

Atlanta Center for Photography Announces

Mo Costello: Forming sounds with my mouth to approximate something that's like a flood

Atlanta, GA, January 30, 2025 -- The Atlanta Center for Photography (ACP) is pleased to announce *Mo Costello: Forming sounds with my mouth to approximate something that's like a flood*.

The exhibition opens February 6 with a reception from 6-9 PM and runs through April 26.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

There are multiple relevant before's, before you read this. Before you enter Atlanta Center for Photography, you are situated on the sidewalk of Edgewood Avenue in Atlanta. Across the alley, rusted steel scraps trace the negative space of geometries and patterns, framing the business next door's perimeter. A sign reads 'Fred Martin Welding Co, Est 1938'.

Before artist Mo Costello entertained what artworks to display inside ACP's gallery, there was the before of ACP's entryway to contend with. A three-inch rise rendered ACP's doorway inaccessible, and thereby, inappropriate for the conditions of gathering that Costello's practice privileges. For those whose gaze privileges the wall over the floor, for whom entryways are automatic passages, for whom ease of entry constitutes community, passage over Costello's *Situated Accommodation* may go unnoticed, engaging the angled steel tread by foot nonetheless, to enter this building, to read this text.

"Welding everything but the crack of dawn and a broken heart" reads Fred Martin Welding Co's social media slogan. An uncontainable wildness permeates the social. What happens if we depend on each other instead of the state, and your neighboring welder is a poet who goes rogue, and the building has a three-inch rise? Modifying the term "Reasonable Accommodation" from Title 1 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Costello's permanent intervention into ACP's space was born through methods incongruent with the state-sanctioned limitations of the ADA, the legislative culmination of a history of radical disabled disobedience against structural ableism. Costello's site-specific solution to ACP's three-inch rise is concerned with responsiveness and relationships, not regulation and standardization. Designed by Costello through an iterative process involving extensive consultation and fabricated by neighboring Fred Martin Welding, the resulting ramp is bureaucratically unpermitted, collectively improvised, and perfectly accessible.

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The illegal, perfectly accessible ramp gets you in the building, where small-scale silver gelatin prints are on view. The photographs detail clusters of staples from telephone poles in the state of Georgia, a ritualized series Costello has been growing for over a decade. Each image carries

trace carries history: where once a flyer, now a staple. By what force did each flyer fly? Human hand? Record-breaking storm? The context is emergency, the staple gun a tool of urgency. Each staple distills the initial impulse to announce, communicate, commune. To reach into a public sphere, initiate contact, collide with a stranger. The echoes of former invitations – guitar lessons, mutual aid gathering, missing cat sign, Free Palestine, dog walker, yard sale, Jesus Saves, Stop Cop City, conspiracy theory – equalize in the remains.

A chorus emerges. The accumulation speaks in sumptuous vibration, post-language. It's a body-language of yearning, and the staple-pierced pole is a society. Shreds of paper, wads of gum join along: the staple-pierced pole is an orgy, and all are welcome in the pile. Costello tunes toward this desirous song in compact grayscale photographs that dissolve into textural expanse. The camera frames the cacophonous field. The sound travels beyond the container.

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The material intervention to the space's entrance combines with the documentation of accumulated public offerings to suggest the conditions for possibility. There's a revolution on that lamppost, there's no show without a ramp, and there's no ramp without a neighbor. According to Costello's impulses, the dream for a different world might begin with dreaming of people dreaming of people dreaming - of ways to come together in a room.

—Katz Tepper, Interdisciplinary artist and writer

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mo Costello (b. 1989) is an artist and educator drawn to the social life of objects. Costello's working practice revolves around the maintenance of small-scale, community-supported infrastructure for the visual and performing arts. Curatorial and studio-based efforts emerge - and often converge - from within this ongoing commitment to place-based inquiry and infrastructures of care. A recent recipient of residencies from Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2022), Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (2024) and Denniston Hill (2024), Mo lives in Athens, GA.