

project spaces

DEAR CONTEMPORARY ART LIBRARY,

I'M VERY PLEASED TO SHARE THIS EXHIBITION WITH YOU!

WARMLY,

U

project spaces u July 8, 2022 - May 26, 2024 S.A.A.G. Maansiksikaitsitapiitsinikssin Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Exhibition Timeline

2022

- July 8 August 6, 2022: u presented 24 project spaces in their empty, precollaboration state at a former dollar store in Centre Village Mall in Lethbridge,
 Alberta. In a storage room at the back of the store, u showed the video work artist
 talk. (pages 2-22).
- August 7 September 4, 2022: u sent the empty project spaces to the 24 collaborators
 and installed *diary entry 5* where the empty project spaces had previously been
 shown. (pages 24-41).

2022-2023

 Collaborations occured between u and Amy Yao, Maggie Tiesenhausen, Nicole Kelly Westman, Anne Eastman, Elif Saydam, Kate Newby, Alberta Rose W./Ingniq, Ian Rosen, Francesca Percival, Lilou Vidal, Kai Matsumiya, Teresa Tam, Studio for Propositional Cinema, Jesse Birch, Annie Greenfield, Jason Striemer, Eve Johnson, Nicholas Granada, Rita McKeough, Zoe Koke, Ashes Withyman, Nour Mobarak, Darian Schoenne, and Gary Uchikura. (pages 42-89).

2024

- project spaces opens to the public in the form of this publication.
- Essay by Ana Iwataki, On Making a Project Space: pages 91-94.
- Acknowledgements: page 96.













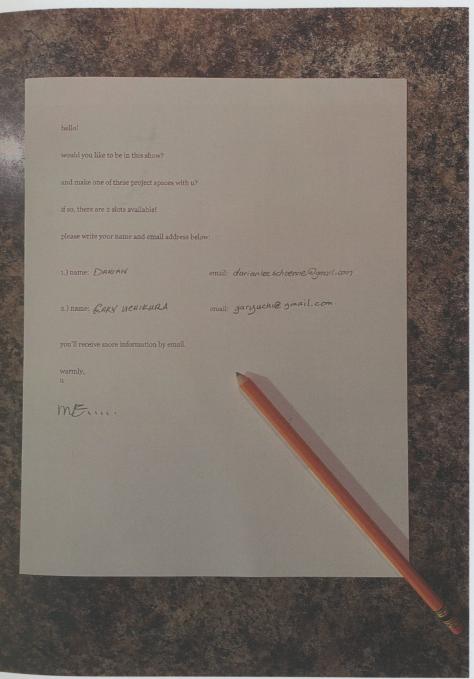


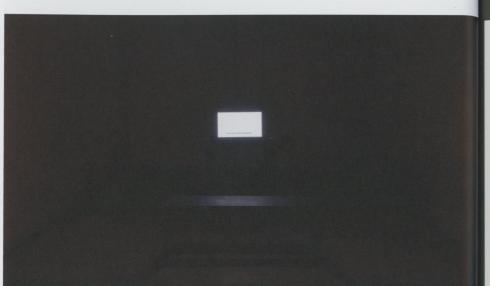












artist talk
single channel video
5:37
2022

when you think about it, it's just tape, taped to tape.

a project space is like a pottery and project spaces are like pots. the project space is most likely between the tape layers.



project space 22 Studio for Propositional Cinema and u packing tape empty: 8 ¹/₄" x 15 ¹/₄" x 20 ¹/₄"



project space 23 Amy Yao and u packing tape empty: 5 %" x 5 %" x 9 34"



project space 24
Anne Eastman and u
packing tape
empty: 3/4" x 2 3/4" x 3 7/8"



project space 25 Nicholas Granada and u packing tape empty: 5 ½" x 5 ½" x 9 ¾"



project space 26 Francesca Percival and u packing tape empty: 5 1/4" x 5 1/4" x 6 5/8"



project space 27 Jesse Birch and u packing tape empty: 5 ½" x 5 ¼" x 6 5%"



project space 28 Alberta Rose W./Ingniq and u packing tape empty: 5 %" x 5 %" x 9 34"



