

activism

KEEP IT PUBLIC.

intellectual

COLLECTIVE

ACTION

ARCHIVE

political

ATTENTION

collaboration

SEP 6-29
2013
Passage Gallery
SUNY Purchase

RECEPTION:
Sep 11
Passage Gallery
4-6pm

SYMPOSIUM:
Neuberger Museum Study
6-8pm
With **Gregory Sholette,**
W.A.G.E. and **Knifeandfork**

FREE and open to the public

Organized by
Franklin Street Works
and New Media program,
School of Film & Media Studies,
at Purchase College, SUNY.

Introduction

The **Collective Action Archive** is an exhibition consisting of items from a recently created archive that goes by the same name. The videos, zines, posters, books and other materials that form the archive and exhibition were submitted by more than thirty socially and politically active artist collectives between October, 2012 and July, 2013. The call for materials was initiated by the not-for-profit art space, Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT, as one component of their exhibition **Working Alternatives: Breaking Bread, Art Broadcasting, and Collective Action** (October 27, 2012 – January 13, 2013).

That call aimed at an informal survey and gave only loose parameters on types of materials or what kinds of groups could send them. It asked among other things: “What is your collective saying, making, distributing,

performing, provoking, etc.?” Also, rather than imposing a definition on what a “politically and socially active” collective of artists is, the curators accepted materials from any groups that self-identified in this way. The decision to only invite U.S. collectives was largely logistical, taking into account budget and time limitations.

The **Collective Action Archive** was inspired in part by the Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D) archive started by art historian Lucy Lippard along with artist/activist Gregory Sholette and other PAD/D members, including Barbara Moore and Mimi Smith. That collection of materials, now in the MoMA Library collection, was initiated with Lippard’s 1979 call asking political artists for archive materials as part of her Artists Space exhibition **Some British Art from the Left**.

Lippard and PAD/D continued to collect materials throughout the 1980s. The PAD/D Archive includes groups such as ACT UP, Not For Sale, Deep Dish TV, PESTS, and Art Workers Coalition.

With the Purchase College, SUNY, redux of the **Collective Action Archive**, the school’s student gallery provides a generous space that, unlike the Collective Action archive’s first iteration, allows for all of the collectives to be exhibited simultaneously. This gives audiences the opportunity to explore the archive, unpacked from its files and boxes in a shared space, providing an ideal setting for conversations, observations, and discoveries about the strategies, materials, organizational structures, and themes found in socially and politically active artist collectives today.

Essays

CollectiveActionArchive

Brooke Singer, Associate Professor of New Media, New Media Program Coordinator, School of Film & Media Studies, Purchase College, SUNY.

COLLECTIVE

Google the word “collective” and the top result (at least on August 24, 2013) is collective.com – a company about big data science that is passionate and client-centric. Yes, big data is a form of collective, maybe even the most salient today. This collective is the data stream of our digital bits that we offer up hundreds of times a day to feed server banks scattered across the globe. It is not only big in size but, according to collective.com, is also big with ideas, heart and fun.

Try looking for collective.org and it does not appear; it is parked and maybe waiting for the highest bidder.

If you are feeling depressed, turn to Wikipedia.com, a massive collective experiment of a different kind. Here online you-sers everywhere are describing what is important in the world. It has, as many once feared,

replaced the faux brown leather encyclopedia set of my youth. (As a child I started precisely at the beginning and began to memorize the contents of my parents’ encyclopedia. This fixed knowledge, I believed, once digested and retained, would bring me unequivocal intelligence. The first word was aardvark.)

Wikipedia has a different tone. Under the header “collective” there is talk of a group of people sharing, motivated by a common interest or issue. There is this idea of working together – or collaborating – to achieve a common goal. Collectives are not necessarily focused on economic benefit the text goes on to say. The structures are variable. The models are numerous.

The list of collectives in this exhibition reads like band names: fierce pussy, The Pinky Show, Temporary Services, Philly Stake, etc.

No individuals listed, instead there are indications of direct sentiment with a peppering of sass. As the audience we wonder what they are up to, why and how. The items presented in this exhibition share some of the story; they point toward common goals and shared interests among the groups.

ACTION

The world is your studio. You will find it in the video games you play, the person who sits next to you on the bus, the construction of a park bench, the advertisements that frame your emails, the worms in your compost bin. By any media necessary, by any means necessary, get out from where you think you ought to be making art.

A friend recently forwarded a short essay titled "In Praise of Laziness," by the Croatian artist, Mladen Stilinovic. Laziness? What could laziness have to do with action? The essay is a short provocation (please find online to read in its entirety). Here is a sample:

"Laziness is the absence of movement and thought, dumb time - total amnesia. It is also indifference, staring at nothing, non-activity, impotence. It is sheer stupidity, a time of pain, futile concentration. Those virtues of laziness are important factors in art. Knowing about laziness is not enough, it must be practised and perfected. Artists in the West are not lazy and therefore not artists but rather producers of something... Their involvement with matters of no importance, such as production, promotion, gallery system, museum system, competition system (who is first), their preoccupation with objects, all that drives them away from laziness, from art. Just as money is paper, so a gallery is a room."

Action here is dumb time – but a smart move: carving space to do nothing. Action can be non-activity, deciding not to take part. Action can be laziness that is practiced and perfected. Action in the context of this exhibition means creating the life you want to see rather than following a path that has been laid before you. Life hacks are entertaining one-liners, but hacking life is a full-time job.

ARCHIVE

The irony of course is that we have brought ephemera into a room, the gallery, for you to look at, consider and enjoy. We have transformed these collective actions into objects, taking away their lifeline and making them part of the production/promotion/competition system.

