

A Proximity of Consciousness Exhibition - Artist Information -

EXHIBITION

A Proximity of Consciousness: Art and Social Action

September 20 – December 20, 2014
The School of the Art Institute, Sullivan Galleries, 33 S. State St., Chicago

At the core of Chicago's intellectual and creative life stand these influential artists for whom this city itself was a springboard for a new way of thinking about art at the intersection of society. Their work has influenced generations, having made social practice a worldwide phenomenon. Now this exhibition brings their ideas alive through ten newly commissioned projects. Exhibiting artists: Jim Duignan, Paul Durica, Pablo Helguera, Inigo Manglano-Ovalle, Dan Peterman, J. Morgan Puett, Michael Rakowitz, Laurie Jo Reynolds, Temporary Services, and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

A Plea for Playgrounds by Jim Duignan

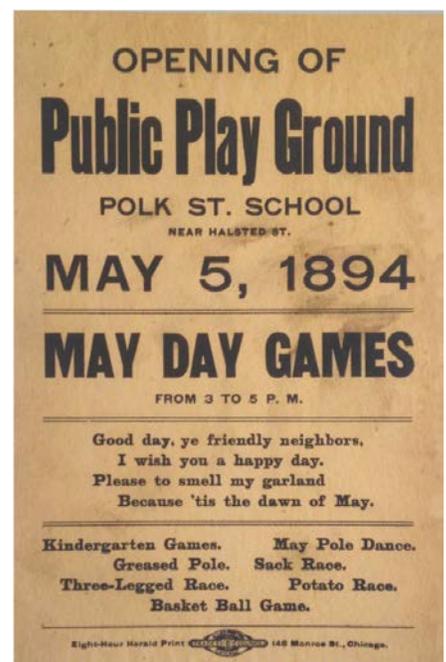
Embodied by a twelve-foot seesaw—a piece of playground equipment requiring cooperation—*A Plea for Playgrounds* is the result of a collaboration between artist Jim Duignan and a group of elders who shared with him personal stories of their youth. Growing up in Chicago in the 1960s, the artist's own childhood experiences echoed those of the elders, where playgrounds operated as natural social centers for the community. Jane Addams's Hull-House was also a shared influence in these conversations, as was the 1905 manifesto *A Plea for Playgrounds*, a publication written by a group of concerned volunteers that drew connections between poverty, health, democracy, and access to these sites.

As part of this project Duignan is also collaborating with Jennifer Gray, architectural historian at Columbia University in New York, to create a contemporary *Plea for Playgrounds* in an effort to galvanize awareness about playgrounds as community spaces—as cities face many of the same concerns as they did more than a century ago—and inspire people to reclaim their communities by engaging physical and social spaces in the public sphere.

Jim Duignan

Duignan began the Stockyard Institute in 1995 as an artist project and shared space in the south Chicago neighborhood Back of the Yards. Its formation was influenced by a small group of community artists, architects, radical teachers, local activists, and individuals—all of whom considered deeply how the social and

civic forms of engagement were integral to their practice and life. The efforts of the Stockyard Institute and the studio work of Duignan has been exhibited in such places as Allgirls Gallery, Berlin; rum46, Denmark; P74, Ljubljana, Slovenia; and Mess Hall and the Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; among others. Duignan is co-founder of AREA Chicago with Daniel Tucker; co-organizer of Chicago Social Club in collaboration with the SAIC's Department of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies. He is also professor of Visual Art in the College of Education at DePaul University where he is Chair of Visual Art Education.



Poster for the opening of the Hull-House Playground, Chicago, May 5, 1894.

Earth's Choicest Products: Pocket Guide to Hell Audio Tour
by Paul Durica and Heather Radke

This project takes its name from a newspaper advertisement proclaiming the opening of the building currently housing SAIC's Sullivan Galleries—Schlesinger and Mayer's flagship department store, designed by Louis Sullivan, on October 12, 1903. According to the advertisement, a visitor to the store would encounter "earth's choicest products in fabric and handicraft." Using this phrase as its starting point, Pocket Guide to Hell appropriates the form of the guided audio tour to explore what was and continues to be produced in the store and, in particular, on the seventh floor, and to consider what gets valued, remembered, and forgotten.