project space 29 Lilou Vidal and u packing tape empty: 7" x 7" x 9 ½"



project space 30
Jason Striemer and u
packing tape
empty: 3 ½" x 5 %" x 7 %8"



project space 31 Ian Rosen and u packing tape empty: 6 1/4" x 5 7/8" x 7 7/8"



project space 32 Teresa Tam and u packing tape empty: 3 1/8" x 3 1/8" 5 7/8"



project space 33 Kate Newby and u packing tape empty: 5 3/4" x 6" x 7 3/4"



project space 34 Kai Matsumiya and u packing tape empty: 4 3/4" x 4 3/4" x 6 5/8"



project space 35 Elif Saydam and u packing tape empty: 4 3/4" x 4 3/4" x 6 5/8"



project space 36
Eve Johnson and u
packing tape
empty: 6" x 5" x 5"



project space 37 Zoe Koke and u packing tape empty: 4 ½" x 5 %" x 9 ¾"



project space 38
Rita McKeough and u
packing tape
empty: 5 34" x 5 34" x 9 34"



project space 39 Maggie Tiesenhausen and u packing tape empty: 3 7/8" x 3 7/8" x 3 7/8"



project space 40 Ashes Withyman and u packing tape empty: 3 %" x 3 %" x 5 5%"



project space 41 Annie Greenfield and u packing tape empty: 1 ½" x 1 ½" x 3 ¾"



project space 42 Nicole Kelly Westman and u packing tape empty: 4 3/4" x 4 3/4" x 10 5/8"



project space 43
Darian Schoenne and u
packing tape
empty: 2 3/8" x 5 7/8" x 5 7/8"

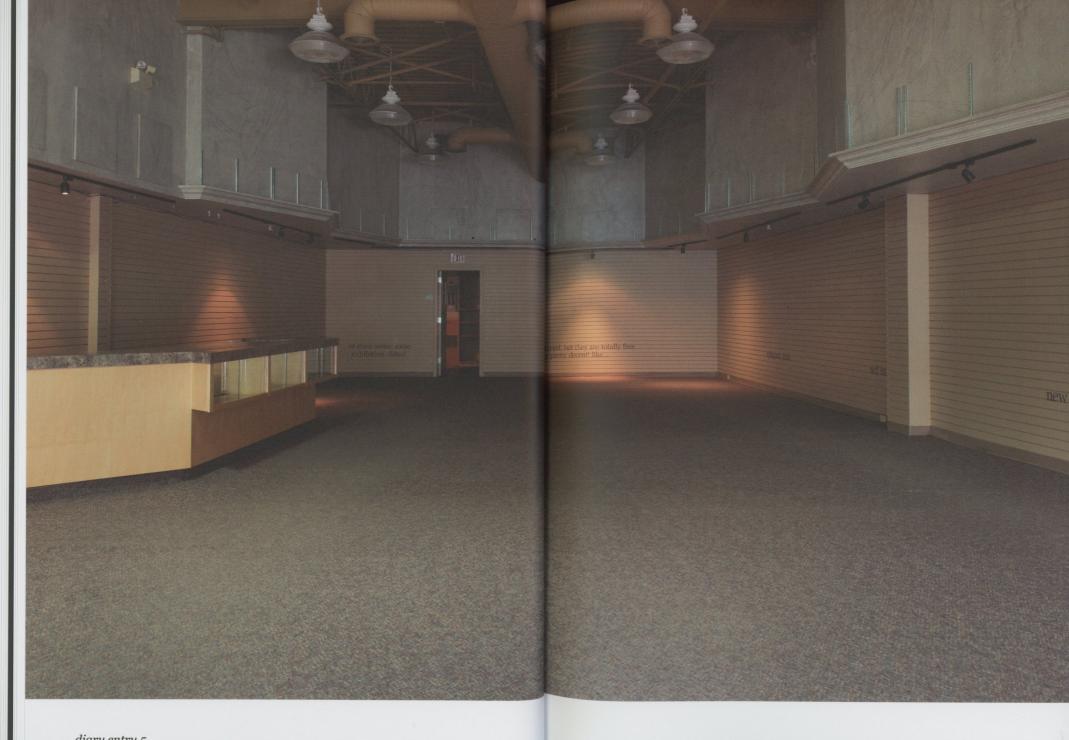


project space 44 Nour Mobarak and u packing tape empty: 6 5%" x 6 5%" x 9"

