work.

MM As you set out on Teach 4 America you are stopping at many art schools to, “learn from different models of art education and to rally art students, engaging them in dialogues around how we define “art education,” how it should be taught, and how we can build meaningful artistic and educational experiences locally, nationally, and beyond.” This sounds a little like sowing the seeds of revolution among the students. Yet I can’t help but think about how these institutions will use your visit to boost recruitment. Is your message of revolutionizing arts institutions already recuperated into the institutions because of their sponsorship of your presence? Is there a shared co-opting in your relationship with these institutions? Does one side have the upper hand?

BHQF We seriously doubt that once Teach 4 America actually happens that it will do anything to boost enrollment. We’re hopeful for the opposite effect.

MM Fair enough. There is quite a history of these phenomena of arts institutions sanctioning artists to be their critiquing consciousness, which then lends greater credibility to the institution itself. Here the artist serves in the capacity of a kind of public editor or secret shopper in corporate consumer culture. So, 1. Do you feel that you are taking on that kind of a role?

And 2. As you do gain the attention and access mentioned above does BHQF begins to be subject to the kind of examination as other institutions? Is it fair to look into the deals of individual artists in this way? I am thinking of the New Museum exhibition, Skin Fruit and the controversy around the exhibition curator Jeff Koons and Dakis Joannou’s collection from which the show was culled.

And lastly, are you implying that a situation where more artists were less professionalized would be an improvement, and if so, in what ways?

BHQF 1. We don’t really feel comfortable saying we have just one role. It’s true that in many cases critical artists are brought in to add credibility to the institution, though that is a somewhat cynical way of looking at it. Institutions may also just feel guilty for past indiscretions or the fact that they aren’t saving the world. We don’t mind helping out in that regard if it provides us a platform for our own agenda.

2. Being both an artist and an institution, it’s par for the course. We tend to side with Mr. Wilde – there is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or poorly written. But artists are people too. And some of them – very few, but some – are very wealthy collectors, board members, and real estate tycoons. There’s no reason to give anyone a pass.

3. It would be an improvement, certainly. The market has a flattening effect on contemporary art. Artists are afraid to take risks because they want to appear salable.

MM Benjamin Buchloh asked Thomas Hirschhorn “Who was more important for you, Warhol or Beuys?” When looking at your oeuvre the same thought comes to mind, yet I want to add Haacke into the equation, so, Warhol, Beuys or Haacke?

BHQF Haacke, for us, has been more of an entry point for how to think about the contextual politics of the art world. But he’s a seriously unfunny dude. Warhol and Beuys gave us access to the more diverse expressive possibilities within institutional critique.

MM Your work does contain a level of humor, sometimes absurdist, as in the press release for The BRUCENNIAL 2010: Miseducation, which claimed to bring “…together 420 artists from 911 countries working in 666 discrete disciplines…” that is not found in Haacke, or even Andrea Fraser, perhaps in a bit of Marcel Broodhaers, and yet I find a melancholy in many of your objects. Could you talk about how you employ humor and sadness?

BHQF Perhaps the biggest difference between BHQF and the mainstays of institutional critique, at least how they’ve been discussed, is that with us, we aren’t inclined to instrumentalize art in the service of an ideology. We are often ideological, but we think the ultimate point of what we’re doing is empathy. The point is the sharing of human feeling – wherever it falls on the spectrum. So in that sense we aren’t employing humor or sadness. The shared experience of humor and sadness is and end in itself.

MM This interview is occurring for the 2011 Open Engagement conference. A free annual conference on socially engaged art, held in connection with the Art and Social Practice MFA program at Portland State University. Within that context I am curious to hear your thoughts regarding the language and history around social practice, participatory practice, public practice, relational aesthetics, public art, new genre, etc?

BHQF So much language! It’s a challenge to get past all the academic bloat that fills the pages around social, participatory, relational etc. It’s not that we aren’t interested in knowing what we’re doing, but most of the language surrounding social practice is a crime against humanity. We spend more time talking about Las Meninas and John Hughes movies than we do engaging with Bourriaud. Some worry about being relational. We worry about relating.

MM With BHQFU whom do you worry about relating to? Art students, arts academics, the arts administrators?

BHQF We think of the participants in BHQFU the same way we think of our art audience – they are people with an abiding interest in art. Students, academics, administrators, working artists – it doesn’t matter. Everyone has something to gain from the experience.

MM In your interview with the band Pablo Picasso for Interview Magazine you asked them the simple question “Dream gig?” I now ask you the same.

BHQF We have a plan to build a geodesic dome in Manhattan to house Bruce’s remains and his university. We suppose the dream gig is the inaugural party.