Participants can select from three listening experiences. One offers a concise but thorough account of Sullivan's architectural practice, aesthetic features of particular note, and the corporate histories of Schlesinger and Mayer and its longtime successor Carson, Pirie, & Scott Co. A second strand situates the exhibition in relation to the spatial history of the seventh floor of Carson, Pirie, & Scott and includes interviews with participating artists. The third tour collects together bits and pieces, practices and memories, that fail to fit within either a conventional architectural or gallery audio tour and yet cannot be fully discarded.

Paul Durica and Heather Radke

Durica is founder of Pocket Guide to Hell, free and interactive walks, talks, and reenactments on Chicago's past, some in collaboration with such organizations as the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Chicago History Museum, Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois, and Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2014 Durica participated in organizing *Let's Get Working: Chicago Celebrates Studs Terkel*, a three-day festival of readings, film screenings, music, and performance involving over thirty partners. His writings have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Chicagoan*, *Tin House*, and *Indiana Review*, and he is co-editor with Bill Savage of *Chicago By Day and Night: The Pleasure Seeker's Guide to the Paris of America*. Radke is a writer, multi-media producer, and public historian, with expertise in dynamic storytelling, community curation, and outreach to diverse audiences. She works at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum as exhibition coordinator and curator, where she served as lead curator for *Unfinished Business: 21st Century Home Economics* and *Unfinished Business: the Right to Play*, exhibitions that connect the history of the Hull-House Settlement to contemporary social justice struggles. Before working in museums, Radke attended the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies with a specialization in radio. She has produced audio documentaries and multimedia content for cultural institutions and national broadcast.

Addams-Dewey Gymnasium
by Pablo Helguera

The *Addams-Dewey Gymnasium* honors and activates both meanings of the word gymnasium: a space for physical activity and a preparatory school of higher learning. The space, reflecting turn of the century gymnasiums, is inspired in the educational philosophies of Jane Addams and John Dewey, Chicago-based contemporaries who, at the turn of the century, were pioneers of progressive education in both theory and practice. The central tenet of their approach, which was to give primacy to experience, took form in a curriculum that included art making and physical activities.

Looking at the rich history of socially engaged art in Chicago, this project explores what could be some of the intellectual and historical roots of this practice. In this spirit, the *Gymnasium* will enact curriculum practiced at Dewey's Chicago Laboratory School and Addams' Hull House, as well as present new experimental actions that draw inspiration from the legacy of these educators, seeking to bring the relevance of their ideas into twenty-first century art and education practice.

Pablo Helguera

Helguera (BFA 1993) is an artist and educator focusing on history, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, and anthropology in the format of lectures, museum displays, performance, and fiction. As Director of Adult and Academic Programs in the Department of Education at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, he has spearheaded socially engaged initiatives for adult audiences, while presenting his own projects recently at the Guggenheim Museum, SITE Santa Fe, and upcoming at the Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona, and Kunsthalle Osnabruck, Germany. His books include *Education for Socially Engaged Art* and *Art Scenes: The Social Scripts of the Art World*; and awards include Creative Capital, John Simon Guggenheim, and International Award of Participatory Art of the Region Emilia-Romagna, Italy.



Pocket Guide to Hell's Haymarket Reenactment, 2011. Photo: Yoni Goldstein.

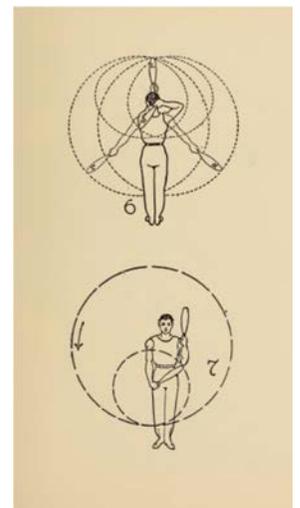


Diagram from W.J. Schatz, *Club Swinging for Physical Exercise and Recreation* (Boston: American Gymnasia Company, 1908).

Seven Thousand Cords (After Beuys)
by Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle

This work is a contemporary response to Joseph Beuys's renowned social sculpture/ecological project *7000 Oaks*, composed of seven cords of wood as distinct sculptural elements. For centuries stacking split firewood has been used as an efficient and elegant method: an economic anticipation of warmth, comfort, and need. This project invites contemplation of the banking/harvesting carbon cycle that we continually engage as organic beings, but maybe not enough as environmentally conscious citizens.