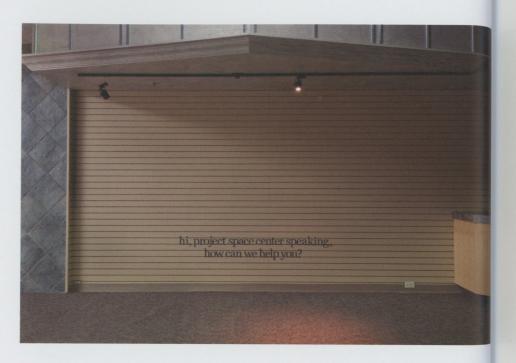


project space 45
Gary Uchikura and u
packing tape
empty: 3 1/4" x 7 7/8" x 11 3/4"



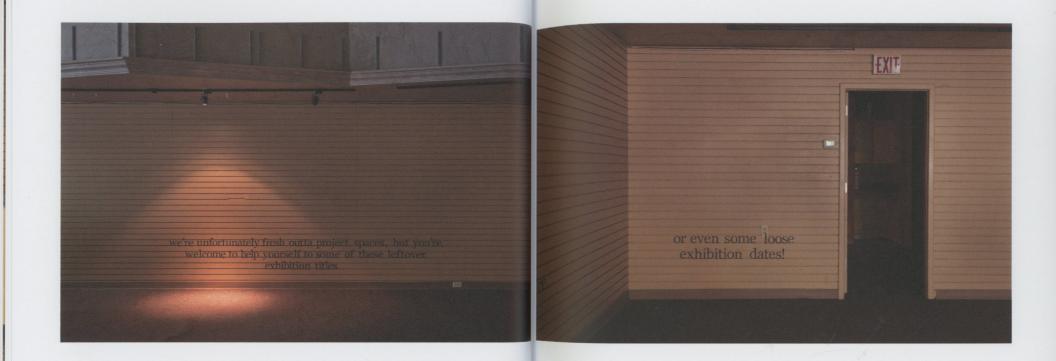


diary entry 5 u 2022

































Project space 22
Studio for Propositional Cinema and u
Lens and packing tape
8 1/4" x 15 1/4" x 20 1/4"
2022

Installation views from the group exhibition:

EVERYTHING IS BIG, SOMETIMES MONSTROUS AND REALLY INTENSE (alongside works by Benjamin Hirte and Jan Domicz)

Wschód, Warsaw, PL

2022





project space 23 (An Asian Christmas Clam)
Amy Yao and u
Asian clam, paint, glitter, and packing tape
5 %" x 5 %" x 9 3/4"
2022-2023





project space 24 (Notes in Hand)*
Anne Eastman and u
single channel video with sound
23:10
to watch the video: uuus.info/24
*this work may exist with an alternative title elsewhere.
2022-2024





project space 25 (Aquarium Space)
Nicholas Granada and u
Ceramics, mixed objects, epoxy resin, and packing tape
5 ½" x 5 ½" x 9 ¾"
2022-2023





project space 26 (Heart spill in the garden)
Francesca Percival and u
Bedsheet, pine needles, poplar hobby board, wire, silk,
Passementerie, vintage light fixture, and packing tape
5 1/4" x 5 1/4" x 6 5/8"
2022-2023





project space 27 (selected failures)
Jesse Birch and u
Ceramic shards and packing tape
5 1/4" x 5 1/4" x 6 5/8"
2022-2023





Project space 28 (Back in Black [Diamond])
Alberta Rose W./Ingniq and u
Wood, earth magnets, gouache on paper, and packing tape
5 7/8" x 5 7/8" x 9 3/4"
2022-2023





project space 29 (An epistolary narrative between U and I)
Lilou Vidal, Simon Asencio, and u
A4 letter associated to a book and packing tape
7" x 7" x 9 ½"
to read the letter: uuus.info/29
2022-2023





Jason Striemer and u
Collage and packing tape
3 ½" x 5 %" x 10 5%"

