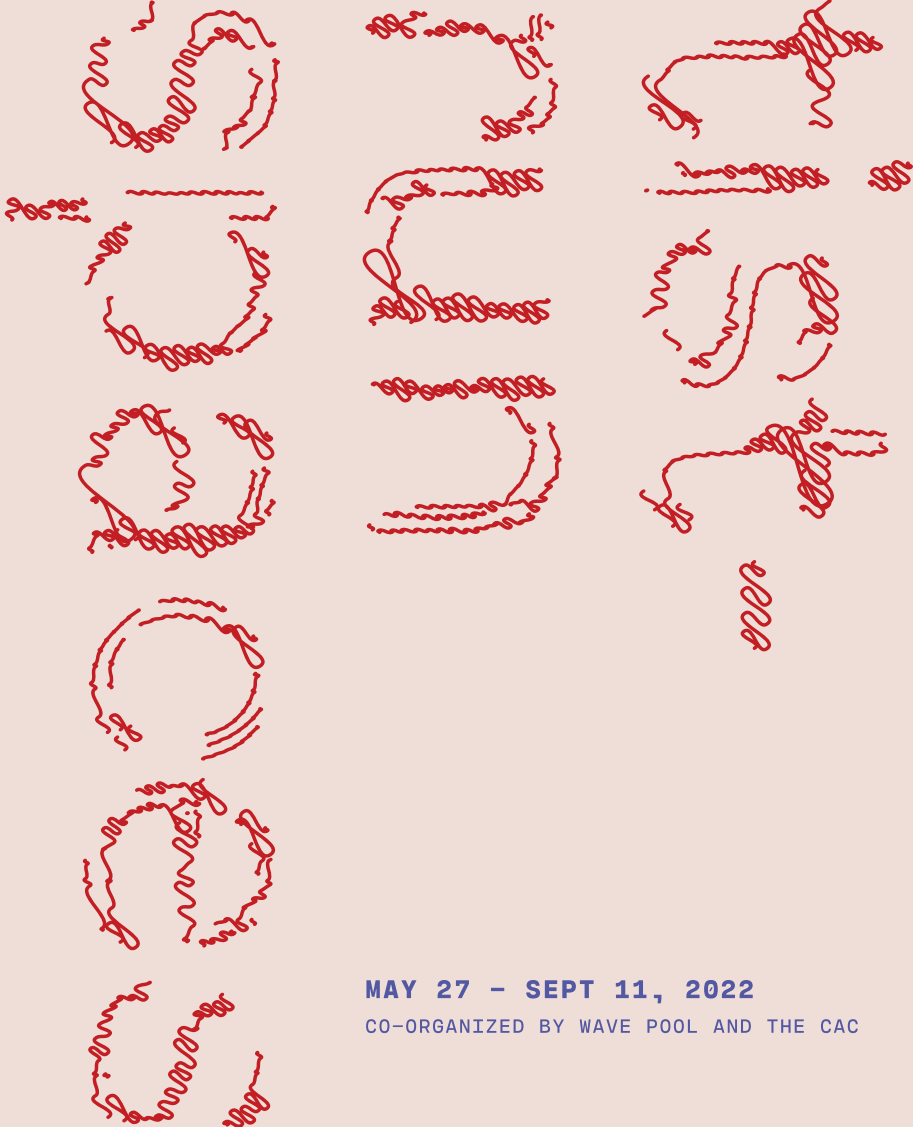


EXHIBITION AT THE
CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER
CINCINNATI, OH



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CO-ORGANIZED BY WAVE POOL AND THE CAC

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artist-run spaces

Artist-Run Spaces is an assemblage of ten independent arts organizations, non-profits, and collectives based throughout Ohio and Northern Kentucky. Sometimes known as artist-run, alternative, DIY, or independent spaces, they have historically been hubs of experimentation and community-building organized by artists for artists. Often rejecting more commercialized or institutionalized platforms, they privilege interdisciplinary exchange, grassroots organizing, and learning. Circumventing the bureaucracy, gatekeeping, and loaded histories of the sterile “white cube” of a contemporary gallery, they create experiences and spaces that foster mutual exchange and collectivism.

Artist-run spaces take on different formats—a book fair, a farm, a home, an archive, a radio program—to respond to the urgencies of a hyper-local creative communities. Some of the participants featured here, including **Basketshop**, **The Neon Heater**, **Rainbow**, and **Storefronts**, organize regular exhibitions and gatherings in reclaimed storefronts or office spaces. Others, including **Akhsótha Gallery (ATNSC)**, **The Blue House**, **The Lodge KY**, and **PIQUE**, have transformed their residences into hybrid live/work areas

that create safe spaces and blur the boundaries between life and art. The remaining participants refuse the notion of a conventional “exhibition space” altogether and devise alternative approaches. **Section 15 Fraction 6 31.83 AC** transforms swaths of farmland into concepts for new forms of living and leisure, and the **Cincinnati Art Book Fair** holds an annual gathering and trade fair of independent publishers.

This multifaceted exhibition features installations that have been developed by the selected organizations to highlight their mission and works by artists or makers who are part of their networks. Although there are no overarching themes, the plurality of approaches, styles, and perspectives encapsulates the modus operandi of artist-run spaces and the value they bring to the communities they serve—an ever-changing counterpoint or reflection of the now. By giving a platform to these artist-run spaces, this exhibition showcases some of the most exciting and experimental work being done throughout the region—even right in our backyards.