MM What might be the motto or epitaph to be inscribed over the geometric entry to this mausoleum/university?

BHQF Professional Challenges. Amateur Solutions.
BUREAU FOR OPEN CULTURE

DILLON DE GIVE Bureau for Open Culture is a kind of shape-shifting institution. Can you say a little about its genesis and how it typically functions?

JAMES VOORHIES Bureau for Open Culture was initiated in 2007 in order to identify the kinds of exhibitions I was producing at Columbus College of Art & Design. The exhibitions and events were taking place inside and outside the gallery, generally in downtown Columbus. Bureau for Open Culture was a way to practically define the programming.

The conceptual impetus comes out of trying to reconsider how we engage with contemporary art and its discourses. Each exhibition is a proposal to increasingly explore new ways of shaping the art institution as a productive site for learning without the typical hierarchies at academies or add-on educational programs for exhibitions. The exhibition-as-education model is a very important aspect of these intentions.

To respond specifically to your term “shape-shifting.” I think the uneasy determination of what exactly is Bureau for Open Culture is an asset that helps to destabilize the influence an art institution can make on audiences and artists. There is always a basic framework put into place, but also a variance for uncertainty that gives room for projects to develop in response to the texture of the site, the people and the moment. This way audience, artist and institution may move forward hand-in-hand to investigate the topics addressed by the exhibitions.

The name Bureau for Open Culture describes this open process. It simultaneously acknowledges the history of the curator or institution as caretaker, organizer (a bureaucrat) while speaking to a curatorial practice that pursues an expansion of the traditional limits of exhibition-making. This model, of course, has a history in Group Material, Martha Rosler and other incredible practitioners like them. Bureau for Open Culture looks toward that history but also acts in response to the increasing dissolution of disciplines in contemporary art and nebulous academic structures of the present moment.

DG How is the theme for a Bureau program decided?

JV Ideas for exhibitions are sometimes responsive to the locations where we are invited to work or where I am living. For example, the exhibition Consumption Junction was the first exhibition I curated for CCAD. Having moved from San Francisco in 2007, I found surprising the disparity between West Coast and Midwest interests in recycling, bicycling, organic gardening, etc. Generally, a strong appreciation for these things wasn’t quite there in Columbus at that time. So, the exhibition, which was about consumer actions and the environment, was kind of an immediate reaction to these conditions.

The projects Bureau for Open Culture will produce at Open Engagement and at MASS MoCA are responsive to my now living in North Adams. The specter of large manufacturing industry is everywhere in this city, and a number of other mill towns throughout the area. I’ve never lived anywhere where gigantic factories are the tangible evidence of a city’s former economic existence. I am fascinated by the way North Adams in particular is a kind of transitional economic zone. The city was originally home to textile manufacturers and to Arnold Print Works, the first occupant of the site of MASS MoCA today. After Arnold Print Works closed in the 1940s, Sprague Electric moved in and made conduits and other electrical components in that complex. And, the loft building I live in was also at one point home to Sprague Electric. We can read about these conditions but it’s incredible to see it and to feel it like I do here. In many of these spaces the current occupants are now manufacturing immaterial culture and experiences.

DG The Bureau’s contribution to Open Engagement is a comprehensive work in itself, as opposed to a curated exhibition.

JV On Symptoms of Cultural Industry is based on a series of research conversations conducted with former employees of Sprague Electric. These folks have lived in North Adams for many decades and worked for Sprague for most of their lives. Some of them started work for the company and living in North Adams, when the city’s existence was based on a Fordist manufacturing model, are incredible. In the 1980s Sprague faced economic challenges because of global competition and other factors related to labor. In 1985 they finally shut down operations at the Marshall Street complex, which is where MASS MoCA operates today.

On Symptoms of Cultural Industry examines the way North Adams and many other cities around the world (including Portland, Oregon) have transitioned from manufacturing goods and materials to manufacturing experiences and knowledge: from Fordist to post-Fordist economic frameworks.

The personal stories of the Sprague employees are edited to 20 minutes total, the length of one coffee break at Sprague. The artist Cassandra Troyan edited these interviews, interweaving them with facts about North Adams and Sprague. She will perform this monologue once in Portland (for Open Engagement) and again in North Adams. The performances will be filmed and eventually projected on the same wall against which they originally took place. The comprehensive work is this performance and photographs by the artist Timothy Nazzaro and video by the artist Rachel Sherk. The work gives texture of the environments – both domestic and public – that the Sprague participants discuss in the interviews alongside words and images of the artists / curators / culture makers / designers who live and work in North Adams now.