IAN ROSEN'S REAL ESTATE

Text by

Contemporary Art Writing Daily, Ian Rosen



Above, the single image is an artwork by lan Rosen, slid into your hands in the stream of broadcast. A keyhole look at a disco ball, Rainbow Fish scales, or some "funky" tilework. What is this artwork made of? This in your hands is the IRL experience. You are holding the exhibition. It is its own object, cycling through the flows. A nowhere. This is where Rosen's project exists, not in galleries but the cogs of art's social machine and public-in its displays. Printmaking in our digi-social presses. The master printer had been Contemporary Art Daily (CAD), where you may have seen Rosen's images before, each exhibition a small image floating without information or press release.1 You may have thought they were a glitch, a formatting error, an exhibition interns forgot to upload. In the phantasmic society of image today, where documentation gets a pornographic detailing, Rosen's reticence appears like a breakdown.

But Rosen's crumb trail is the product. Pieces of image, both virtual shrapnel flying though its pages and its rubble. They appear like defective thumbnails, parts, crops. Infer a larger whole. This is their inherent tension. A struggle to identify. Rosen says this one was "generated." Images whose reference point is lost. To further the wreckage, Rosen has since removed his name from Contemporary Art Daily. It is now nine spaces, and looks like this: UnGoogleable. But online, it's still a clickable hyperlink-the flow replaces subject. A dislocation refusing his object's context or identity, the generalized markers of "meaning." Like fragments we place to our foreheads and ask for their civilization's secrets, contemplate their use. But this is the fragment's use: to be interminably silent. Hold it to your ear and hear the ocean.

The ocean is your own blood flow, listen: "What you are now reading instantiates Rosen's 'art' as

much as anything." wrote Bruce Hainley in a 2007 Artforum review. "Cooperation," Hainley said, was Rosen's artistic medium. Cooperation "between Rosen and someone at the M[agazine], between you and me."

This is art's "law of conservation of social energy," per Bourdieu, "the product of a vast operation of social alchemy, jointly conducted." Between you and me. Cooperation. Art being our MMORPG. We choose a role, a class. Our in-game currency, symbolic capital, backed by our agreements and standoffs. We leverage the assets of our credibility in an attempt to consecrate ourselves as legitimate players—so people see us, be granted a power in art we might call, "the ablility to make visible." To make someone care. A magazine spread. The capital that Rosen borrows from a masthead "pleased to present" him, haloing his blast bits so it wounds your cynical armor and can't be ignored.

THE OCEAN IS YOUR OWN BLOOD FLOW, LISTEN:
"WHAT YOU ARE NOW READING INSTANTIATES ROSEN'S 'ART' AS MUCH AS ANYTHING." WROTE BRUCE HAINLEY IN A 2007 ARTFORUM REVIEW.

This is the field we frolic through, hiding in the flowers of our art, and Rosen mows. The lawn was the first status symbol for seventeenth century Europeans: fertile land wasted—turned to highly manicured, cut by hand, playfields. Waste shows wealth. Don't think of gold Gucci belts or peacocks' tails; that's tasteless and we're aesthetes. More like biological "handicap principle": Think of the male who wears sweatpants to a Lamborghini dealership—this is how he proves he can afford it. Think white walls at 100\$/ sqft making gilt frames redundant. Think fragments as sweatpants, his casual exhibition.

And I am the laurels' woven grass joggers. Look how relaxed I am. A magazine burns the real estate of its paper on me. Fashion pages exude their gloss so I don't have to sweat. This real estate equation—invisibly left in the margins of the pages—is itself the wreath that adds to the coronation. Waste is gilt. The show of flagrance, the burning, is the production. This page is the wastefully extravagant ornament, a hand cut field, spelling out Rosen's sweatpants.

Delete your name. This is, after all, the economic world reversed. Watch Rosen's glitches cycle through the streams as markers. Look where it goes, how it gets there. They are short-circuited buoys in flow, symbolic accumulation, accruing a necklace as barnacle hangers on me. The CV becomes the exhibition. For most young artists. Rosen bejewels his like pins on a map that has become the territory.