— Amara Antilla, Senior Curator at Large at the Contemporary Arts Center, Cal Cullen, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Wave Pool, and Stephanie Kang, Assistant Curator at the Contemporary Arts Center

MAKING IT WORK:

ARTIST-RUN SPACES AS THE ULTIMATE ARTISTIC EXPERIMENT

There is a joy, a freedom, and a willingness to “make it work” that is found almost solely in artist-run spaces. We, as artists, identify a void in the offerings of the cultural centers in our region, and we aim to fill it. We do this almost always with not much more than a couple of walls, a hammer, and an insatiable desire to make it so. Often begun with little to no curatorial experience, these spaces become the ultimate learn as you go laboratories, and being artist-run, the spaces are often more artistic endeavors unto themselves than curatorial models at all.

Perhaps this is why often the most interesting, or at least the most experimental, art happens in these spaces.

Since graduate school, I have personally had the privilege to be a part of three of these spaces thus far. They have a natural life span as most things do, and perhaps that is part of their appeal, and why they are so important. They originate to fill a gap, often through little more than will and gumption, and fade through both natural and unnatural causes; the founders might find other interests, move, get new jobs, argue and part ways, get kicked out by landlords, the building sells, the neighborhood becomes gentrified and unaffordable, etc., etc.

This life cycle is often protested against by artists and art lovers alike. Change is disappointing, especially when it signifies an end of a beloved space. However, the instability of the artist-run space continually allows for new crops of spaces to emerge every few years, answering different questions, and giving younger artists the opportunity to make a space in their own vision. Of the three spaces I have been a

part of, each had their own transition story. The first, a space called EPISODE that existed in a house in Northside, Cincinnati, died naturally as we all moved on from the city and the school that kept us connected. The space had only marginal success but the lessons learned and relationships developed through that space have served me well, long into my career as an artist and arts administrator. The second, Adobe Books Backroom Gallery, which I had the privilege of directing as it transitioned to a co-op model and to a new location, is continuing to go strong, now over 20 years old. The space and programming continues to garner fresh energy and ideas that keep it relevant and vibrant in the Mission District of San Francisco. This long-term success as a scrappy, artist-run space is largely because it exists within a for-profit bookstore that holds space for it and naturally generates new energies to organize and care for it. The third and final space I have been involved with, Wave Pool, which I co-founded in 2014, has now evolved into a quasi-institution all its own. Still artist-run, but no longer the scrappy, anything goes space that it was founded as, it evolved naturally from a deep desire to substantially and sustainably support local artists and the community it resides within, and to achieve this goal we needed it to be legal, legitimate, fundable, and long-lasting.

I am extremely proud and happy of the way that Wave Pool has evolved, risen to the occasion to pay artists fairly and make strides for our community at large. However, it would be shortsighted and negligent if I said that all of this change is good, or that this path should be the

answer or optimal progression for every artist-run DIY space. Notable things get lost in the midst of procedures, policies, and committees.

Somehow the well-funded white walls of a proper museum collapse the energy and excitement of arts-workers, making them almost always the “no” people, telling artists what they can’t do in their space rather than bending over backwards to make the impossible possible.

It is easy to see the appeal of a rule-less space where creatives are in charge and willing to shed their blood, sweat, and limited free-time to assist others in making magic happen out of nothing.

Often these projects are completely obnoxious in their ambition, attempting (and often pulling off) incredible feats of administrative and logistical deftness, defying the unorganized artist stereotype. Whether it’s 24-hour performance marathons, dozens of exhibitions over a few month period, or expansive mile-long artistic dinners, the projects that come of out artist-run DIY spaces often surpass the accomplishments of their well-polished and vetted counterparts, if in only earnestness and moxie alone.

There is something about an independent vision, unreined in by budgets, insurance, or even collectors, that produces surprising and fulfilling results.

This exhibition is a time capsule of this moment, in this region, brought together to showcase the diversity and rigor of a small selection of what local artist-run spaces are producing. The variety and wealth of regional artist-run spaces in the Cincinnati area is astounding and nothing short of essential to the health of the culture of our city. These spaces feed artists in ways that

museums cannot, fostering young artists with visions as they provoke, challenge, and build community in real, tangible, and intangible ways. It’s hard to quantify the impact of these spaces, but the ripple effect of their presence and programming runs far and deep. I hope you enjoy what they have pulled together for you here, and proceed to seek out and enjoy their programming in their respective spaces in the future.

—Calcagno Cullen

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

with Amara Antilla, Stephanie Kang, Ian Breidenbach, Nicholas Arnold, M. Carmen Lane, and Ian Hersko

Amara Antilla, Senior Curator at the Contemporary Arts Center (AA): I'm Amara Antilla, Senior Curator at Large at the CAC. I was really excited to think about putting this project together as kind of introduction to artist-run spaces and ad hoc projects that have emerged out of people making space—a temporary storefront or other kinds of grassroots projects. I think they are really the lifeblood of our creative ecosystems, and the way that so many artists find their way into the field, and such a necessary alternative to larger institutional structures. I'm really happy that you've all been part of this process of putting together *Artist-Run Spaces* for the CAC.

Stephanie Kang, Assistant Curator at the Contemporary Arts Center (SK): Yeah, thanks so much, everyone, for joining us today. Maybe just to start off the conversation, it'd be great to hear about how you work within your own local communities. Why did you choose to set up a space located in Ohio? What are the benefits to working specifically within your area?

