



the book of everyday instruction

chloë bass

the operating system c. 2018





the operating system  
print//document

the book of everyday instruction

ISBN: 978-1-946031-37-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018939195

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the book of everyday instruction







## DEDICATION

To you (and me).







## INTRODUCTION

"The Book of Everyday Instruction" is an eight-chapter project exploring one-on-one social interaction – in other words, pairing. In a search through my inbox to find something else about the early days of this work, I discovered that I had referenced it as an "autistic cookbook project" as early as 2013.

[MORE BACKGROUND INFO.]

What happens with a project that takes too many formats to count is that it begins to feel more and more like life. It is my hope to share the interplay between artistic output that could easily be captured in still images and that which could not. Each chapter relied on all of its elements in order to function. There are moments of the work that are always missing: experiences you didn't share in the past, or souvenirs for memories in the future that haven't been made yet. No matter how much I add to this book, it will never be enough.

Although my work focuses only very partially on the details of my own private life, each of my intimacy investigations is, for me, a form of healing and discovery. Over the course of making The Book of Everyday Instruction, I meant for myself to fall in love – in the romantic way, the one that relates to partnership, and to home. In fact I did fall in love, many times, in ways I could not have predicted or expected.

The premise of this work – and indeed of most of my projects – is that you could do them yourself. I have tried to state clearly that a goal of my work is to get us to live better together. Let this book





serve as an invitation not necessarily to follow the steps of my projects to the letter (too much has been left out for that), but to feel something that reminds you of your own relationships. I leave this document as some intersection of past record, and future souvenir.

In the end, this is all about you.

CHLOË BASS  
Brooklyn, NY  
March 2018





# CHAPTER ONE:

## YOU + ME TOGETHER







## CHAPTER ONE:

### you+me together

#### QUESTION:

How do we know when we're really together?

*The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter One: you + me together* is a chronicle of time spent one-on-one. Cleveland residents were invited to spend an afternoon with me, engaging in an activity that the participant would normally conduct with a regular partner.

The 16 text and photo-diptychs, 107 instant images, and ephemera that compose Chapter One represent time spent with 16 strangers. My participants and I shared activities ranging from dog walks, to beauty salon trips, to cemetery visits. The amount of time we spent together ranged from one to nine hours, and took place at all times of day.

Time spent together is imperfect. There is so much that we miss. Sometimes a great deal that we get wrong. This is one attempt at capture.

#### WHEN:

March - May 2015

#### WHERE:

Cleveland, Ohio

Premiered at SPACES, Cleveland OH  
May 2015

you and me together  
/// 11 ///





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you and me together /// 13 ///





Scenic overlook stop preceding discussion of his mother's final words; 1 minute of looking, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



A detour off the highway, 8 minutes, and/or thank goodness we are both slender people who can slip through this fence; 3 minutes; Cleveland, OH, April 2015.





Two questionable Japanese meals eaten in a mall food court while talking about family dynamics and personal growth; 2 hours (more or less), Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Stopping briefly during a tour of the Morgan Conservatory, bumping up against old wooden shelves (I bruised my knee); 2 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Two activities conducted simultaneously as a form of preparation, the inability to co-exist fully in both: a family dynamic; 14 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.

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A car ride to the lake so that we can do some walking; 20 minutes or less; Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Trotting through Lakewood to avoid waiting too long at the bus stop, turning every few minutes to see if the bus is catching up to us yet; 25 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



A muddy walk, just after almost slipping (and before almost slipping again), as we laugh; time unknown, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.







Brief moments of heat between observation of historic graves, interaction with strangers, time spent in the car; 15 seconds (repeatedly), Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Time spent together in the living room after dinner, answering questions and finishing a bottle of red wine; 52 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Sitting by the lake in the fog, two boys sprawled out at the end of the jetty, a young couple climbing on the rocks, while we talk about not much; 40 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.

you and me together | /// 17 ///





One orange eaten together over the course of three minutes (me) and much longer (her), interrupted by a family visit; 20 minutes in total, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Stopping at the intersection as the sun continues to rise, 30 seconds; Cleveland, OH, April 2015.



Stepping out of the car to catch the picture of a place we didn't go, car's engine still running, cold outside, but sunny; 2 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April 2015.





A beer and a whiskey after an  
excruciating film, still sitting on  
hard seats, talking about love;  
25 minutes, Cleveland, OH, April  
2015.



Inking and pulling and printing  
and placing the papers on the  
floor, on repeat, best achieved  
with four hands and not two; 35  
minutes, Cleveland, OH, April  
2015.

you and me together | /// 19 ///







you and me together | /// 21 ///







you and me together | /// 23 ///





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# CHAPTER TWO:

THINGS  
I'VE SEEN  
PEOPLE  
DO LATELY





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## CHAPTER TWO:

things I've seen people do lately

### QUESTION:

What is the pairing described by voyeurism?

*Things I've seen people do lately* focuses on what it means to be a pair when only one person (the watcher) knows the pairing exists. Described as "part observation-based text installation, part video peephole," the chapter demonstrates the poetics of how people come together accidentally.

Half of the information from this chapter was produced via direct observation of people and situations in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, where I live. The other half was produced via remote observation: watching publicly accessible surveillance livestreams online.

The materials produced for *Things I've seen people do lately* consist of four interconnected parts: a dual-channel video sculpture and associated text-based poster, a collection of 61 screenshots from surveillance livestreams throughout the world, 16 "blank" prints with imaginative text labels, and a participatory voyeurism exercise.

### WHEN:

June - August 2015

### WHERE:

Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn;  
other remote locations  
via the internet

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We know – or think we know – the discomfort of surveillance. At the security line at JFK, the agent sidles up to me: “Are you traveling alone?” “What?” I say. He looks at me again. I go through the scanner, accept a gentle patdown on my hair. The agent squirms through after me. I freeze. He looks at me hard: “No, I just thought you was someone.” Afterward, I notice how much more interesting everyone is when I am by myself. Anyone can become someone for an instant.

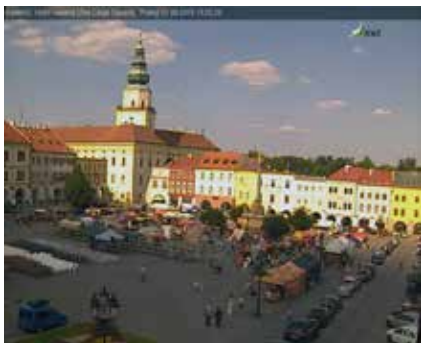
I WANT YOU TO  
LOOK MORE CLOSELY

things I've seen people do lately

/// 29 ///

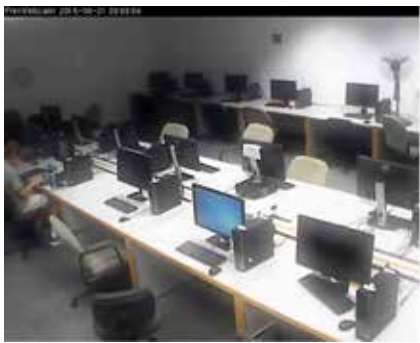






things I've seen people do lately // 31 //









I eavesdrop.

On vacation, seated alone, I learn that the couple at the table next to mine has six children, one of whom is in medical school in California, one of whom didn't come home for Christmas, and that both parents occasionally ride motorcycles.

Did they know I was watching?

I retain this information infrequently. I have no way either to pursue what I forget, or understand what I somehow remember. It comes up like the scattered phrases of foreign languages I've learned, a line of Neruda's poetry:

*desnuda, tu eres tan simple como una de tus manos.*

What drifts up from the records we make every day may be random. The challenge of surveillance is not that it tracks what we have been doing. It's that any story can be created out of the mountains of evidence we inadvertently leave.

I wonder sometimes about my data. Is it more or less than other people's? What stories might it reveal through an accidental archaeology? What stories would it reveal through a deliberate one?

My mouth is crooked. The right side smiles more than the left. Did you notice?

*The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter Two: Things I've seen people do lately*  
Chloë Bass, 2015

things I've seen people do lately | /// 33 ///







things I've seen people do lately

/// 35 ///





Running up the stairs after a young Black boy, an older White woman cries out, "wait! You lost your toothbrush!"

Things I can deduce from riding the train this morning: a lot of people were running a race today.

Vintage midnight blue Chevy truck with the Arkansas plates, I like your style.

Older white man earnestly explaining to younger Asian woman: "We're not Patsies over here."

Grizzled, tough looking man sitting on the front steps of his stop, patiently making a beaded necklace for the kitten at his feet.

Someone outside calling for his father so plaintively, and so loudly, alternating between *dad*, *daddy*, *pop*, just before dawn on a Saturday morning.







things I've seen people do lately

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She tells me she wants to travel.  
She tells me she's joining the  
Peace Corps. She tells me she's  
teaching herself Korean.

Facing the corner of the bridge  
walkway, looking pensive,  
leaning into the surrounding city,  
quietly urinating.

Sad looking people blasting the  
radio and eating peaches in the  
lake's 4 PM sun.

The elderly couple in front of me  
in line at the store, buying only  
half a gallon of Rocky Road and  
a liter of Sauvignon Blanc.

The wholesome looking people  
sitting next to me have switched  
from glasses of milk to pony  
bottles of Smirnoff.

Staring down at her lap, smiling.

things I've seen people do lately

/// 39 ///



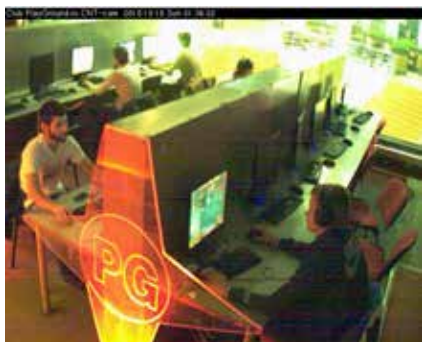
A tiny child watching me apply my mascara on the train. When I catch her staring, she grins at me broadly, then turns to her mother to explain that her art teacher taught her class to shade under the nose and eyes in their portraits *to make it more 3D*.

The guy biking down Lewis Avenue balancing a 6-foot folding table, smoking a cigarette, and talking on his phone, all while not wearing a helmet.

Two classes of preschoolers bopping in the dairy aisle to Pretty Young Thing over the in-store sound system during their Halloween trip to the local supermarket.

A woman doing Bible word searches (one verse per search).





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# CHAPTER THREE:

WE WALK  
THE WORLD  
TWO BY TWO





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## CHAPTER THREE:

We walk the world two by two

### QUESTION:

How do we build a place through  
shared labor over time?

*We walk the world two by two* is a series of four permanently installed cast aluminum historic plaques that document on going two person exchanges along South Elm Street. The project memorializes small moments of personal history from the everyday lives of community members. The goal is to make public otherwise unseen and unremarkable events, highlighting them as an essential element of how we develop place over time.

For *We walk the world two by two*, I interviewed subjects in pairs, allowing the relationship between the subjects, rather than between subject and interviewer, to guide the process of forming and historicizing lived truths along South Elm. Each plaque has a corresponding edited audio interview, which is available both to remote listeners online, and geotagged to the plaque's location for passersby in Greensboro.

### WHEN:

July 2015 - September 2016

### WHERE:

Greensboro, North Carolina

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# LIVINGMAPS *REVIEW*

AUTUMN 2017

LINES OF DESIRE



*The route down South Elm Street.  
Google maps.*

In 2015, I was invited to Greensboro, North Carolina, to do a project along a section of South Elm Street. This work was part of a series commissioned by Elsewhere, a museum and artist residency set inside a former thrift store, which is also on South Elm. Elsewhere's work focuses on the idea of collection. Most artists are invited to make new installations out of the things and materials already housed within the three-storey building. I was asked to do something different - to make a new work out of the stories and people already housed in

the museum's neighbourhood. This made sense to me. Although I have a robust studio practice, I rarely work directly with materials, preferring instead to investigate interactions, engage in social research and utilise familiar, often pre-fabricated structures in poetic ways.

I wound up working with approximately a five-minute walk's worth of South Elm, from the railroad tracks on one end to almost the corner of Gate City Boulevard. But five minutes can mean many things - the shift from a safe place to danger, or the chance to run into a friend. As a New Yorker, I'm trained not to notice. I walk faster than North Carolina's more neighbourly pace. Five minutes in Greensboro can easily be spent between the one step and the next, saying "hey" to the people you encounter.

We walk the world two by two /// 49 ///





*Jerry Leimenstoll with his plaque, permanently installed on the outside of his home on Greensboro's South Elm Street.*

My project *We walk the world two by two* is a series of four cast aluminium historic plaques that document ongoing two-person exchanges along South Elm Street. The project memorialises small moments of personal history from the everyday lives of community members. The goal is to make public otherwise unseen and unremarkable events, highlighting them as an essential element of how we develop place over time.

Greensboro is a particularly interesting place in which to engage with ideas of who makes history. Somewhat further down the road from where I worked, South Elm Street is home to the Civil Rights Museum, set inside the Woolworth's store that housed one of the first integration sit-ins in 1960. The city is rich with history and its documentation, from the transformation of the store to a museum to plaques commemorating the inventor of Vicks VapoRub or a bust of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. marking not a site where he visited, but where he didn't. Passive aggressively, this bust's plaque suggests that if he had made it to Greensboro rather than heading to Memphis perhaps he would not have been shot and killed.

But there's missing history too. Greensboro is an ideal place in which to examine systems of power and their impact on the creation and presentation of history. The city went through a long and detailed Truth and Reconciliation process following an outcry over the public representation of the 1979 Greensboro Massacre.<sup>1</sup> During a peaceful march against the Ku Klux Klan, five protestors were shot and killed by Klan members. When historical signage was put up to commemorate the event, the word "massacre" was considered too strong for public presentation, and ultimately eliminated: a quite literal whitewashing





of the tragedy. Who gets to write history, and how that history can be either manipulated or erased, is an essential question anywhere, but one that seems publicly foundational here.