One of the funniest things about Rosen's project

is this confusion between exhibition, artwork, gallery, CV, and publication. The aggregator CAD having been the CV. The artwork lost to the digi-social nowhere. The gallery distilled into heraldry. The exhibition reduced to a thumbnail. The whole thing voiding place. A world where everything is punctured and exchangeable. On CAD, Hainley's Rosen review eventually replaced the exhibition: an image of the review is all that's left. This is the holy handgrenade's spirit. capable of deflating the thin films holding our meta game together. Art customs blended into one Rosen goo. It could all seem faithless, ironic, insider sport (it is) but in our current moment of everyone casting mud in an attempt to recite their standing, Rosen's vaporized plane aggravates the painful points of art, its loss to virtual social place. Rosen's playing without even making rooms full of paintings. The object, like a virtual Pong blip, bouncing around the art meta-gameboard.

THE CV BECOMES THE EXHIBITION. FOR MOST YOUNG ARTISTS.

This is our turf: the art metasphere of gossip and email and handshake cooperation. This is Rosen's real estate and ours. The exposed bedrock of art, not a bedrock at all, but a social-virtuality. Which hurts. Our lives are increasingly flotsam in the virtual, longing for real sand islands. A ground we need but Rosen's game endlessly exacerbates a world increasingly groundless. Rosen himself circulates a lot, the body is key to the game. But things get confused in this machine where everything is a stand in for something else. Digital pins in the map eventually become monuments in the territory. Further adrift in code and vertigo, and you there holding its exhibition. A game of access to the proper club for the golf shot. The effort is in the backswing of the drive, where the sweat equity resides. There the potential energy gathers, getting some heft behind the swing of his Hainley. Rosen's jewel that I am trying to drive into your forehead for it to reside in perpetuity.

And so here at the end is this image—a radiant, sparkling, deflection. A zoom into sparkly, smirking, what? Does the image matter, or just enough to get me spilling words. Think of the Rainbow Fish distributing scales, who wins? To sweat a pin placed into a map.

We are an aristocratic class, a chosen fashion class, whose wealth need not produce. Or what is produced is me, us, this, an ornate field. Glittering in the fragment of a disco ball, our dance, my face smiling at you. A game. The turf. Have fun. These are the grooming gestures. In your hands: real estate.

It should be noted that Rosen's exhibitions aren't always an image. There has also been a single second of audio, or a link to a lecture (not by Rosen). There is rarely a press release, or any given informative content. The image we're writing about was actually shown once before at "Apiary Projects, Cape Cod"—which when Googled pretty much only shows Rosen's project on Contemporary Art Daily.

Project space 31 Ian Rosen and u 2022-2024 ROSEN'S





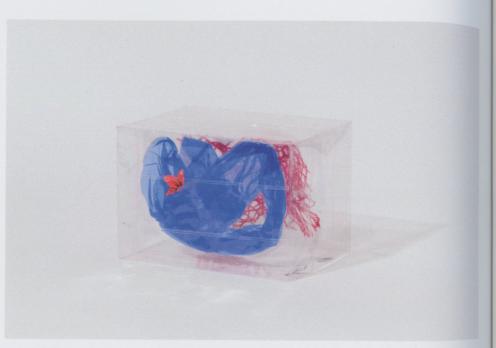
Project space 32 (from house 34)
Teresa Tam and u
Assorted adhesive tape, freight/cargo manifest, and thermal paper
3 1/8" x 3 1/8" 5 7/8"
2022-2023

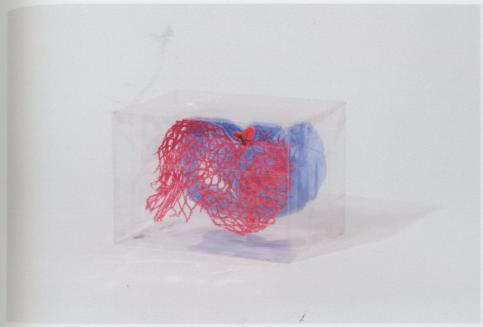




Project space 33 (More of this please)
Kate Newby and u
White brass, aluminum, and packing tape
5 34" x 6" x 7 3/4"
2022







project space 35 Elif Saydam and u Laminated plastic, found stickers, and packing tape 4 3/4" x 4 3/4" x 6 5/8" 2022