Ian Breidenbach, founder of The Neon Heater (IB): I went to Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio for undergrad, where I met Nick Arnold. After we both graduated, we did a collective called Broken Dayton, where we went around to a bunch of smaller communities that were hard hit by the recession and started doing art projects there. When we were winding down, I started The Neon Heater in a building in Findlay, Ohio (where I'm originally from) that had predominantly been artist studios for 40 years just through the generosity of one of the people in town. She

really loved artists and kept the rent low. So, in 2012, I started it and passed it off when I went to Texas to go to grad school, but took it back over when they bailed. So, it's still currently running, and we will be moving back in a week or two.

Nicholas Arnold, co-founder of The Blue House (NA): We started the Blue House in 2014 when my partner Ashley Jonas and I moved to Dayton, Ohio and we found that there wasn't a real robust arts community. And we thought, why don't we try and create a place where that can happen? And The Blue House came about because a friend of ours had bought a house for \$28,000 in the wreckage of the housing crisis and wanted to start an art center. And we kind of said, sure, why not? We put on exhibitions in the house and lived there for seven years. And then with the pandemic, we closed the doors of the gallery, but we currently still operate, curating exhibitions around Dayton and working with community partners on different projects.

M. Carmen Lane, founder of ATNSC and Akhsótha Gallery (MCL): The ATNSC Center for Healing and Creative Leadership is sited in a house that was slated for demolition in the Buckeye Shaker neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio. Initially, the project was interested in a commercial space and bumped into the power and politics of development in the neighborhood. And we partnered with a housing nonprofit to receive a land bank home and up to \$25,000 towards the renovation. So, we were one of six projects chosen. The renovation was completed in November of 2020, during the pandemic,

and part of the negotiation around the space is that artists could live, work, and exhibit here in response to a disinterest in developers accessing a commercial space to use as a gallery. And so, we've sited the gallery in the two-car garage in the back of the house. A lot of this project came out of irritation from conversations around equity and inclusion, so the project is really about showing, not telling or explaining or deciding to have a seat at the table, but really just embodying the values around access to ideas and experimentation. And the radical notion of this project is that it is rooted in a neighborhood rather than in a city-identified arts and culture hub. Historically, the neighborhood was predominantly Hungarian at one point, and then after white flight, it became an African American community. My family has lived in Northeast Ohio for several centuries. And so, for me, this project is also rooted in what we like to call "place reclamation," that rather than an arts and culture project covering up or being an intervention around gentrification, we excavate and tell the stories of all the peoples and families that have occupied the space before us. Similarly, I live here as the steward of the project, but also as a neighbor to the community so that there's a point of contact and relationship.

Ian Hersko, founder of Rainbow (IH): Rainbow just started in 2021, so it's pretty new. And I think the thing that really made me want to start it was because there was a mass exodus a couple of years ago, where a lot of really powerful creatives left the city. These were people I really looked up to in the community, and they were running spaces that I really loved. So, it just felt like it was time to start the next cycle. There's a lot of great places in Cincinnati to see—there's definitely no lack of art scene. We have the CAC and even the Cincinnati Art

Museum bringing some great out of town talent into our city. But what I really wanted Rainbow to do, outside of its community programming events, was bring emerging artists from outside the city here. Because no one gets to see the emerging artists, the people who don't quite have a career yet. What are they making in other cities across the U.S.? It's been really important to me to bring that work into the city and having an unapologetically gay as hell space, where people can come and be their best freakiest selves. So, it's been really fun.

AA (CAC): A lot of you talked about inhabiting the spaces that you operate and filling in gaps where larger institutions maybe aren't creating space. I'm just curious if you could talk about the ways in which that sense of autonomy that comes along with running your own space has allowed you to do things that otherwise aren't possible. What is unique about this idea of opening your own space and running it? What kind of possibilities does it engender that are distinct from other formats?

NA (The Blue House): We didn't know what we were going to really be when we when first opened our doors. We've kind of become a conduit for folks that weren't involved in the arts community to understand and see contemporary art. Because it's in a house, it has an approachability. Like people see our little neon sign and they know they could stop by and see some cool work. I think that was one of the biggest advantages for us—to actually build a reputation for showing contemporary work in an approachable atmosphere.

IB (The Neon Heater): When I was starting out, it was less about what I wanted to be and more about what I didn't want to be. I didn't want to be a commercial space, so it became a space where if I wasn't

worried about money, the artists then also didn't need to worry about it and could experiment with whatever they wanted to do. They didn't have to think about whether that work was going to sell or not. At the beginning, I think for like the first six years of the space, we just gave the space to the artist. Like Ian H. said, bringing in artists from all over the U.S. to a place that doesn't see this necessarily.

MCL (ATNSC): I think there's something about being sited in a home that invites some conversation about what it means for the community to be in conversation with contemporary art. I think it also invites people to think about what is the appropriate location for a work, what's the best space to hold it and care for it and invite others to traverse the city in a non-automatic way. If this project didn't exist, many people wouldn't come to this neighborhood at all. For me, it's also been creating or removing the obstruction of how you care for "local artists" versus "visiting artists." Because it's in a home, whoever the artist is, we're hosting them, we're responsible for them, we're caring for them and their practice in a way that the larger institution maybe doesn't have the capacity to do so. For example, last week, we hosted Shaun Leonardo, who's a Brooklyn-based artist, and some of his work had been in an exhibition that was cancelled by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland. Their decision harmed his relationship to the city, so by hosting him in this home and by bringing the community together with him and his practice, it really repaired that relationship. We've shown artists whose work has been shown in the Louvre, the Guggenheim, and Studio Museum of Harlem in a garage. And it really pushes against people's values and understandings about why this artist would choose to be

in this space rather than a museum. And although it's a beautiful experience, it's also a discomfort. Part of the intervention of an artist-run space is to keep those lines of demarcation in question.