*From left: the artist, Chloë Bass, Jo Leimenstoll, Jerry Leimenstoll.*

‘We walk the world two by two’ is the third chapter of my ongoing work, *The Book of Everyday Instruction*, which explores one-on-one social interaction. Each chapter of the project focuses on its own idea of pairing, and its own central inquiry question. Chapter three’s central question is, ‘how do we build the story of a place through shared labour over time?’

For this project, I interviewed subjects in pairs, allowing the relationship between the subjects, rather than between subject and interviewer, to guide the process of forming and historicising lived truths along South Elm. There’s a way that two people, especially two people who know each other well, can fact check each other simply through their use of tone and gesture, not to mention their desire to restate what each remembers as ‘the facts.’

With my work, I wanted to emphasize and make public the ways in which daily, unsung labour over time — as much as, or possibly more than, important, change-making moments — turn a place into what it is. The variety of interviews I conducted helped my definitions of labour to widen: from artistic collaborations (George Scheer and Stephanie Sherman), to the work of making a family (Jerry and Jo Leimenstoll), to the maintenance of a business (Mary Wells), to the emotional labour of sharing space as a city-dweller.

Interviewee Walter Jamison, for example, told me about the unwritten rules of being a young black boy in the South — where he could or could not walk,

*We walk the world two by two* /// 51 ///





where his mother was allowed to shop or not shop. There was no moment or story of conflict that he could particularly recall yet these boundaries were real for him and affect him even as an adult. Walter's interview partner, Liz Seymour, clarified his stories by sharing the ways in which she (a white woman) and Walter (a black man) will never have the same experiences walking down the street even now.



*Walter Jamison and Liz Seymour holding Walter's plaque inside Elsewhere, pre-installation.*

While working on the project I classified my own responses to my subjects and their places as a kind of falling in love. Every time I do a project that requires social participation I find myself falling into a wonderful listening place where everyone can be someone. I was in love with each of my interviewees, at least temporarily, and I held them with care in this way. I too was held with care in turn. I joined Walter and Liz as the third (honorary) member of the Greensboro Philosophers' Club. I got to ask people about things that felt like secrets and I got to treat these secrets with honour and care. I am not by nature a joiner. I am an only child. I celebrate the particular prickly state of attention that is produced by being alone in a public space. But as a person who thrives on finding poetry in the familiar there is perhaps nothing more intimately special than being entrusted with someone else's secrets. The best way to collect the material I love is through simple acts of being together.





In the throes of this work, my love began to extend further than my immediate subjects and collaborators. I started to look at everyone, at least for a while, as someone with a fascinating story. In my regular life as a jaded New Yorker it's hard not to view everyone and everything with a sense of scepticism and questioning. I often feel that this is the lens through which I am being regarded as well. But in the midst of a project about history something else happens. Everything comes to seem like a fascinating and essential part of how a place is made.



*George Scheer holding his and Stephanie Sherman's plaque inside Elsewhere, pre-installation.*

At the end of each of my interviews I asked my pairs of participants to tell me what it would mean for them to have a plaque expressing their story embedded into their chosen building. I was delighted that the answers never included a banal expression of gratitude. Instead most participants focused on the idea of permanence. What does it mean to be on the map in this way? How does it feel to visit a record of one's own, now somewhat historicized, daily life? What does it mean if the record lasts longer than you do? Aluminium plaques are guaranteed to survive at least 50 years and Mary, my oldest interview participant, is either 73 or 74 (on the record, she couldn't remember). How will her plaque carry her daily life and work forward into the future?







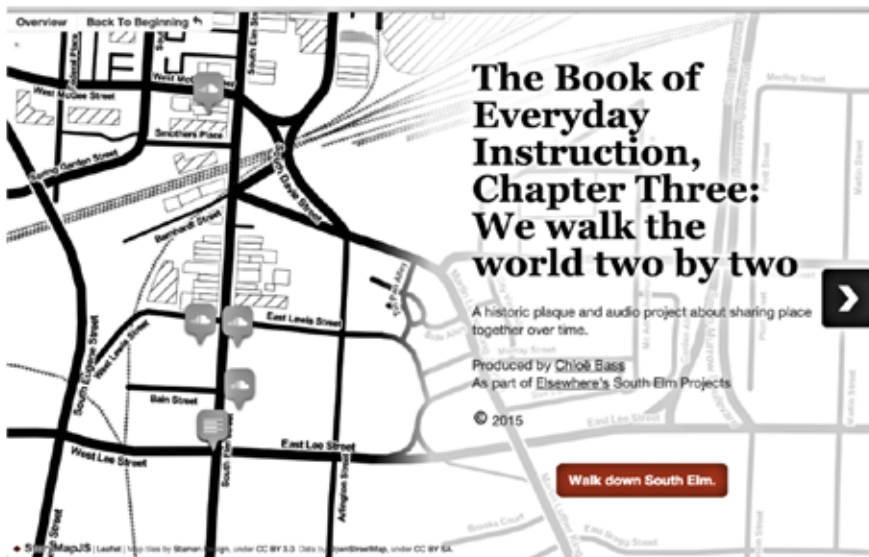
*Mary Wells with her plaque, permanently installed on the outside of her store on Greensboro's South Elm Street.*

It's only a year and a half later. Mary Wells shut down her store this week although her plaque remains. I'm not in love anymore. There are lots of ways to measure time. To call it a five-minute walk misses the point entirely. But isn't labour always something hard-earned that other people can consume in an instant?



*A close-up of Mary Wells' plaque, permanently installed on the outside of her store.*





A screenshot of the *We walk the world two by two* interactive story map, produced using tools by Knight Lab.

## NOTES:

1 Modelled after the Truth and Reconciliation process used in South Africa, the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation process began in 1999, 20 years after the 1979 incident. For further information on the commission, including a detailed timeline of their work, visit <http://www.greensborotrc.org/>

2 This text was originally published in *Living Maps Review No. 3*, in the "Lines of Desire" section co-edited by Blake Morris and Clare Qualmann, in August 2017.



**INTERVIEW WITH MARY WELLS:**

Mary Wells. 607 South Elm Street, Greensboro, North Carolina. I first started in business at this location and the building next door 46 years ago, and seven years ago downsized to just this building. I have been in the antique business that long. Really, I have a love affair with history and old buildings. It truly was a love affair with this part of town. I had no desire to be in any other part of Greensboro. Downtown should be the center of a city community-wise, historic-wise, business-wise. It doesn't always hold true all through the years because of the exodus of department stores from center city out to malls. I have just always wanted to be here.

I used to be in a store up the street to the right of the drugstore. I started there and was there for about two years. Then were able to purchase the building right next door at 603-605. It used to be a feed and seed store. There was a big potbellied stove in there. There was a huge safe because they did not use banks back then. They had to keep their own safe, hope they remembered the right combination every morning. You could see in the backroom where there was a huge hole in the roof where the hay truck would come and drop seed and hay down. Of course, the dust and everything that came with it would come flying all through the store.

Then, this building was a dry cleaning, Wade's Dry Cleaners. You can still see the rods in the next room where all the clothes hangers were pushed all down the line. In the back room there was nothing but plug-ins all along the walls for the washing machines and the dryers.

My daughters grew up down here. Lisa, who is nonverbal, has wandered off up and down the streets way back in the beginning. She's 43 now. She would go down an alley so fast, just exploring, and cross the streets and so forth. I would get phone calls. "Did you know that Lisa is up here at our store?" "No. I didn't know she was up there."

We were always open on Monday nights until 9 o'clock. Got a lot of people, of course, after work. Now we get people who come in on Saturdays and say, "Well, you're never open." We say, "We are always here from 10 to 5 Monday through Saturday, but we get tired and go home at 5 o'clock. You're able to walk downtown and go to eat, but we want to leave downtown and go home."







Truly, the love affair was with the buildings and, of course, the people. There are a lot of people who still run these stores who have been here, not quite as long as I have, but close. We have developed relationships and we care about each other. We watch out for each other. Most of the time I would go on delivers so that I could see where it was going to be placed in somebody's home. It just thrilled me to be able to buy unusual pieces like back bars that would come out of drug stores, and pretty mirrors that came out of dime stores or fancy restuarants.

It's sad to me that we feel like, because we grew up with certain pieces of furniture and things that we had in our homes, that we never care to see again. I think that's like punishing that piece of furniture because it happened to be in a home where the people were not happy. It all comes from people and what their lives, their roots, were. How they have evolved, how they have become happy or not become happy.

To me, I guess, I relate to a piece of furniture as if it were a person because it can speak to me and tell me its history by looking at the back of it, how it was made, how it was hand-planed, how the boards were hand-cut, not by machine. Now, at 73 or 74, whichever one I am, I am beginning to realize that I do have to start letting go of many things that I have collected. You'd be surprised some of the things that people collect. They collect razor blades. They collect the old hand razors. Oh, goodness. They collect Depression glass. They collect different kinds of potteries.

They collect old clothes. I'm dealing with that now because I'm discovering in my warehouse boxes of old clothes. These are 1800s dresses and clothes. They will have turned yellow because of the type of boxes that they were stored in. Do I try to wash them in the bathtub with light Clorox? Then, of course, they all have to be ironed to look pretty before they come in the shop. I'm beyond all that type of work.

The longer I stay in business, the more change I see, the less interest I see in what I want people to be interested in. I'll have parents come in and they'll say, "Don't touch this. Don't touch that." I have to speak up and say, "I understand where you're coming from, and I understand that, yes, things can be broken." In a museum, people are upset because they





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## INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE SCHEER & STEPHANIE SHERMAN

Stephanie Sherman:

My partner in telling this story is George Scheer. We've been friends since 2002 and collaborators since 2003. We've been through, I think, everything that a person can be through together. Love, near death, starting a business, managing people, and I think we want to continue collaborating as long as we live. We'll probably also be best friends as long as we live. Sometimes, those are the same things and sometimes those are not the same things.

George Scheer:

This is my partner and friend, collaborator, muse, Stephanie Sherman, whom I have been friends with since 2002, and collaborating with since 2003. I remember the first time I saw Steph and I remember the first time I met Steph. One was where I dropped a flyer in her lap and the other was when she passed through campus, which was shortly before I dropped the flyer and then we began working as writers together.

Do you remember the smell when we first came in? It's still there. Do you remember ... I have a few things. Do you remember flashlights on the second floor into the room full of toys before they were all brought downstairs? Do you remember the first time you came before we even started? When you and Lauren were first driving down to see? Do you remember a candelabra when sweeping for the ghost story and listening to Ulysses?

Stephanie Sherman:

Yeah, I remember there was a possum in the living room. Do you remember the day that Alex said he was going to go live upstairs for 24 hours? Before we found Elsewhere, we were struggling with all these questions that were about how you just endlessly critique something without making anything and how easy that is and how it would be so much richer and probably more interesting to actually figure out what it would be like to invent the alternatives. Our education was so theoretical, right?

We walk the world two by two /// 59 ///





We never did anything. We just asked questions and asked questions and took things apart and took things apart. At a certain point, you just realize that you've been like a meth addict and everything has been taken apart. Don't you feel like then, that Elsewhere was, "Wait. Here's a way that we could put things back together in a totally different way?"

George Scheer:

It was always within the process of storytelling and there was an early sense of adventure was defined around making the story, seeing the story in the space, and the environment and the things, that confirming the story that we were making. Then the occasional terrors of whether or not you can turn around or change things or whether you actually have any control over what all is happening, right?

Then the insistence even then to be telling stories. Even in those moments where it's like, this is not the story I want end up telling. Like really insistently going back into it. I think that that has shaped a certain kind of mechanics over time, that we've related always to the building.

Stephanie Sherman:

At least for me, a big part, and there's also different dynamics in my family than George's. I dreamt of the sort of generosity that your parents bestowed on your beliefs and also what you were doing. They also knew you were doing a service to a ... Like, at least in part, right? You were dealing with a family legacy and contending with it and that was obviously, we're supporting.

Where I feel like in some ways, that's obviously a little bit more complicated for my parents to be understanding the benefit of supporting that kind of thing, but those generosity, they're not his role. Not everybody has a giant warehouse building sitting around full of things and the time and safety net to spend five years sorting it out.

George Scheer:

I don't remember that you and I have ever really directly talked about it, but your joining my family's narrative, but I don't know at what point that we had always talked about it.





At what point it became visible that the kinds of relationships or the space, what have you. I don't know. That's one thing. Something about that was invisible to us even though we talked about, from the beginning, our role, right?

That was the whole thing, was how do you build ... Part of our thinking about organize wise was always about, how do you build something sustainable within an environment that's going to inevitably change it and help secure some of the character of that place?

Stephanie Sherman:

The building contains yesterday's weather. The temperature inside is yesterday's weather. I just want to put it in there that I think ...

George Scheer:

It's true. Yeah. It is always yesterday's weather. It's only the last bit that will be yesterday's weather, but it always feels like you know it's going to be cold in there today because it's rainy and cold yesterday. Having you present in this way is really important for the history of the organization and of the building. Historicizing your name into it. It's like people sometimes will ask, "When is Steph coming back?" Right? It's like, Steph is gone. She's here, but there's not like a ... You know what I mean? Even though you totally would. But I also think that in terms of the building and how people are coming in and how it will live beyond us, which is I think what the next phase is.

Stephanie Sherman:

Elsewhere has always been about complexifying the idea about what a home is and for me, the idea that I'm coming back is part of that complexity, right? Always coming back. Like, when is the next time I'm going to come back?

