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**CAN ARTISTS CHANGE SOCIETY? THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO EXPLORES
THE QUESTION IN EXHIBITIONS, PUBLICATIONS, AND PUBLIC FORUMS**

- Chicago offers some real answers to what social art practice can be -

CHICAGO—As the global art market soars, this fall, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) marshals a three-part series of exhibitions, publications, and public forums designed to examine art created for the advancement of community life rather than for the gallery/auction arena.

Entitled *A Lived Practice*, the program series is the largest and most comprehensive ever organized on social practice in art, a contemporary framework for artmaking whose legitimacy continues to be contested both within and outside of the art world. Events begin on Friday, September 19 with the opening of the exhibition *A Proximity of Consciousness: Art and Social Action* in SAIC's Sullivan Galleries (33 South State Street, 7th floor) and continue throughout the season via a series of book releases and public forums convening such thought leaders as author/MacArthur Fellow Lewis Hyde and philosopher/self-professed anarchist Crispin Sartwell, among other distinguished scholars from around the world.

On view through December 20, *A Proximity of Consciousness* taps into a long lineage of artists' activism in Chicago: in newly commissioned works, Jim Duignan, Paul Durica and Heather Radke, Pablo Helguera, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, Dan Peterman, J. Morgan Puett, Michael Rakowitz, Laurie Jo Reynolds, Temporary Services, and Rirkrit Tiravanija use the intellectual and creative history of Chicago as springboard and inspiration.

"In organizing this exhibition, I have been most driven by the objective of expanding knowledge around Chicago's art history and place within the American story," said Mary Jane Jacob, Executive Director of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies and Professor at SAIC. "And this has become a key part of the mission of the Sullivan Galleries as its reach and responsibility stretches out to the city, as well as inward to the campus." Jacob is noted for pioneering site-specific and community-based programs in such landmark exhibitions as *Culture in Action* in Chicago (1992–93), and *Places with a Past* in Charleston, SC (1991).

The Exhibition

Several of the projects in *A Proximity of Consciousness* are grounded in the work of Chicagoans Jane Addams and John Dewey, who took social activism to new heights, focusing, in a large part, on the power of popular education and the transformative role of art. Pablo Helguera's *Addams-Dewey Gymnasium* pays homage to this legacy, enacting curriculum practiced at Dewey's Chicago Laboratory School and Addams's Hull-House through new experiential activities that bring their 19th century ideas into 21st century art and education practices. J. Morgan Puett transposes elements of her home and residency program—Mildred's Lane—into a gallery installation that suggests commonalities between Addams' Hull-House as a life-and-service enterprise and her own present-day shared communal experiment at the intersection of art and life.

Jim Duignan's 14-foot-long Chicago Park District–green seesaw is at once a remnant of the artist's youth and a collaborative product of deep exchanges with elders about their experiences of playgrounds as natural social centers for their communities. His work is also a call to action, offering a contemporary version of Jane Addams's 1905 manifesto, *A Plea for Playgrounds*, which draws connections between poverty, health, and democracy.

History takes curious turns with Paul Durica and Heather Radke's project, *Earth's Choicest Products: A Pocket Guide to Hell Audio Tour*, which offers two alternate listening experiences. One track situates *A Proximity of Consciousness* within the architectural practice of Louis Sullivan, who designed the building housing the Sullivan Galleries as a department store at the turn of 19th century; like the original emporium, *A Pocket Guide to Hell* aims to offer something for everyone. This track also includes interviews with fellow artists. A second strand collects bits and pieces, practices, and memorabilia about Chicago and its socially engaged past that eludes conventional categories.

With Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle's *Seven Thousand Cords (After Beuys)*, a sculptural monument of seven metal frames of split wood, visitors encounter another historical, essential source of social practice, as Manglano-Ovalle acknowledges Beuys as a model and inspiration on the 40th anniversary of the artist's historic, first visit to the U.S. during which he gave performative lecture at SAIC. A work which he created during that time is on view in a corollary exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Current social issues are confronted by other artists. The threatened re-opening of the notorious Tamms supermax prison in southern Illinois is the backdrop to Laurie Jo Reynolds's *Tamms Year Ten Family Room*. Reynolds's installation takes the form of an ongoing meeting space for opponents of the prison, transformed into a living room with furniture, photographs, and memorabilia loaned by family members of men formerly incarcerated in Tamms. Dan Peterman probes urban land use issues with his meditation on Chicago's South Side lakefront formation of Morgan Shoal—a site of historical, ecological, and geological complexity that can inform and deepen the understanding of the lakeside ecosystem. His *Lake Bottom Land Use* project includes public workshops with experts on Lake Michigan biology and ecology; Great Lakes regulatory issues; and ways the public can measure, tax, own, and utilize city space. Temporary Service's *Publishing Clearing House*—a fully functioning print shop—calls attention to the art and activism in Chicago through the on-site production of more than 30 small books produced with visiting artists and groups who are continuing to enact social change.