IH (Rainbow): At the end of the day, the real treasure is the way we get to build relationships—do whatever we want, whenever we want. We don't have to answer to anyone or get it approved or put on a schedule or have logistics figured out. There's no money involved, which definitely limits the level of programming we do, but that means that every time we do anything with the artists, we're both choosing to do it because we see value in what the other one does, and we both think that we're going to help each other. I just can't believe how much that keeps growing exponentially. Even in between exhibitions, people just hit me up and ask to use the space to do a performance or document things, and I just drop them off a key and tell them to put it through the door slot when they're done. The level of trust that's involved in a space of this size is really beautiful.

IB (The Neon Heater): Yeah, that trust is a huge thing. Because nobody's getting anything out of this, so you have to trust that I'm going to promote it on social media or that I'm going to let people into the space that can't come to the opening. Yeah, I love working with people in this way. It's like handshake agreements to do a show in April—whatever happens, happens. Glad to see that Rainbow's doing this exact same thing.

NA (The Blue House): I think one of the feelings that I was getting from everybody was the freedom to fail, right? We can experiment, and if no one comes, it's not the end of the world. Like, we didn't waste anybody's money or time. But we've taken on some artists that go wild. When you see

an artist whose work is much more tame go a little nuts, it's pretty fun.

SK (CAC): Yeah, as you all shared, there's a lot that can be done in an artist-run space that just oftentimes isn't possible within larger institutions. I'd love to hear about some of the challenges that you face, as well, though. Even thinking about post-2020, where really all facets of art making were affected on some level, it'd be interesting to hear the ways in which you've experienced challenges and how you've addressed them.

IB (The Neon Heater): I think back in the pre-pandemic days, I was going full steam ahead, because what else are you going to do in Findlay, Ohio. I was sometimes programming two or three exhibitions a month and doing that for years. But I've learned in the pandemic to slow down a little bit. It was nice to then figure out a way to do performance art that people would show up at. Doing it digitally allowed us to open that up to literally anyone, anywhere. So that was a really nice thing. Video art exhibitions are the same way. They could just stay online, and people could visit it any time as opposed to coming specifically during open hours. Yeah, I think it's really allowed an opportunity for how you can expand your programming beyond your location.

MCL (ATNSC): Well, our space opened during the pandemic. We started out with virtual programming, and prior to the renovation being complete we did stuff in other people's places. I think one of the biggest challenges is also the resistance to you being present. I can't speak for others, but in my experience as a queer person of color, founder and director of an artist-run space, it is a threat in the era of racial reckoning—the idea that white arts and culture is being ignored or replaced by artists of color. For me, part of the challenge is to reconfigure the arts and culture

community, and an artist-run space may be the place that holds that potentiality. In this in-between time, people thought I was crazy to want a small space, and now, it really is the only configuration that people feel most comfortable in. During the past two years, we started a reading group where artists came in and out virtually. And now, this group of people wants to do things together in the space, so we've shifted to in-person gatherings. It's been really exciting to see people figure out how to make differently outside of whatever their default mode was prior to the pandemic. This space is inviting people to hold multiple realities in a way that I don't think other kinds of contemporary art communities can offer, and that is excellent. But that is a threat to the scripted ways of intervening around equity in contemporary art. If you want to see this work, you got to come to the ghetto to see it.

IH (Rainbow): I'm pretty much the sole funder of Rainbow, and it's hard. Something I'm curious about from the other people here is the process of filing to become a nonprofit. And, of course, wanting to seek grants but also sort of enjoying this place where we don't technically exist on paper. We like the way we operate with money in our current state, because it allows us to run on mutual aid. That really aligns with our politics, but also, we have the potential to do great things with more money. So, trying to decide how we want to walk that tightrope going forward, I think, is a really big challenge.

MCL (ATNSC): That's a great framing, and it really resonates with me because this project is a 501(c)(3). One of the best pieces of advice that I got was to only reach out for grants when you are very clear about what you want. So, if all the money went away, we own the building, we can pay the bills, and an

artist can do what they need to do here, in terms of research, rest, imagining, making an exhibition, and accessing an audience. For me, those were the conditions. However, to your point, around the autonomy and the politics of place, it's important to also frame this project as a work in and of itself, which means that individual artist funding is something that you can access towards the project. It is an ongoing work that, whether I'm running it or not, will always be run by an artist—those are the conditions. Taking a step back and saying what are the non-negotiables of this project has been an important conversation and question to revisit.

NA (The Blue House): We never did go 501(c)(3). It's still a debate that Ashley and I have, as co-directors. For many years, we just ran on a Patreon that brought in about \$2,000 a year, but that vanished with the pandemic. Our first successful grant, though, was after the pandemic through a community partner. The pandemic also helped us reshape and reformat what we were envisioning our organization to be. We weren't going to invite a bunch of people into our living room like we used to. Changing that format, utilizing our community partners, and engaging with the artist community in Dayton became our new mission. So far, it's been fairly successful. We're even partnering with The Neon Heater on an Artist-Run Space Symposium, coming up almost analogous with this exhibition.

AA (CAC): I feel like there's this tension between maintaining the level of ambiguity, flexibility, and freedom that comes along with running a space of your own versus the structure, stability, and funding, which are often associated with established or institutionalized organizations. So, I'm curious to hear about how you balance

those two extremes. How have you avoided becoming stuck or fixed in the way that you do things, while also avoiding burnout?

