

Max: Our bodies have many, many inputs for environmental conditions [and built conditions] which alter our state of mind, our capacity to act—all of this stuff.

Elly: I have a really vivid memory of being a kid and someone being like, the sun is a star, and when it bursts, it's going to create a black hole and suck everything into it. And I was horrified. I was like, oh my God, that beautiful thing. And I was like, don't worry, you won't be alive then. And I was like, no, that's really sad. And also just the sun being this thing that dictates everything will also be gone. It's [also] small talk or filling time to talk about the weather; but also, the weather is the least trivial thing, bigger than most things we're busying ourselves with right now.

In their most recent exhibition together, friends and collaborators Max Guy and Elly Reitman talk in silhouettes. Outlines that offer an opening to more freely navigate a world that would prefer to delineate our edges, to foreclose impulse and instinctual movement. We're meant to keep static and apart in fixed shapes, via standardized rules and systems of symbols. "You have a silhouette, and so then you have an outline, you have a fill, and then you have whatever is in the backdrop [...]. It's the easiest way of establishing difference," Max notes. In the chance patterns of how leaves fall, or the acid-green-dyed river water of Chicago's annual St. Patrick's Day parade, in circles of keyholes and manhole covers and the broken record of circular lies and the breath from our lungs, the weather and mortality and other forces of the universe, together their work asks: how do we fill our time, while here, in these structures in these places in these physical frames on this earth? It's a conversation about alienation, but as absurdity, obliqueness, and an undercurrent of longing prevail, so, too, does the imperative of friendship.

Max: I visited Elly at their house in 2010 where they were making grilled cheeses for people. In 2011 we met again in NYC around my birthday. I was there to pick up art from Erin for Peggy's and my first exhibition in our apartment. It was raining when we ran into each other and we went to Sake Bar Decibel either that same night or the next, at an agreed time and date. Elly was very much a part of my reconnecting with New York as an artist.

Elly: Yeah it was your birthday and you had gotten ditched by XXXXXX and it was pouring rain! I had to do something. One time i stayed with Max in Baltimore on his floor right next to his tarantula Madonna

Max: I think we always have liked each other and admire one another as thinkers and people so while the collab has solidified in some ways (a name, Pluto), it actually feels more like a correspondence because not all ideas or dreams have been resolved. Also that might be because we're both idealists in our own ways, so it's actually really nice to fantasize together and just appreciate one another

Elly: I think both of us had very dark times in graduate school; a lot of our phone calls were about how alienating we found those experiences, how we didn't feel like we fit in, and I think Max is a big part of how I got through it. I think Max and I have helped each other really be our own artists and people, make the things we want to make and not what we think we should make.

Max: Yeah I feel like we kind of completed each other's sentences just now.

Elly: Lol

Max Guy lives in Chicago. Guy works with paper, video, performance, assemblage and installation. Guy received his BFA in 2011 from Maryland Institute College of Art and his MFA in 2016 from Northwestern University. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, including at Jack Shainman Gallery, Kai Matsumiya, Laurel Gitlen, and Nicola Vassell, (New York); Krannert Museum of Art (Urbana-Champaign); The Renaissance Society at University of Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Prairie Gallery, Produce Model, and Chicago Cultural Center (Chicago); Malmö Museum of Art (Malmö, Sweden); What Pipeline (Detroit); and Galeria Federico Vavassori (Milan, Italy). Max will present solo exhibitions at And Now in Dallas and Good Weather Gallery in Chicago.

Elly Reitman (b.1990) lives as a guest on unceded Indigenous lands in Tioh'tià:ke / Montreal. They received a BFA from The Cooper Union, MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, and diplomas in TCM Acupressure and Naturopath at École Setsuko. Recently they have exhibited work at Egret Egress, Baader-Meinhof, Joe Project, the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, White Columns (online), and Rumpelstiltskin. Elly will have an upcoming solo exhibition at Bad Water.