George Scheer:

Right.





Stephanie Sherman:

I'm also a nomad. At this point in my life, I really don't feel like I have one home. Greensboro is as much a home as anywhere I can imagine living. It's the place I've lived longer consistently than anywhere else. The idea about having a home somewhere that's a shared home, that you can always return to is pretty exciting, I think, as a concept for what it means to live in a world in which many people are rerouted and leaving for reasons more important than my own. How we live as nomads in the world with shared homes is something that seems pretty, pretty crucial.

The town transforming around us is a moment where our challenges of equity and who is a player in the new evolved Greensboro is incredibly pressing and part of our responsibility. Our challenges are making sure that we pass off the concept in a way that what feels like thousands of people who love it for reasons beyond loving us, that that's actually the reason that keeps it forward. It should be some memorial to what we dreamt of. It should be something that constantly reflects the present as a function of the past and future that have always been folded into the ecosystem that we imagine being called Elsewhere.

Trust isn't built in a month or a year. It's actually like a really hard ... You can go in with an intention to trust, but that's really different than actually trusting. Most times, it's solidified when things go wrong. Everyone has an Elsewhere, right? Their attic, their basement, the couch that they won't throw away for whatever reason. Those are part of our psychology of things.

Maybe they are like symptoms of this bigger condition we have of relating to stuff, but those are also the surplus slippages that made us human in this system that controls us. It's one way that we actually control it or relate to it beyond what it prescribes for us to do. The only thing consistent is that there's a collection of things in a building that is called Elsewhere. That's the idea of being an organization, not a collective or something else, is that ideally, in an organization, that that entity can be passed along.





George Scheer:

I'm looking forward to how it's going to grow and how we'll grow with it and how you and I will grow up together. I think it's going to be great. It's fun to stand at this point and be like, "Okay. Now, we got time to grow up." Even after all these things that we put together and all the fears and things that we've shared. It's fun to remember having stood outside and just be like yelling at the sky about what we hope to see and what we thought could be.

We walk the world two by two /// 63 ///





## INTERVIEW WITH JERRY, JO AND RAMSAY LEIMENSTOLL

Jerry

My real name is Gerald Leimenstoll.

Ramsay

My name's Sarah Ramsay Leimenstoll, but I go by Ramsay, and I grew up here until I went to college.

Jo

And my name is Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll, and Jerry and I got married in 1985, and we decided to buy a downtown building.

We moved in, in August of '87, and we bought it like August of '85, or fall or '85, we got married in May of '85 and then bought it and then did our design work and then hired the contractor. And I think it took them about nine months.

Jerry

Yeah, I'd say nine months.

Jo

I thought it was really important to keep a storefront there. I mean I wanted it to be a part of the street.

Jerry

I can't find a particular single moment for Jo. Who she is is exemplified by this building, I think, and what it is downtown. It's there, under it's own terms, and its own terms are very, very wonderful and very gentle. And I think that would be my comment on that.

Jo

We wanted to be here and our expectation was that downtown would come back and that we wanted to be a part of that. But it certainly was slow in happening when we first lived here. It was just dead. But I remember George's







grandmother, Sylvia, she was a fixture, when we would take the kids she'd often come out to see them in their stroller, and of course she never wanted to sell anything. The thing people associated with South Elm was kind of on Saturday's you could come down and go in the shops, but there wasn't a lot else happening. And then across from what is now Gate City Boulevard, Lee Street, on this corner was a-

Ramsay

Fish market.

Jo

A fish market. And it had a giant billboard that was a mermaid. That was sort of like a, I was trying to tell people where we lived or how to find us, I would say, "Well you know the corner of Lee and Elm, where the mermaid is?" And everybody knew the mermaid and so you turn left there. So when we first moved here, the day labor pick up point was right here on this corner, across the street from us, and on our side, so when it rained, they would come, some of them would huddle inside of our little recessed entry and stuff.

And as Ramsay said, we had a nice rapport with them. They knew we lived here. It took a long time to get them stop urinating behind our building. It was sort of like, "Don't you know we see you?" That's what people thought of with this part of town was you could come pick somebody up to come do work for a day. Or you were going to the fish market, or on Saturday's you could come down to sort of spend the morning looking for antiques. And now, and people thought we were crazy when we bought this building and moved it here, it was like, we couldn't get a bank to give us a mortgage, they were like, "Yeah, we understand you can make the payments, but if you decide you don't want to live there, there is no one else who would, you know." But it was pretty redlined, I would say.

But now, I mean say people think it's hip to live downtown. You know it wasn't like Jerry and I invented that, it just, it hadn't really happened much in Greensboro at that point. So we were ahead of the curve on that. But now, tons of people live downtown and I find that people aren't so suspect. But they're often surprised when they come in here and see the space.

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What resonates for me, continually, is the whole street scape of Elm in this section, because it's got so much charm and character from the period of the buildings and because people weren't investing in it for a long time, the storefronts stayed. It has a different sort of ambience to it and character to the street, that is so far from being generic. It's what to me, is downtown. And there aren't that many cities in North Carolina that still have several blocks of that. So I love that there's all this new energy and new things happening, I cringe every time I see someone make choices about how to alter their storefront or the façade in a way that to me is showing a lack of understanding of the charm it has.

### Ramsay

I think it's really great that there's so much more happening in downtown now. It's especially nice because I can, driving be like my friends when I come home want to go to things that are within walking distance. And I've always felt that people should spend more time downtown. Like growing up, we'd, even my brother and I when we were kids, would like scoff about how terrible like urban sprawl and white flight are for cities, and we're like, "It's just terrible what's happening to the American metropolis" and things like that. We're very glad that we didn't live on the outskirts and have to drive 20 minutes to get anywhere.

But I think a lot of people who are coming downtown now maybe don't, and it's easy to see why, but like if you kind of think that it was really dead before, I mean there were always people making a go of it. Like they had their store, or like there was something that they were really dedicated to and that people would go to constantly, but it was just a smaller group of people. And like there definitely was a dip, like when I was a little kid, Woolworth's was still open as Woolworth's and we'd go there with our babysitters and it was, it closed and was kind of dormant for a while, before it was the Civil Rights Museum.

And so there definitely was like a dip, but there have been stores that have been there the whole time, some of them are still here or some of them have converted or merged or moved and it's not like everything that's good about downtown is new since new people started investing in it





or something. And we're really glad that there is Downtown Greensboro, Incorporated and Action Greensboro and stuff, but there's always been things to do and it's always been worthwhile to spend time down here.

Jo

I mean I remember people would say, "Oh, I've never been downtown." And I would say, "How can you live in Greensboro and you've never been downtown?" It just flabbergasted me.

Jerry

I think the stories are about people and that's what sort of what Ramsay is alluding to as well. I mean, you mention names and you mention places and the people who are here now, some of them were here 28 years ago, some of them are gone. That's just the way history works, I think. People come, people go, and people live, people die, and whatever else. But some of the people, like Bill Brooks, I mean he's been here before we were here. And he's a crazy guy, but he's a genuinely decent person and he knows everybody by name. And he's part of this community. When there was Southside Hardware, where The Artistic is, Southside Hardware was an institution for generations down here. And Jack worked at Southside Hardware his whole life.

Jo

Talk about how people kept asking what happened to us, I mean because Jerry walked our dog.

Ramsay

Four-

Jo

Four times a day.

Ramsay

Four, 45 minute walks, every day.

Speaker 4

Lucky dog.

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Jo

Yeah.

Jerry

For 10 years. And he died when you were-

Ramsay

2010. Summer of 2010.

Jerry

When you were in the last year of college, I guess.

Ramsay

It was when I was in New York before senior year.

Jerry

Yeah. But there, years went by when people would ask me, they'd see me on the street and say, "Where's your dog?" This was three and four years after he had died.

Jo

Well, and all kinds of people. And some of them would just burst into tears when Jerry told them. I mean it was like, he was, Jerry and Watson walking the street, was part of the neighborhood, and it's touching to me, just all the times he's come home and said, well. One time somebody was driving by and pulled over and was like, "Wait, what happened to the dog?"

Jerry

In the last few months here, what's going on now right around here is intense. Very intense. And it's very positive. It's the most I've seen happen in such a short time ever, since we've been here.

Jo

Well, and it's the closest to us. I mean, really things have been happening further away, and now I mean it's, right here.



Ramsay

Yeah, it took a while for things to come south of the rail road tracks. I realize that I'm finally not scared when people are going to like be disappointed and leave downtown. Like whenever Grimsley had their prom at the Empire Room, and I was like, "Oh, people are going to be downtown, I hope that they think it's cool, that they don't have a negative experience and then decide to never come back again." And now, it's like, and it was like The Green Bean, and it was like, "Oh, people my age are coming downtown, are they going to stay?" And now it's like, not, I'm not worried about that.

Jo

You feel like it's turned a corner so they're not, you're not worried whether they'll like it or not.

Ramsay

Yeah. Which is just, I just kind of realized that, that I was always kind of like scared that people weren't never going to come back, after they were like, and I'd be like disappointed-

Jo

Dis your neighborhood.

Ramsay

Or something.

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## INTERVIEW WITH WALTER JAMISON AND LIZ SEYMOUR

Walter Jamison

My name is Walter Jamison. I was born and raised here in Greensboro back in 1958.

Liz Seymour

I'm Liz Seymour, and Walter is a really talented artist.

Walter Jamison

So you say.

Liz Seymour

Walter is a really talented artist. We met over that and kind of just started talking. We've talked about Walter growing up as a black man in the south, and me growing up in a privileged north, white, middle-class, college educated ... Even now our experience of walking down the street is different, and walking into a store is different.

Walter Jamison

Right. Right.

Liz Seymour

That's the sort of thing that you can read in a book, but having somebody be willing to share his experience with me has taught me a lot.

Walter Jamison

Yeah. I know on Elm Street in Greensboro there was Woolworths on one side and the movie theater, the Center Theater and I think it was Kress store-

Liz Seymour

I think that's on the same side as Woolworth's. Yeah.





Walter Jamison

Walter Jamison: I'm trying to remember these things, but there was stores on the left side and stores on the right side, which was Woolworths. During those days, when mom would come to us and say, "Hey, we're going to Woolworths," like that was an exciting time, you know, Woolworths, because black folks were allowed to shop downstairs. We could come upstairs and order food at the counter but we wasn't able to eat there. So we would order our food and go and eat it somewhere else.

Liz Seymour

Even after the sit-ins?

Walter Jamison

No, this was before the sit-ins. Before. Yeah. As soon as you opened the door you could smell the peanuts and popcorn and chips and cookies and everything. I think about it now, I can still smell it. It's, I don't now, a psychological thing, but if I close my eyes and I walk into Woolworths it's like the smell, the sounds and everything in there. It was the best of times, you know, and it was the worst of times. I didn't know much about racism back then, but I knew there was a difference. I knew there was something wrong.

Liz Seymour

I moved to Greensboro in 1979 and when I moved here downtown was just over. All the businesses had moved out. Most of the storefronts were empty. South Elm Street was here, but it was like a movie set with no movie.

I don't have any history with Greensboro when the last time downtown had stuff going on in it, but what was South Elm Street itself like when you were a boy? I know that there was ... There were sort of two Greensboros that were ... I've been told that the railroad bridge on East Market was kind of the entryway from black Greensboro to white Greensboro, but did you spend any time down in this part, South Elm Street?

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Walter Jamison

Elm Street? Yeah. A lot. There was a thrift store and there was ... Blumenthals was a little further down and to the right.

Liz Seymour

Oh, I remember Blumenthals.

Walter Jamison

Yeah.

Liz Seymour

Do you remember ... Do you know the sign that they have that says like if you don't get a receipt you get a carton of cigarettes or something like that? That sign is in the Historical Museum now.

Walter Jamison

Really? Okay. Yeah. Another thing was like all the white folks would shop on one side and the black folks on the other side of the street. I know it's a psychological thing, you know. It was just a thing. Of course Woolworths was on the right. But when we got to come over to Woolworths it was great, or Blumenthals, because it seemed like everybody did their clothing shopping at Blumenthals.

Liz Seymour

You talk about the way that Woolworths smelled. I remember the way Blumenthals smelled.

Walter Jamison

Yeah, that jeans smell. Yeah.

Liz Seymour

Yeah.







Walter Jamison

Believe it or not, it came just right from up the road, Cone Mill,  
which is also closed down now. That was huge.

Liz Seymour

But when you were growing up was downtown ... Did it feel  
like it belonged to you as much as it belonged to everybody  
else, or was that kind of like going-

Walter Jamison

Absolutely not. No. We could go ... We was allowed to go  
certain areas, but if we'd go too far it was like, "What are you  
doing in here?"

Chloë Bass

What was the boundary that you remember?

Walter Jamison

As far as I can remember it was, like I said, as far as Woolworth  
and then back home. Well, actually Sears, because you could  
go to Sears and-

Liz Seymour

So not south at all? Because Woolworths is just barely on  
South Elm Street, so no further south? Well, Blumenthals.

Walter Jamison

Blumenthals, yeah. Remember that little red building in the  
center of the railroad track, or right next to the railroad track?

Liz Seymour

Yeah.

Walter Jamison

Yeah.

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Liz Seymour

That saloon-

Walter Jamison

Yeah, somewhere along in there.

Liz Seymour

... Was where you couldn't go any further?

Walter Jamison

Yeah.

Liz Seymour

So you knew that Forbes was down there but you also knew you couldn't go?

Walter Jamison

Right.

Liz Seymour

So where would you go for a soda?

