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WORKS

LOVE ACTION

7 MAY 2017

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ART LOUNGE

Love Action Art Lounge

January 28 - May 7, 2017

Exhibiting Artists: Chloë Bass, Katie Cercone, Go!PushPops, Elisa Garcia de la Huerta, Riley Hooker, House of Ladosha, Carmelle Safdie, Christopher Udemezue, and Laura Weyl. This exhibition also includes a commissioned event by Bruce High Quality Foundation University on March 25th.

Curated by Terri C Smith

“Love Action Art Lounge” is supported by a generous two-year grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and with support from Connecticut Office of the Arts. Special thanks to our in-kind sponsors Design Within Reach, Purdue Pharma, and Rosco.

Mixing in the Supermarket World
Terri C Smith

Love Action Art Lounge features works that are generated from or encourage convivial social scenes, freedom of expression, and interpersonal connectivity. For this exhibition, emerging, New York City based artists have created individual works and installations inspired by underground music clubs, written scores that instruct visitors, and videos that celebrate and world-build but also critique existing sociopolitical systems. One of my goals in working collaboratively with these artists, four of whom were commissioned to make new works, was to create a hang-out vibe that agitates the cultural symbolism and sterile nature of the “white cube” and that highlights the people-positive, aspirational, and transgressive qualities of the work on view. In *Love Action Art Lounge*, the social in contemporary art is approached from several perspectives: with Go!PushPops and House of Ladosha, art is made collaboratively by collectives that formed around social scenes including art schools and music clubs; Chloë Bass uses text and installation to connect gallery goers

with each other; and Carmelle Safdie’s work combines the social act of collaborating, the influence of music, and installation elements such as seating and tables to reestablish the social within the exhibition space.

The idea for *Love Action Art Lounge* came to me last year when I was viewing works submitted to an open call for feminist video art and noticed that many videos were informed by music clubs or similarly communal, even utopic, social scenes. I was especially struck by Carmelle Safdie’s *Discovery of The Shape* video, with its hypnotic groove, its conjuring of idyllic social spaces, and its siting of art production in a small music club. I was also intrigued and mesmerized by Go!PushPops’ freewheeling mix of performance in the public sphere and celebratory, sex-positive smashing of the wall between artist and audience via workshops and direct action with strangers on the street. Seeing these artists’ works sparked my curiosity and inspired further inquiry, which got me

thinking about the collective House of Ladosha, who I have followed for years, and my recent introduction to the work of Chloë Bass during a collaborative project with the Social Practice Queens MFA program.

Of course, the social in art is not a new phenomenon; it harkens back to the early 1900s with DADA, as well as post war collectives and movements such as Situationist International and Fluxus. *Love Action Art Lounge*, however, provides some insights into what the social in art looks like today in the major art hub of New York City, and at a time when, financially, that city has become an increasingly challenging place to live as an artist. Much of the work in this show also reflects the relatively recent—and now potentially threatened—strides in national legislation and general awareness of LGBTQ rights and a resurgence of feminist scholarship and activism in the last decade. Portable computers (in the form of phones) now heavily influence contemporary social interactions, and the work here—from House of Ladosha’s vignettes that satirize dating videos to Chloë Bass’s printed assertion that “We will need each other now more than ever”—reflects the increasing number of public intellectuals and spiritual thinkers who focus on positing solutions for diminished connectivity in our age of screens and often crushing post-recession workloads.

In thinking about past work around the social, I revisited “Happenings” and decided to title this essay using a phrase from artist Allan Kaprow’s “How to Make a Happening,” which was an LP album pressed in 1966 where he describes, not surprisingly, how to make a Happening - a type of participatory performance art he invented in the late 1950s as a project for an experimental music class taught by John Cage. In a booklet of the same year titled “Some Recent Happenings,” Kaprow writes:

A Happening is an assemblage of events performed or perceived in more than one time and place. Its material environments may be constructed, taken over directly from what is available, or altered slightly; just as its activities may be invented or commonplace. A Happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of

rags, and in a friend’s kitchen, either at once or sequentially. If sequentially, time may extend to more than a year. The Happening is performed according to plan but without rehearsal, audience, or repetition. It is art but seems closer to life.