In *Seven Thousand Cords* Manglano-Ovalle asks others to participate in their own accessing of natural resources through the most direct methods of sawing, splitting, and stacking. The end product of which may be simply sculpture, or fuel for a conversation around a fire.

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle

Manglano-Ovalle (MFA 1989) is a conceptual artist working across media to create works that challenge our notions of the political and cultural. He is internationally recognized for his activist-inspired public art and studio-based works. His work currently regards the inversion of utopia, the fabrication of war, and the hypersonic re-entry of modernism. He has received numerous awards including fellowships from the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and a United States Artists Guthman Fellowship. Manglano-Ovalle has presented major projects at Art Institute of Chicago; Documenta (12), Kassel, Germany; Krefelder Kunstmuseen, Krefeld Barcelona Pavilion, Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and Bilbao; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; among others. He is also professor of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University.



Courtesy of the artist.

Morgan Shoal: Lake Bottom Land Use
by Dan Peterman

Morgan Shoal is a shallow water limestone formation that extends one-half mile from Chicago's shoreline at 49th street. Covered by four to eight feet of water, the Shoal still bears the visible striations caused by glaciers moving across its surface. It hosts a complicated ecosystem very different from the surrounding sand and gravel lake bottom, and it harbors the remains of the Silver Spray—a commuter steamship that was crushed on the shoal by waves 100 years ago. At several points in the past century and as recently as 2009, plans have been made by the City to expand park acreage by using Morgan Shoal as a convenient base for fill. In this project Peterman focuses on Morgan Shoal as a site of historical, ecological, and geological complexity that can contribute to a deepening sense of the lakeside ecosystem we inhabit. The exhibition component is paired with public conversations inviting experts in Lake Michigan biology and ecology, as well as experts in Great Lakes regulatory issues, to make the case that the lake bottom is both a "wild" place and a public commons, a vital and energetic intersection of climate, water, rock, and living organisms, including us.



Silver Spray shipwreck at Morgan Shoal. Photo: Dan Peterman.

Peterman launched this project of with an opening event in July that sought to spark awareness of this ecological site through commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the wreck of the Silver Spray at Morgan Shoal. Irish stew was served to all, honoring the stew simmering on board at the as the steamship ran aground on July 14, 1914.

Dan Peterman

Peterman is an artist and founder of the Experimental Station, an innovative Chicago-based incubator of small-scale enterprise and cultural projects. His work explores networks of recycled or discarded materials, producing minimal works that function interchangeably as stockpiles, sculpture, functional objects, and critiques of environmental waste and neglect. He has exhibited at the Venice Biennale; Van Abbemuseum, The Netherlands; Kunsthalle Basel; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Smart Museum of Art, Chicago; among others. He is recipient of the University Scholar Award from University of Illinois, Chicago, where he is an associate professor in the College of Architecture and the Arts; Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; and Lewis Comfort Tiffany Foundation.

HumanUfactorY(ng) Workstyles: The Motion Journals of Excerpts from the User's Guide to Mildred's Lane. A costume drama of the everyday.

by J. Morgan Puett

Coming to Chicago as a film student at SAIC, J. Morgan Puett made small film sketches, while her research into costume thrust her into deeper curiosities around clothing and dwelling, eventually leading her to an established career as an innovator in the fashion industry. In the next chapter of an evolving and emergent story, Puett fabricated immersive installations in museums and other sites around the world that brought a reality to our sensory and imaginative connection to cloth and other material objects. Puett returns again to her Chicago inspiration, this time to the Jane Addams Hull-House and Addams's Labor Museum endeavor with John Dewey, who also saw growth and creativity as a dialogue between doing and reflecting. Puett's installation engages this history to present a deep reflection on the doings of Mildred's Lane—her art-as-life practice going on twenty years—through films, photography, costumes, and belongings, creating a period room that transgresses time and place.