Walter Jamison

Woolworths. Yeah. Soda, popcorn and chips. It was great because you wouldn't ... Today you get like a bag of chips, you know, you might have this much air and this much in chips, where back then chips came in a paper sack. This may sound weird, but it was exciting to see a greasy sack. You walk in and you're eating greasy chips, but it was okay. This was a big bag of chips and it was filled up all the way to the top for maybe a quarter to 75 cents. It was wonderful.

Liz Seymour

I wonder if it had to do with stores like Fordham's were locally owned? Woolworths was a national chain. I wonder





if people felt more comfortable. Even if Woolworths had that history, but I think part of the reasons that the sit-ins were there rather than at Fordham's was because they could have a national impact.

Walter Jamison

Right. Right.

Liz Seymour

But I wonder if your mother, for instance, felt more comfortable at a place like Woolworths than a place that was locally owned?

Walter Jamison

My mother was really passive. That's why I blame some of my passiveness, from her, because she always would say, "You obey the rules," so I can't be mean to the white folks, white persons, like my friends were. They were out there with like irate ... They was able to speak out, "I hate you," boxing back and forth. Whereas me, I was like my mom said this is bad. We was church going folks. Okay, let me be humble. God is listening.

I never went to jail for something I thought was right. I always went to jail for what I knew was wrong. That's a big difference right there. I never stood up for righteousness so to speak.

Liz Seymour

Well, you have, but you just haven't gone to jail for it.

Walter Jamison

Right. Exactly. But I have went to jail for things that I've done wrong and knew they were wrong.

Liz Seymour

Can I ask what you went to jail for in Greensboro?

Walter Jamison

There was a lot of fights, you know. Stealing.

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Liz Seymour

Was this when you were in high school?

Walter Jamison

No. I'd say before high school, maybe early parts of junior high. I didn't stay much in jail, but maybe a day or a half a day. I'd cry my eyes out until mom come and get me, that type of thing. "I should leave you in there." No, no.

Liz Seymour

I'm kind of attracted to the idea of historical markers of essentially what wasn't there, right? That invisible line that was never drawn.

Walter Jamison

Yeah.

Liz Seymour

It was never ... It wasn't painted in the street, but that everybody knew was there, and that now young people won't know that that invisible line was there because it's never been memorialized.

Walter Jamison

Right. Right.

Liz Seymour

The majority of Americans were born after the Civil Rights Movement, so your experience is growing more and more unique. Places where there was a sit-in do get memorialized, but places where people were just leading their daily lives, following the rules that everybody acknowledged and nobody ... But were never written down anywhere, I think those need to be memorialized also.





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# CHAPTER FOUR:

IT'S AMAZING  
WE DON'T HAVE  
MORE FIGHTS





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## CHAPTER FOUR:

It's amazing we don't have more fights

### QUESTION:

What is the story told by the distance  
between two bodies in space?

*It's amazing we don't have more fights* is focused on the accidental and incidental choreographies created by engaging with other bodies in space. This chapter uses the sociological field of proxemics to investigate forms of storytelling. The chapter's title paraphrases a quote from my mother about successful social behavior on New York's subways and buses.

Chapter Four consists of two short publications: *A Glossary of Proximity Verbs* (Appendix A: Personal), and *A Field Guide to Museum Intimacy* (Appendix B: Pedagogical), as well as a workshop performance, a series of short films, and a text installation in a shared, multi-stall unisex bathroom.

### WHEN:

February - May 2016

### WHERE:

New York, NY

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## **A GLOSSARY OF PROXIMITY VERBS**

The Book of Everyday Instruction

Chapter Four:

*It's amazing we don't have more fights*

(Appendix A: Personal)

it's amazing we don't have more fights  
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I am writing a glossary of proximity verbs,  
and dedicating it to you. Perhaps this is what  
you meant when you said I'm less careful  
than you are. It's true; I have less at risk.  
By which I mean: all of my mistakes are my  
own, and yours belong to other people, too.

**Any experience can become  
a kind of definition.**





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## FOLLOW

A few weeks ago you gave me a granola bar, which I found smushed at the bottom of my bag today and ate. Salt. Peanuts. Coconut. Every calorie warming me up against the chill of the day, the boredom of sitting still. You are fat, and pushy with food. You told me how you used to chase your children around with a spoon: *taste this. It's good.* I might have imagined the spoon. This morning you brought me eggs and toast, tiny tomatoes, soft little lettuces. I ate them too late, after we fucked, instead of right when I woke up, the way you had imagined. You have a problem with food; too much has challenged your body. I have a problem with you; the symptoms are somewhat the same. You urge me to see the doctor, get my bloodwork done. *I know it will be outstanding,* you tell me, but this is after we have agreed outstanding is a grade that doesn't really exist.

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## SETTLE

Eventually you can settle into anything, even sound. Beds, soft and warm. Patterns, if there's time to develop them. Anxieties, if they're constant.

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## ENTANGLE

The first time I saw you, I was sick in bed with cramps, or maybe feverish. You had been dining in the lower apartment, and met my then-lover on the front steps. The two of you exchanged the greetings of dear friends; we were all so entangled already.

The child at the top of the stairs watching the party below believes she can't be seen. It's a special space of invisibility, like cats have. But a moment later your round face and his dark head turned upwards, towards my window, and I startled back, maybe yelped. Hot faced. Unwilling to come down. I didn't even wave.

## PROTECT

You ask me if I have any archives. You mean the accidental ones, the collections we don't know we're making, or perhaps the purchase of other people's collections. I think of the suitcases of photos in Istanbul that served as slippery beds for sleepy cats hungry for sun. Where the light would fade the image, perhaps the fur protects. I never wanted one photo, I wanted all of them, and the suitcase, and the cat, and the sun to come with it, too. I tell you I don't have any archives, not even the accidental ones, and I think this has something to do with my thoughts about boundaries.





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## SACRIFICE

You sacrificed your socks the day you fixed the leak under my kitchen sink. I washed them and I wear them now. It is not until the second time I put them on that I notice your embroidered initial resting over the big toe on each of my feet. Seeing this, all the ideas that I've constructed around your life start to crumble. Such a tiny thing to teach me I know nothing.

---

## LOSE

*You're not very good at telling me what you want, you say, and I say if I ask for one thing, I might ask for everything, and we both know that won't work. I think: how can you have lived this long without realizing that the second desire is uttered, the utterer runs the risk of losing everything. That naming is in fact a form of theft. For the mother, birth is not a celebration, but the beginning of a lifetime of loss.*

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In the bathroom, I tell Tamar that I have boundary issues. I mean this in the context of saying no. Although what is a boundary if not a certain type of refusal. This is where I end, in the context of you asking for things. This is where you end, too. An inquiry with unmet desire turns a question into a statement, and the questioner into a kind of thud. If we both agree that it's an ending, maybe it won't feel so bad. Then we can walk away.

There's so much we learn as we share a private space. At what point does overhearing become a form of engagement? I've finished people's songs in the bathroom — where someone is in there, and I don't think they realize someone else is in there, and they start to sing a pop song, and I finish it. Not the entire song, but the chorus.

In the bathroom, Trokon tells me that this is the first time he's been in this unisex space with a woman and felt comfortable. "I guess that means we're friends now," I suggest, and he agrees. The moment quickly passes, but I don't forget it.

At one point in high school, my friend and I were talking about how we wanted to get some Adderall after school. We were in a rebellious time in our lives. We walked out of the stall, and my teacher was right there. She wound up calling my parents to the school, and having a whole

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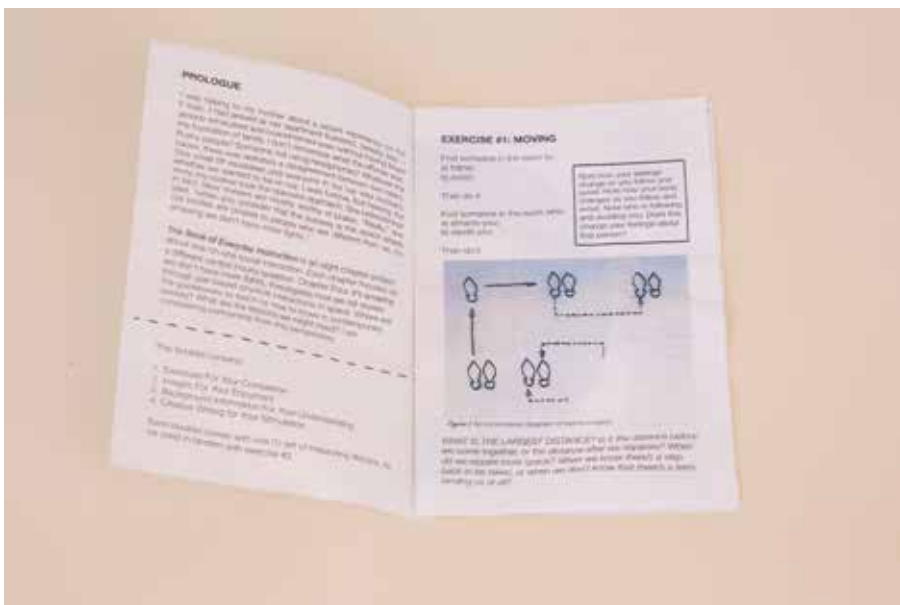
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protect & preserve /// 125 ///





## CON CHRISTESON, COMMUNITY & PUBLIC ARTIST



Safety is never having to say you're sorry. So if you're allowed to say things, do things, make mistakes, take risks, and you do it in a way that you think is ethical, responsible, legal, moral, whatever, and other people accept it even if they don't like it, you can be safe. And that implies responsibility on both sides, I think. Because if you're going to be safe, you have responsibility for others to help them feel safe. How you see yourself, how you see others, how you see others seeing you, and if you want to go one step further, how you see others seeing you see them. If you can slow yourself down long enough to go through that process, everyone can be safe, I think.

## CARL PHILLIPS, POET & PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH



More than safety, sometimes people just don't want to encounter anything that reminds them that their fantasy of the world is not true.





Safety for St. Louis is unity. And that's the only word that popped into my mind: unity. As they say, a house divided can't stand. And the sooner people realize that we're all in the same situation — granted, Black people are getting the blunt end, and have been for some time — but there are also other people of color and even Whites who still struggle under the same oppressive system. So I think a safe space for us is unity. If you look at these branches, if I took one branch, you could

NYKIA, DANCE TEAM MEMBER, 13 YEARS OLD



I think safety in St. Louis isn't violence. They think violence can solve every single issue. They think guns, or hand violence, or verbal violence, that any type of violence, any weapon or physical violence, they think that can fix everything. But really it can't, because the impact — it will create more violence later on in life.



## RANDY VINES, CO-CREATOR of STL STYLE



Safety is subjective. We're so accustomed to defending the city, and it just depends on where you're from, or your frame of reference.

## DANIELLE McCOY, HALF OF WORK PLAY



As far as St. Louis, I don't know if people realize how much mental trauma we've been going through lately, for years. For decades. For generations. Even just talking and listening to stories from my grandparents, my great-grandparents, they don't want to talk about the past. I love stories. When I read a story about my people, and it's something really traumatic, it breaks my soul. People realize the trauma that they're putting other people through, with videos and articles and tweets and Facebook so readily in front of us, and it kind of screws us up inside. I cry. Water I look at as a purification. When I feel like I'm in water, I feel purified.







## DE NICHOLS, WOMAN



I often do not feel safe. And I think part of that is because I am an activist and an organizer. I am a queer woman. I am a young queer woman of color. It's the quadruple minority status that makes me afraid in a city like this that is experiencing so much tension and so much division. The fact that we sometimes can't see the intersectionality of our own struggles makes me feel unsafe because I live in those intersections.

## GAITOR REDD



If the patrolmen are subtle, not so much of a jerk, to where they are causing harassment rather than peace and surveillance, this would in turn make their district feel more safe. The district and the neighborhood would know that if there's a concern between neighbor and neighbor, or someone out of the neighborhood, that this offer would address the issue with a teacher's hand, with a father's hand, more so than with an officer's hand, which could possibly be seen as a threat for gaining or obtaining authority in the wrong manner.





EUGENE BENJAMIN REDMOND, POET LAUREATE OF  
EAST ST. LOUIS SINCE 1976



The definition of safety has to change. If you're not safe, you're not safe. If I'm not safe, you're not safe.

KEN FLEISCHMAN, BORN AND RAISED IN ST. LOUIS



How would safety happen? We need some leadership, and I'm not seeing it at the national level in our politics — the presidential race. I don't know where it's going to come from, but there's a part of my soul that's saying, it's got to be grassroots. It's got to take people like you, and me, and other people to try to come together to do something profound. And this time around I feel like the issues are really complex. So. We need leadership, and right now we're kind of, as a nation, very divided, and floundering. I have to figure out what can I do about something like this. And obviously it starts simply, but something bigger needs to happen. I hope people start to try to find love and start the conversation.





JOY SOUTHERLAND, 8TH GRADER



I would write to my little cousin about safety. I would tell her if anyone puts hands on her, or if she is going to do something not safe, she needs to talk to somebody. Before she does something unsafe or really bad. Because she doesn't know what the other person might do back to her.

**NANCY MORROW-HOWELL, PROFESSOR OF GERONTOLOGY,  
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK.**



I did focus groups with older adults who lived in Ferguson and surrounding areas about a year after the incident with the shooting of Michael Brown. And they were still feeling not safe. The African-American folks had a very long and engrained fear about the police, but they had developed a new fear about police non-intervention. Older adults, White folks and Black folks, witnessed where they thought the police in an older day, in a previous time, would have stepped in and intervened, but there was some more restraint, there was some more not being clear how to be involved — so they were afraid of the police, and they were afraid of not the police, if you know what I mean.