We have done this to celebrate this loose grouping of work that is collaborative, issue-based and action-oriented.

We have done this to fuel a conversation about art, ideas and alternative histories.

We have done this because action can look good and should be admired from an aesthetic perspective.

We have done this because when collective action art goes out of fashion, this archive will persist.

We have done this to nourish minds and spirits and incite you to join, continue and claim for your own.

The Collective Action Archive: Virtual Geography

Gina Mischianti, Curatorial Intern,
Collective Action Archive

Within last quarter century, we have steadily built rapidly changing technologies and systems that have most of us scrambling to process the resulting paradigm shifts in human interaction. Systems built around the concepts of physical boundaries and corporeality have been rendered almost completely obsolete in the face of rapid technological advancements. Despite these shifts, we have seen few large-scale changes in the ideology of the world's cultural institutions. One could ask, "Do these reasons include fear, reluctance, confusion, or perhaps, ignorance?" In the face of seeming institutional complacency some groups are studying and tackling the consequential issues emerging in this environment. Compelling models are present in the various artists groups featured in the **Collective Action Archive** exhibition. These collectives explore, examine, and expand the developing mindsets born from technological globalization and virtual landscapes, critically deconstructing the stagnating institutions of a freshly outdated past. The groups encapsulate (either through a direct reaction to the new technological age or forward thinking correspondence), the various conflicts, fears, and hopes created on the cusp of this burgeoning cultural evolution, ranging from the contemplation of physical/non-physical location to the desire for connectivity.

One primary way that the collectives in **Collective Action Archive** contemplate the growing culture of physical limitlessness is by fixating on geography and/or what

it means to be without it. This examination manifests itself in a variety of ways, extending throughout many facets of their work. Looking at neglected geographical locations is a prominent method by which physical location is explored. Groups such as the M12 Collective and Regional Relationships focus heavily on often-ignored rural and/or impoverished areas, as well as man-made, synthetic boundaries. Both collectives deconstruct elitist and regressive misconceptions about these areas created by conventional institutional thought while respecting and upholding unique regional cultures. Examples include M12's project/event called "The Big Feed," an annual gathering that combines the so-called "high-brow" and "cosmopolitan" elements of a contemporary art/architecture fair with those of a "low-brow" and "rustic" cookout festival. This is also seen in Regional Relationships' prominent projects "A Map Without Boundaries" and "Greetings from the Cornbelts," where mail art utilizes information to re-imagine spaces and cultural histories, including the juxtaposition of indigenous narratives kept apart. These projects show the arbitrary and unnecessary nature of regional exclusions and expose the areas' unique local culture to a wider demographic.

Meanwhile, some of the collectives focus on exploring and critically examining the non-corporeal environment of cyberspace. Since the virtual landscape of the Internet is a new invention (and its widespread use by common civilians an even more recent

development), the nature and effects of its full-fledged usage are yet to be determined. Groups such as Second Front and Preemptive Media realize this and, much like explorers of the past, intend to traverse this intangible territory keeping in mind its far-reaching ramifications. Second Front studies and questions the possible expansion of performance art as well as the way we socially interact and “physically” live inside the worldwide web. They do so by utilizing a social media/life simulation program called “Second Life” both to create separate virtual identities of each artist and to stage elaborate, group performances via manipulation and play within the digital space. On the other hand, Preemptive Media is more heavily focused on how the growing landscape of technology affects us in our everyday lives. They educate the public on how big business and government unscrupulously utilize new media for invasive purposes and how to create personal gadgets to help counteract the potentially negative aspects of a technologically advanced world.

Finally, other collectives address slowly developing social shifts due to the changing landscape of technology-based interaction. They have become more focused on creating and fostering a sense of community within localized areas or specific social networks. Not only would many of these artists be unable to carry out their activities without the expanded social capabilities made possible by technology, but they are also using these tools to rethink and reimagine outdated concepts of social individualism. They turn to an Internet-compatible collectivist mindset in which technology enables overlooked or socially marginalized groups to assemble and/or grow stronger through communication. The ways that the collectives within

the **Collective Action Archive** aim to strengthen their target communities vary. Some collectives, such as Just Seeds, take a proactive, social justice/political activist approach to preserving and improving communities. Whereas Philly Stake aims to build a sense of connectivity by creating public events that utilize local agriculture and small businesses. Others, such as National Bitter Melon Council, work to make minority groups and opinions within a community more visible to a mainstream audience, fighting to decrease social hegemony and stagnation within their region.

The artists featured in the **Collective Action Archive** are adapting and building types of networks and artworks designed to fit the environment created by technologically advanced age. While the culture jamming impulses and do-it-yourself aesthetics of Dada, Punk and the Picture Generation continue to influence many of the collectives, they strive to create innovative, and often improvisational, dynamics and paradigms that challenge institutional thinking and eschew the Western art history canon. The non-physical age on the horizon has provided the artists in **Collective Action Archive** the means and the motive to break away from these systems and pursue fresh approaches. As the world changes, these artists are helping to shape what it means to gather, interact and even live within this increasingly virtual culture.