J. Morgan Puett

Puett (BFA 1981, MFA 1984) is an interdisciplinary artist, cultural producer, fashion designer, and co-founder with Mark Dion and director of Mildred's Lane and The Mildred Complex(ity) in the upper Delaware River Valley on the border of New York and Pennsylvania where being is profoundly a social and political practice. Her work explores pedagogical structures, systems of labor, sociality, ethics, and all-encompassing lived experience. Earlier she intervened in the fashion system through storefront installations and clothing/dwelling projects in Manhattan, followed by museum installations on the histories of the needle trade systems. Puett's awards include the John and Marva Warnock, United States Artists Simon Fellow, the Smithsonian Institution Artist Research Fellowship, Anonymous Was A Woman Award, PEW Charitable Trust.



"The Labor Portraits," Rebecca Purcell with J. Morgan Puett/Mildred's Lane. Courtesy of Mildred's Lane and Rebecca Purcell. Photo: Jeffrey Jenkins.

Every Weapon Is A Tool If You Hold It Right
by Michael Rakowitz

Dating back to ancient Babylon, *Masgouf*, the national dish of Iraq, consists of a fresh carp fished from the Tigris River, split open from the back and impaled on wooden stakes next to an open fire. The fish can take anywhere from one to three hours to cook, during which time guests eat mezze and congregate. Yet the recent history of carp's use as a food fish has been complicated. In 2007 Baghdad's Imams declared carp swimming in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers unclean and unfit for consumption due to the large number of human corpses found in the waterways. In the United States the fish are widely regarded as the first wave of an "invasive species," with an overwhelming growth in population that is considered a threat to native ecosystems.



Rakowitz at fishing outing, 2014. Photo: Jeremy Ohmes

Every Weapon Is A Tool If You Hold It Right seeks to recalibrate Chicago's relationship to the Asian carp. Building on the artist's earlier work, *Enemy Kitchen*, he once again collaborates with the city's community of Iraqi émigrés and US veterans of the Iraq War. Together they will fish in Chicagoland's rivers, catch carp, and cook it in a traditional fire pit designed to resemble the damaged pedestal on which Saddam Hussein's statue once stood in Baghdad's Firdos Square. Stakes for holding the fish while it cooks will be fashioned from Iraqi and American bayonets, and the knives used to gut them will be forged by Saddam Hussein's personal sword maker, Haidar Sayyed Muhsin. Weapons become tools, and invasive species become revered, abundant cultural symbols that can sustain and enrich. Thus, this project attempts to enlist an invasive species to preserve and make present an endangered recipe.

Michael Rakowitz

Rakowitz produces conceptual works charged with geopolitical narratives and the history of his own Iraqi Jewish heritage. Intended to incite conversation and exchange, his projects take shape outside conventional art spaces. *Enemy Kitchen*, an ongoing project, compiles and teaches Baghdadi recipes to public audiences ranging from middle school students to museumgoers. In 2012, *Enemy Kitchen* became a food truck, staffed by Iraqi refugees who cooked the food and US veterans of the Iraq War who operated as sous chefs and servers. In *Return*, 2006, Rakowitz reopened his grandfather's import and export business first operated in Baghdad, then relocated to New York when his family was exiled in 1946, offering free shipping to Iraq three months after the U.S. declared trade restrictions on the country. *Spoils of 2011*, housed at a New York Park Avenue restaurant, provided a "culinary/art experience" for patrons with traditional Iraqi dishes served on rare pieces of fine China from Saddam Hussein's personal collection. Later a cease-and-desist letter from the State Department abruptly ended *Spoils*, resulting in the return of the fine China to Iraqi territory. Rakowitz is also professor of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University.

Tamms Year Ten Family Room by Laurie Jo Reynolds

The 2013 closing of Tamms supermax prison in southern Illinois marked a major victory for Tamms Year Ten (TY10), the volunteer grassroots legislative campaign initiated by men in Tamms, their families, and artists. This year TY10's primary goal is to re-elect Illinois Governor Pat Quinn who closed the Tamms supermax, three other prisons, abolished the state's death penalty, "banned the box," and signed several Second Chance bills. Returning to the space in SAIC's Sullivan Galleries that housed the *TY10 Campaign Office* (which served as the hub of the 2012 closure efforts), family members and men formerly incarcerated in Tamms will create a living room out of furniture and objects from their home. After the November 4 election, the family members will use the gallery as a meeting site to access the past, establish closure for TY10, and make plans for the future. Through a series of convenings, they will explore the possibility of a new political or social collective.