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## CHRISTINA "STEENZ" STEWART, LIBRARIAN & COMIC ARTIST



Find someone that you know is going to have your back no matter what happens. Someone that you know you can be safe with, rather than someone that someone else says you can be safe with. A designated safety area is different than someone that you personally know will help you.

## JEFF VINES, CO-CREATOR OF STL STYLE



For me, getting out of my comfort zone actually makes me feel more safe, and more a part of the city. So I tend to explore areas that I'm not as familiar with, and change up my commutes. It makes you realize what a big city St. Louis actually is. Having a sense of adventure is safe for me.







NATALIE VOWELL, NORTH ST. LOUIS RESIDENT



We're taught to think in these terms, especially in St. Louis city, of neighborhoods, and segregation, and this is where all the White people are, this is where all the Black people are, this is sort of the Hispanic area. So I think the more we learn to cross over those borders and kind of step outside of our own world, the more accessible safety becomes. Because when we're not all strangers, we're just friends looking out for one another. There's nothing to fear anymore.

REBECCA RADFORD, STOREFRONT LEADER AT 10th LIFE



Safety is, to me, a work. A work in progress. It never stops.





SILAS EDWARD ELLIS, JR. 27-YEAR RETIRED POLICE  
OFFICER, MANAGER OF SECURITY FOR THE PULITZER



I think safety involves going out, getting out, knowing things, finding things, being a participant observer, being a volunteer. If you're always doing something until you've got yourself worn out, you're probably safe. People make you safe.





*(This lecture-performance originally premiered at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in October 2016. It has since been performed at the Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn, NY, and at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, VA. The performance is accompanied by a slideshow. Indications for the slide transitions have been left as part of the script. Some of the slide images appear in this book. Others do not.)*

Slide #1: Title

Hi. Hello. Thank you for coming.

My name is Chloë Bass. I'm an artist. I was born and raised in New York City. I live in Brooklyn now. I am thirty-three years old. I am a mixed race Black American.

I'm glad you're here.

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## Slide #2: Credits

This is *The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter Five: Protect & Preserve*. The Book of Everyday Instruction is my ongoing project about one-on-one social interaction. It has eight chapters in total. Each chapter of the project has its own title, focus, and central inquiry question.

If you've been in the gallery, you've seen some of the material from all eight chapters. the titles and questions appear as an element of wall text. The odd-numbered chapters (1, 3, 5, and 7) are conducted as social practice projects, directly engaging with others. Each of these chapters was produced in conjunction with a community in a historically important African-American city: Cleveland, Ohio (Chapter One); Greensboro, North Carolina (Chapter Three); St. Louis, Missouri (Chapter Five); and New Orleans, Louisiana (Chapter Seven). Even-numbered chapters (2, 4, 6, and 8) were produced as studio projects, although many of these chapters had ultimate manifestations in social spaces including shared restrooms, lecture halls, public gathering places, or even online.

For example: here we are in a lecture hall, and some of the work is also in your restrooms down the hall.

## Slide #3: Photo of Pacia

This chapter, chapter five, investigates the relationship between people and safe spaces as a kind of partnership. The chapter's title, Protect & Preserve, is a riff off of the Los Angeles Police Department's motto, "to protect and to serve," which has been adopted by other police departments nationwide.

## Slide #4: Baton Rouge black and white photo.

On January 11th, 2016, I started a document on my computer and titled it "Keep Yourself Safe." The date turned out to be significant for reasons that I won't be telling you now.

On July 7th, 2016, I landed in St. Louis. I had been invited by two great organizations, the Pulitzer Arts Foundation (a large non-profit institution) and the Luminary (a small artist-run residency program and gallery), to produce new work in response to their city. I flew to St. Louis from New Orleans, where just days beforehand, Alton Sterling had been killed by police in Baton Rouge.

I had never been to St. Louis before.







Slide #5: Photo of Natalie

I did not (necessarily) go to St. Louis to do a project about race. But there are certain things that are unavoidable. Last summer was a slap in the face. There wasn't a single day when I woke up feeling anything other than the sense that I was drowning.

Slide #6: Photo of Joy

I want to tell you about how this all happened.

I am an artist who works responsively. Often, this comes to mean that I make my work through conversation.

In St. Louis, I had the opportunity to speak with twenty-two strangers: friends of the Pulitzer Arts Foundation (one of the major St. Louis-based arts organizations, and the commissioner of this project), friends of the Luminary (a non-profit residency and studio program), and friends of the first set of interviewees, about safety.

Slide #7: Photo of Carl

I asked each of my participants six questions:

1. I asked if we could meet in a place that is safe to you. Can you tell me where we are and why you picked this place?
2. What is safety to you?
3. What is safety to St. Louis?
4. If you could write a letter to someone else about safety right now, who would you write to and what would you say?
5. Finish the sentence: "Safety is . . ."
6. Is there anything that you did not get to say because of what I asked, or the way that I asked it?





#### Slide #8: Photo of De

I like speaking to people directly for a lot of reasons. There's something very nice about being held together in the deep, magical space that can exist between two people. The conversations I had ranged from 10 minutes to 90.

#### Slide #9: Photo of Rebecca

I met people in parks, in their homes, in their workplaces. I met people on street corners. I met Rebecca at Tenth Life Cat Rescue, where she is a volunteer. Making safe space for others helps her to feel safe herself. I asked everyone my six questions, and in the process I learned about their families, their lives in the past and present, and so much more.

#### Slide #10: Photo of Steenz

For me, taking a stranger to a safe place and having a conversation about safety is really odd and anxiety-provoking. It's essential to make sure that the best parts of that oddness are preserved and turned into something productive. At the same time, I have to work hard to make myself extra comfortable for the person who's allowing for this vulnerable interaction to happen. Balancing these kinds of dynamics is a huge part of my craft.

#### Slide #11: Photo of Nancy

Most people I spoke with fell into one of two camps:

1. Safety requires the presence of others. We are safe when we are together.
- OR.
2. We can only be safe if we are alone.

#### Slide #12: Baton Rouge iconic photo of a woman standing up to riot cops

We know this image.

Iconic photographs of civil rights actions tend to emphasize one of two things: either that we are not safe in the presence of The Other; or that we are only safe when bolstered by others. No wonder that we learn so little through the picture alone.





Slide #13: Photo of Kevin

My photos were meant to convey not the single snapshot (which they are, in a way, although I don't think I should tell you how many images I took in order to capture 22 moments of calm), but rather the sense of the ongoing: the safe space as a space that holds bodies in repose. Where taking the photograph a moment (or two, or five moments) later would actually not produce a totally different image.

Slide #14: Photo of little boy and police

Are we safer when we're allowed to maintain a certain type of innocence, or are we safer when we can't? What's better, privilege, or awareness?

Slide #15: Photo of Cole

Cole told me that she felt unqualified to talk about safety. She had grown up in a safe place, she said. She had had experiences that she knew other people never had the chance to have. But she also spoke of the difficult of being away from her family. Because she is always alone, she said, she has to make herself very safe. Always. She spoke to me a lot about control. In the meantime, she let me frame her. She let me record her voice. She allowed her image to be up to me.

Slide #16: Photo of Randy

I used to think of family as a kind of nesting, a concept by which everything can be neatly contained within a single structure.

Slide #17: Photo of Jeff

In a nested system, obligation to others holds each of us in our place. This is the regularity against which we rail in adolescence (and, often, beyond).

Slide #18: Photo of *I Am A Man*

But in truth the idea of family is fraught, temporary. Wayne Koestenbaum, in his book *Notes on Glaze*, writes about "the frozenness of being in the wrong body at the wrong time and in the wrong place." What happens when that wrong body joins others, makes bonds, becomes family? What happens when we are so many wrong bodies together?



#### Slide #19: Photo of water hose trained on Black protestors

The impermanence of family could reference any number of conditions: the ways in which families can be chosen, not born-into; the families we leave; the impossible world that sends dad to work in the car and brings him home only as another victim on the evening news. What does father mean then?

#### Slide #20: Photo of Dani

One thing that came up during my conversations was the weary heaviness of ongoing trauma. Danielle talked to me openly about this. She told me, “As far as St. Louis, I don’t know if people realize how much mental trauma we’ve been going through lately, for years. For decades. For generations. Even just talking and listening to stories from my grandparents, my great-grandparents, they don’t want to talk about the past. I love stories. When I read a story about my people, and it’s something really traumatic, it breaks my soul. People realize the trauma that they’re putting other people through with videos and articles and tweets and Facebook so readily in front of us, and it kind of fucks us up inside. I cry. Water I look at as a purification. When I feel like I’m in water, I feel purified.”

#### Slide #21: Photo of Silas

I want to make something beautiful as a pathway to discussing something difficult. This is not a remedy. It’s just another kind of door into receiving what we need. Silas told me if I kept moving until I was exhausted, I’d be safe. He advised me that the best way to explore St. Louis would be on roller skates. But somehow I wanted to find safety in stillness.

#### Slide #22: Photo of Racially Profiled Sweatshirt

I think a lot about the attitudes of safety enacted — and avoided — by those who are able to march, and keep marching. Make no mistake: the conditions of ongoing protest are special. Our needs change. Our need for each other changes. Is the safety in the gathering, or in the staying home? When my Black mother calls and tells me not to protest, I know that it is due to a sense that my body is hers, which it is. If my body were not hers, the urgency to march would be much less.





#### Slide #23: Photo of Alison

What does it mean to feel safe as a body? Alison talked to me about the safety of the mind, about safety as a condition that we hold internally, but admitted to me that as a Black female body in the world, she almost never felt safe. Alison called safety a negotiation. It's interesting when we feel our safety lies outside of ourselves, that safety comes from the permission of others. It's interesting, but also scary.

#### Slide #24: Photo of Stay Woke shirt

The day I flew to St. Louis, I was wearing a sweatshirt that read "UNARMED CIVILIAN." As I was going through security, worried that I was going to miss my flight, a TSA officer from the lane opposite mine gestured to me. He indicated the front of my chest and I looked down, wondering what security rule I was violating. When I looked up, confused, he mouthed to me, "I really like your shirt."

#### Slide #25: Photo of Con

Con told me that she refuses to live like she's not safe. It was not my job to question this. She went on to talk to me about the responsibility of helping other people feel safe, of how safety is something that we share. Like the way I think of my work, she positioned safety as a kind of dialogue. Who would you talk to? What would you say?

#### Slide #26: Photo of Eugene

I grew up singing Civil Rights songs without knowing what they were. We met in assembly every Friday morning, pledged allegiance to the flag, and then shrieked our way through We Shall Overcome, elementary-school style. No one told us the history. Yet there was never a point where the message was far from us, either.

#### Slide #27: Photo of Nykia

Still, there's a difference between proximity, and immediacy. Nykia talked to me about her neighborhood, and how violence only begets more violence. She is thirteen years old, in the 8th grade, and a member of her school's dance team. She is quick to answer questions, and likes to pretend she's a television reporter so she can get more gossip from people. This should be enough. Why can't just this be enough for one girl's life?





Slide #28: Photo of *Am I Next*

Twice that summer in St. Louis, I was riding in the car with a relative stranger, having a terrific conversation on the surface, and all the while thinking, “if the police pull us over and something happens, I will not know how to save you.” Thinking, “we should both just get out of this car. It doesn’t matter where we need to go.”

I probably don’t have to tell you that both of the nice strangers I was riding with were Black.

Slide #29: Photo of Michael Allen

The philosopher George Yancy talks about expanding the idea of who we call our neighbors. This seems really different to me than expanding the idea of what we call our neighborhoods. We are somehow able to think about space without people. This, to me, is the opposite of urban living. The space and the people become inseparable. When we sign on for on, we sign up for both. Michael walked me up and down Chippewa Street, talking to me about safety as social connection. It was a very hot day. We barely saw a soul.

Slide #30: Photo of die-in

Here’s a thought experiment: before you go outside each day, turn yourself into a ghost story. Really mean it. Will that serve to keep you more alive, or less?

Slide #31: Photo of Terrell

This is the only person who asked to meet me not in the place where he feels safest, but where he has thought the most about safety. As a very young man, and as a very young father, Terrell Carter was a beat cop on Cherokee Street. We walked the street and talked about policing as reactive, not proactive. Then we talked about the importance of safety as a family man. He’s not an officer anymore.

Slide #32: Photo of tank coming

We need to learn that in most cases, “we are family” means nothing more or less than “until I can’t recognize you in the dark.” There’s a point where you think being around other people will help. And there’s a point where it obviously doesn’t.





Slide #33: Photo of multiple protest signs

Something's got to give. Maybe it's us. Maybe we can continue to give and give and give. Even in the face of failure, giving retains some kind of meaning. Even when we're told that we have nothing, this is one way to discover that in fact, we have a lot.

Slide #34: Photo of Gaitor

One person who I talked to, Gaitor Redd, told me a long story. I don't remember all the details, but the gist was that one good turn begets another. The ending of the story was a shared home cooked supper made by a formerly hateful lady, resulting in the sale of a recipe and profits and fame for a local community. I haven't figured out how to create safety, but I feel pretty good about that.

Slide #35: Photo of Ken

There's always an edge of unsafety around any kind of safety. Being aware of that edge is what keeps you safe. But that means we're also always thinking about potentially not being safe.

Maybe, like Ken, it means that we're offering continued prayers for our safety, and the safety of others. He told me he's praying for leadership, even as he knows the responsibility lies with us.

Slide #36: Flag photo

At some point we have to admit this is our day, this is our city, this is our life. It's not what comes next. It's now.

Slide #37: Rainbow photo

Look, I took the time to make this beautiful for you. I took the time to put it all down. The question now is what you're going to do with it. The question now is how we're going to live.