The work in *Love Action Art Lounge*, while fully planted in the moment, is also in conversation with these sorts of historical efforts to dismantle the line between artist and viewer, between performer and audience. Similar to Kaprow’s Happenings this exhibition aims to be as close to life as possible by presenting works that are mixing it up in the supermarket world outside of galleries and museums.

The practices of House of Ladosha and Go!PushPops are impressive in their ability to make work that is “closer to life,” and they do so with tactics ranging from making music to feminist interventions to text works. For House of Ladosha camaraderie and interactions at art school, parties, and clubs inspired them to make music and videos that foreground performance, social and/or media critique, queerness and play. The collective is also engaged in ideas around micro-realities, creating family through “sisterhooding,” and being your own hero. HLD member Neon Christina expands on this idea of being your own hero with text he wrote to accompany his photograph *Blue Mountains and The Stain of William thomas Beckford*, “As the comfortable become a little agitated and the powers that be grip at what they can control—queer, black/ brown, and femme people especially will continue to take on the heaviest weight of this political landscape. More now than ever we have to become the armor of our own protection against the tyranny of hate, capitalism and the police state. Our own imagined superheroes.” *Love Action Art Lounge* features three videos created by House of Ladosha along with two works by individual members commissioned for the show—a takeaway poster by Riley Hooker and a photograph by Christopher Udemezie.

Go!PushPops is self described as “a radical, transnational queer feminist art collective... [that] employs the female body ... in tactical, ideological strategy.” Their practice includes performances in the public sphere, art and movement workshops, parades and other participatory actions that encourage

peace, sustainability, sex-positivity, gender fluidity, and love, while critiquing patriarchy, war, and systems of power. *Love Action Art Lounge* includes videos of the collective’s past performances, textiles used in performances, and photos of the collective taken by Laura Weyl. There are also two videos on view made individually by Go!PushPops members Katie Cercone and Elisa Garcia de la Huerta. As part of the exhibition programming, Go!PushPops will give a hip hop yoga CHAKRA workshop for youth of Stamford in collaboration with UNDAKOVA, which will culminate in a live-action performance as a kinetic sculpture embodying the rainbow of chakras and the celestial serpent of consciousness.

In addition to these collectives, Chloë Bass and Carmelle Safdie work as individual artists who foreground the social in their practices, encouraging visitors to connect socially through real, fictitious, and/or hybrid situations that include prompts and immersive design. Carmelle Safdie’s *Nightlife Design* project navigates from architectural proposals to pop music, imagining idealized spaces for collective audio-visual engagement. This ongoing project was inspired by the artist’s reflection on her communal creative experience as a musician and a desire to establish a utopian space for such social expressivity. In her 2016 music video, *Discovery of The Shape*, she uses interior design—created as part of an artist residency at a New York City bar—as the stage for a fabricated party where her friends perform various roles in a nightclub scene. At Franklin Street Works, the video is installed amidst sculptural lounge furniture, and its original dance track activates a full-scale prototype for a light-up dance floor. Additional components include drawings that sequence through the patterning of dance floor lights and a new series of phosphorescent paintings that translate these sequences into a gridded system weaving throughout the exhibition.

Taking human connectivity from the scale of Safdie’s party to one-on-one situations around food, Chloë Bass’ installation *The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter Six: What is shared, what is offered (Maintenance)* includes a test kitchen installation that directly interfaces with the daily workings of Franklin Street Works’

café. The project is one of several Bass has created to connect people via performance scores and food. “The project,” says Bass, “is designed to question intimacy in one-on-one relationships. The kitchen will serve as a gathering and decompression space in contrast to the more ‘party’ aspects of the exhibition.” *The Book of Everyday Instruction: Chapter Six* includes text prompts printed on café cups, napkins, and compostable wood cutlery that encourage interconnection, safe place making, and solidarity via phrases such as, “We make sense of things by being together,” and words like “consider,” “challenge,” and “collaborate.” For this exhibition, Café customers will pick up their printed cups in the gallery as part of making their order.

While these exhibiting artists approach the social from distinct perspectives and with different goals, they, arguably, share the impulse to encourage audience transformation in a manner that aligns with author Yates McKee’s characterization of Occupy Wall Street as “...a horizontal pedagogical space in which viewers themselves might be prompted to imagine and perhaps eventually enact their own sense of social transformation.” Taken as a whole, my hope is that the ecstatic actions and caring prompts of *Love Action Art Lounge*’s artists cultivate our potential for social transformation and authentic self-expression via imagined spaces, personal expression, and invitations to connect with each other.