Bureau for Open Culture is making On Symptoms of Cultural Industry rather than commissioning a single artist or collective to do it because I’ve produced enough projects to know what works and what doesn’t. The job of a curator is to mediate between the artist’s vision and the experience of the audience, help the audience walk away with something. In this case, it’s actually easier and more interesting for me to do the project as a Bureau for Open Culture production. It’s a vision of and a response to life in North Adams.

On Symptoms of Cultural Industry will be presented at Open Engagement and in the BOC space at MASS MoCA from July 17-31 as part of my series I Am Searching for Field Character.

DG Do you see all activities in a given project having a cumulative effect? I am thinking of Descent to Revolution (2009) in which artists engaged in various ways with the city of Columbus itself, sometimes simultaneously.

JV Yes. I think the exhibitions have overlapping and complementary ways of addressing the concepts, circling around from different angles and with different intensities. Descent to Revolution is exemplary in this regard because of how the artists (Learning Site, Claire Fontaine, Red76 and REINIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT) were in residence for varying lengths of time during fall 2009. Their work was very visible in public parking lots, on the lawn of the Ohio State house, the off-site space Office of Collective Play, and in alleys. We needed so much help from students and others in the community to actually physically make the work. It was incredible how many people came out. These workers-cum-participants were accompanied by friends and other interested people and generated a momentum of community around the exhibition as it progressed throughout the fall.

Coming out of ideas of Lefebvre, Debord and a general annoyance by the way cities, like Columbus, abuse and neglect their downtown cores, Descent to Revolution examined the way cultural behavior might be changed through the production of knowledge. Revolution then is perceived in small progressive shifts. I believe participants learned a great deal about the city of Columbus, its odd annexation processes, and extraordinary infrastructure that accommodates and encourages vehicular traffic, and the histories of the downtown and suburban spaces. This knowledge hopefully shapes an understanding for how the city got to where it is, and encourages thoughtful considerations about what can be done to move it forward. The exhibition made this knowledge apparent through experience. In other words, we did not say, “Hey look! There are too many parking lots in this city.” We just started to build big obvious and quizzical things in those parking lots aggravating the drivers who actually wanted to use them to park their car. Of course, this could be viewed as rhetoric and who really knows if anything will change. The publication we produced is important for a comprehensive and cumulative view of all the works and the theories and threads of ideas that connect them. And, it was fun!

DG I’d love to know where you grew up.

JV I grew up in Ohio. I always felt like there was so much more to experience. Perhaps a sense of place was developed by an awareness and desire to experience other places.
Julie Ault is a co-founding member of Group Material, a collaborative practice that produced over 45 events and exhibitions between 1979 and 1996. Shows ranged in theme but insisted upon a central, inseparable role for the political within artistic and cultural production. Her current practice as an artist, curator, writer and editor continues to examine cultural production and the entanglement of the aesthetic and the political in our construction of our shared spaces and contexts.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY TRANSFORMAZIUM

Julie Ault

TRANSFORMAZIUM We are interested in your experiential knowledge of collaborative practice. We want to use this quote from a 1981 review of the Group Material exhibition The People’s Choice by Tom Lawson in Artforum as our jumping off point:

“The artists of Group Material are clearly serious in their commitment to the idea that art can be used as an instrument for social and political change. But like all such groups, they will probably suffer from the contradiction that lies at the heart of their existence. No matter what their aspirations are, no matter their abilities, at some point each member of the group will be faced with a terrible, if familiar choice—between political or esthetic action.”

In the making of projects and in the group process of Group Material how present was the negotiation between the political and aesthetic?

JULIE AULT I suppose as we were young and relatively inexperienced, and because that was a period where politics and aesthetics were widely perceived and represented as being at odds with one another, we didn’t belabor the problematic that Lawson predicted. In the very founding of the group we were putting forward the notion that sociopolitical and aesthetic concerns are, can, and need to be merged; bringing together these interests in practice was a primary impetus for GM. I think we knew this assumed separation was specious and served a political purpose. The division was accepted to the point that it seemed a logical truism—that supposed neutrality of art and its production was something we were challenging. We viewed the cultural and the political as intricately intertwined and rejected the term “political art” as a counterproductive marker. So the negotiation wasn’t really between politics and aesthetics but of cultural politics in practice and of aesthetics and form as political content and as politics.

T What about now?

JA I continue to believe the first mistake we make is in language; people continually replicate a division of aesthetics and politics as though it is a given...

T When did it feel comfortable or necessary for you to begin working with memory and history through editing publications?