Project space 36 (Can Art Save The World?)
Eve Johnson and u

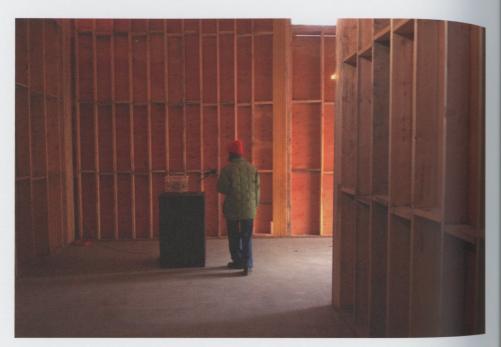
Needle felting, fabric wrap sculpture, and packing tape
4" x 6 ½" x 9"

2022-2023





Project space 37 (heart)
Zoe Koke and u
Bronze and packing tape
4 1/4" x 5 7/8" x 9 3/4"
2022-2023





project space 38 (a room to feel our words)
Rita McKeough and u
Scaffolding, soil, amp, speaker, and packing tape
54" x 24" x 24"
2022-2023

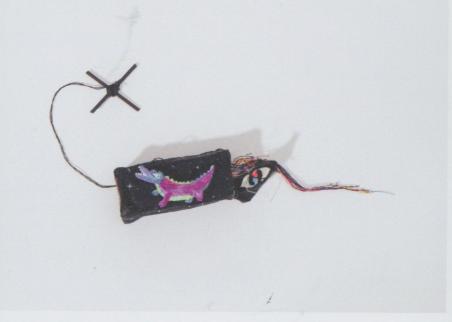






project space 40 (To Quietly Start a Skimmington from The Neanderthalish Proverbs)*
Ashes Withyman and u
Found bedsheet, fabric, wood, string, mask, collage, and packing tape
76" x 8" x 8"
*This work exists with an alternative title in The Neanderthalish Proverbs project by
Ashes Withyman.
2022-2023





project space 41 (I am an Alligator) Annie Greenfield and u

Steel wire, cotton fabric, felt fabric, cotton embroidery floss, oven-baked clay, craft wire, hot glue, interfacing, wooden skewers, acrylic paint, and pieces of the original packing tape.
1 ½" x 1 ½" x 6"

2022-2023







Project space 43 (American Spirit)
Darian Schoenne and u
52 packets of cigarettes, scissors, and packing tape
2 3/8" x 5 7/8" x 5 7/8"
2022-2023





project space 44 (\$300B)

Nour Mobarak and u

Red india ink and packing tape
6 5/8" x 6 5/8" x 9"
2022-2023





project space 45 (Pushing Hands)
Gary Uchikura and u
Impressed and carved coffee clay, polar ice slip,
palladium glaze, and packing tape
3 ¹/₄" x 7 ⁷/₈" x 11 ³/₄"
2022-2023



On Making a Project Space Ana Iwataki

A collaboration with u begins with an invitation. Where Sean Morel and "u" meet is where the invitation begins. Sean Morel is a person with an email address who sends international packages. "u is part artist, part arena—a transferable personal alias, and a social space for collaboration."

The entanglement of Sean and u makes possible a most curious alchemy that in turn makes their collaborations, especially the project spaces, endlessly fascinating and exceedingly difficult to write about. They are open—as in indeterminate, receptive, transparent. They are also sealed—a product of clearly defined parameters, reticent, enclosed.

In the summer of 2022, u had a solo exhibition called *project spaces* hosted by the Southern Alberta Art Gallery at the Centre Village Mall in Lethbridge, Alberta. 24 empty project spaces were exhibited. During this time, Sean Morel began corresponding with the artists who would receive these project spaces. The exhibition also offered an opportunity for two visitors to sign up for a project space collaboration. In 2023, these collaborations were continued, completed, and documented. This 2024 publication brings together the 24 project spaces. This third phase of the exhibition is its primary site, where the project spaces can be experienced in their most resolved state. Sean invited me to write this essay in the fall of 2022.

Dates and sequences are one of many funny, fascinating problems of Sean's work. Most projects have them and they serve the purpose they should. They bookend each ephemeral, tangible gathering of artwork, objects, architecture, people, processes. The dates help orient the memories of the participants and the understandings of observers.