PWR / Pulse / Glitter / Gunman
Danilo Machado

Last summer, I went to see the queer punk band PWR BTTM for the first time, holding the hands of a boy. Their music, fluctuating between campy and tender, is about putting the “whole world in drag,” about gender-neutral pronouns; about wanting “a boy to keep the bed warm while [you] shower.” During their set, Liv Bruce and Ben Hopkins commanded the stage with energy and banter, and established their intentions of being a thoroughly queer band and making their shows “safer spaces.” There was a feeling that in that space, our transgressions and vulnerabilities were not just permitted—but celebrated in a way we knew was special, and perhaps singular.

A few weeks later, a gunman took 49 lives during “Latin Night” at the gay club Pulse in Orlando, Florida; marking the largest mass shooting in United States history. Watching the hate crime unfold on the 24-hour news, we were starkly reminded that our deviations still have consequences and that our “safe” spaces are still especially vulnerable.

As an ambiguously brown child that learned English and respectability quickly, I internalized a certain impulse toward assimilation that, among other things, distanced me from my parent’s music. It played in the car on every road trip, but when I eventually began buying CD’s and downloading music, old salsa wasn’t what I reached for. (To this day, my father’s white, American Ford Explorer shuffles his wide catalog of unassimilated music.)

Still, I slowly began seeing the realities of being a person of color in white America; gaining what W. E. B. Du Bois called “double consciousness” and eventually rejecting assimilation. I saw the subtle and explicit ways the system of white supremacy (and, by extension, capitalism, heteronormativity, and the patriarchy) shaped my life and the life of my family, and began gathering language to describe it.

More and more, occupying a space required grappling with (or at least noticing) whiteness—as well as queerness, gender, and class. This

was no different at clubs, which became places where whiteness palpably intersected with the other ways the space was loaded (sexually, economically, politically; among other ways). I became exposed to more LGBTQ folks of color though through traveling for conferences and gatherings. During a few of those trips, I was able to experience not just “theme nights,” but clubs that were specifically LGBTQ Latinx—where they played the same music my father played in the car. In social and organizing spaces, a positionality within heteronormative white supremacy was shared, and did not have to be defended. Especially as I was decolonizing and reclaiming my brownness, these spaces felt fully affirming and powerful. After attending a retreat in Los Angeles to form a national LGBTQ Latinx organization, I often recall the time me and a cute photographer boy both laughed as we stumbled over salsa at a queer Latinx club. I can only imagine that this feeling was what was possible at Pulse during “Latin Night.”

The extended community I built within and outside of these spaces became the only way I was able to grieve and unpack the tragedy in Orlando.

One can construct both the PWR BTTM concert and “Latin Night” at Pulse as temporal, queer spaces—deliberate in both their openness and their otherness. For some, PWR BTTM might have been the first band that reflected their queer experiences and desires. Similarly, “Latin Night” may have been the only space where queer people of color could see themselves reflected and where the soundtrack made them feel at home. In these spaces of queer dancing and singing along, community and resistance was being created.

Clubs, of course, are often at the center of communities and carry a history of resistance—against both tangibles, like shootings and police raids, and intangibles, like gender norms and heteronormativity. Theme nights like the one at Pulse can create singularly affirming experiences for many and can serve as alternatives to the whitewashing of queer spaces. We must continue to foster and protect these spaces, especially since they can be the most vulnerable and vital ones.

For me, these two back-to-back moments last summer represent the spectrum of the queer experience: sometimes, queerness is about energetic moments of glitter and affirmation, but sometimes queerness is about targeting, about mourning.

Since, I’ve seen PWR BTTM twice more, holding the hand of the same boy—a boy who had spent some time in Orlando and had actually been to Pulse—and still holding on to queer possibility.

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Exhibition curator Terri C Smith invited Danilo Machado to contribute this essay for “Love Action Art Lounge” in order to expand on the show’s themes of art, social connection and safe places for personal expression, enriching the exhibition’s interpretive content via his well-informed perspective on the intersections of LGBTQ, immigration issues and cultural production today.