Lively exchange and imagining change over a meal has often been a mechanism for action and a metaphor for social art. A series of meals and discussions will take place throughout the course of the show at sites across the city as part of Michael Rakowitz's engagement of Chicago's community of Iraqi émigrés and American war veterans. For this exhibition, the artist will fish in the area's rivers, catch carp, and cook *masgouf*, a traditional national Iraqi dish for which carp is the centerpiece. In the Sullivan Galleries, visitors can watch carp swim, while viewing Rakowitz's narratives that crisscross the subject of this so-called invasive species and the American invasion of Iraq.

Another meal-based project brings Rirkrit Tiravanija into collaboration with fellow artists Dan Peterman and Michael Rakowitz, along with Ken Dunn, the recycler/gardener/philosopher/artist, and founder of Chicago's City Farm. Focusing on the topic of our relationship to the city's land and lake, a group of college students from across the city will convene to partake in a lunch of "re-routed" food—otherwise wasted, but made a resource thanks to Dunn's creativity, and the commitment, passion, and activism of the artists.

A subsequent convening of the college student study group, The Chicago Consortium for Art in Society, will focus on incarceration, to be staged at Jane Addams Hull-House Museum Residents' Dining Hall. There the Chicago artist collaborative Lucky Pierre will perform a work from their ongoing series *Final Meals*, in which they serve food requested by prisoners before execution. The SAIC Consortium will also bring together stakeholders and policy makers to participate in this event and engage in conversations about our connection to those out of sight from society at large.

The Chicago Consortium for Art in Society

The Chicago Consortium for Art in Society brings together a select group of 35 exceptional undergraduate and graduate students from the city's seven major public and private universities and colleges to give them an experience no single school can offer.

As Consortium Fellows, these students—with the desire to consider deeply one's life work as both self-satisfying and socially engaged—will enter into direct dialogue with seasoned practitioners who are making personal investments to better the lives of others, and with artists who bring their art and life together in their practice. This program is a unique opportunity for curious and motivated students to work together across institutions and geographical boundaries and among multiple academic disciplines, as they imagine their stake in this future through this shared, co-learning experience.

The consortium partners are Chicago art and social practice leaders representing Columbia College Chicago, DePaul University, Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. They join forces knowing art's essential place in society and its critical role in the world at large, thus for the future their students will need to steward.

The Chicago Consortium for Art in Society is convened by SAIC on the occasion of *A Lived Practice* and in its inaugural year is funded through an SAIC IdeaLab grant.

Adjunct Exhibitions Include:

Joseph Beuys, *Untitled (Sun State)*, 1974

August 8–January 25, 2015

Art Institute of Chicago, Modern Wing, Gallery 293, 111 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

An advocate for the transformative potential of art through what he termed "social sculpture," Joseph Beuys made his first trip to the U.S. in 1974, with the purpose of promoting his Free International University. He spoke at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago during his American tour, where he was met with an enthusiastic reception and a lively exchange. This chalkboard, created during that lecture-performance, maps the connections Beuys perceived between the spiritual, social, and natural worlds. The return of this work to Chicago on the 40th anniversary of the artist's historic trip is presented through collaboration with the Art Institute of Chicago.

Oxherding: A Buddhist Parable

September 2–November 8, 2014

The School of the Art Institute, Sullivan Galleries, 33 S. State St., 7th floor, Chicago

Oxherding is based on the Song-Dynasty Chinese Oxherding Series, a Zen Buddhist parable of self-discovery comprises pictures and verse. The original series was used by Zen masters to guide disciples through successive stages of spiritual training. Departing from this traditional approach, Max Gimblett's ink drawings are abstract "demonstrations" of the text, manifesting his personal vision and spiritual connection to the themes, while Lewis Hyde's multiple English translations of the Chinese poems suggest a range of possible readings, with varying nuances of meaning and tone.