Annette Franklin, a TY10 mother at her home in Elmhurst, 2014. Photo: Soohyun Kim

Laurie Jo Reynolds

Reynolds (MFA 2000) is an artist, policy advocate, and researcher who dedicated two decades of work to addressing negative representations of people in prison. Her work strategically engages with government systems with the goal of concrete political change. For the past eight years Reynolds has focused on Tamms Correctional Center, the notorious supermax prison in southern Illinois designed for sensory deprivation. In 2007, she collaborated with former and current Tamms prisoners, their families, and other artists to launch Tamms Year Ten, a volunteer grassroots legislative campaign seeking to reform or close the prison. On January 4, 2013, Tamms supermax was shuttered by Governor Pat Quinn. As a 2010 Soros Justice Fellow, Reynolds researched and advocated for best practices to stop sexual abuse and reduce crime recidivism. In 2014, she and her cat Leon completed a residency at the Museum of Arte Útil at the Van Abbenmuseum, Netherlands. She is currently on the staff of Governor Quinn's reelection campaign, and in January of 2015 will take a position as assistant professor of Public Arts, Social Justice, and Culture at University of Illinois at Chicago.

Publishing Clearing House by Temporary Services

Temporary Services has produced a booklet for nearly every project they have completed over the past fifteen years. The result is 101 publications, as well as numerous posters and ephemera. In 2008 they started Half Letter Press, a publishing imprint that produces and distributes book-length works. Thus far, Temporary Services has never made publishing—as a living, breathing, collaborative, generative, and empowering activity—the center of an exhibition.

Publishing Clearing House will be a temporary, fully functioning print shop. Members of Temporary Services and assistants will work with invited collaborators to produce new booklets and printed works during the run of the show—sharing and launching publications. Visitors will be able to meet Temporary Services and visiting authors, and watch the mechanics of the print shop as works are developed and created.

Temporary Services is inviting a diverse range of guest authors with an emphasis on Chicago, the Midwest, and a particular interest in artists, activists, and voices from marginalized and disadvantaged populations including juveniles and the incarcerated, as well as people who represent or articulate narratives counter to dominant cultural norms. In banking and finance, clearing denotes all activities from the time a commitment is made for a transaction until it is settled. In *Publishing Clearing House*, clearing denotes all activities from the time a commitment to an author is made, until the publication is designed, printed, stapled, folded and distributed. Making a clearing is also about creating a space for meeting and making processes visible, open, and transparent.

Temporary Services

Temporary Services currently based in Copenhagen and Chicago (Brett Bloom and Marc Fischer) has existed, with several changes in membership and structure, since 1998. Their name directly reflects the desire to provide art as a service to others in order to pay attention to the social context in which art is produced and received. Temporary Services was started as an experimental exhibition space in a working class neighborhood in Chicago, and they produce exhibitions, events, projects, and publications. The distinction between art practice and other creative human endeavors is irrelevant to them. Experiencing art in the places we inhabit on a daily basis remains a critical concern for Temporary Services. It helps them move art from a privileged experience to one more directly related to how we live our lives. Temporary Services is interested



Temporary Services, *Publishing Clearing House*. Sketch by Kione Kochi.

in art that takes engaging and empowering forms; a variety of people should decide how art is seen and interpreted, rather than continuing to strictly rely on those in power.

**Untitled 2014 (recycle, lunch break)
by Rirkrit Tiravanija with Ken Dunn and Dan Peterman**

In conjunction with recycler-gardener-philosopher/artist Ken Dunn and Dan Peterman (see above), Rirkrit Tiravanija will team up on a series of interactions—meals and discussions—that intervene into the city's foodways as they call into question and probe the city's social ways.

Rirkrit Tiravanija with Ken Dunn and Dan Peterman

Tiravanija (MFA 1986) is a Thai artist whose practice combines object making, public and private performances, teaching, and other forms of public service and social action. He is a recipient of the Hugo Boss Prize by the Guggenheim, New York; Benesse Prize by the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum, Japan; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucelia Artist Award. His retrospective at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam traveled to Paris and London. Tiravanija is on the faculty of the School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York and is a founding member and curator of Utopia Station, a collective project of artists, art historians, and curators as well as the Land Foundation in Chiang Mai, Thailand.



Zebra Thailand stainless steel food carrier.