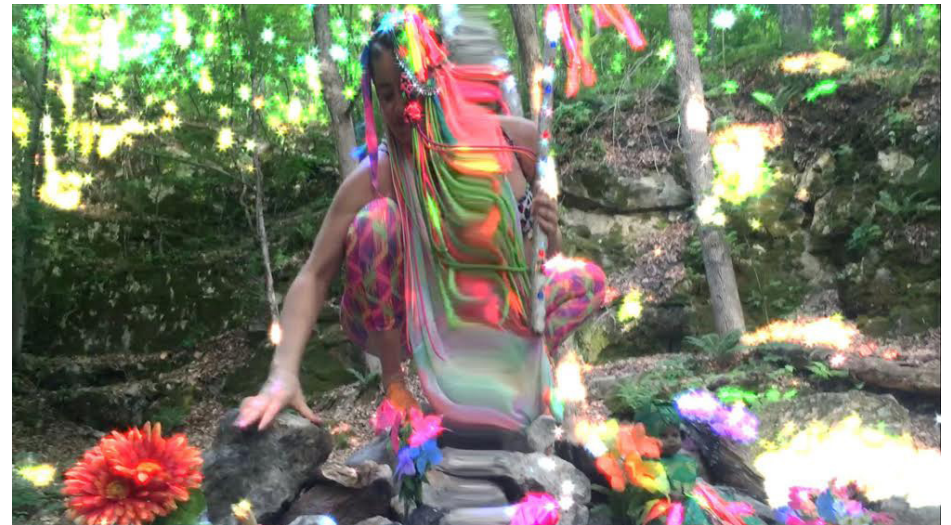
Checklist



Chloë Bass
The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter Six: What is shared, what is offered (Maintenance), 2017
Mixed media installation
Courtesy of the artist



Katie Cercone
RATCHET AMMA'S Ecstatic Birth Blanket, 2016
Fabric assemblage
Courtesy of the artist



Katie Cercone
UNIVERSE NATURALLY DELIVERS MET SKEET BARBIE, 2016
In Collaboration with UNDAKOVA
Digital video
Running time: 6:01
Courtesy of the artist



Go!PushPops
Bad Bitches, 2013
 Digital video
 5:55 min
 In collaboration with Michelle Marie Charles
 at Brooklyn Museum
 Courtesy of the artists



Elisa Garcia de la Huerta
Healing Selk'nam—self discovery, 2013
 Fabric, drawing, and painting on bed sheet
 Courtesy of the artist



Riley Hooker (General Rage Ladasha)
I HATE AMERIKKKA, 2016
 Takeaway poster
 Edition of 500
 Courtesy of House of Ladasha



Elisa Garcia de la Huerta
METAMORPHOSIS: Psylocybe Tampelandia,
 2015 - 2016
 Digital video
 Running time: 15:00
 In collaboration with M1n0mox & Mio P.
 Courtesy of the artist



Go!PushPops
Kawaii Queendom Sakura Power (Tokyo,
 Japan), 2015
 Digital video
 Running time: 28:57
 Courtesy of the artists



House of Ladosha
THIS IS UR BRAIN (chapter 1), 2016
 Digital video
 Courtesy of House of Ladosha



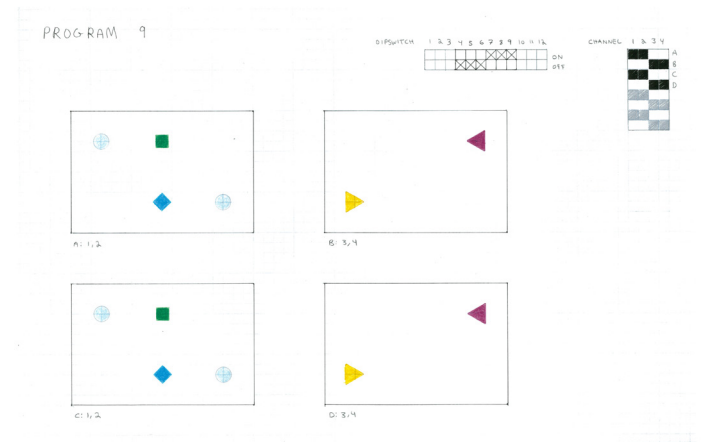
House of Ladosha
THIS IS UR BRAIN (chapter 2), 2016
 Digital video
 Courtesy of House of Ladosha



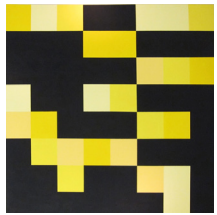
House of Ladosha
THIS IS UR BRAIN (chapter 3), 2016
 Digital video
 Courtesy of House of Ladosha