Examining A Collective: Temporary Services

Sandrine Milet, Curatorial Assistant,
Franklin Street Works

Temporary Services is a collective made up of Brett Bloom, Salem Collo-Julin and Marc Fischer. Founded in 1998, it is based in Chicago, Copenhagen and Philadelphia. Born from a desire to provide art as a service for others, Temporary Services was originally an experimental exhibition space in one of Chicago's lower income neighborhoods. They produce exhibitions, events, and projects and are largely known for their vast number of publications. Their main concern is to examine the way in which art is produced and received in society today and to experience art in the places the members inhabit on a daily basis. Temporary Services attempts to decentralize art making and viewing. They experiment and test out ideas without hesitation or permission. They take risks, defy rules, give back, and most importantly, according to the collective, ignore distinctions made between art practice and other creative human endeavors.¹

I first came across Temporary Services while working on the Collective Action thread of the Franklin Street Works exhibition **Working Alternatives: Breaking Bread, Art Broadcasting and Collective Action** in October, 2012. I didn't know much about them at the time, but took a keen interest in their activities since they were partially based in Copenhagen, Denmark, a city that I had studied in for four months. While more thoroughly researching collectives for the second iteration of the project, **Collective Action Archive**

at Purchase College, SUNY, I spent time on the Temporary Services website and read through their submitted archival materials. Immediately, their "Why the Exhibition was Canceled" zine caught my eye; its authenticity, humor and simplicity kept me reading. As a staff member of a not-for-profit, it was also relatable because of my recent experiences of corresponding with artists. Ever since then I have been hooked and have been on a quest to learn more about Temporary Services' strategies, influences and connections to other collectives.

One of Temporary Services' key approaches is to create ephemeral art, hence the word "temporary" in the group's name. **Mobile Sign Systems: A Temporary Public Art Project** (1999) involved the collective asking artists to create mobile signs inspired by those used at gas stations, car washes and food stands. After all of the signs were temporarily displayed in the gallery and viewed together, they were placed anonymously throughout the city of Chicago, in specific or random locations, until the signs were removed, vandalized or stolen. With this project, the collective gives Chicago and its citizens the power to determine whether these works stay in the city and deserve respect, including how long they will remain public art.

This intentional brevity and focus on the city reflects Temporary Services' desire to eliminate competition and to challenge the demands of the art market. The collective

¹ <http://www.temporaryservices.org/contact.html>

explained in a recent Art 21 interview, “The commercial market needs to be abandoned on a massive collective scale and artists need to stop relying on others exploiting them to be the definition of how art is made and received. ... We simply want to support and encourage anyone who finds other ways of putting their art into the world.”² Looking at the rest of the archive, these ideas also permeate fierce pussy’s wheat pasting posters in the streets of New York City and Conflict Kitchen’s temporary menus that focus on food from countries that the United States is in conflict with. Additionally, Second Front’s performances in the avatar world of Second Life not only challenge the notion of performance art in the virtual, but also the materiality of art. Collectives such as these are searching for ways to challenge the institution of art and are creating new models for democratizing art making.

Mobile Sign Systems is not only a look at one of the collective’s many projects that focus on the temporal, but is an example of Temporary Services’ explorations and interventions in public space. **Boston Ravioli** (2003) and **Chicago Ravioli** (2004) examine the ephemeral qualities of public art projects, where “raviolis,” or plastic bags filled with art, were placed around the city as a means to distribute free art to the public. Similarly, **The Window Show** (2005) was a public art project where art was installed on boarded up windows of vacant homes in downtown Baltimore. These public art projects maintain the collective’s desire to broaden the audiences for art and creative practices beyond the museum or gallery setting, making art

accessible to those who wouldn’t normally seek it out. Projects like, Illegal Art’s **Personal Space** or M12 Collective’s **Campito** in the **Collective Action Archive** have similar goals of creating engaging art experiences in the environment while encouraging dialogue, conversation and interaction between community members.

Temporary Services’ fascination with the public sphere is also evident in their many publications. In the **Collective Action Archive**, there is **Public Phenomena: Informal Modifications of Shared Space** (2010), a book that visually archives regional culture in public spaces in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. **Mobile Phenomena** (2012), published by the Temporary Services publishing initiative, Half Letter Press, brings together a selection of images featuring mobile structures such as bookmobiles, traveling art projects, structures created for protests and bar bikes. These mobile phenomena allow ideas and projects to move with ease, while also evoking the idea of “social mobility,” calling into question whether people have the power to alter structures around them to fit their needs. The **Mobile Phenomena** project is reminiscent of Floating Lab Collective, also in the **Collective Action Archive**, who uses a converted taco truck as a mobile museum to circulate art projects among different neighborhoods and regions in Washington, D.C.

Mobile Phenomena became one of four Temporary Services digital archives, which also includes: **Group and Spaces**, **Public Phenomena Archive**, and **Reading Material**. These archives serve as resources for other artists and communities and are a way for the group to distribute ideas to the public. Additionally, Temporary Services has curated

² Donovan, Tom. “Five questions with Temporary Services,” Art 21 blog. October 21, 2010.

exhibitions that are structured with a similar impulse to share information. One such exhibition was **Designated Drivers** (2011) where twenty artists and groups were invited to upload four GB of their archives, videos, images, etc. onto a USB drive that was presented in an exhibition space for audiences to copy onto their own laptops or drives. The booklet of this exhibition can be found in the **Collective Action Archive** and provides an introduction from the twenty participating artists.

While many of their activities revolve around art projects, Temporary Services' main strategy for challenging the demands of the art market is, as their title implies, by providing services to their communities. This approach frees art from the confines of the art market, but also engages in social practice, activism and collaboration. **One-Week Boutique** (2000) was a project that invited visitors to drop by their pop-up boutique for coffee, read their publications, try on donated clothes, and take them home for free. An extension of **One-Week Boutique** was the **Warming Center** (2001), which turned the Temporary Services offices into a space for the public to get warm and take home free clothes. **Epicerie and Portable Store** (1999) and **Library Project** (2001) also instigated and activated, furthering the questioning of education, economics and authority. In the Collective Action Archive there is documentation of the **Supermax Subscriptions** (2008) project, which aimed to provide all of the Tamms supermax prisoners with yearly subscriptions to magazines by exchanging donated unused frequent flyer miles for magazine subscriptions.

