

## Art

# 75+ Artists Take Over Manhattan's 14th Street

The Art in Odd Places outdoor festival is back for its 19th iteration this weekend with a focus on empathy and care.



Rhea Nayyar October 18, 2024



*Hyperallergic* Staff Reporter Rhea Nayyar with artist Lisa Hein's "QUENCH" at Art in Odd Places on 14th Street (photo by Flora Allen, all others Rhea Nayyar/*Hyperallergic*)

In the thick of a variety of free art events in New York City this weekend, it's worth mentioning that one of the most accessible happenings — [Art in Odd Places](#) (AiOP) — is set to span nearly all of 14th Street in Manhattan. In its 19th iteration, the three-day-long public arts festival spearheaded by Ed Woodham places a particular emphasis on care and empathy as it embarks on its annual mission to mindfully integrate visual and performing arts with devoted attendees and unassuming passersby alike.



AiOP 2024 is co-curated by partners Christopher Kaczmarek and Patricia Miranda, both of whom have participated in the festival as artists throughout the years, and includes over 75 artists and collectives who will creatively activate 14th Street during a three-day sweep moving from Avenue A toward the Hudson River. From sculptural and performative interventions to intentionally intimate interactions, the fleet of participants round out this year's theme of 'care' and its nuanced avenues, bringing both body and soul to a word that has been broadly abstracted by the art world.



One of the hoses from Lisa Hein's "QUENCH" was directed at a carved-stone Bible verse that reads "Ho, Every one that thirsteth ..."

"The arts envision the futures that are possible — it's the space where we're most adept as humans to articulate the complexities of life," Kaczmarek told *Hyperallergic* ahead of the festival.

"The need to articulate those complexities in a way that is open and inviting to nuance and conversation is greater right now more than ever," Kaczmarek continued. "We're making sure that the conversations do engage in a way that's deeper than just the environments that are for the arts. Because the arts are for the people, and bringing it to the people and bringing it to the communities is an important way for those conversations of complexity to happen."

A casual glance at the festival's first day lineup indicates that there is plenty of space for this sort of dialogue. The initial stretch of AiOP occupies between Avenue A and Third Avenue, with



various interventions studding the sidewalk and ensnaring passersby. A contemplative introduction was situated right outside the First Avenue L station, taking the form of a regular red carpet with a unique ability to delineate “public” and “private” space by simply sitting on the sidewalk.

Just across the street is Lisa Hein’s “QUENCH,” a haphazardly constructed hand-pump fountain aiming spurts of water into the sky and directly at the carved-stone Bible verse “Ho, every one that thirsteth ...” outside of the Immaculate Conception Church. Hein told *Hyperallergic* that her interest in water is rooted in the resource disparity in California and its excess on the east coast. The rickety assembly is meant to connote the stress and immediacy in treating a leaky roof.

“Passersby have been very enthusiastic,” Hein said, noting that she bore witness to “two fiercely theological conversations” within an hour of setting up.



Theda Sandiford tied branded *NYP*ost bags to one of the shopping carts from the “Emotional Baggage Cart Parade,” saying it was an effort to “turn bad news into good news.”

Half a block down, Theda Sandiford’s “Emotional Baggage Cart Parade,” in its colorful and enthusiastic glory, drew many sets of eyes and eager participants. Comprised of decked-out shopping carts, Sandiford’s parade invites people to “dump their emotional baggage” off their backs as they take the carts for a spin. Participants took the carts for a lap, intriguing an older woman who approached Sandiford’s team to ask more questions about the project.



Theda Sandiford's project entourage was just as festive and enthusiastic as her decorated carts.