IB (The Neon Heater): I worked a job at a warehouse for a decade that I hated. That was how I funded The Neon Heater for the entire time that I ran it basically. I think having to step away and go to grad school made me rethink all these things, though. Who do I want to be working with? And how is it sustainable? As we started to open back up in the pandemic, I wanted to work with the artists that could drive there in a day. And I wanted to bring them to the community because that was the entire point of it in the first place. I think as we move forward, I'm going to scale it back a little bit, because I was showing artists from all over the world and having to ship work back to New Zealand sucked. So yeah, bringing it a little closer to home. Reacclimating to what the arts are in Ohio at present is a big goal of what we're looking to do in the future. The pandemic really changed the landscape quite a bit, and I'm curious to see what I'm walking back into. Still not going 501(c)(3) though. It'll still be out of pocket and ridiculous.

MCL (ATNSC): For me, every opportunity was a way to be in conversation and build relationship with the environment that I found myself in. Although I grew up in Cleveland all my life, I moved for almost ten years and returned to care for my grandparents. So, I didn't know anything about the city other than the past story I was telling myself about the environment. When I understood how artists of color weren't engaged or invested in, that their practices were not nurtured at all, it was pretty disheartening. But as I said earlier, irritation is generative. I was even tired of hearing myself talking about what was absent. So, I can respond to the

environment, invite others to play in the container of it, and demand something of the project itself. The question then evolved to, what are the resources required to support the artists that are gathering around the space? That becomes a part of my responsibility as the steward of the project. I have thoughts about nonprofit work, or about money in general, but I have to ask myself what resources are required. Then it becomes a different conversation outside of the realm of cash.

SK (CAC): A lot of what we've been talking about, I think, is what makes this exhibition at the CAC so exciting—what it means to integrate what you're all doing in your spaces at the CAC. So maybe you all can just give a short introduction to what you'll be including in the exhibition *Artist-Run Spaces* and how it correlates, or potentially differs, from what you typically do as a space.

NA (The Blue House): It's an archive of past exhibitions put in the format of an installation, titled *Welcome Home*. Because the gallery was at a house, all the works relate to the domestic in some way. And overall, the installation will kind of be a tiny house. I hope it's received that way.

IH (Rainbow): Usually with our programming, we would just give artists complete free rein. I think this time, we're creating the conversation a lot more than we were in the past. We are making an installation, and it's definitely different from what we might do because we're taking this as an opportunity to highlight myself and my collaborator Silas as artists. I have not made art since I started Rainbow, and of course, I would never show my own work there. So, we're taking it as an opportunity to fuse the work of amazing artists we've met since we've opened with some of our own visions. That spirit of collaboration is

a lot of what Rainbow is about. It's going to be a weird, glitchy cave installation that thinks about weird tensions, particularly when it comes to queer and trans identity and physical and virtual embodiment. We're highlighting three video pieces done by artists that we've met through this process. Two of them have just been cold calls on the internet, and they proved to be the most amazing people.

MCL (ATNSC): The project gives a sense of our history—the things that are rooted in the ground of the project and the people and relationships that have been in the space. One of the artists that we've shown is a man named José Rodriguez, and he shares a studio space with his daughter. I had to install work in Columbus while he was installing his work at Akhsó, and when I got back, the first thing he said to me was that he had to call his daughter to help him and get feedback. So, I wanted to embody that story, where the space can engender kinship ties and intergenerational meaning-making as an artist practitioner. There will be a video work of their collaboration that kind of gestures to that moment when he installed his work at our gallery. There's also going to be a selection of 18 books from our archive that will be installed as a part of the exhibition. And it will gesture to both what the depth and breadth of the archive is, but also visually represent how long we've been in the space. (In May, it'll be 18 months that we've been in the house.) The final work is six prints that are a visual narrative of how this project was born. That work was actually commissioned by the Cleveland Museum of Art as a part of their *Picturing Motherhood Now* exhibition. It was really one of the only kinds of works in the exhibition that talked about birth outside of physical birth. So, it really embodies my identity as a visual artist, as the steward of

this space, but also as a birth and end-of-life doula. Also, part of my identity and social location is as a Two Spirit person. And the values embedded in the project come from the Haudenosaunee, where the gallery and Northeast Ohio are, in the western territories of the Haudenosaunee. So, all of that will be immersed in these three gestures in the installation.

IB (The Neon Heater): In 2018 to 2019, we did a nine-month series of exhibitions called *The Temperature*, in which we were taking the temperature of the art world and the socio-political climate at the time. I partnered with 16 other galleries around the country to do 25 exhibitions in those nine months. We worked with 135 artists, but I never really got around to collecting all the documentation together into one place. It was a strange project, where I applied a narrative framework to my curatorial practice. It was totally different than what we had done at The Neon Heater before, and I curated all the works specifically to help tell a story. The works, the details, became building blocks for the narrative at large. And so, for the CAC, we're collecting all of it into books, so there'll be a few copies of the entire *Temperature* as just a documented book. There'll also be a couple of pieces from the actual shows—an entrance by Ella Medicus is a bone neon piece and then an exit with a scorched temple from William Fillmore.

AA (CAC): It's been really interesting to hear the terms that you've used to describe your space and your work in terms of stewardship, hospitality, trust, care, and joy. What do you think the ideal institution of today or the future could be? And what kind of methodologies, approaches, or formats would that embody? And is it in alignment with what you're doing now? Or is it something else entirely?