While this last project, **Supermax Subscriptions**, resembles a social or political

initiative, it encourages people to think and expand upon their ideas of how art is used and for whom it is meant, reinforcing Temporary Services' goal of ignoring distinctions between art practice and other creative activities. This final point calls attention to the spirit of the **Collective Action Archive** itself, conjuring a list of other collectives seen here, including: National Bitter Melon Council, Guffey Hollow, and Conflict Kitchen. All of these steer away from pure artistic objectives and ask the question, "Is this art?" in a variety of ways. As with Temporary Services, the goals of artist collectives often include the blurring of these distinctions as a challenge to hegemonic ideas of the production and consumption in contemporary art. With this as the backbone of Temporary Service's core mission, the collective questions who and what art serves, using a DIY aesthetic and an openness to shifting meanings and visibility at the hands of the local communities they serve.

For more on Temporary Services see Gregory Sholette's chapter on the collective in **Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture** (Pluto Press, London, 2011), 94 – 115.

Participating Collectives

In Their Own Words

ABC No Rio // New York, NY

ABC No Rio is a collectively-run center for art and activism. We are known internationally as a venue for oppositional culture. ABC No Rio was founded in 1980 by artists committed to political and social engagement, and we retain these values to the present.

We seek to facilitate cross-pollination between artists and activists. ABC No Rio is a place where people share resources and ideas to impact society, culture, and community. We believe that art and activism should be for everyone, not just the professionals, experts, and cognoscenti. Our dream is a cadres of actively aware artists and artfully aware activists.

Our community is defined by a set of shared values and convictions. It is both a local and international community. It is a community committed to social justice, equality, anti-authoritarianism, autonomous action, collective processes, and to nurturing alternative structures and institutions operating on such principles. Our community includes artists and activists whose work promotes critical analysis and an expanded vision of possibility for our lives and the lives of our neighborhoods, cities, and societies. It includes punks who embrace the Do-It-Yourself ethos, express positive outrage, and reject corporate commercialism. It includes nomads, squatters, fringe dwellers, and those among society's disenfranchised who find at ABC No Rio a place to be heard and valued.

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

Artists Against Apartheid // worldwide

Artists Against Apartheid is an international alliance committed to Equal Rights and Justice, and the elimination of apartheid in our world.

<http://www.artistsagainstapartheid.org>

Big Tent // Winston – Salem, NC

To provide young people with a safe place outside of the school structure to talk about the problems and joys of growing up in a multiracial, post-segregation society and to create art that communicates issues of racial identity among peers and to the larger society.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Big-Tent-Transforming-Race/198094470230054?sk=info>

Conflict Kitchen // Pittsburgh, PA

Conflict Kitchen is a take-out restaurant that only serves cuisine from countries with which the United States is in conflict. The food is served out of a take-out style storefront, which rotates identities every 6 months to highlight another country. Each Conflict Kitchen iteration is augmented by events, performances, and discussion about the culture, politics and issues at stake with each country on which we focus. We are currently presenting the third iteration of Conflict Kitchen via COCINA CUBANA, a take-out restaurant that serves homemade Cuban dishes. Developed in collaboration with members of the Cuban community, our food comes packaged in take out boxes sealed with stickers and custom-designed wrappers that include interviews with Cubans both in Cuba and the United

States on subjects ranging from the U.S. economic embargo to Cuba's relationship with other global players.

<http://www.conflictkitchen.org>

fierce pussy // New York, NY

fierce pussy is a collective of queer women artists. Formed in New York City in 1991 through our immersion in AIDS activism during a decade of increasing political mobilization around gay rights, fierce pussy brought lesbian identity and visibility directly into the streets.

Low-tech and low budget, the collective responded to the urgency of those years, using readily available resources: old typewriters, found photographs, our own baby pictures, and the printing supplies and equipment accessible in our day jobs.

Fierce pussy projects included wheat pasting posters on the street, renaming New York City streets after prominent lesbian heroines, re-designing the restroom at the LGBT community center, printing and distributing stickers and t-shirts, a greeting card campaign, a video PSA and more recently, various installations and exhibitions in galleries and museums.

Originally fierce pussy was composed of a fluid and often shifting cadre of dykes including Pam Brandt, Jean Carlomusto, Donna Evans, Alison Froling, and Suzanne Wright. Many other women came to an occasional meeting, and joined in to wheat paste, stencil and sticker. Four of the original

core members —Nancy Brooks Brody, Joy Episalla, Zoe Leonard, and Carrie Yamaoka— continue to work together.

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

Floating Lab Collective // Washington, DC

The Floating Lab Collective is a group of artists working collaboratively on social research through public and media art projects in Washington DC, as well as nationally and internationally. They experiment with the aesthetics of direct action in crafting responses to specific places, communities, issues and circumstances. FLC artists move across visual art, performance, new media, and publications to engage and integrate such social topics as housing, the environment, migration, labor and urban mobility. One of FLC's most important tools is a converted taco truck— a Floating Museum— that circulates projects among different neighborhoods, communities and regions.

Floating Lab Collective was started in 2007 in partnership with Provisions Library, an arts and social change research and development center at George Mason University. To date, over 50 groundbreaking community projects have been produced in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area, New York City, Mexico City, Detroit (MI), Louisville (KY), Medellin (Colombia) and Port of Spain (Trinidad). Through Provisions, FLC has been funded by The Creative Communities Initiative, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, The Virginia Museum, George Mason University and the DC Commission on

the Arts and Humanities.