Carmelle Safdie
 (co-directed with Daniel Fetherston)
Discovery of The Shape, 2016
 HD video
 Running time: 03:16
 Courtesy of the artist

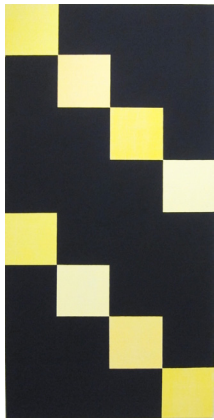


Carmelle Safdie
Map for 16-Program Light-up Shape Floor with ED-15 4-Channel Controller, 2017
 Ink, graphite, and colored pencil on vellum
 15 excerpted pages
 Courtesy of the artist



1

1 Carmelle Safdie
Programs 1-16, detail, 2017
Flashe on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



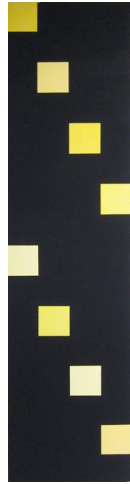
2

2 Carmelle Safdie
Program 1a, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



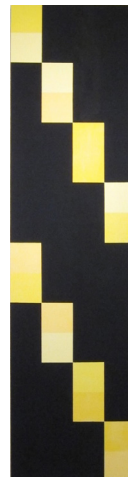
3

3 Carmelle Safdie
Program 4b, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



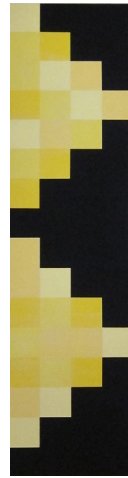
4

4 Carmelle Safdie
Program 11b, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



5

5 Carmelle Safdie
Program 14b, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



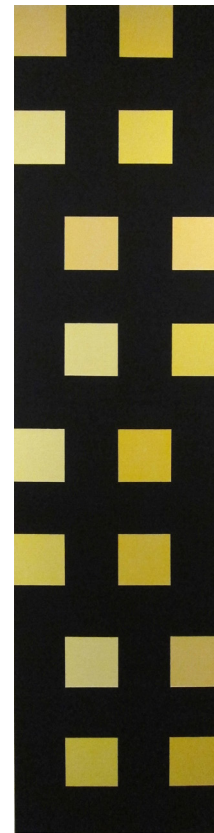
6

6 Carmelle Safdie
Program 1b, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



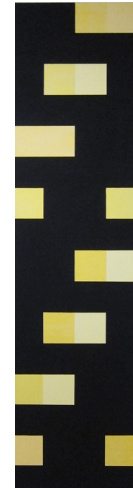
7

7 Carmelle Safdie
Program 4a, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



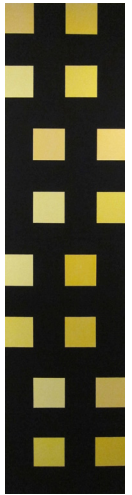
8

8 Carmelle Safdie
Program 6, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



9

9 Carmelle Safdie
Program 8a, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



10

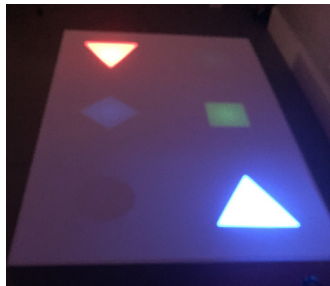
10 Carmelle Safdie
Program 16a, 2017
Flashe, phosphorescent pigment,
and acrylic medium on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



Christopher Udemezue
 (Neon Christina Ladasha)
*Blue Mountains and The Stain of William
 Thomas Beckford, 2016*
 Framed archival digital print
 Courtesy of the Artist



Carmelle Safdie
*Three Views of Model for Room with Steps
 Descending onto Programmable Light-Up
 Shape Floor, 2017*
 Laserprint on paper, mounted onto wall
 Courtesy of the artist



Carmelle Safdie
*Prototype for Programmable Light-up
 Shape Floor, 2017*
 Acrylic, MDF, latex paint, foam core, light
 fixtures, LED lightbulbs, and 4-channel
 controller
 Courtesy of the artist



Carmelle Safdie
Set of Modular Shape Furniture, 2017
 MDF, plywood, pipe, latex paint
 Dimensions variable
 Courtesy of the artist