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\\\\ 146 \\\\ | book of everyday instruction





# CHAPTER SIX:

## WHAT IS SHARED, WHAT IS OFFERED





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## CHAPTER SIX:

What is shared, what is offered

### QUESTION:

How do we share love between  
individuals and institutions?

*What is shared, what is offered* focuses on the pairing between individuals and institutions as a form of attachment and attention that's akin to love. Structured as a meal in four courses (engagement, maintenance, romance, and healing), the work offers conceptual pairings and blends to guide participants past a scarcity mentality of emotional economy. The chapter's title is borrowed from Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, in the chapter "Bread and Wine." De Certeau describes the relationship between bread, wine, and the social economies produced between dinner guests, as follows: "Wine contains, as a result of the unique virtues attributed to it through a social consensus, a motivating social force that bread does not have: the latter is shared, wine is offered."

Chapter Six consists of a series of four diagrammatic photos representing different phases of love, a corresponding scent installation involving spices, a couples-counseling workshop for individuals and institutions, and a series of five conversations centered around an image-sharing game.

### WHEN:

December 2016 - February 2018

### WHERE:

New York, NY

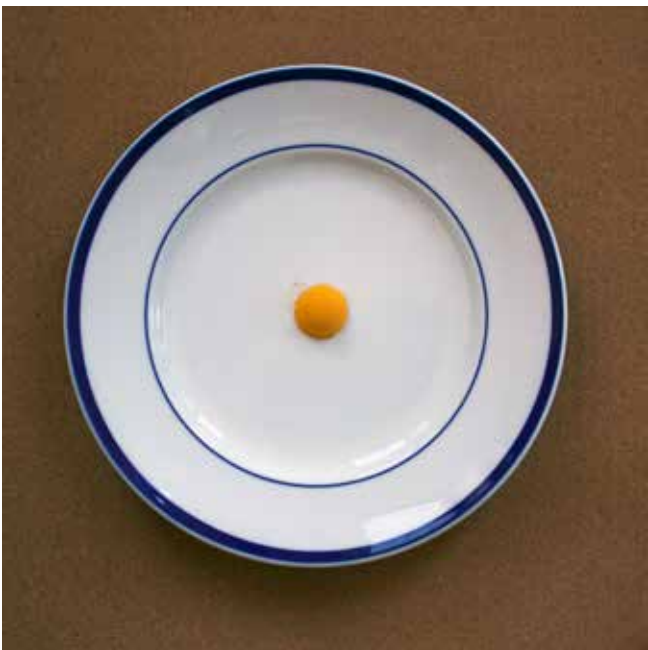
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The conversation series for *What is shared, what is offered* began with me sending each of my guests a private love letter, which included an invitation to join me for an evening at Independent Curators International.

After accepting my initial invitation, each guest received the following instructions:

First, I'm so glad that you and I will be sharing this time. I really look forward to being in discussion with you.

Second, I want to talk to you a bit about the format of the event. Since it will just be the two of us (plus someone from ICI as our interlocutor), I was hoping we could play a small game. As you know, I want to speak with you about intimacy over time. I am also interested to speak about [topic varies by guest], which should come as no surprise.

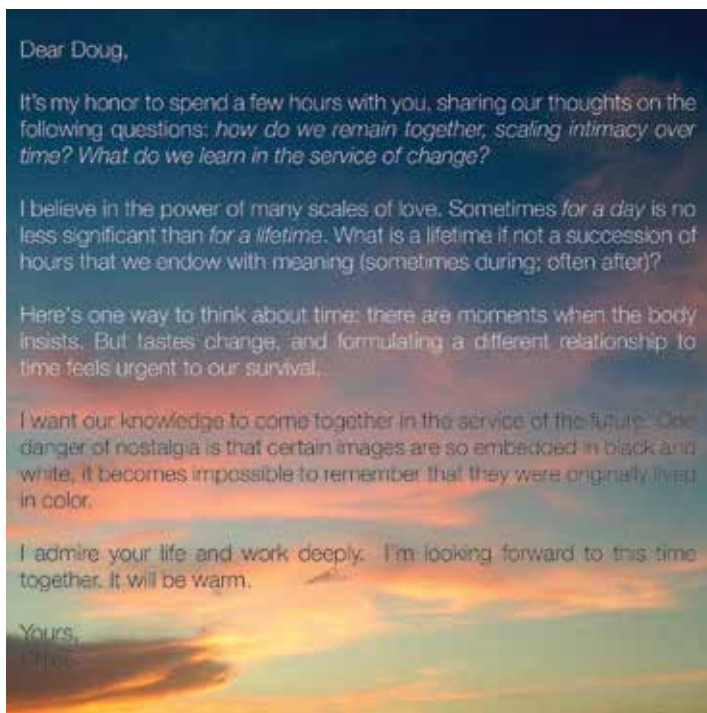
Here is the game: we will each put together a series of 5 - 10 images (you can choose the final number, and I will match it; remember that if you choose 10 we will have 20 in total) that will guide our conversation. We will not look at each others' images before the event. During the event, we will each have a chance to respond to the image the other person put forward, and then to speak about it together. We will do this until all images have been discussed, or time runs out, whichever comes first.

The images can come from anywhere: preferably not your own work, but other artworks, news media, found things, the world. Let me know how this sounds to you. My hope is that this kind of instinctive conversation will guide us towards a more genuine conversation and larger truths. Remember: intimacy is the goal.





GUEST #1: DOUG ASHFORD  
DATE: FEBRUARY 14TH, 2017  
FOCUS TOPIC: TIME.



DOUG ASHFORD is an artist, teacher and writer based in New York. He is Associate Professor at The Cooper Union where he has taught sculpture, design, and interdisciplinary studies since 1989. Ashford's principle visual practice from 1982 to 1996 was the multi-form practice of Group Material, whose work has been recently compiled in the book *Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material* (Four Corners Books, 2010). Since 1996 he has continued to produce paintings, essays and collaborative projects that engage sociality with artistic form. His most recent public effort ended in the project *Who Cares* (Creative Time, 2006), a book built from a series of conversations between Ashford and other cultural practitioners on public expression, ethics, and beauty. Recent exhibitions of his paintings include "Abstract Possible", Tensta Konsthall and other locations (2010-12), dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel (2012) and the Gwangju Biennale 11(2016). A collection of essays, *Doug Ashford: Writings and Conversation*, (Mousse Publishing, 2013), was published on the occasion of his retrospective exhibition at the Grazer Kunstverein that year. He is represented by Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam.

#### IMAGES INCLUDED:

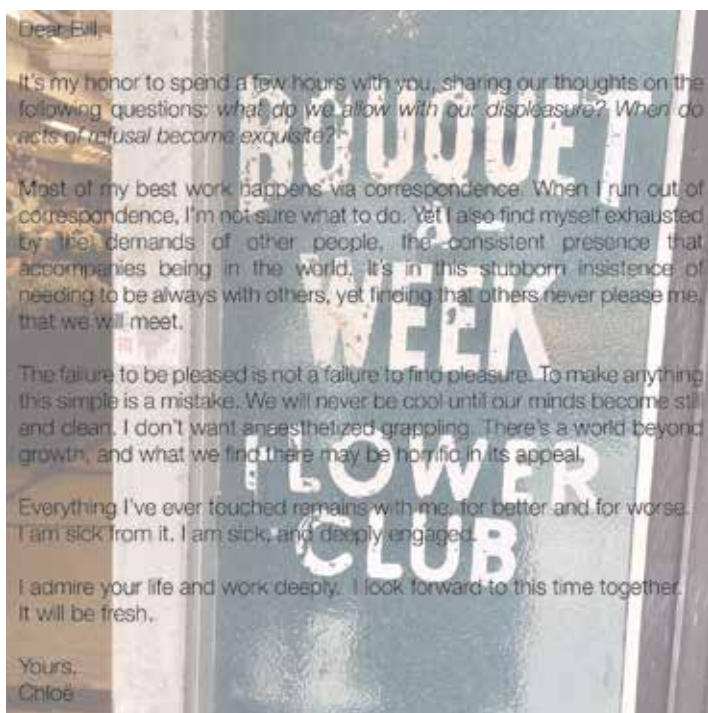
- Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, 1601-02; Oil on canvas, 42 1/8 x 57 1/2 in; Neues Palais, Potsdam
- Obituary for Wilhelm Brasse (3 December 1917 – 23 October 2012), the professional photographer and a prisoner in Auschwitz during World War II who was ordered by the SS





camp administrators to photograph “prisoners’ work, criminal medical experiments, [and] portraits of the prisoners for their files.

- The Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) founded in 1969 by the New Yorker artists Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche, organized a demonstration in front of MOMA calling for divestiture of the museum from all companies who receive economic support from the American War in Viet Nam.
- Gallery opening
- Image from the controversial 1995 Calvin Klein ad campaign. After many complaints and federal investigation, the ads were withdrawn by Klein, who publicly apologized for their content.



GUEST #2: BILL DIETZ  
DATE: JUNE 8TH, 2017  
FOCUS TOPIC: DISPLEASURE  
AND REFUSAL.

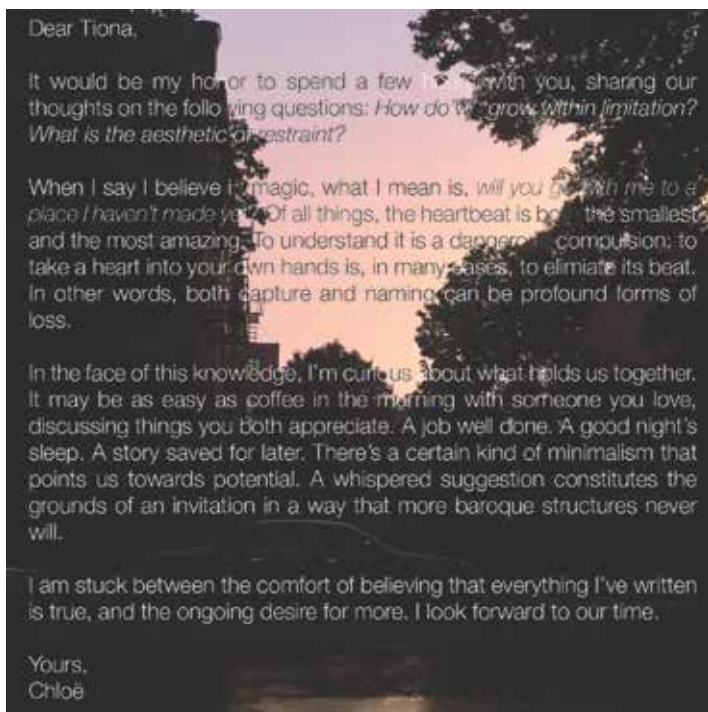
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BILL DIETZ is a composer and writer, based since 2003 in Berlin. From sounding the facade of Le Corbusier’s Unité d’habitation in Marseille to orchestrating echoes across city blocks in Manhattan, his work traces genealogies of publicness and the performance of listening. He is co-chair of Music/Sound in Bard College’s MFA program, and is currently Guest Professor of Sound at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. With Woody Sullender he co-founded and edits Ear | Wave | Event. In 2015 Edition Solitude released a monograph on his “Tutorial Diversions,” and in Fall 2017 a book accompanying his work *L’école de la claque* will appear.



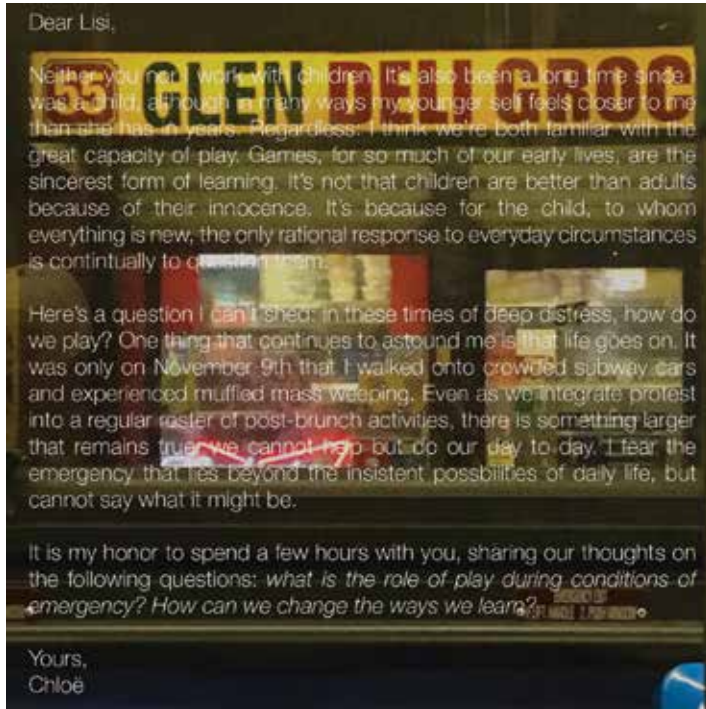


GUEST #3: TIONA MCCLODDEN  
DATE: SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2017  
FOCUS TOPIC: LIMITATION AND  
RESTRAINT.



Tiona Nekkia McClodden is a visual artist, filmmaker, and curator whose work explores, and critiques issues at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and social commentary. McClodden's interdisciplinary approach traverses documentary film, experimental video, sculpture, and sound installations. Themes explored in McClodden's films and works have been re-memory and more recently narrative biomythography.





GUEST #4: LISI RASKIN  
DATE: NOVEMBER 14TH, 2017  
FOCUS TOPIC: PLAY.