But each of Sean's works—and I say work in the most broad sense—provides a wormhole to the next, or to the last. They are all imbued with an energy that hovers and reappears. This energy sometimes manifests as hints for particularly attentive observers or even as more obvious clues. But at other times it is hidden, meant only as private reminders for Sean. That is, until it isn't.

"I'm an artist based in Black Diamond, Alberta. As part of my practice I create projects as 'u' and also run a project space in rural Alberta called u's (formerly 67 Steps in L.A.). u is the letter 'u' in the word 'Current' on the 67 Steps website.

I'm wondering if you'd like to make a project space with me [I would be working as 'u']? Project spaces are small, six-sided, closed forms made out of clear packing tape. The process begins by me [u] making an empty project space and mailing it to you. From here, the options

are endless - maybe you want to add something to the outside or inside of it, or maybe you want to completely destroy it, or ignore it, or maybe we just have a conversation about it and nothing really gets resolved - whatever feels natural to you. An interest of mine is to lay the groundwork for a dialogue that is similar to the dialogue and relationship between the organizer of a project space (like u's) and an exhibiting artist or curator creating a show. I [u] will play the role of organizer, and will be primarily responsible for all shipping, documenting, promoting, and potentially securing exhibition opportunities for the project space."

Excerpt from an artist invitation

The conditions for the collaborations between u and other artists have thus been created by these parameters. There is an extreme purposefulness behind every decision. That purposefulness is the product of a deep well of intense energy and manifests in methodology and form. The creation, execution, and repetition of the methodology and form go on to produce systems of logic. Sean, u, and u's operate according to these systems. And their deepest purpose is to make possible the betrayal of these systems.

That's Sean's punk energy.

What does art want with us? A lot of times people set out to make art out of ideas and materials. A project space is more like caving in and leaving a saucer of milk out for a feral cat. Maybe art will show up today?...perhaps tomorrow?

Excerpt from u's artist talk

When I first received my invitation to write this text, I misunderstood.

I thought I was going to write something for a book about project spaces. I think he had the same misunderstanding. He shared images and information for each of the completed project spaces. He sent me links to the SAAG's exhibition page as well as documentation on the u's website, but said little about them. I sat with records of seemingly resolved collaborations, exhibitions, and artworks.

So, for a while I wondered what Sean wanted from me. Then I also wondered, what is art writing supposed to do? What is the work asking me to do?

Thinking about Sean's different roles, aliases, and modes of working got me thinking about my own. It seems so nice to have these distinct containers. It would be so useful for me here. I only have my own name and I didn't know which version of me Sean invited into the book. Obviously Sean Morel, u, and u's are not completely distinct entities nor can the work they produce be understood

in discrete parts. But the monikers are like that clear tape—if you need it to matter, it will.

What I wanted to be was both audience member and participant. I wanted to find a way into the system itself—not just record my observations as a scholar, curator, or friend.

I began to imagine the writing as its own project space—or at least a collaboration between myself and "u." I was bashful, even covert about this because I felt I was going beyond the parameters of my invitation. I had not been sent a tape cube.

"By gathering, highlighting and elevating the often unseen elements of an exhibition, u encounters and reflects its own prompt and provocation of the empty project space; what should go inside? Where will the work be located? Who is it for and what conversation do we want to have with them?"

Excerpt from project spaces exhibition text

It's not about what he wants me to do, it's about the conditions in which I am asked to do it. Actually, it's about how he creates these conditions. Sean, u's, and u are channels. They are a medium for inhabiting different energies and tendencies. They also direct and divert. They are like waterways that have been inscribed into the earth over time by processes of force or flow, providing a structure that can withstand itinerant disturbances like floods. Such complex systems also make confluence possible—the meeting and merging of bodies and flows.

project spaces as well as the individual project spaces crystallize that confluence. They are at once a pretext for their collaborations and the product of them. The aesthetic, conceptual, and practical choices that allow them to become resolved objects are traces of the temporary unit of u and each invited artist. The project spaces offer a platform and form to collaboration—as a possibility, as an activity, as the record of a transformative encounter.