IB (The Neon Heater): I think a lot about the limitations and the shortfalls of museums and their histories. I think that's why there's so much possibility in thinking otherwise and reinventing those systems. The number of conversations that I've had in the last couple of years, especially during the pandemic, about how terrible academia is and trying to create some sort of hybrid art school education is what I think, eventually, I will be working on. Going to art school, and then having to deal with the bureaucracy of emails is stupid. Especially having done this in my late 30s, coming into a system that's very hierarchical felt like I was giving up the autonomy that we had created. I think that's where institutions can learn from—going to a more decentralized system and prioritizing conversation as opposed to lecture. I think that's where we're moving.

NA (The Blue House): Since we created The Blue House, I have since moved into academia by running the University of Dayton's galleries. I've tried to bring a lot of those same kinds of values, the same kind of scrappiness. I've also brought in more challenging artists to the university setting to, I guess, make it palatable for myself. It's not like I don't enjoy academia at all. But at the same time, I do. Bringing the kinds of exhibitions that I would have done at The Blue House to an institutional scale has been a challenge. I'm now inside of that system and trying to do something positive. I don't know if I'm getting there or not. It's a little mysterious and murky, but that's essentially my perspective on that kind of a question. Yeah, successes in that metric are kind of difficult to measure.

AA (CAC): Like the Trojan horse approach where you're embedded within the system, but you're trying to sneak something else.

NA (The Blue House): Yeah, the galleries were very traditional when I started. The first one that I curated at the university was this one called *Virtual Healing* that involved bringing an artist who created all these videos that had a healing tone. And then there was like a virtual reality Reiki healing cave. I think people were a little bit weirded out, but I think now they're kind of getting more used to me bringing in just out-there stuff and challenging the traditional notion of what art can be.

MCL (ATNSC): I have very strong opinions about a question like that. So, I'm going to just say simply, I think any institution is only as powerful as what we imbue upon it. And, for me, the museum should be a respondent to the environment. Given it is an archive, in and of itself, it's a storage facility that contains all the things unfinished, stolen, answers to questions that we still struggle with as humans. So, I think it is the responsibility of those who are in museums to create these opportunities to respond and be in conversation in the here and now. I don't have an art degree. However, I won't go as far to say that I'm self-taught either. I come from several generations of visual artists. My grandfather kept a woodshop in his home, and I lived there the first five years of my life. So, in many ways, that's the first art institution I was a part of. I understand that this project didn't just spring forth out of my imagination—it came from some core experience. So, what are the core experiences that we want to offer as stewards of arts and culture spaces? I also want to say that I hear this phrase: the PWI, the predominantly white institution. We are contained by the systems that we are part of. My training is as an applied behavioral scientist, and so I bring a lot of that theory and method into my practice and into how I lead this gallery and this artist-run space.

And so, the social psychologist Kurt Lewin has a basic formula for behavior and that is behavior is the function of the person in the environment. So, I think about that in the context of installation work, in the context of an artist's intervention, in the context of an artist-run space in a home or neighborhood. And if people who have the ability to be cultural workers in their day-to-day lives aren't thinking in that way about what they are creating, and what the conditions are for meaning-making in the institution (whether it's a gallery, museum, academic institution, or artist-run space), then that's poor stewardship, it's collusion.

IB (The Neon Heater): We can't be afraid to also take part in these institutions, because otherwise somebody else is going to step in there and keep the status quo. There's that Audre Lorde quote that you can't take apart the master's house with his tools. But you can really fuck his day up, so you've got to get in there.

MCL (ATNSC): That Audre Lorde quote is one of my favorites, because people usually read it very flat, and I read it through a system's perspective. We're all the master's tools if the system is framed and designed as a plantation. The enslaved were creating art in a contained form, so we can't say that art immediately is freedom in the systems or that the artist-run space isn't attached to these other institutions. They are institutions, and we all are institutionalized within this nation. And so how do we figure out what is our own decision making? And what is an invitation from the system to embody whatever archetypes that make up our day-to-day realities? So, when I hear that quote from Audre, it's an invitation to question myself. Am I distinguishing myself in some way and in my practice?

AKHSÓTHA GALLERY (ATNSC)

ATNSC (pronounced *at-aen-sic*) Center for Healing and Creative Leadership is a socially engaged artist-led urban retreat, residency, research, and exhibition space located in a residential home in the Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio. The project, rooted in place reclamation, acknowledges it is sited within the western territory of the Haudenosaunee, the former location of the largest immigrant communities of Hungarians second only to their homelands and currently one of several thriving historic African-American neighborhoods in the city. ATNSC lives at the intersections of contemporary art, centering Indigenous and Black arts and culture, equity leadership, healing, and change.

www.atnsc.org

In the tradition of artist-run spaces, Akhsótha Gallery is sited in a two-car garage. “Akhsó” means grandma in the Mohawk language and is named in memory of the founder’s grandmother Vivian C. Murphy.



BASKETSHOP

For the *Artist-Run Spaces* at CAC, Basketshop fostered an international collaboration of artists that focus on archiving the dystopian present.

Artist duo Chris Dreier and Gary Farrelly have collaborated from their respective posts in Berlin and Brussels to create the Office for Joint Administrative Intelligence, a nomadic operation of sound and performance that utilizes the aesthetics of bureaucracy to produce radio programs and convene summit hearings that walk the edge between banality and absurdity. Through their research, they strive to circumvent structural norms through the creation of a governmental organization that archives material otherwise overlooked in the current narrative of prosperity.

Included in the installation is a collection of circuit-bent instruments created by the artist/musician Elucidated Voyyd,

founder of the transgenetics collective CGRU (cybergrunge.net). The collection of electronic instruments coincides with Basketshop’s annual Transmission event that celebrates the contributions of the LGBTQ+ community to electronic music in Cincinnati, the birthplace of the sub-genre musical performance known as circuit-bending. Voyyd views the creation of such instruments to be a political statement in itself to comment on a society of excess consumer goods that are readily discarded as electronic waste.