JA The roots are in working on my first post-GM project, Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, at The Drawing Center in 1996. The research process entailed visiting a lot of alternative spaces and individuals associated with defunct groups and encountering a motley range of saving habits, from comprehensive archives to scraps of information. This demonstrated the potential of archiving to shape history the consequences of exclusion.

I wanted to make a book in order to enter information and analysis of the field into the lasting record and organized Alternative Art New York 1965–1985 published in 2002 with University of Minnesota Press. I felt an academic publisher would insure the subject be taken seriously and provide longevity. I also wanted to tap into academic authority even though I was an artist.

I have a somewhat investigational relationship to form and frequently take on methods from other arenas as part of my art practice. In addition to adopting curatorial activities, I’ve turned to editorial pursuit as artistic practice, frequently using publication as a medium over the last ten years.

Part of the initial allure of publishing for me was that it was unknown and somewhat mysterious terrain I had little experience of—it offered a chance to learn and I didn’t feel burdened by publishing conventions. It was refreshing and new. I love making books and somehow regard them as exhibition spaces.

In the last ten years I’ve been especially intent on how histories of ephemeral, indeterminate, and peripheral activities in the art field are shaped into appropriate lasting historical representations. There’s an implicit challenge of creating fitting representational forms in dynamic with particular practices that have not yet been formally historicized (for example Sister Corita Kent, or Group Material). I think each subject demands its own customized representational method and form. The books I’ve edited on the alternative arts movement, Corita, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Group Material for instance each have particular structures, methods, visibility, and distribution circuits that develop from close engagement with the subject over time.

T In Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material conflicts between group members are presented. Was it your intention to present conflict as a productive force in GM’s development? Was conflict exhausting? How did you stay energized?

JA Since Group Material ceased its activities I was concerned about the propensity of a potential book to streamline the group’s histories and in the process produce a kind of resolution in representation. What I wanted was instead to bring the group’s position and its contradictions to life. For me, collaboration has been defined by difference and connection, in roughly equal measure. I feared the impression of GM as a fossilized harmonious entity, and was alert to the time gap from when the group disbanded to the making of the book—how those years tended to soften the edges and emotions of the group’s processes, in memory. That is one reason I looked to the written record as a primary layer of information for Show and Tell—to recollect lost details and the nuance of moments and relations implied in the traces of communication that delineated the various incarnations of the group. So there was a consciousness about these hazards that influenced the process of selecting what information to include and exclude, and definitely not to gloss over conflicts and ruptures.

Difference is where things get interesting. Difference was at the heart of GM’s practice in terms of both process and projects. Different perspectives in dialogue, various methods informing and building on another, a repertoire of diverse forms, and different media rubbing up against one another. But compatible interactivity in the larger sense brings the efforts and differences.

Too much conflict can be exhausting and too much agreement can de-energize. This doesn’t mean there has to be some happy medium or ultimate equilibrium, but it is essential to figure out effective methods to deal with these directions in context. There are so many co-factors at work in collaborative process, including moods.

T Is some form of organization necessary at the beginning of group process, in order to establish shared language and etiquette?

JA Every group agrees at some point either overtly or tacitly on how they’re going to relate to each other and work together. I’ve witnessed new collaborations go through the same struggles that we did over structure, hierarchy, procedure, means, and power. It’s part of the process that probably shouldn’t be short-circuited as such working through has value in itself in how individuals develop and convey their perspectives within the group and how the group develops its groupness or collective subjectivity. As you probably know from your practice, these negotiations are not only necessary at the beginning of group process but are ongoing as individual members and the group as a whole are dynamic entities further compounded by being in dynamic with each other. Some agreements might not need redress but in general I think it’s somewhat dangerous to set a way of doing things as a solid commitment, but rather prefer to view such things as flexible guidelines that are contingent. You can say for instance we don’t want a hierarchical structure but then comes a situation when hierarchy or leadership is called for.

T Do you have any advice about communication for individuals embarking on a collaborative project?

JA There’s no replacement for in person discussion with its nuance, expressiveness, and multi-directional aspect. I prefer it. Writing is also good as it allows one to think carefully and precisely (potentially) but email as a writing and reading media is a ripe arena for misunderstanding. Rhythm is a big factor to respect in communication and in a group generally. Ideas and discussions as well as the overall process tend to have an ideal rhythm, which might involve respecting gestation, slowness, even ennui. Force and manipulation are obviously dangerous.