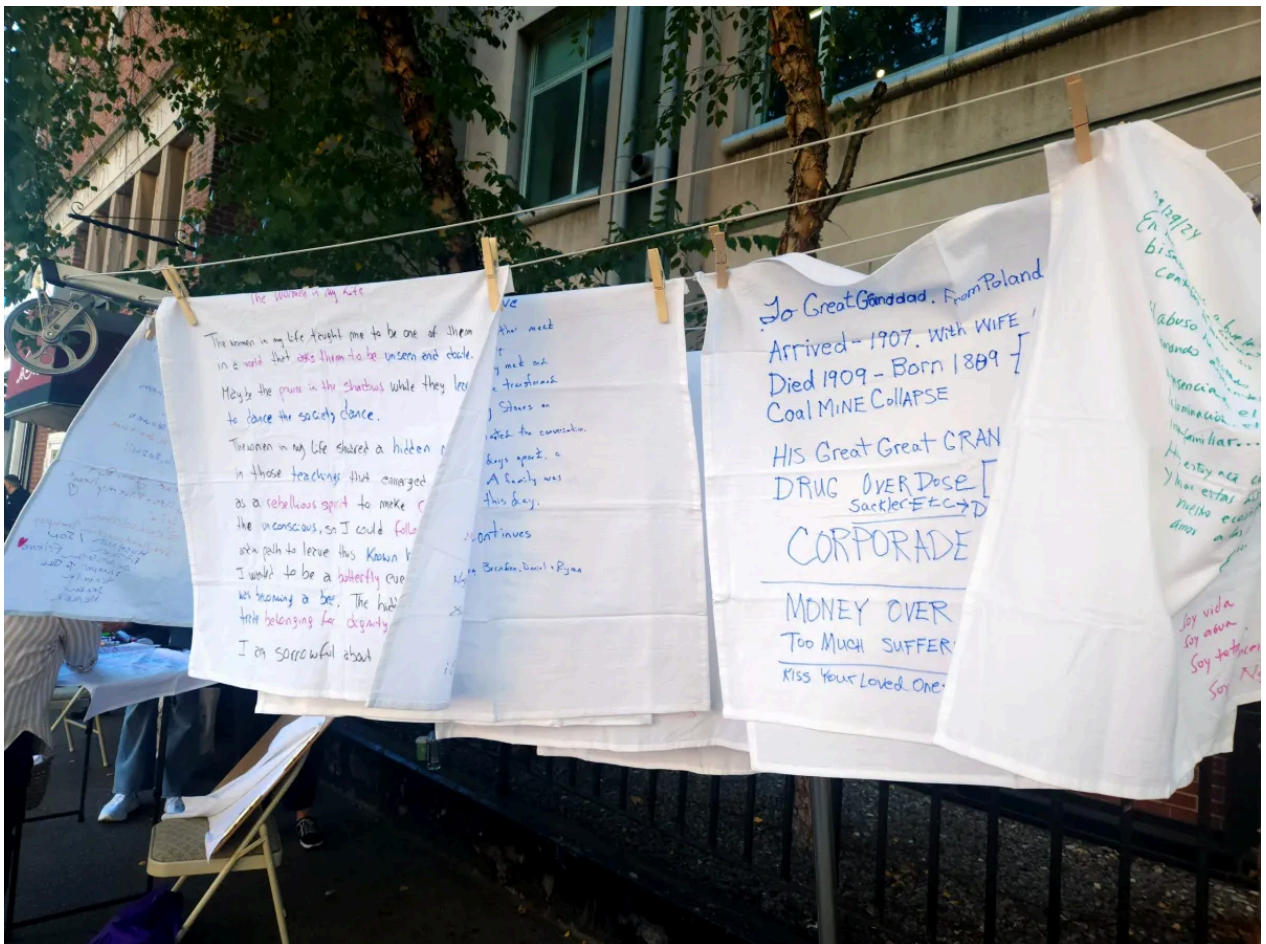
“It’s been amazing,” Sandiford told *Hyperallergic*. “People want to talk and release their baggage. Just now, we had a group of teenagers who spent about 15 minutes with us talking about school, bullying, their families, and whatever else is on their minds. It’s really incredible — I didn’t have that confidence or even the language to describe what I was going through at their age.”

Sandiford also noted that the parade is responsible for “a lot of spontaneous smiles from New Yorkers that are often mean mugging when they’re out and about.”





A woman writes her own story related to grief on the provided fabrics from the collaborative project "Wash!"



Stories that others had already written billowed gently in the shade and breeze on a clothesline. The fabric will be washed together, and the ink from the stories will bleed into each other before the pieces are stitched together.



Just outside the 14th Street Y, Maria Seddio, Pia Tempestini, and the WasherWoman Collective set up “[Wash!](#)” — a collaborative installation in which participants share stories of grief and loss using washable markers on linen. The linens clothes-pinned to a line until Sunday, during which they’ll be washed together so that the ink from each story bleeds into each other. There were at least a dozen stories pinned to the line within two hours of commencing.

The varying experiences of pumping water and pushing carts to writing odes to those we grieve and putting [unsent letters](#) (one scathing, one mourning) offered insights into the different modes and manners in which care can take place, and to whom it is directed.



A detail shot of Scottish artist Deirdre Macleod working on outdated maps through drawing, writing, cutting, pasting, and interacting with the public.

What’s profound is that so many people going about their day stopped to participate alongside those who came specifically for AiOP. For a city where people need to be explicitly told to say something if they see something, it sure looks like a lot of us have a much to say — we just need someone who is willing to ask.

Art in Odd Places takes place from Friday, October 18, through Sunday, October 20, from 10am–6pm. A full lineup of participating artists and collectives, schedules, and locations is available [here](#).