(<http://floatinglabcollective.com>)

Futurefarmers // San Francisco, CA

Futurefarmers is a group of artists and designers working together since 1995. We are artists, researchers, designers, farmers, scientists, engineers, illustrators, people who know how to sew, cooks and bus drivers with a common interest in creating work that challenges current social, political and economic systems. Our design studio serves as a platform to support art projects, an artist in residency program and our research interests.

<http://futurefarmers.com>

Guerrilla Girls // New York, NY

In 1985, a group of women artists founded the Guerrilla Girls. They assumed the names of dead women artists and wore gorilla masks in public, concealing their identities and focusing on the issues rather than their personalities. Between 1985 and 2000, close to 100 women, working collectively and anonymously, produced posters, billboards, public actions, books and other projects to make feminism funny and fashionable. At the turn of the millennium, three separate and independent incorporated groups formed to bring fake fur and feminism to new frontiers:

Guerrilla Girls, Inc., www.guerrillagirls.com, was established by two founding Guerrilla Girls and other members to continue the use of provocative text, visuals and humor in the service of

feminism and social change. They have written several books and create projects about the art world, film, politics and pop culture. They travel the world, talking about the issues and their experiences as feminist masked avengers, reinventing the “f” word into the 21st century.

www.guerrillagirls.com

Guffey Hollow // Pittsburgh, PA

Guffey Hollow is a semi-regular speak-easy, created autonomously with the intention of creating a situation where handcrafted beverages can be shared privately in unpretentious, convivial surroundings. Drinks are served in mason jars alongside mindful homemade food, both for the tune of a dollar, and candles light the space while a rotation of friends DJ low-key music. Guffey Hollow is named for a settlement of coal-mining Italian anarchists in Western Pennsylvania around the turn of the century, who were run out of town due to anti-anarchist sentiment following the assassination of President William McKinley. Codes of conduct at Guffey are few: be classy, be discreet.

Howling Mob Society // Pittsburgh, PA

Looking out over the burning Strip District from the safety of his office in Pittsburgh’s Union Station, Thomas Alexander Scott must have been humbled. Only days before, as president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Scott famously suggested that impoverished and striking railroad workers be given “a rifle diet for a few days and see

how they like that kind of bread.” Now, with the local Pittsburgh militia all but mutinied and the State Militia rapidly retreating, he must have wondered if his hard-line stance had backfired...

We’re imagining here what the events of July 21st and 22nd, 1877 must have looked like to one of that era’s most prominent robber barons. This approach follows a tradition of reporting history from the point of view of a powerful, moneyed elite. It is the last you’ll see of that perspective here. While the mainstream media—both past and present—frame events in terms of their effect on national economic interests, the Howling Mob investigates history through the experiences of common, working people. The Howling Mob Society (HMS) is a collaboration of artists, activists and historians committed to unearthing stories neglected by mainstream history. HMS brings increased visibility to the radical history of Pittsburgh, PA through grassroots artistic practice. Our current focus is The Great Railroad Strike of 1877, a national uprising that saw some of its most dramatic moments in Pittsburgh.

<http://howlingmobsociety.org>

Illegal Art // New York, NY

Illegal Art was a collective of artists who worked together from the summer of 2001 until the fall of 2011, whose goal was to create interactive, participatory based public art to inspire self-reflection, thought and human connection. Each piece was then presented or distributed in a method in which partici-

pation was simple and encouraged.

<http://illegalart.org/>

Just Seeds // Pittsburgh, PA

Justseeds Artists' Cooperative is a decentralized network of 24 artists committed to making print and design work that reflects a radical social, environmental, and political stance. With members working from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, Justseeds operates both as a unified collaboration of similarly minded printmakers and as a loose collection of creative individuals with unique viewpoints and working methods. We believe in the transformative power of personal expression in concert with collective action. To this end, we produce collective portfolios, contribute graphics to grassroots struggles for justice, work collaboratively both in- and outside the co-op, build large sculptural installations in galleries, and wheatpaste on the streets – all while offering each other daily support as allies and friends.

<http://justseeds.org>

Kitchen Sink // Portland, OR

Kitchen Sink is a series of nomadic multidisciplinary arts events that strive to initiate a dialogue between artists involved in the various realms of creative expression. Visual artists, musicians, filmmakers, performance artists and those that would claim to be none of the above can share their work with the public in one place. These events aim to expose viewers to mediums with which they may have previously been unfamiliar, and to provide artists with

opportunities to network, collaborate and inspire on another.

Knifeandfork // New York, NY & Los Angeles, CA

Knifeandfork, founded by Brian House and Sue Huang while on a coffee break during a figure-drawing class in Sweden, currently operates out of New York and Los Angeles. Knifeandfork projects are concerned with the critical reconfiguration of media structures and contexts. American culture guide Flavorpill says of the collective, “the imaginative bicoastal duo[s] installations utilize unorthodox media, including text messages and video clips, in their expository repositioning of traditional art forms.”

Knifeandfork recently completed a series of non-object-based social engagement projects at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Los Angeles in 2009. Other recent work includes *The Wrench* (2008), which recasts Primo Levi's *The Monkey's Wrench* as an open-ended mobile phone text-message exchange between participants and an artificially intelligent character; *5 'til 12* (2006), a nonlinear interactive installation utilizing a database of video clips to create a near-infinite number of narratives based on the Akira Kurosawa film *Rashomon*; and *Hundekopf* (2005), a location-based narrative project utilizing SMS text-messaging to animate and recontextualize the experience of riding the Berlin Ringbahn. Knifeandfork has exhibited with *Rhizome* at the New Museum for Contemporary Art,

New York; Beall Center for Art + Technology, University of California, Irvine; Loving Berlin Festival, Berlin; and Kulturnuset, Stockholm.

