

Nick Raffel

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This building was designed for natural ventilation. Prevailing winds would enter through its south-facing windows and exit through its skylights.

Over time this original functionality was lost. The building has been largely sealed shut and made reliant on mechanically forced air conditioning.

For air to circulate naturally through an interior space there must be an intake and an exhaust — here, windows and skylights, respectively. The now-sealed skylights trap warm, stale air and make it difficult for fresh air to enter through the windows.

For an HVAC system to operate correctly there must be a supply and a return. The supply draws in air from the outside, conditions it, and forces it into the space. The return draws air out of the space to be reconditioned and redistributed.

The return unit in this space has been made inaccessible by the construction of the gallery's north wall. Without anywhere to go, contaminants in the air compound and circulate indefinitely. More energy is used as the system must work harder to condition only the warm air drawn in from outside, rather than the cooler air already circulating inside.

This exhibition has improved passive airflow within the gallery and made the HVAC system more efficient.

For when external conditions allow, two passive ventilators installed in the skylights draw air out and allow the space to breathe naturally.

When conditioned air is necessary, a newly installed vent in the north wall enables air to flow to the return unit, improving the overall efficiency of the system.

A second passageway has been cut through the south partition wall. This allows fresh air to travel more freely from the windows to the skylights and provides a clearer path for conditioned air to flow from the registers to the return.

The wind dial is rotated by this new pattern of circulation.

Nick Raffel (b. 1982, Portland, Maine) lives and works in Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include *Prairie*, Chicago; *Cushion Works*, Chicago; *Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery*, Wesleyan University; *Pied-à-terre*, San Francisco; and *Regards*, Chicago. Recent group exhibitions include *GRAY*, Chicago; *Artists Space*, New York; *Swiss Institute*, New York; *Bridget Donahue*, New York; *Fondazione Prada*, Venice; and *Kunstverein Nürnberg*.