Sensitivity is a must. Radical honesty, though difficult and perhaps unfeasible, can be transformative. Seriously listening is an obvious but not always practiced. I remember many occasions in discussion when one person is speaking and others are chomping at the bit or worse yet, interrupting, which confirms they are not really listening or trying to understand, but rather preparing what they want to say. Of course such heated dialogue can be terrifically productive despite being frustrating. There are no hard and fast rules, which is why I don’t want to put Group Material forward as a model with a capital M. Sure there are things there to be learned, lifted, and built upon but it’s just one example.
FRITZ HAEG

Fritz Haeg’s practice operates in and between architecture, design, gardening, dance, parades, teaching, writing, happenings, and quite a few more besides. He trained as an architect in Italy. He has lived in a biodesic dome in LA since 2001, which he has opened up for regular events and happenings as the Sundown Saloon now-become the Sundown Schoolhouse. I spoke to Fritz about the diversity and energy that goes into and comes out of such a vast array of activities and projects most often involving “deep collaboration.” We went on to speak about gardens, ecology and pleasure within art and art practice.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY TRAVIS SOUZA

TRAVIS SOUZA The first thing I immediately get a sense of through the diversity of your projects, the website, and in the level of participation that your projects elicit, is the tremendous amount of energy at all stages of all these different activities and outcomes. Is there some conceptual basis from where this is coming or is this simply a way you work?

FRITZ HAEG I guess I’m an extremist. I go through different cycles. The last five years for me has been an extremely busy, active period. And this year I am very consciously trying to pull back. So it’s not like there is a steady, consistent way of working for me. When I go deep into the work and develop projects it tends to consume my whole life for that period. I try very consciously to create empty spaces where I can retreat a little bit and gather myself in some way. But in terms of the level of participation, that is implicit in the work I think. Lately it has been predicated upon deep collaboration with lots of other people who are involved in a lot of ways.

TS Well a lot of attention has been given over to the Edible Estates project in particular and quite a few articles referring to your projects have applied the term “farming” in a variety of ways, and there was also an architectural article you wrote quite a while back entitled, The Building that Farms.” I wonder if you wouldn’t mind talking about when you started to think about agriculture and how that thinking has developed in your practice over the years?

FH Well, I’m more interested in gardening, in terms of the history of gardening and what gardening means as a way of having a relationship with a particular piece of land over time. I think farming comes loaded with certain attitudes towards how plants are used. There is nothing implicit about the word farming that presumes places of pleasure for people. I guess I am more interested specifically in making pleasure gardens that happen to produce food, or places that produce food that happen to be places of pleasure for people. But its important that there be both for people.

As I’ve grown away from architecture and buildings and towards something else – which I’m not really sure about – I think I’ve always been drawn to activities and systems and ways of working where there were elements which required me to surrender control, and that involves working with animals and plants and other people.

TS It’s been useful for me to think specifically about farming in relation to art practice from the viewpoint that, traditionally it was a very placed lifestyle where home was at the centre of activity and production. Whereas the art world, on one hand tends to require its ‘workers’ to live more of an itinerant lifestyle, or on the other, like in some social practices, to contribute in some way to “place-making.” How would you tend to think about “place-making”?

FH I guess one point I’d make right off is that there is the tendency to approach a site where perhaps there is no building, and say “well there was nothing there and I put something there” and then there’s this idea that until people arrive there is nothing, there is no sense of place. This idea, that an empty lot is nothing and that people are required to provide a sense of place. I think is deeply flawed in a way. So I don’t think I am ever providing a sense of place. I think it’s more about revealing the sense of place that is already there.

As I think specifically about your point about farming, there is this extremely important idea for me, for those of us who live in cities, for those of us who are extremely dependent on all of these invisible systems for surviving and being comfortable in these cities, there’s something very exciting about revealing those systems and making evident all of the systems that are keeping the place going. And I think specifically with food that there is something so incredibly sensual and universal about it.

If you look at a garden of food growing in the middle of the city suddenly you snap back into a sort of primal consciousness that I think in our typical daily lives in cities we are disconnected from. I am not saying that all the food a city eats needs to be grown within the city because with the density of the cities we are living in it isn’t possible. And it’s not a panacea for all the problems that we have. But I do think that there is something powerful about that physical experience within the city and experiencing that in a very immediate way.

TS How would you tend to think about experience, economy and pleasure in your practice and projects?

FH In some ways I think maybe there’s a presumption with a lot of the work that I am doing, that it is motivated by a sense of duty when in fact for me it is almost entirely motivated by pleasure and just moving towards what gives me pleasure and what I need in my life and that’s what the work grows out of. And even beyond that I think it is important to note that I don’t have an overtly commercial aspect to my practice. All my work is like service industry, so there are no real commodifiable products being produced.

And this isn’t because I think things are bad or that ability to buy and sell things is inherently bad. I get this profound sense of freedom when my work is un-tethered to physical objects and instead is growing entirely out of ephemeral activities. I guess I can say experiences, but I don’t know if that is the right word because I think then that privileges the firsthand human experiences with the work, which maybe isn’t even the case.