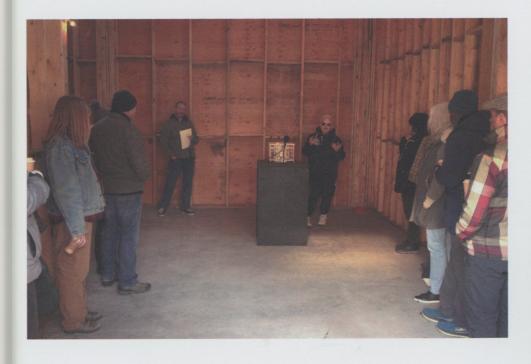
In our collaboration, I thought I might redirect the attention and stewardship Sean brings to other artists back towards Sean himself. I wanted to do this because I want him to be seen as an individual artist, not just someone else and u. But as I've spent more and more time trying to inhabit Sean's systems, I've reflected in a serious way about how and why we do any of this. Loneliness and isolation—as artists and writers—are byproducts of the work, not its resolution. So in addition to process, methodology, structure and intent, I'm thinking now about observation, admiration, influence, tenderness, commitments.

And this made me realize I messed up the timeline. (Again, that problem of sequence.) Because of course a collaboration doesn't begin with an invitation—it can be traced back much farther than that. Sean first situates himself as an

observer—a fan. An invitation is always fueled by enthusiastic, ongoing attention and curiosity. The earnestness of fandom has darker qualities too—things like obsession, isolation and aggression. The remote, solitary experiences of being both a fan and an artist alone in the studio can be transmuted into something much more intimate through the tender interpellation of an invitation. And accepting the invitation, especially from a stranger, but even from a friend, is an act of good faith too. On both sides there must be a willingness to contribute time, resources, ideas and other things we often hold jealously for ourselves. This is a glimpse of what is contained in the invitation to make a project space.

The invitation brings about the changing configurations of people and resources that in turn make project spaces. By design, project spaces archive various iterations of what we believed in, who we felt affinities with, how much we felt we had to give, and who we were compelled to give to. Project spaces are an opportunity to deepen our existing attachments. They can infuse the intermittent nature of adult friendship with the intoxicating energy of more youthful periods, when we had fewer resources but endless time for everything, including each other. Project spaces can make room in our lives for new interlocutors who disturb the systems we've become too attached to. In a very real way, project spaces are a way to materialize investments in each other's work. They announce torturously deliberated commitments but also the willingness to just try something for a time with whatever is on hand. They are that potent blend of structure and the unknown.

And in this way, we begin to understand the conditions that Sean (and u's and u) has created for us to make things together, again and again.



Acknowledgements

u is currently based in Diamond Valley, Alberta, which is in the traditional territory of Treaty 7 people, and u's activities occur on the land that is cared for by the Blackfoot Confederacy (inclusive of The Kainai, Piikani [Peigan], and Siksika Nations), Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Iyarhe/Stoney Nakoda people (inclusive of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). This land is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

Photos by Blaine Campbell (pages 2-12, 14, 18-22, 44-45, 48-59, 62-73, 75-77, 80-85, 88-89, and 97), John Dean (pages 24-41), Morris Nguyen (page 13), Stacey Watson (page 74, 95, and back cover), Derrick Birkmann (pages 86-87), Jan Domicz (pages 42-43), and Steven Cottingham (pages 78-79). Book design by Laura F. Morel, with support from Jason de Haan.

Full documentation of *project spaces* at uuus.info/project-spaces-at-saag

project spaces was supported by:





calgaryarts



Conseil des Arts Canada Council

SAAG SOUTHERN ALBERTA ART GALLERY MAANSIKSIKAITSITAPIITSINIKSSIN

Front Cover:

Video still from project space 24 (Notes in hand)* Anne Eastman and u Single channel video with sound 23:19 to watch the video: uuus.info/24

*this work may exist with an alternative title elsewhere.

2022-2024

Back Cover:

Mona Bess Morel viewing project space 38 (a room to feel our words) in u's hut (2023) Rita McKeough and u

Scaffolding, soil, amp, speaker, and packing tape

2022-2023

Photo: Stacey Watson