BroadCast is an example of Basketshop’s programming that allows space for artist activism and the intersection of art and tech. The collaborative effort that is materialized from this exhibition includes artists that are able to identify with the city of Cincinnati in order to broaden a global dialogue of cultural similarities instead of finding differences.





THE BLUE HOUSE

Welcome Home is an invitation to uncanny hospitality; it's a compendium of work that relates to the domestic space, and an artistic archive of seven years at The Blue House. The installation invites viewers to step inside a blue house, feel welcome, and turn viewership into an act of curious belonging.

The works in *Welcome Home* deal with the domestic either directly or metaphorically—and sometimes even both. Some of our artists turn domestic objects fanciful, implausible, grotesque. Like a kitty litter box in which the litter has taken the shape of the Taj Mahal or a miniature swimming pool that is embedded in a collared shirt (white collar? blue collar?). Other artists challenge ideas of the domestic by critiquing and/or celebrating capitalism and consumer culture, such as Ella Weber's *Lazy Boy Poetry* or artist Dave Scott's clothing line *T.E.D. (the Epitome of Dope)*.

Welcome Home is installed in order to simulate the rooms of a house. Works that are about food reference a kitchen, works that deal with garments or textiles reference a bedroom or closet. Like the uncanny, the works and installation are strangely familiar, welcoming the viewer to live in abstruse comfort for as long as they choose.

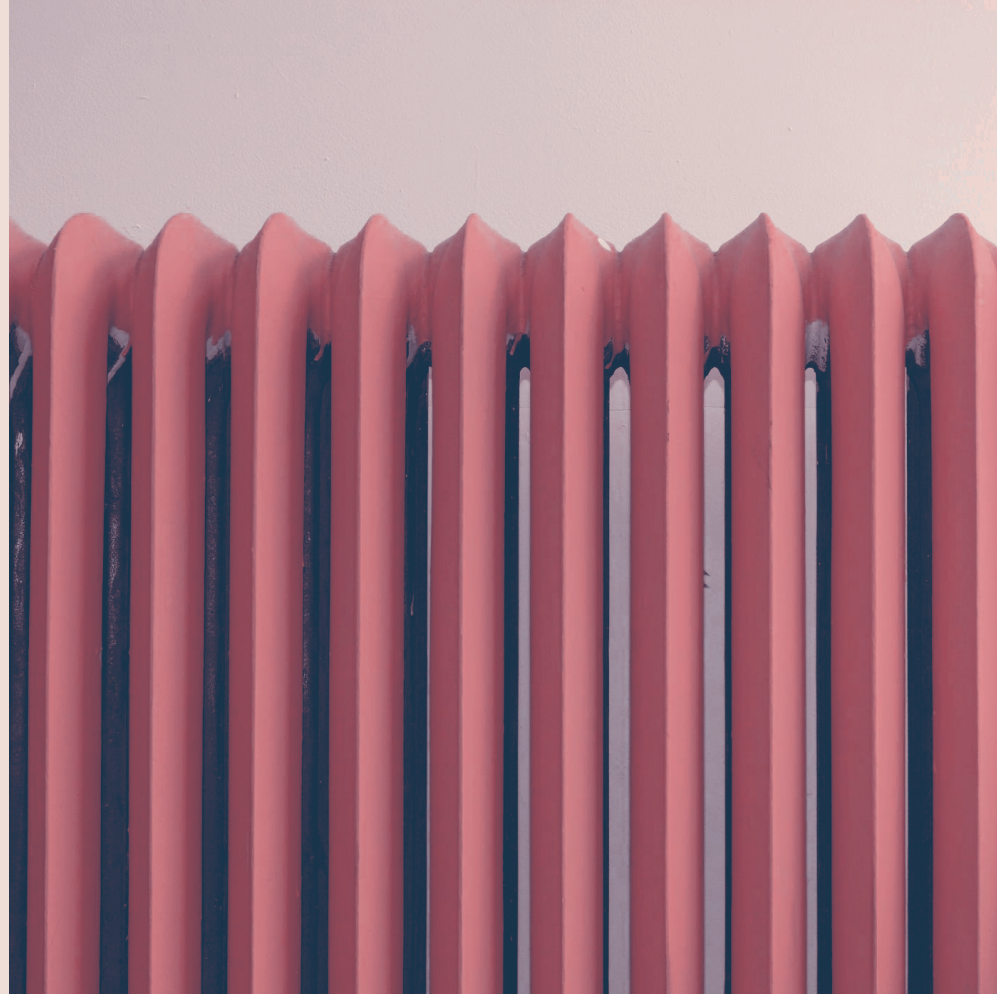
CINCINNATI ART BOOK FAIR

Founded in 2017, the Cincinnati Art Book Fair is an artist-run initiative to highlight those creating work outside of established art institutions. We believe in the experimental potential of artists' books and editions, as well as the democratic potential for those works to be dispersed among a wider public, independent of dictates set by the larger art market.



THE LODGE KY

The Lodge KY in Dayton, Kentucky is an art studio rental community that rents space and studio time to musicians, photographers, and other artists. Our 9,000 sq/ft Masonic temple features a world-class recording studio and two large theater spaces that allow for artists to create and record unique light and sounds. The Lodge also hosts live performances, art shows, film screenings, pop ups, music video shoots, clown classes, and any idea you bring our way. At the end of the day, we hope to provide artists in our region with the community, space, and resources they need to continue a life full of artistic expression. Follow us on The Lodge KY on Instagram and Youtube for upcoming shows or reach out to book.