I think there are these expanding rings of influence in the work that radiate out from a central activity so that you are no longer able to circumscribe exactly what the work is in. Its influence radiates outside of the narrow confines of the platform for contemporary art even, hopefully to penetrate into a mainstream dialogue. Maybe getting so far from the form of contemporary art that its relationship to it, and your awareness of its relationship to it disappears.

TS Yes, in one of the Edible Estates video there was a family that just had just too many vegetables to know what to do with; that even after trying to jar them and freeze them and give them away there was this excess. But because they grew it themselves there was this excess and waste that no one is feeling any guilt about. There was something about that that was nice to see. Excess seems to be characteristic of your practice in some way [laughs] and that is really great to see.

FH I am really interested in models that exist in nature, so if you look at how a lot of different organisms reproduce there are sometimes helpful models to compare to how creative people create, or artists create. I think there are some people whose ways of working are much more like human reproduction. Where in your entire life give birth to one or two very precious things that you then nurture and take care of. And you pour all your energy into these very few things that require long gestation and a lot of care and are very precious in that way. And another way of producing, lets say like an apple tree, is producing thousands and thousands of seeds each one with the capacity to produce another tree. I think I tend to be much more in that category, which also can become even like subterfuge where you just throw enough things out and just see what sticks.

Of course there’s some level of editing that happens. So in that way I like my work to exist as text, as video, as images, as shows, as books, as websites, as printed materials, in as many forms as possible, none of them being it and none of them being terribly precious but they’re all out there feeding off each other and maybe after a while you get a sense you’re never really able to get to the middle of it, because no matter what you’re looking at you feel that there’s more and that your only touching the surface, which of course in fact is true.
ALYSHA SHAW When are labels useful for socially-engaged artists, and when are they obstacles?

PABLO HELGUERA Labels are problematic to every kind of professional (not only artists), but we all learn to live with them in one way or another. In terms of how labels work for socially-engaged artists, I find a particularly interesting paradox in how the word “art” discreetly vanishes from the term “social practice.” While we refer to what we do as “social practice,” we still implicitly acknowledge that we are artists. It is not a breaking up with art, but an attempt to de-emphasize the aspect of art making that perhaps we find most personally embarrassing – namely, the cult of the individual.

Yet I would pose that the term “art” is problematic for us within the art field, but it actually is conveniently useful in the outside world when we engage with others. I believe it is problematic from within because we want to break with the notion of the artist as an elevated illuminated individual whose work participates in a centuries-old dialogue of art history. Yet it is beneficial, because saying we are artists helps us in many instances penetrate communities under a role that is relatively understandable and doesn’t pose many threats – it doesn’t presuppose, to a general audience, that we may have a political or a social agenda. It is also a way to encourage engagement and reflection through activities that may not be seen, at first, anything more than leisure or play.

AS Does an artist’s potential role in society have any inherent strengths or handicaps? To what extent is an artist’s potential social role flexible?

PH I believe that being an artist is both a strength and a handicap in that one is necessarily positioned as an outsider of society. This outsider-ness gives us the possibility to be an external viewer and to intervene from a place of knowledge that is hard for others to attain. This condition is paradoxically a handicap in that we cannot, as ethnographers or anthropologists also experience or integrate ourselves completely into our subject. Our artistic contribution is then necessarily the container of both our unique outsider perspective and our wanting to intervene in that internal reality.

AS In your experience from The School of Panamerican Unrest, how can an artist foster cross-cultural and cross-geographic connections that respect and promote locality and diverse folk culture within a globalized and increasingly culturally homogenous world?

PH The conceptually simple (although not so simple logistically) idea of crossing the Pan-American highway in small ways managed to link people in very unexpected cities, such as Mérida and Vancouver, or Mexicali and Anchorage, or Asuncion and Phoenix. This, however, was not done only through the simple act of arriving to those places, but rather by proposing a kind of dialogue that was not art-centric nor one where I would be positioned in a place of authority. Instead, it had to depart from a horizontal thematic platform, which meant that we would talk about things that local individuals would be the most authoritative to talk about and this meant in general that it needed to be something related to the local reality. As exemplified by the documentation of the project, I believe it is clear that we give too much credit to hegemonic forces. In fact, there are still enormous complexities to each geographical region and these become manifest the moment you start a conversation on one of those places.

AS Are technology, the internet, and global capitalism tools of global connection? If not, what are they?