Lucky Pierre // Chicago, IL

Lucky Pierre, founded in 1996 by Michael Thomas and Mary Zerkel, is a collaborative group working in writing, performance, and visual forms. Lucky Pierre creates structures for engagement with various publics. In these forms, we explore complex issues and ideas (political, aesthetic, social) in ways that accommodate a wide range of experience, styles and approaches. The open structure allows collaborators and viewers to define their own participation; helping to create the meaning, and determine the final form and outcome of the work.

www.luckypierre.org

M12 Collective // Denver and Byers, CO

The M12 art collective is organized and operated by a collective of artists and creative professionals and is based in Denver and Byers, Colorado. We also operate a rural field office and land-based project site that is located 2 miles south of the HWY 71 and 36 intersection in Last Chance, Colorado. M12 creates interdisciplinary site-based art works, research projects, and education and outreach programs. Working in the fields of sculpture, architecture, and public art and design, we favor projects that are centered in rural areas and which can be developed through dialogical and collaborative approaches.

Our projects explore community identity and the value of often under-represented rural communities and their surrounding landscapes. We strive to be stewards of effective local and global creative problem solving, and a community resource for evolutionary thinking and innovative communication.

M12 affiliates have worked locally in Colorado and internationally with programs and exhibitions appearing at The 2011 Australian Biennial (SPACED), The Biennial of the Americas, The Center for Land Use Interpretation in Wendover, Utah, The Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture at the University of Tennessee, The Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, The Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art in Boulder, Colorado, The Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, The Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, the Wall House Foundation in Groningen, the Netherlands, and the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, Ireland.

<http://m12studio.org>

Meme Rider Media Team // Anchorage, AK

The Meme Rider Media Team is an international art organization formed in Anchorage, Alaska in 1999 by artists Sarah Lindisfarne, Zephyr Quiettus, Joelle Howald, Isaac Boatright, Nathan Shafer and F. Austin Love. Based on the concept of memes as ridable happenstances.

National Bitter Melon Council // Boston, MA

The National Bitter Melon Council (NBMC) is an organization run by an artist collective that is devoted to the cultivation of a vibrant, diverse commu-

nity through the promotion and distribution of Bitter Melon. Supporting the use of Bitter Melon for its myriad health benefits and culinary possibilities, the NBMC celebrates this underappreciated vegetable through the production of creative and stimulating food-focused projects that highlight the foreignness of Bitter Melon, instigating situations that, through bitterness, create an alternative basis for community. Bitter Melon is a truly unique and bitter ingredient that is not yet well known in the United States. Advocating the appreciation of this vegetable across cultures and cuisines, the NBMC believes that these Bitter Melon focused- events can bring whole communities together through a single shared experience -- that of bitterness.

<http://bittermelon.org/>

Okay Mountain Collective // Austin, TX; Cambridge, MA; Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA

Formed in 2006 and based in Austin, OKAY MOUNTAIN is a collective consisting of ten artists who live and work in Austin, Cambridge, Chicago, and Los Angeles. All exhibit as solo artists as well. Originating as an artist-run alternative gallery space, OKAY MOUNTAIN evolved into an artist collective when its founding members began creating art together outside of the gallery environs. What began as collaborative drawing sessions during weekly staff meetings has since developed into a wide range of collaborative projects across a variety of media, including drawing, video, sound, performance, prints, zines, murals, and large-scale sculptural installations. Their shared

artworks reveal the unique perspective provided by a group dynamic, give emphasis to drawing and the artist's hand, and are always leavened by a sense of humor, whimsy, and larger-than-life Texan spirit. Playing on the conventions and absurdities of contemporary consumer culture and drawing upon pop graphics and styling, their works are scrappy, colorful, and maximal-just like the artists themselves. Most of the artists are graduates of the University of Texas at Austin, others are graduates of University of California Los Angeles, Rhode Island School of Design, and the University of Kansas.

OKAY MOUNTAIN has exhibited at Freight + Volume, NYC, Austin Museum of Art, Galeria Enrique Guerrero in Mexico City, Paragraph in Kansas City, PULSE in Miami, Texas State University in San Marcos, TX and the Creative Research Lab in Austin. Upcoming projects include exhibitions at Prosect 1.5 in New Orleans, Blaffer Art Museum, Houston TX and McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX.

<http://www.okaymountain.com/>

Paper Tiger // New York, NY

Paper Tiger has been creating fun, funky, hard-hitting, investigative, compelling and truly alternative media since 1981! The programs produced at PTTV have inspired media-savvy community productions and activism around the world. Our archive includes shows that provide critical analysis of media, educate about the communications industry and highlight issues that are absent

from mainstream information sources. Through the distribution of our short documentary programs, media literacy/ video production workshops, community screenings and grassroots advocacy, PTTV works to expose and challenge the corporate control of media. Because of the bias and misrepresentation of issues in mainstream media it is critical to include diverse perspectives in the process of making media. PTTV strives to increase awareness of how media can be used to affect social change. A public that can strategically and creatively use the media is necessary for a more equitable and healthy democracy.

Paper Tiger Invites You to Join the Collective. Paper Tiger Television is a creative, nonprofit, volunteer-based artists collective that produces documentaries, studio shows and advocacy shorts. Most collective members are media makers interested in creative, independent, alternative media production. We learn as we go and if nothing else bring enthusiasm!

<http://papertiger.org>

Philly Stake // Philadelphia, PA

Philly Stake is a recurring event celebrating locally sourced food and creative community projects; organized completely by volunteers. We hold events approximately every 3-4 months.

Stake dinners are seasonal meals sourced from local farms and purveyors. At each dinner, project proposals are presented to the diners. Community members pay a sliding scale (\$10-\$20)

donation for dinner and an opportunity to vote for the project they deem most worthy for the funding. These projects aim to contribute to the vitality of Philadelphia in a multitude of innovative ways. Awardees will leave with the dinner proceeds and will present their project at the next meal.