Accompanying Publications Include:

Chicago Social Practice History Series

A four-volume series published by the School of the Art Institute and distributed by the University of Chicago Press: *Art Against the Law*, editor Rebecca Zorach; *Immersive Life Practices*, editor Daniel Tucker; *Institutions and Imaginaries*, editor Stephanie Smith; and *Support Networks*, editor Abigail Satinsky

To be released in fall 2014.

<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/series/SAIC-CSPH.html>

Symposium

A Lived Practice Symposium

November 6–8, 2014

At the Art Institute of Chicago and School of the Art Institute of Chicago

saic.edu/livedpractice

This weekend intensive program seeks to probe the reciprocal relationship of art and life: one can make a life as an artist, but we can all lead a meaningful life of heightened consciousness and awareness. So what can we glean from art practice to cultivate our own life practice? This has been a driving question throughout time and has taken many forms across civilizations. How can we address this question today? What can we learn from artists who are changing our communities and social landscape through their innovative cultural output and through the ways that they live their lives?

In Dialogue

Claire Bishop and Claire Doherty

October 2, 2014

Art Institute of Chicago, Rubloff Auditorium

Sponsorship

A Proximity of Consciousness is made possible through contributions by the Danish Arts Council and Dick Blick Art Materials. It was initiated through a Curatorial Research Fellowship from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

The presentation of Joseph Beuys's *Untitled, (Sun State)* is made possible with generous support by the Goethe-Institut Chicago and the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, and in collaboration with the Art Institute of Chicago.

A Lived Practice symposium is presented with the support of the Goethe-Institut Chicago, Federal Republic of Germany, Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago, Salzburg Global Seminar, and SAIC's Visiting Artists Program.

The *Chicago Social Practice History* publication series is made possible through grants from SAIC's Earl and Brenda Shapiro Center for Research and Collaboration, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation.

Oxherding has been organized for tour by the Gund Gallery at Kenyon College and previously shown there and at the Japan Society, New York, where the exhibition originated.

All programs are made possible in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

The Curators

Mary Jane Jacob is Executive Director of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies and Professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Shifting her workplace from museums to the street, she critically engaged the discourse of public space with landmark exhibitions *Places with a Past* in Charleston, SC, *Conversations at the Castle* in Atlanta, and *Culture in Action* in Chicago—which is the subject of a newly release volume in Afterall Books' *Exhibitions Histories* series. Jacob's study into the nature of the art experience with artists and others has led to the anthologies *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, *Learning Mind: Experience into Art*, and *The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists*. The latter was published by University of Chicago Press, as well as *Chicago Makes Modern: How Creative Minds Changed Society*.

Kate Zeller is a curator in the Department of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. There she has worked in recent years with artists Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho, Kimsooja, and Wolfgang Laib to create site-specific installations for SAIC's Sullivan Galleries, while also directing its MFA shows. Collaborating with the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago, Zeller curated *A Sense of Place*, presented as part of the 54th Venice Biennale's Italian Pavilion. She is assistant editor of *Chicago Makes Modern: How Creative Minds Changed Society* and *The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists*, and is co-series-editor the four-volume series *Chicago Social Practice History*.

About the Sullivan Galleries

The Sullivan Galleries of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) are located in Louis Sullivan's historic masterpiece, the Carson Pirie Scott & Co. building. Exhibitions and public programs feature the work of both acclaimed artists and those new on the scene who work collaboratively with the SAIC community to explore how art functions within society today. As the public arm of SAIC's Department of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies, Sullivan Galleries seek to generate new research around issues, ideas, and professional practices in art and design, while stimulating dialogue among the wider Chicago arts community. In addition to commissioning international artists to create special projects for the galleries, the Department runs an ambitious practicum program in curatorial training for SAIC students.

A Lived Practice follows on two citywide exhibition programs: *Studio Chicago* (2010–11) that led to the publication *The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), and *Living Modern Chicago*, a new look at modernism with the Mies van der Rohe Society at the Illinois Institute of Chicago (2008–10) retraced in *Chicago Makes Modern: How Creative Minds Changed Society* (University of Chicago Press, 2012). It also continues a meditation on the role of the artist in society that was taken up in the 2013 exhibition, *News From Nowhere: Chicago Laboratory*, featuring the works of Korean artists Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho.

Public hours for the Sullivan Galleries are Tuesday–Saturday 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Free admission. For more information on the above programs, visit: saic.edu/livedpractice.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate programs to more than 3,200 students from around the globe. SAIC also provides adults, high school students, and children with the opportunity to flourish in a variety of courses, workshops, certificate programs, and camps through its Continuing Studies program. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC's resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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