Since 1998, LISI RASKIN has traveled to remote locations exploring the intersection of nuclear-age fears and utopian mythologies as they manifest in oral histories and the architectures of the Cold War. Raskin's on-site research has informed the making of paintings, drawings, objects, videos, and large, constructed environments that she has exhibited internationally. Slowly but surely, Raskin's installations have become laboratories where the artist deliberately builds bridges between politicized subject matter, utopian architecture, abstraction, collaborative making, non-hierarchical interventions into normative systems of power, and radical pedagogy. Her web projects have been published in *Triple Canopy* magazine, with The Dia Foundation, and on Creative Time Global Reports. She has built large-scale environments at the 11th International Istanbul Biennale, the 2nd Athens Biennale, and the 3rd Singapore Biennale. She has installed site-sensitive sound projects in the 1st Time Machine Biennale of Contemporary Art, D-O Ark Underground and the Momentum 7 Biennale of Nordic Art. Raskin was born in Miami, Florida. She received her BA in Fine Arts from Brandeis University and her MFA from Columbia University. She has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants including a Creative Time Global Residency Grant, the Guna S Mundheim Berlin Prize at the American Academy in Berlin, among others. Raskin is currently department head of Sculpture at RISD and a member of the rock band Da Peeblz. With this group, she is working on an intersectional, feminist, children's propaganda album.

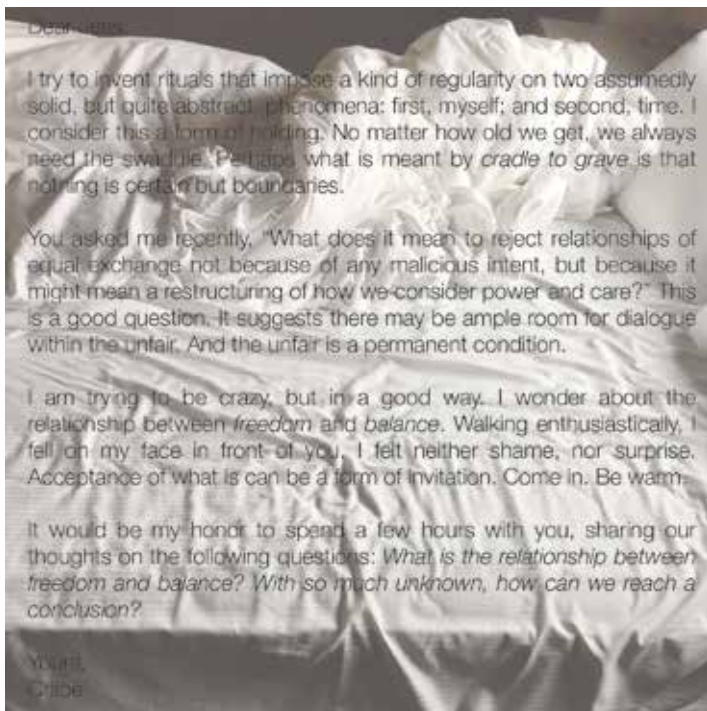
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GUEST #5: JESSICA LYNNE  
DATE: FEBRUARY 14TH, 2018  
FOCUS TOPIC: FREEDOM AND  
BALANCE.



JESSICA LYNNE is co-founder and editor of *ARTS.BLACK*, a journal of art criticism from Black perspectives. She received her B.A. in Africana Studies from NYU and has been awarded residencies and fellowships from Art21 and The Cue Foundation, Callaloo, and The Center for Book Arts. Her writing has appeared in publications such as *Aperture*, *Art in America*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *Kinfolk*. She is a Winter 2018 Columnist-in-Residence at Open Space and currently serves as the Manager of Development and Communication at Recess. She is co-editor, alongside Sharon Loudon, of a forthcoming book about the art world that will be published by Intellect Ltd. and The University of Chicago Press.





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*This essay was originally commissioned by ARTS.BLACK for the 2017 Common Field Convening. It was published on Arts.Black, as well as by Common Field, in October 2017.*

## **SORRY NOT SORRY.**

### **(COUPLES COUNSELING FOR ARTISTS AND INSTITUTIONS: STEP TWO)<sup>1</sup>**

*(Author's note: In contemplating how our world holds us (or doesn't), I have been examining the role of apology. We seem to fear direct apology, perhaps because it sets a precedent for future reparations (i.e. if I say sorry now, how many times will I need to say sorry in the future?). Is apology a moment, a process, or a rut? How can we begin to see it as an opportunity?*

*Sorry not sorry is an interweaving of personal experiences of apology, or the blank gaps of non-apology, mixed with quotes from famous institutional and professional apologies. Quotes appear in bold. The source of each quote has been cited in the footnotes. A database of political apologies and reparations can be found here: <http://political-apologies.wlu.ca/index.php>. Both the search function and the links to external sources only sometimes work. Sorry about that.*

*I recently apologized to someone myself, the real way: I acknowledged what had happened, I said it was because of me, and then I said the words I'm sorry. I also cried a little. As to that last bit, I wish I hadn't. Still, the vulnerability inherent even to the shabbiest of apologies makes it an interesting point of departure from which to dissect the relationship between individuals and institutions. -- Chloë Bass)*

Apologies for mis-attributing your role in the project!  
 Apologies for the random reach-out.  
 Apologies for my delay here.  
 I apologize that I couldn't send an object up to Montreal.  
 Our apologies for the confusion.  
 Apologies for duplicate emails.  
 I apologize for not sending a clear and specific proposal.  
 Llamas to apologize to Texans now.<sup>2</sup>

**We did some homework — speaking to New Yorkers, branding people, and even running some survey work asking about the name and any**

<sup>1</sup> Presented as part of Chloë Bass' project *The Book of Everyday Instruction*, Chapter Six: What is shared, what is offered. Previous couples therapy sessions between artists and institutions have explored an exploration of phases of love shared over time ("Step One," which premiered in February 2017 at CUE Art Foundation as part of *The Visible Hand*, curated by David Xu Borgonjon), as well as couples counseling for individuals and their relationship to Blackness (which premiered at the Design Studio for Social Intervention in March 2017, a few days shy of Black History Month (sorry/not sorry), at the invitation of Kenneth Bailey.

<sup>2</sup> A brief sampling of the first 50 search results for "apologize" in my Gmail inbox, as of September 25th, 2017.







potential offense it might cause. But it's clear that we may not have been asking the right questions of the right people. Despite our best intentions and our admiration for traditional bodegas, we clearly hit a nerve this morning, we apologize. Rather than disrespect to traditional corner stores — or worse yet, a threat — we intended only admiration. We commit to reviewing the feedback and understanding the reactions from today.<sup>3</sup>

Well-cited: the things that people say when they think everyone in the room is like them. Less-cited: the things they don't say when they realize that wasn't the case. I am made strange to myself through the apology of not passing and the silences it prompts.<sup>4</sup>

First, it should be said (I wish it went without saying) that no racial implication was intended, by Time or by the artist. One could argue that it is racist to say that blacker is more sinister, and some African Americans have taken that position in the course of this dispute, but that does not excuse insensitivity. To the extent that this caused offense to anyone, I deeply regret it. Nor did we intend any imputation of guilt. We were careful to avoid that in our story, but for at least some people, this cover picture was worth several thousand words. The issues surrounding photo-illustration, particularly with regard to news photos, are much more complex. To a certain extent, our critics are absolutely right: altering news pictures is a risky practice, since only documentary authority makes photography of any value in the practice of journalism. On the other hand, photojournalism has never been able to claim the transparent neutrality attributed to it. Photographers choose angles and editors choose pictures to make points[.]<sup>5</sup>

A sharing exercise at an outdoor art event in New York in July. It's a hot day, and I'm partnered with a stranger, a young white woman, to take turns holding each other's heavy places. I hold her first. My focus is hazy in the heat, but I breathe and try to accept her. After a few minutes, we're told to switch. I place my hands on top of her hands, gradually giving her the weight of my arms. She begins to tremble, adjusts herself, and then looks into my eyes with alarm. *I feel sick*, she says, *I need to sit down*. She slumps, puts her head down: *I'm*

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3 The start-up company Bodega's apology about their name, and general launch proceedings, to the people of the internet, 2017, accessed via [<https://blog.bodega.ai/so-about-our-name-aa5bff63a92d>].

4 a) While I have never, to my knowledge, been mistaken for white, I am often seen as not-Black even by other Black colleagues. Passing is complicated, so I do not expect an apology for these moments of misidentification, but I wonder what purpose it serves. [and/or] b) I tend to find myself in spaces where people share a fair amount of educational affiliation, so difference can come as quite a surprise.

5 Jim Gaines, then managing editor of TIME Magazine, apologizing for the infamous cover photo that darkened OJ Simpson's skin color, accessed via [<http://www.thewrap.com/oj-fact-check-read-time-magazines-apology-for-making-simpson-blacker/>].





sorry. I rub her back. *It's okay, I think, if I didn't have to feel the way I feel in the world, I wouldn't want to, either.*<sup>6</sup>

**[T]hank you for caring enough to complain or to praise. Perhaps we can all agree that whatever values we look for in the theater, we all stand on the common ground that it is a vital and important art form that we look to to illuminate the human experience with complexity and integrity.**<sup>7</sup>

Note the way we treat other people as vaults: *I told you to remember that so I wouldn't have to hold onto it myself.* I can't count the number of times some supposed ally has pointed me towards a piece of Black information -- even useful things I don't yet know -- only later to ask "wait, what's that?" when I reference that same information again. No sign of a blush for the fact that you gave me something so you had the permission to forget it yourself.<sup>8</sup>

**We're sorry for the massive disruption it's caused their lives. There's no one who wants this over more than I do. I would like my life back.**<sup>9</sup>

I was sitting on the floor of Powell's, reading Roxane Gay's *Hunger* and beating myself up for not choosing a more interesting book while surrounded by so many rare things, when I was struck by a sudden sneezing attack. Once, then twice, and on and on. No one near me said anything. My eyes began to swell. The sneezes continued. I believed I was cursed: to keep up these exhausting explosions until someone acknowledged me with *bless you*.<sup>10</sup>

**I know that my public comments and my silence about this matter gave a false impression. I misled people, including even my wife. I deeply regret that.**<sup>11</sup>

Every day, the weight of this work breaks my heart, and then I work again to

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6 *I tend to take no longer than 10 minutes between admitting I feel nauseated and actually vomiting.*

7 Tim Stanford's apology to the audience of Playwrights Horizons, 2013, accessed via [<https://mobile.nytimes.com/blogs/artsbeat/2013/03/25/the-flick-prompts-an-explanation-from-playwrights-horizons>]

8 A corollary to this is when the information people are feeding me somehow corresponds to their sense that they've invented who I am, or suddenly been the first person to discover me out of nowhere. This is very much, I imagine, how America felt when Columbus sailed up and crowned it the Indies.

9 BP CEO Tony Hayward's apology to residents of the Gulf Coast following the 2010 oil spill, accessed via [<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/05/30/gulf.oil.spill/index.html>]. An apology advertisement video can be viewed here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Awd\\_7yNzKo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Awd_7yNzKo)

10 Fourteen sneezes, at which point I got up and moved.

11 Bill Clinton's apology to the American people concerning the nature of his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, 1998, accessed via [<http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1998/08/17/speech/transcript.html>].





unbreak it. Surely there must be more to life's labor than this.<sup>12</sup>

**For those who were abused by a member of the clergy, I am deeply sorry for the times when you or your family spoke out, to report the abuse, but you were not heard or believed. Please know that the Holy Father hears you and believes you.**<sup>13</sup>

In the importance of acknowledging context and how it holds us, let me tell you that I intended to write this work entirely in transit between Portland and New York City on September 11th, 2017. I liked this disconnected scene: imagining the *I'm sorrys* that tie me to the ground while floating disconnected through the air. But I couldn't do it. I was seated next to someone else's grandmother. We

were traveling together. It is hard sitting down to a piece of writing when you're responsible for someone else's relative. It is even harder if you're responsible for your own. Your own relatives know when you're lying.<sup>14</sup>

**The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.**<sup>15</sup>

*I'm so sorry*, he writes. *Please forgive me.* And I do.<sup>16</sup>

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12 First recorded instance of heartbreak: sometime in the fall of 1997, my 8th grade year. Cause: the senior boy I liked not saying hello to me during his travels from homeroom to science class (Physics? Chemistry?), a route that I strategically walked on as many mornings as time permitted. Later, when I was older, this boy became my boyfriend. We dated for over three years. When we separated, the heartbreak I felt was different, but not worse.

13 Pope Francis' apology for ongoing incidents of juvenile sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, 2014, accessed via [<http://www.phillyvoice.com/transcript-pope-francis-apology-church-victims/>].

14 Like many people, I lie more about innocuous things than important ones.

15 Apology from the Australian government to the Aboriginal people of Australia, 2008, accessed via [<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples/>].

16 A future iteration of this work may focus on forgiveness, and whether the equation of forgiveness = forgetting really holds true. Sometimes I think I forgive more when I remember the incident that required the apology. To remember translates forgiveness into an ongoing act rather than a generosity that stops after its instance.







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# CHAPTER SEVEN:

SUBJECT TO  
CHANGE  
WITHOUT  
NOTICE





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## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### Subject to change without notice

#### QUESTION:

How do recognize an ongoing coupling  
in spite of change?

*Subject to change without notice* returns to the relationship between people and the cities they live in, this time focusing on subjective experiences of color as a way to track and share public space. The chapter's title was taken from a line of text that appears on all historic and contemporary public transportation maps in New Orleans: subject to change without notice. This sentence also serves as a good description of urban life in the time of rampant gentrification: for the resident, local change often occurs without warning, request, or consideration -- something that happens to rather than with, a neighborhood.