Laura Weyl
Three Forces, 2016
 C-Print
 Courtesy of the Artist

Artist Biographies

Chloë Bass is a conceptual artist working in performance, situation, publication, and installation. Her current project, *The Book of Everyday Instruction*, is an eight-chapter investigation into one-on-one social interaction. Chloë is a 2017 Workspace resident at the Center for Book Arts, and a 2017 studio resident at Triangle Arts Association. Recent work has been seen at the James Gallery, EFA Project Space, Salisbury University, the Bronx Museum of Art, SPACES, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Flux Factory, and Momenta Art, among others. She is a

regular contributor to *Hyperallergic*. Chloë is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Art Department at Queens College, CUNY. You can learn more about her at chloebass.com; she welcomes correspondence at info@chloebass.com.

— Go!PushPops are a queer, transnational, radical feminist collective under the direction of Elisa Garcia de la Huerta (b. 1983 Santiago, Chile) and Katie Cercone (b. 1984 Santa Rosa, CA). The Push Pops formed in 2010 at the School of Visual Art

where both Cercone and Garcia obtained their MFA in 2011. The Push Pops have shown their interactive multi-media sculptures and performances in free public art festivals and Fine Art galleries throughout the greater metropolitan area including at The Brooklyn Museum, Whitney Museum, Bronx Museum, Czech Center, Maryland Institute College of Art, C24 Gallery, Momenta Art, Apexart, White Box and Grace Exhibition Space. Their work has been featured in *Interview*, *MILK*, *DAZED*, *ART 21*, *Paper*, *Huffington Post*, *Japan Times*, *ArtFagCity*, *Posture*, *Slutist*, *QUARTZ*, *Brooklyn Paper*, *Revolt Magazine*, *BOMBLog*, *ARTNet TV*, *N.Paradoxa*, *Bronx Net TV* and *Catchfire Berlin*. The Push Pops were a 2013 Nominee for the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Visual Arts Award and received a Brooklyn Arts Council Community Arts Fund Grant that same year for their *Warrior Goddess Workshop*. *Go! Push Pops* was awarded the Culture Push Fellowship for Utopian Practice in 2014 and in 2015, were Artist-in-Residence in Manchester, England during *Alexandra Arts' Pankhurst in the Park* series and participated in the J.U.S.F.C. Creative Exchange in Tokyo, Japan.

— The House of Ladosha is a collective exploration of the “house” philosophy popularized by ballroom culture. As a group of like-minded artists, they explore conceptual & social constructs and relate to them via their individual ethnic, racial, sexual and gender identities. The house puts self-expression via social media on the same level as more traditional media including photography, video, painting, music and performance.

— Carmelle Safdie is a New York based artist and musician who has shown her work and performed internationally. In New York City she has exhibited and presented projects at The Queens Museum of Art, Sikkema Jenkins and Co., Soloway Gallery, Momenta Art, Recess, Printed Matter, and MoMA PS1, and performed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as at countless local music venues. Safdie has collaborated with numerous bands and performers for over a decade, releasing multiple LP and EP records. She has been awarded residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, The Shandaken Project, Art Farm, and Andrea Zittel's Wagon

Station Encampment. Features and reviews include *The New York Times*, *Artoforum*, *Art News*, *The New Yorker*, *The Village Voice*, *The New York Observer*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Safdie holds a BFA from Cooper Union and an MFA in Painting from Bard College.

— Laura Weyl is a New York-based photographer, filmmaker, and multi-media artist. Her work explores sexuality, the urban landscape, and analog image manipulations to create visceral, poetic visual worlds. Her work and performances have been exhibited in galleries and event spaces including *Art Basel Miami/ HG Contemporary*, *Georges Berges Gallery*, *Untitled Space*, *Kinfolk 94*, and *Project One* in San Francisco.

The curator would also like to thank: all of the artists who put their talent and time into this project; the entire Franklin Street Works team, especially Executive Director Bonnie Wattles; designer Maura Frana; Lawrence Kaczmarek at Purdue Pharma; Daniel Carpenter at Rosco; lighting designer Gene Lenahan at Second Sight; Francis Carr and LoriBeth Talbot Rick for painting; our intern Tyler Carrillo-Waggoner; Jack Dingas at Tad Day Trucking; and fabricator Joe Kay.