THE NEON HEATER

The Temperature :: Omnibus collects, for the first time in one place, the complete curatorial project *The Temperature* in book form. *The Temperature* was a series of 25 exhibitions, featuring the work of 135 artists across 17 artist-run galleries, which took place between September 2018 and May 2019. Built using a narrative conceptual framework, *The Temperature* sought to understand the art world and the socio-political climate of the time, and offer strategies to change it.

PIQUE

How to PIQUE:

Have no hierarchy for art or ideas.
Build clubhouses.
Sleep with art.
Dance with hotdogs.
Attempt everything.
Draw something.
Write your own plays and perform them.
Never let yourself be fully defined.
Drink many shots of Turkish coffee.
Read philosophy to house plants.
Create your own absurdist comedy talk show.
Play heavy metal music with a trombone.
Host a Fluxus Club.
Try getting hypnotized and then play some music.
Have an art experience for 24 straight hours.
Begin things at :13 after the hour.
Have an art show on a bus.
Make a zine.
Put a cake in the basement (but beware of flies).
Perform a Korean ritual with an added male body part.
Invite your Lyft driver to an art show.
Sing from inside a suitcase.
Believe in art.
Write letters to an inmate.
Have an art experience in a Uhaul.

Consign your memories and have a memory pullock.
Hang up posters to remember to love your pancreas.
Make art about Madeline Stow(e).
Travel through time.
Take pictures of the river.
Make art about libraries.
Laugh for an hour straight.
Give yourself a tattoo.
Start something not knowing how it will finish.
Sew extra pockets in your pants.
Make sales while you lucid dream.
Paint with puffy paint.
Go on a paper pulp scavenger hunt.
Project a video onto trains.
Write and listen to poetry.
Especially listen to a poetry read from a computer.
Apply to grants and residencies.
Weave things.
Invite someone to give you a concert for your birthday.
Create a magical space that adapts for whatever an idea needs it to be and where everyone is welcome.



RAINBOW



In the face of hegemony, DO IT YOUR FUCKING SELF!

Our purpose as emerging artists is to serve other emerging artists and bring fresh, transgressive art to Cincinnati while providing space for local makers and performers. In an artist-run space, there is no individual, everything we do, as a collective, is to build and serve our community. We strive to celebrate underrepresented creatives while focusing on critical dialogue, new aesthetics, and anti-capitalist sentiments.

Rainbow is a gallery, studio, project space, and alternative, third space where curation and community organizing coexist. We trust our neighbors, artists, and ourselves to lead with care then improvise along the way. There is an urgency to what we do because what needs to happen, needs to happen now. We are unfunded, uninhibited, and perpetually learning.



SECTION 15 FRACTION 6 31.83 AC

In 2016 we bought a plot of land in Athens County on which to live and work with the idea of creating over time a sculptural park and residency—an evolving site that would serve as a resource for both our dispersed creative communities and our immediate local ones. We envision this yet-to-be-named park as a crossroads also between natural and cultural cycles with features of the site taking shape at different timescales over the course of the coming decades. We plan for the park to be an evolving collection of works of art that is eventually open to the public.

Supported at the outset by the Prada Foundation, we began work in 2017 on an initial set of large-scale features of the property to anchor the site. This first stage, which is still underway, involved construction of a multi-use main building which will provide workspace, an event-hosting site, and living quarters for residency participants, an amusement-park scale lazy river, and a watch tower/elevated cabin in the woods atop the ridge of the property.

The property itself, previously a horse farm, is situated across the Hocking River

from the community of Canaanville outside Athens. Rising steeply from the floodplain along the river, the land is mostly wooded hillside, home to abundant wildlife with which another important and inevitable collaboration is formed. The landscaping we have begun aims in part to increase the existing biodiversity, and encourage that collaboration.

Currently we are in planning/fundraising conversations with a group of fellow artists and friends who will be collaborating on the next stages of developing the site, with contributions that range from an embedded ‘arboretum’ of unusual grafted and sculpted trees to a pair of kilns constructed from clay sourced on site to a commissioned stained glass sculptural intervention in the main building’s windows. In addition, we continue to use the grounds for evolving movie sets and as a location for shoots (our own and others).

We are maintaining an open approach to the shape that the park and residency ultimately takes, allowing its development to be continually informed and renewed by the different interests and intentions brought in by collaborators rather than hewing closely to a predetermined vision.

—Lizzie Fitch, Saria Pastor, & Ryan Trecartin

STOREFRONTS

Storefronts is a neighborhood-based collaborative. Most of us are not trained artists. We believe in the human capacity for creativity, that our lived experience puts us in a perfect position to make the work we make, and that art can be a powerful tool for social justice.

Grounded in these beliefs, we produce artworks that challenge and propose alternatives to the dominant social, economic, and political narratives in Over-the-Rhine and other Cincinnati neighborhoods. We invite folks to struggle with us, as we confront issues that impact civic life.

The socially engaged art we make is supported by students at the Miami University Center for Community Engagement. Our work can be seen in the MUCCE storefront space, and it spills out into the neighborhood, in the form of participatory performances, interventions, installations, video projections, and people-first urban design. Past works include *Vigil*, *Radio!*, *Wonderland*, *Time For An UPdate?*, *BlackLiberation*, and *Input as Poetry*.



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The Lodge KY:

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The Neon Heater:

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Section 15 Fraction 6 31.83 AC:

Lizzie Fitch, Saria Pastor, Ryan Trecartin

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