Chapter Seven consists primarily of a free phone app, *City Palette*, which is available for iPhone and Android. Through camera and location access, City Palette allows users to upload the colors from their own local environment. The app will choose a dominant tone to save from each user-submitted image. Users assign their own names to the colors they upload, and can view 'nearby' swatches from other users. Allowing users to generate and name their own color-coded swatches of New Orleans (and other cities) will reflect and convey an individualized and experiential portrait of urban space—not just what they see, but how they see it.

#### WHEN:

June 2016 – November 2017

#### WHERE:

New Orleans, LA

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FIELD NOTES FROM "THE BOOK OF EVERYDAY INSTRUCTION, CHAPTER SEVEN: SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE"

I've been in New Orleans collecting colors, a selection of which are presented on these pages as the beginning of an answer to something. Later, I'll be releasing these colors as a certain kind of narrative about people, and transit, and the ways our cities support us and let us down, but that's not fixed yet.

For now, let's say this: colors are associative ideas. They're placeholders for something we remember but can't quite approach. If this sounds romantic, it is. New Orleans is a romantic place. But I mean something particular when I say that: it includes all the good and the bad. The wild fluctuations. The long years of boredom. The sense of the self as eclipsed (by the heat, by the system, by the circumstances).

Pantone states that their Color of the Year program is, "A symbolic color selection; a color snapshot of what we see taking place in our global culture that serves as an expression of a mood and an attitude." 2017's color is Greenery, a semi-pleasant shade that I'd rather just leave you to imagine. (If it helps, Pantone describes it as "nature's neutral.") Most of the recent annual colors have also had environmentally-motivated names (Radiant Orchid, 2014; Emerald, 2013; Tangerine Tango, 2012; Honeysuckle, 2011) and those that don't are named simply (Turquoise, 2010; Blue Turquoise, 2005; True Red, 2002; Cerulean, 2000).

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Color-naming is a sensitive subject. Too often it calls to mind a certain kind of power struggle: we name things not just for what we see, but how we see them. The color becomes a referent for something we want to remember, or think we know. With this color set, I'm providing an interpretation of an experience. I've tried to name these colors by saying only what I saw: the side of a house, the glaze on a tile, the sheen on a leaf, a fallen blossom. What does it mean to remove color from its source? There's a certain safety in knowing you can't tell me my red isn't "really" hibiscus.

Abstraction, like politics, can try the patience. It can be difficult to accept that some of the meaning we discover is imposed by what we see – or even worse, by how we live. A diagnosis of *chromophobia* has been closely linked to legacies of colonialism. The production of the perfect white (my photo backdrops, for example, come in *white*, *pure white*, and *super white*, not to mention offshoots like *eggshell*, and this doesn't even begin to touch the fantastic range of whites produced by any commercial paint company) is the eternal quest for purity – with a subtle range of names and intended uses that keep us within the lines.

If the bright color palette is foreign, somehow mysterious or inferior, what is the faded-bright? The brights traveled far during periods of serious Diaspora, but the fade seems to say we're beyond all that now. The ravages of time and weather go far beyond the control of culture, or of the paint can. Software makes it very difficult to sort things by color. This is one case where technology allows us to pretend that our world is better than it is. In reality, we sort things by color all the time.

All scientific evidence suggests that chromophobia is learned.

There are some colors I can only describe: the color of white people carrying greasy bags from Gene's while talking about their worst hangovers. The color of an old man slowly riding a powder blue bike the wrong way up Elysian Fields. The color of the abandoned house, still boarded up, across the street from a row of new renovation. The color of crustpunk dog. The color of *we didn't mean for it to be this way*. The color of faces. (Who do you see when I say that?)

I don't pretend that these colors will always be the same.

(As collected on a hot sunny day in early June 2017, on a walk through Marigny and the French Quarter with Imani Jacqueline Brown.)





**What color is your New Orleans?**

These ads were designed using colors sampled from photographs of various locations in New Orleans. This set of colors is from the Backstreet Museum in Terre

Add your own colors to the New Orleans collection by using the free City Palette app, available now at <http://citypaletteapp.com>.

Share how you see your city.



[Link text here]



**What color is your New Orleans?**

These ads were designed using colors sampled from photographs of various locations in New Orleans. This set of colors is from a walk through the Garden District.

Add your own colors to the New Orleans collection by using the free City Palette app, available now at <http://citypaletteapp.com>.

Share how you see your city.



[Link text here]



**What color is your New Orleans?**

These ads were designed using colors sampled from photographs of various locations in New Orleans. This set of colors is from near the famous site of Lee's statue.

Add your own colors to the New Orleans collection by using the free City Palette app, available now at <http://citypaletteapp.com>.

Share how you see your city.



[Link text here]



**What color is your New Orleans?**

These ads were designed using colors sampled from photographs of various locations in New Orleans. This set of colors is from a walk through the Upper Ninth.

Add your own colors to the New Orleans collection by using the free City Palette app, available now at <http://citypaletteapp.com>.

Share how you see your city.



[Link text here]

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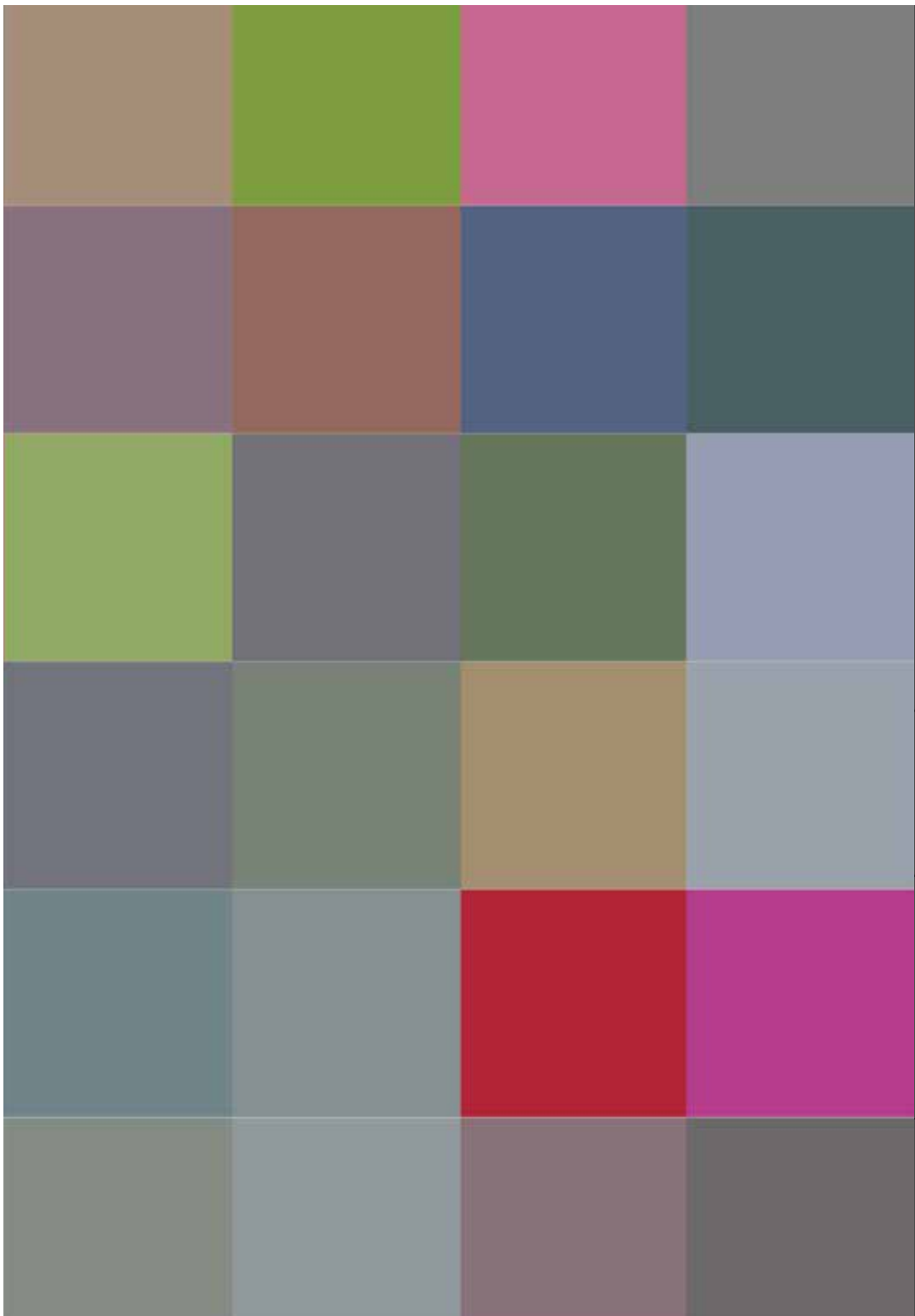




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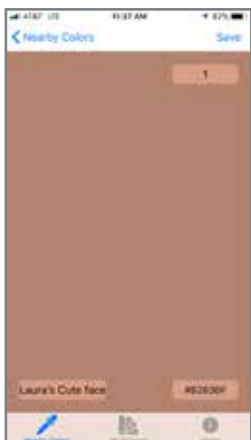




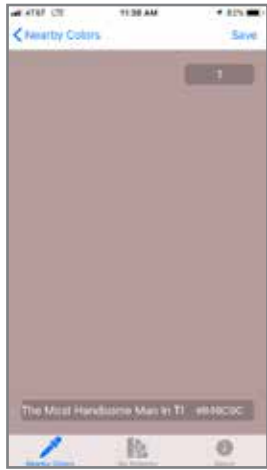
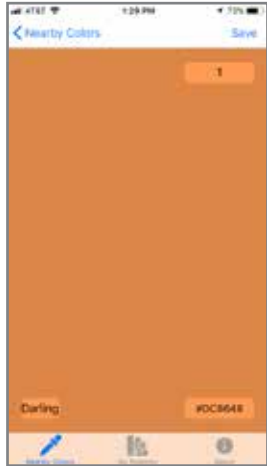
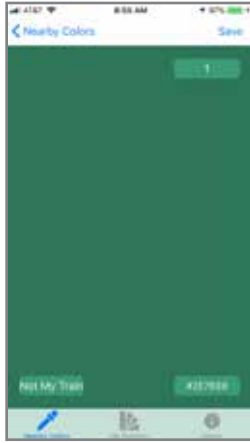
subject to change without notice

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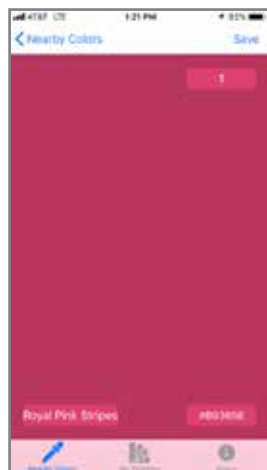


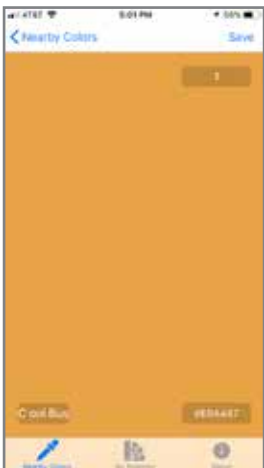
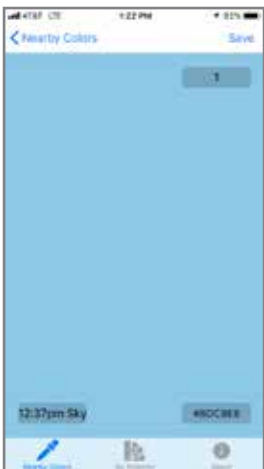




subject to change without notice /// 177 ///

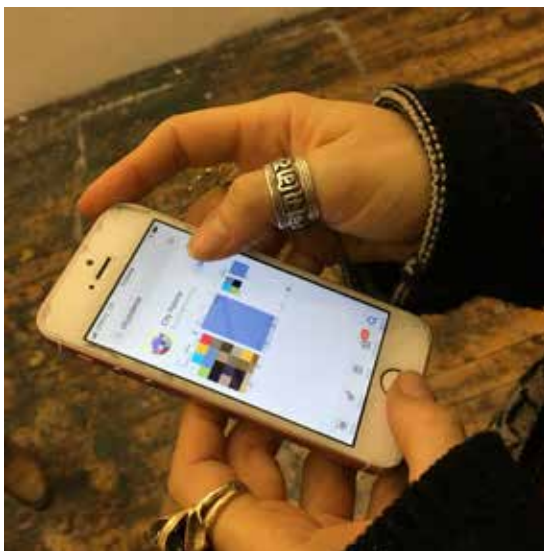






subject to change without notice | /// 179 ///







subject to change without notice | /// 181 ///





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# CHAPTER EIGHT:

## COMPLETE UPON ARRIVAL





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## CHAPTER EIGHT:

Complete upon arrival

### QUESTION:

Do we invent the people we love?

*Concluding The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter Eight* tracks the relationship between me and various audiences over the course of producing this project. Audience groups are divided into four major categories, each of which I have also “performed” as an aspect of making this work: students, curators, writers, and artists. The chapter focuses on the return to the self as an essential element for understanding the pair.

Chapter Eight consists of four sentences:

**For years I followed you like a tail, and on happy days I wagged.**

**I will be you when I have what you have.**

**While away, I imagine you as different, but upon return I find you’re just the same.**

**In the end, I invented you one by one.**

These four sentences are represented on sweatshirts, in a photo series, on custom-printed Lifesavers candy, and as a text-based wallpaper installation.

### WHEN:

June 2016 – November 2017

### WHERE:

New Orleans, LA

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In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.

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In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.

In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.

In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.



In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.





In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.



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In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.

In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.

In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.





In the end,  
I invented you  
one by one.

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