PH Global capitalism and the internet are very different things, so they should be thought about separately. In very general terms, however, they are certainly forces that have changed our world. What is more interesting to me is how they have changed our way of thinking about the world as artists. Whenever these issues are brought up in the discussion of hegemonic dominance, it would appear that they have infinite reach. While it is a mistake to believe, for example, that the internet contains all the knowledge of the world, it is also a mistake to think that contemporary forces of communication and global capitalism are all-inclusive. Vast amounts of population are still outside the reach of technology, and while globalization impacts the economy of every country, there are vast regions of the world that hardly have seen any impact in their way of living for a hundred years.

It is important to think about these forces both in terms of who they include and who they exclude. Technology is our new way to westernize the other, the un-technologized, un-globalized individual.

AS In the course of your voyage from Anchorage, Alaska, to Tierra del Fuego you interviewed two women who were the last to speak their languages. How would you describe those women, their experiences, and their current place in society? Why did you seek them out?

PH I was interested in identifying those aspects of places that were absolutely unique and who are quickly vanishing from our world. Without being too dramatic about it, it is a fact that we will never have the same kind of language diversity in the world, precisely because of technology and globalization. These women who happened to live in opposite parts of the world were average people who landed onto a very unusual situation being the last speakers of their respective language. I wanted to understand more about what it felt to be the bearer of that dubious honor. I realized that both carried their condition with some heaviness, both did not choose their fate and were making the best to come to terms with it. Ultimately it is a place of loneliness. In a way, to come to think of it today, I had inferred that these women represented all that slowly dies within us, that which we keep from previous generations and is never transmitted to the next due to negligence, forgetfulness, or indifference. I wanted to foster a discussion on the losing of cultural specificity, and language is the most tangible human example of that.

AS Is art a tool of cultural preservation? Or can it more effectively function as a constructive tool for the evolution of culture and society?

PH I believe that art can do both: it portrays and represents moments in our culture (which is why artworks are primary objects of study for historians when they need to understand a particular period), but at the same time forces a critical analysis of that reality that generally promotes consciousness of problems or other issues, and allows a society to move forward. The German romantic poet Novalis famously wrote “when we dream that we are dreaming we are close to awakening.” Art is the consciousness in our dream that tells us that we are dreaming; it portrays our dream within our dream, and then forces an awakening.

AS Your work over the past 20 years has taken form in so many disciplines, some of which traditionally might seem in opposition of each other. Do you exist in multiple worlds simultaneously?

PH I am interested in ideas and how they are expressed in a variety of disciplines, and in how content dictates formats and not the other way around. I am also inclined to embody the knowledge that a particular format provides, which is why I think I am closer to performance art – I usually become a performer of a particular discipline. This is to say that if I am interested in a piece of history I have not to make an artwork about that history, but to become a provisional historian, and the outcome will follow. I see this act essentially as a performative act, a method actor gesture perhaps. And as such to do such different things does not represent a conflict in my view, with the only and great frustration that one can never become more than a generalist.

The best way I can understand it is by using the analogy of the composer or the architect: my training is to understand disciplines as construction materials, to understand them in what they do, how they behave and function, and hopefully design structures that can make best use of them. It is perhaps a way to escape the whole “de-skilling” debate (the debate around art becoming trapped by the constant refinement of its own skill to the point that one loses critical perspective). In this sense, I relate to what Paulo Freire’s statement that “my expertise lies in not being an expert.”
SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

See pages 4-6 for a complete schedule. Please note that locations are subject to change, and check Art Building Registration Table for updates.

**MAY 13, FRIDAY**

9 Registration + Coffee and Pastries
   Art Building, Registration Table
9:2 Center for Genomic Gastronomy - Outside Art Building
10-11 Introductory Remarks and panel
   Shattuck Hall Annex

11-1 OPENING RECEPTION:
   Social Economies exhibition - Littman Gallery
11:30-1 Getting To Know YouTube - Field Work
12-12:30 Lunch
   Food Cart Work Songs
   SW 4th Ave. Food Carts
12-1 FRINQ: Community Lunch - PSU Community Garden
12-5 Temporary Library of Sentimental Objects - Field Work
1-2:20 Pablo Helguera - Shattuck Hall Annex
2:30-4 PARALLEL SESSIONS
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Julie Perini and Amy Harwood
   TRACKING + TRACING Big Car’s Year in Fluxus
   SOCIAL ECONOMIES Andrew Wilson
   INBETWEEN SPACES Xhurst
   INBETWEEN SPACES Project Grow
   DESIGN PANEL Moderated by Sara Huston
4 Landfill Conversation: Ted Purves and Elyse Mallouk
   Field Work Library
5:30-9 Pub Discussion Series - Multiple locations
9:10:30 Late Night Diner, Becca Lofchie - Field Work

