

# White Columns

## Other People's Projects: Pre-Echo Press

---

November 10 – December 17, 2022

Reception: Thursday, November 10, 2022, 6-8pm

Participating artists

Matt Connors, Brian W. Ferry, Luigi Ghirri, Joe Gilmore, Nate Harrington, Elisabeth Kley, Sanou Oumar, Ryan Preciado, Nick Relph, and Ken Tisa. Organized by Matt Connors

White Columns is pleased to present 'Other People's Projects: Pre-Echo Press', organized by Matt Connors. Pre-Echo Press was founded in 2016 by New York-based visual artist Matt Connors as a platform for "disseminating a diverse and idiosyncratic array of recorded and printed matter." What follows is a conversation between White Columns' director Matthew Higgs and Matt Connors in November 2022.

### **What is the origin of the name 'Pre-Echo Press'?**

The phrase 'pre-echo' originates from an audio phenomenon that I remember from when I was a kid and listened to mostly cassettes. Sometimes, when there is a very loud or strong sound at the beginning of a song, especially if the tape is really worn out, you'll hear a faint echo of it somehow *before* the song starts. It's the actual tape/information bleeding through itself when it is tightly rolled up. Since I found out that this could be called a 'pre-echo,' I've really loved it as a sort of self-canceling mindfuck, the simultaneous before/after idea of it. It feels very pertinent to our world(s). I also used the phrase as a title for one of my first solo shows. I love reusing and recasting words and titles.

### **Pre-Echo Press launched in 2016. If someone had asked you then "What is Pre-Echo Press?", how would you have answered that question? And would your answer be different now?**

Now and then, I'd say it's me (with my friends and loved ones) looking around and asking if there is, or should be, a book (or record, or other printed matter) made of something we love that isn't currently represented that way, and if not, let's make one. A big part of the press is

to really have no relationship to normal notions of success or failure or logic or time frames of selling or making things. Sometimes I ask someone if there's an idea that no one would likely put into motion or production, and that's the origin of a project.

**As an artist-run press, were there any notable precursors for your approach?**

Yes, so many. I grew up working at record stores, so record labels and musicians with strong identities (sonic and visual) were always so important to me— 4AD, Factory, Sub Pop, Throbbing Gristle/Psychic TV, etc. In terms of presses, there are also so many. Jonathan Williams' Jargon Society Press has really been on my mind lately. Contemporary publishers like Roma Publications out of Amsterdam, Primary Information and The Song Cave in New York keep me excited to keep making things (among so many others).

**Do you see Pre-Echo Press as an extension of your studio practice as an artist? If so, in what ways?**

I do, mainly in that both have fascination as an origin point and are or try to be extremely improvisatory and focused on question-asking, problem-solving, play and poetics.

**You publish both books and recordings (music.) As both a fan and a publisher how do you approach these different mediums? Do their audiences overlap?**

I approach them the same way. We haven't made a record in a while, but I tend to consider both the content of books and recordings as well as the materiality of the objects themselves. The synthesis of the two is really the focus. The audiences definitely overlap in my opinion, or I want to force them to!

**How would you characterize your collaborators, which includes artists as distinct as Ken Tisa, Elisabeth Kley, Sanou Oumar, Nick Relph and Peter Shire, and musicians such as Alexis Taylor or Jefre Cantu-Ledesma. Does anything connect them?**

It's hard to answer this question— I would just imagine that what connects them is me, maybe? The course of my life and friendships and connections has somehow magically brought me into contact with each of these amazing humans. I'm not so worried about a 'vision' for the press. Maybe a pattern will emerge later, maybe not.

**Small presses are invariably labor-of-love enterprises. What are the best parts of running the press, and what are the biggest obstacles that you face as an artist-publisher?**

I don't want to add stress or anxiety to anyone's world, or to create a situation where anyone is rushing to finish something, making compromises or not getting compensated for their work, etc. These can quite often be the basic conditions of publishing and of small presses especially. Thinking of it as a real labor of love and an extremely personal endeavor, I've tried to just go really slow and to discard deadlines if they don't make sense, to not follow any

schedule, and to just follow the logic and timeframe of the project and anyone working on it, all of whom are usually artists working on a million other things at the same time. This has made it all very 'stop and start', and along the way I realized I needed help in order to continue, so I sought out that help. Therefore I hope I've been able to avoid most of the heartache and headache usually involved in all of this. Fingers crossed.

**You just released '*Monsters*', a second book with Nick Relph, what can we look forward to in the near future from Pre-Echo Press?**

We have a book ready to go with my friend the filmmaker Matt Wolf, based on his beautiful film '*Recorder*', and we are deep at work on our biggest project to date in collaboration with one of my favorite curators/writers, Jordan Stein; a major monograph on the painter Miyoko Ito. We are all extremely, ecstatically excited about this.

**Finally, if you could work on a project with any artist or musician - living or dead - who would it be?**

I'd love to do something with Vini Reilly/the Durutti Column, but... you know, I think that idea of the fantasy or dream project is the actual impetus of the whole project!

Matt Connors would like to thank Marnie Briggs, Joe Gilmore, Josie Keefe, Jacob Robichaux, and Grant Schofield, as well as all of the participating artists and galleries, for their support.

Matt Connors and White Columns would like to thank Maharam for their generous support of this exhibition. For more information about Maharam Digital Projects by Elisabeth Kley and Sanou Oumar, please visit [maharam.com](http://maharam.com).

To learn more: [info@whitecolumns.org](mailto:info@whitecolumns.org)