<http://phillystake.org>

Preemptive Media // New York, NY

Preemptive Media is a group of artists, activists and technologists who are making their own style of beta tests, trial runs and impact assessments based on independent research. PM is most interested in emerging policies and technologies because they are contingent and malleable. The criteria and methods of PM programs are different than those run by businesses and government, and, therefore, PM gets different results. PM hopes that their inquiries create new opportunities for public discussion and alternative outcomes in the usually remote and closed world of technology-based research and development.

<http://www.preemptivemedia.net/>

Publication Studio // Portland, OR

We print and bind books on demand, creating original work with artists and writers we admire. We use any means possible to help writers and artists reach a public: physical books; a digital commons (where anyone can read and annotate our books for free); eBooks; and unique social events with our writers and artists in many cities.

We attend to the social life of the book. Publication Studio is a laboratory for publication in its fullest sense — not just the production of books, but the production of a public. This public, which is more than a market, is created through physical production, digital circulation, and social gathering. Together these construct a space of conversation, a public space, which beckons a public into being.

<http://www.publicationstudio.biz/>

Regional Relationships // Chicago, IL

Regional Relationships commissions artists, scholars, writers and activists to create works that investigate the natural, industrial and cultural landscapes of a region. It is a platform to re-imagine the spaces and cultural histories around us. An invitation to join in seeing what we can learn—and learning what we can see—by juxtaposing spaces and narratives that are usually kept apart.

Popular beliefs about human geography are composed of binary oppositions like “urban” and “rural” and “cosmopolitan” and “provincial”. These divisions naturalize synthetic borders and harden political boundaries, obfuscating their cultural function. Applying a regional lens encourages us to think more expansively about the disparate geographies that might exist within the space of one small town or across continents and oceans.

<http://regionalrelationship.org>

Second Front // Italy, London, New York, Victoria, San Francisco, Chicago and St. Johns

Second Front is the first performance art group in the online virtual world of Second Life. Founded in 2006, Second Front quickly grew to its current seven-member troupe – Gazira Babeli (Italy), Yael Gilks (London), Bibbe Hansen (New York), Doug Jarvis (Victoria), Scott Kildall (San Francisco), Patrick Lichty (Chicago) and Liz Solo (St. Johns). Second Front creates score-based performances and interventions that challenge notions of traditional performance, virtual embodiment and the culture of immateriality.

<http://thesecondfront.blogspot.com/>

Students of the African Diaspora // New York, NY

The Students of the African Diaspora (SOAD) were in their second year as an officially recognized group at the New School when I initiated our collaboration. Founded by Akeema Zane and others, it is an active campus organization at The New School. I met a number of former and current members of SOAD at the New School’s Justice Leadership Institute in the fall of 2011 and instantly connected with their visions for how to bring culture, ritual and politics to campus. We discussed Liberation Theology and its historical connection to the Civil Rights movement. I shared my interest in Kabbalistic geometry and a proposal for shifting consciousness which is rooted in justice rather than capital. This inspired and rhizomic conversation birthed SOAD’s Residency at The New Division.

subRosa // Pittsburgh, PA

subRosa is a mutable (cyber)feminist art collective combining art, social activism and politics to explore and critique the intersections of information and bio technologies on women's bodies, lives and work. Since its founding in 1998, subRosa has developed situated, trans-disciplinary, performative, and discursive practices that create open-ended environments where participants engage with objects, texts, digital technologies, and critical learning experiences interacting with each other and the artists. subRosa has performed, exhibited, lectured and published in the USA, Spain, Britain, Holland, Germany, Croatia, Macedonia, Mexico, Canada, Slovenia, and Singapore, and has received many commissions for its work as well as funding from the Creative Capital Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon.

<http://www.cyberfeminism.net>

**Temporary Services // Chicago, IL;
Copenhagen, Denmark; Philadelphia, PA**

Temporary Services is Brett Bloom, Salem Collo-Julin and Marc Fischer. We are based in Chicago, Copenhagen, and Philadelphia. We have existed, with several changes in membership and structure, since 1998. We produce exhibitions, events, projects, and publications. The distinction between art practice and other creative human endeavors is irrelevant to us.

The best way of testing our ideas has been to do them without waiting for per-

mission or invitation. We invent infrastructure or borrow it when necessary. We were not taught this in school. We try different approaches, inspired by others equally frustrated by the systems they inherited, who created their own methods for getting work into the public.

Temporary Services started as an experimental exhibition space in a working class neighborhood of Chicago. Our name directly reflects the desire to provide art as a service to others. It is a way for us to pay attention to the social context in which art is produced and received. Having "Temporary Services" displayed on our window helped us to blend in with the cheap restaurants, dollar stores, currency exchanges, and temporary employment agencies on our street. We were not immediately recognizable as an art space. This was partly to stave off the stereotypical role we might have played in the gentrification of our neighborhood. We weren't interested in making art for sale. Within the boundaries of "what sells," artists often carve out tiny aesthetic niches to protect, peddle, and repeat indefinitely, rather than opening themselves up to new possibilities.

Experiencing art in the places we inhabit on a daily basis remains a critical concern for us. It helps us move art from a privileged experience to one more directly related to how we live our lives. A variety of people should decide how art is seen and interpreted, rather than continuing to strictly rely on those in power. We move in and out of officially sanctioned spaces for art, keeping one

foot in the underground the other in the institution. Staying too long in one or the other isn't healthy. We are interested in art that takes engaging and empowering forms. We collaborate amongst ourselves and with others, even though this may destabilize how people understand our work.