**MAY 14, SATURDAY**

9 Registration - Art Building, Registration Table
9-2 Center for Genomic Gastronomy - Outside Art Building
9:30-12 Portland Art Museum Summit
   Portland Art Museum, Whitsell Auditorium
10-11:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Creative Migration
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Sarah Rodigari and Brett Cook
   SOCIAL ECONOMIES The Cake and Eat It Collective
   TRACKING + TRACING Edie Tsong, Borderland Collective
   SENTIMENT + STRATEGIES TART Collective
   INBETWEEN SPACES Deanna Pin dell, artSpa
   INBETWEEN SPACES James Reed and Agents of Change
12-12:30 Lunch
12-1 FRINQ: Community Lunch - PSU Community Garden
12-5 Temporary Library of Sentimental Objects - Field Work
12:30-2 Fritz Haeg - Shattuck Hall Annex
2:30-4 PARALLEL SESSIONS
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Conflict Kitchen (Dawn Weleski),
   Joseph del Pesco and Christian Nagler
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS PSU Social Practice MFA
   Low-Residency Panel with Harrell Fletcher and Rick Lowe
   TRACKING + TRACING Interventions in Public Amnesia
   and Exploratorium: Marina McDougall and Jordan Stein
   TRACKING + TRACING David Osborn
   SOCIAL ECONOMIES Stephanie Diamond
   INBETWEEN SPACES Queer Explorers Club
4:5-30 Art and Education Summit - Shattuck Hall Annex
5 True Stories - Portland Art Museum, Whitsell Auditorium
5 Occupation Preoccupation - Candlelight Lounge
6-8 Alysha Shaw: Balkan Dance Party
   Candlelight Lounge
7 Bureau for Open Culture - Field Work

**MAY 15, SUNDAY**

9 Registration - Art Building, Registration Table
9-2 Center for Genomic Gastronomy - Outside Art Building
10-11:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Amelia Winger-Bearskin
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Julia Cole and Sean Starowitz
   TRACKING + TRACING Petra Kuppers
   SOCIAL ECONOMIES James Rojas
12-12:30 Lunch
   Folk Songs of Invisible Portland
   Outside Shattuck Hall / Park Blocks
12-1 FRINQ: Community Lunch - PSU Community Garden
12-5 Temporary Library of Sentimental Objects - Field Work
12:30-2 Julie Ault - Shattuck Hall Annex
2:30-4 PARALLEL SESSIONS
   PEOPLE + PUBLICS Jennifer Van Winkle
   TRACKING + TRACING Lynn Lu, Matthew Sloats
   and Julie Perini
   INBETWEEN SPACES PLAND
   INBETWEEN SPACES Carmen Papalia and Jason Sturgill
   INBETWEEN SPACES Panel and potluck picnic organ-iz ed by Nolan Calisch at Wealth Underground Farm,
   featuring Fritz Haeg and Harrell Fletcher
   ART + EDUCATION TOPICS Paul Wittenbraker, Rozzell
   Medina, jesika maria ross
2:30-7:30 We Were Here, Dawn Weleski and M. Callen
   Various Locations
4:5-30 Art and Education Summit - Shattuck Annex
6-8:30 Group Dinner and Final Panel
   Julie Ault, Fritz Haeg and Pablo Helguera,
   moderated by Rick Lowe
   PNCA Commons
9-LATE Dance Party
   Boxes

VENUES

Please see the Open Engagement map for a complete list of venues and directions.

ART BUILDING 2000 SW 5th Ave.
AUTZEN GALLERY Smith Memorial Union, 1825 SW Broadway
BOXES 330 SW 11th Ave.
CANDLELIGHT LOUNGE 2032 SW 5th Ave.
CITY HALL 1221 SW 4th Ave.
COALITION BREWING 2724 SE Ankeny St.

FIELD WORK 1101 SW Jefferson St.
FOOD CARTS SW 4th Ave. between SW College and SW Hall
LITTMAN GALLERY Smith Memorial Union, 1825 SW Broadway
MIGRATION BREWING 2828 NE Glisan St.
PARK BLOCKS SW Park Ave. between SW College and SW Salmon
PSU COMMUNITY GARDEN SW 12th Ave and SW Montgomery St.

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM 1219 SW Park Ave.
PNCA 1241 NW Johnson St.
SHATTUCK HALL ANNEX 14019 NW Newberry Rd.
WEALTH UNDERGROUND FARM 70 NW 4th Ave.
WHITE STAG BUILDING 70 NW 4th Ave.
XHURCH 4550 NE 20th Ave.