<http://www.temporaryservices.org>

The Pinky Show // Honolulu, HI

Pinky & Bunny are the creators of The Pinky Show (www.PinkyShow.org), the world's only independent super lo-tech radical metaeducational project by cats. They live in the desert near Death Valley, California.

W.A.G.E // New York, NY

Founded in 2008, Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) is a New York-based activist group whose advocacy is currently focused on regulating the payment of artist fees by non-profit art institutions and establishing a sustainable model for best practices between cultural producers and the institutions that contract their labor.

www.wageforwork.com

Work Progress Collective // New York, NY

Work Progress Collective (WPC) is a hybrid identity, equal parts artist, journalist, political activist, archivist, and curious observer. WPC acknowledges the contemporary condition of art making; looking beyond the traditional artistic boundaries that place participants inside or outside, the model con-

siders an active, implicated audience, performing collectively.

In its current incarnation, WPC is a working agency, referential of a modern day Farm Security Administration documentation initiative. The WPC headquarters on Governors Island currently houses its three founders, Erica Leone, Heather M. O'Brien, and Felisia Tandonio; three artists with diverse national, educational, and professional backgrounds who seek to evoke a collective experience, a conduit of curiosity and learning that can be shared with others.

WPC recently participated in 2010 Creative Time/PS1 Open Door Program. During LMCC Swing Space residency the collective has engaged in and observed image-making during the current economic recession, including conducting focus groups, interviews, research outings, and producing cultural data through video, audio, and photographic means. WPC's office headquarters installation on Governors Island will present agency findings and engage participants in dialogue about present day image-making and consumption. Future projects include visual literacy educational platforms and an online journal of findings; two timely grassroots alternatives to formal institutions in the current financial climate.

www.workprogresscollective.org

About the Symposium Panelists:

Gregory Sholette

Gregory Sholette is a New York-based artist, writer and founding member of Political Art Documentation/Distribution (1980-1988) and REPOhistory (1989-2000). His most recent exhibition is *Collectibles: Models, Action Figures, Objects* (8/28-9/4) at Station Independent Projects, NYC, NY, and *Imaginary Archive: Graz, Austria* (9/21-11/2, 2013). The first chapter of his serial sci-fi graphic novel *Double City* appears in the Summer issue of *Frieze*, 201, and his recent books include *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in an Age of Enterprise Culture* (Pluto Press, 2010) and the co-authored book *It's The Political Economy, Stupid* with Oliver Ressler, (Pluto 2013). Sholette is a frequent lecturer and seminar leader in the US and abroad, he teaches at Queens College CUNY where he recently co-founded the Social Practice Queens master's concentration.

W.A.G.E.

Founded in 2008, Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) is a New York-based activist group whose advocacy is currently focused on regulating the payment of artist fees by non-profit art institutions and estab-

lishing a sustainable model for best practices between cultural producers and the institutions that contract their labor. Over the past 5 years they have delivered speeches, made videos, held open meetings, teach-ins, coffee klatches and workshops, wage-raging in panel discussions and symposia at museums, galleries, conferences, festivals, schools, summits, and art fairs. In 2010 they launched the W.A.G.E. Survey, which gathered data from visual and performing artists about their experiences with the payment practices of New York City non-profit arts organizations.

Knifeandfork

Brian House is a co-founder of Knifeandfork with Sue Huang. He is a media artist whose work traverses alternative geographies, experimental music, and a critical data practice. By constructing embodied, participatory systems, he seeks to negotiate between algorithms and the rhythms of everyday life. His work has been shown by MoMA (NYC), MOCA (LA), LACE, Ars Electronica, Eyebeam, Rhizome, Conflux Festival, ISEA, and Issue Project Room, among others, and has been featured in publications including *WIRED*, *TIME*, *The New York Times*, *SPIN*, *Metropolis*, and on Univision Sports. He is currently a doctoral student at Brown University in the Music and the Modern Culture and Media departments and teaches in the Digital + Media program at RISD.

About:

FRANKLIN STREET WORKS

Franklin Street Works is a not-for-profit contemporary art space, café, and social gathering place in Stamford, Connecticut. It produces original on-site and off-site exhibitions, artist projects, and related programming. Located in renovated row houses on Franklin Street, the two-story space includes three galleries and a café. Franklin Street Works embraces innovative art and exhibition practices, a DIY attitude, and a workshop approach to its programming, audiences, and organizational structure. The activities and attitudes of the café reflect and expand on the organization's mission as a contemporary art venue.

THE SCHOOL OF FILM & MEDIA STUDIES AND NEW MEDIA PROGRAM AT PURCHASE COLLEGE, SUNY

The School of Film and Media Studies integrates production and critique of the media that shape contemporary life. The programs that comprise the School of Film and Media Studies offer studies in new media, video art, and production training in filmmaking in a shared core curriculum. Highlighting the growing convergence of media, the school's majors offer rigorous and forward-looking programs that provide students with the professional and critical tools to engage their desired fields of work or study. The New Media program at Purchase College offers an interdisciplinary bachelor's

degree program at the intersection of art, technology, and society. Students study the effects of digital media from multiple perspectives and develop their own voice through hands-on production in courses drawn from the visual and performing arts, computer science, the social sciences, and other liberal arts disciplines.

THE PASSAGE GALLERY

The Passage Gallery is an interdisciplinary media space founded in 2011 on the campus of Purchase College, SUNY. Dedicated to exhibiting work executed by students from all areas of study, The Passage Gallery is committed to continually providing professional grade exhibitions and in a professional quality space. Admission is free and the gallery is open Tuesday through Friday 2:00-6:00 pm during exhibitions.