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TO (RE)ARRANGE A SITUATION AND LOOK AGAIN

A MANIFESTO OF AN ARTIST'S WORK

BEARING WITNESS TO CHANGE

by

Merrilee Schoen

BA Psychology 2009

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Fine Arts

(in Intermedia)

The Graduate School

University of Maine

August 2024

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Maine recognizes that it is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of Penobscot people, where issues of water and territorial rights, and encroachment upon sacred sites, are ongoing. Penobscot homeland is connected to the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations— the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac—through kinship, alliances, and diplomacy. The University also recognizes that the Penobscot Nation and the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations are distinct, sovereign, legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination.

**TO (RE)ARRANGE A SITUATION AND LOOK AGAIN
A MANIFESTO OF AN ARTIST'S WORK
BEARING WITNESS TO CHANGE**

By Merrilee Schoen

Thesis Advisor: N.B.Aldrich

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters of Fine Arts
(in Intermedia)
August 2024

This hybridized manifesto examines the artist's role in bearing witness to change within the built environment; inquiring how an artist might work towards altering dominant, pathological systems of power. The following manuscript outlines the artistic research pursued through constructing a short-term residency at a demolition site, 127 Hammond St Bangor Maine 04401. From January 12th to May 12th, Merrilee Schoen bore witness to the demolition of this site known to locals as “the old YMCA”. Through a self-directed, public and communal artistic research process called “site-work” she worked to understand systems of pathological power, the redistribution of material resources, and public experiences of change. The following manifesto was created by combining the tradition of a manifesto as a practice of principled, public declaration with the practice of Intermedia; a multimodal research-based form of art making.

DEDICATIONS

Alloy Group; Abatement and Demolition Environmental Service Co
Jamie, John, Todd, Elvis & Rocky

And to those that accompanied me on walks and on-site to rescue material objects, to marvel at machines and material forms changing, to share grief-space, head-space and art-space. To those that assisted in physically helping move material far greater than my singular capacity could. To those who read and re-read drafts. To those that listened to me through tears of frustration, conceptual head scratching, overly caffeinated excitement, obsession and exhaustion. To those who brought me meals, care packages and a steady belief in my process. To those who introduced me to the phrase and teachings of mark making. To those who guide me in radical resistance.

To those that entrusted me with their story; though I am a stranger.

And finally, a dedication to change, the ever-present carrier.

This manuscript is also dedicated in spirit and action to Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Anni Albers, Caroline Woolard, adrienne marie brown, Tania Bruguera, John Cage, Octavia Butler and many other poets and manifesto writers who constructed pathways towards alternative ways of working

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CHAPTER 1

ON THE CHOICE OF A MANIFESTO

This thesis manuscript is a hybridized manifesto. It was built by combining the tradition of a manifesto as a practice of principled, public declaration with Intermedia, a multimodal research-based form of art making. This manuscript is simultaneously an academic paper prepared for defense, a poem, a photographic archive, and an item of local record and oral history, all situated within the container of a manifesto.

127 Hammond St Bangor ME 04401, known to locals as “the Old YMCA” and subsequent site of demolition is the inspiration for this manuscript. Since 2013 the building has been unused, except as a site for graffiti and occasional trespassing. The site went through extensive alterations since the first YWCA in 1890. Between 1969 and 1971, the building was demolished and rebuilt. YMCA ownership changed hands, portions of the site were leased, purchased with failed intentions of alternative development, then purchased again in the hopes of establishing a dental school. In 2017, its final chapter, the building was purchased by Penobscot County Commissioners one day after it was condemned by the City of Bangor.

Through a series of unexpected encounters and conversations, an agreement was made between the artist and Alloy Group to encompass an artist's site-work from early January to May. 127 Hammond St became a robust site of research containing complex systems of power both within and surrounding the local community. Multifaceted social issues encircling the site became an integral part of the artistic research process. Issues of homelessness, material resource distribution, systems of power and governance and public reactions to change rose up as the site was razed.

Readers will encounter different kinds of statements and material in this manuscript. Included are declarative statements, quoted scholarly research and theory, reflective writings and transcripts, and photographs taken during the research process and from archives. Italicized portions in

quotations indicate the personal voice of the artist-author that are related but separate from the manifesto declarations. Endnotes are included for additional reference to images and quotes.

These choices were made intentionally to introduce an alternative to the expected forms of academic research and thesis manuscripts. This manifesto is an exposition of thought and way of working that draws inspiration from- though not as a subset of -academic methodologies and traditional thesis display. It is a direct extension of the sculptural exposition on view in Lord Hall Gallery though its form is quite different. An experimental and nonlinear compositional arrangement of information within this manuscript was the only form possible given its interconnectedness with the exhibited, sculptural expositional form and embedded theory of the artist as socially committed and politically involved.

CHAPTER 2

THE ARTIST OBSERVES

“You are entrusted with everything and entitled to nothing.” Alnoor Ladha (Raymond)

“What death consumes, life breathes itself back into.” Corinne Spence (Spencer)



Figure 1: “I live here bitch” 127 Hammond St. Bangor. February 2024.

Perceptions of Mark Making

“Material, that is to say unformed or unshaped matter, is the field where authority blocks independent experimentation less than in many other fields...” (Albers)

Mark making is the act of engaging with one’s surroundings by altering a surface, leaving it different than before the mark maker’s arrival.

At a basic level, observing involves perceiving. Perceiving involves responding.



Figure 2: “Bittersweet Piece” Dimensions variable. 2021.ⁱ

The artist responds to their environment. Mark making is a way of responding to an environment.

Arranging, curating and collecting material objects are ways of mark making within an environment. These behaviors inform how an individual can, or cannot, move through the built environment. Material objects signify an individual's experience with their surroundings.

In an ever-changing environment, the arrangement of material objects elicits a sense of being in control. For some, mark making and arranging helps in their comprehension of their surroundings as well as their perception of their own experience within their surroundings.



Figure 3: "Encounter with Site, Under the Penobscot Bridge, Bangor" February 2024.

Mark making with or on material objects is an expression of power; an attempt towards control, reflecting the social system one perceives they inhabit.

"Just as man is governed, in religion, by the products of his own brain, so, in capitalist production, he is governed by the products of his own hand." (Marx)ⁱⁱ

Material objects and arrangements are forms of capital, expressing value and power.

In the built environment, the surroundings are constructed by arranging and (re)arranging material objects.

Individuals of capitalist culture are powerful political mark makers reflecting larger social systems of power.

Engaging or changing the built environment with material objects reflects degrees of personal agency and ownership. The extent of one's ability to engage with or change the built environment with mark making and material object is an expression of their range of power.

M: "What are those? Are those the kinds of things that you would mind if I pocketed?"

J: "Go for it."

M: "Thank you."

J: "Yeah, I mean, usually the first thing we do when we get to a job, like Chris did yesterday, is walk around and see what's even good....it's kind of like your own little treasure hunt."

M: "So what are you guys looking for? What do you see that is valuable to you all?"

J: "You'd be surprised by some of the stuff that gets left behind. Like my buddy, Charlie, one time found a paper cutter, like a big industrial paper cutter. And, you know, he asked the owner of the company if he took it. He didn't. He ended up selling it for like \$5,000 in a day. You don't run into good hits like that very often, but they do that. A lot of guys do like to go after the copper."

M: "Right. Now, is that something that you all can make?"

J: "Well, yeah, I think like for us it goes back to the company...[gestures to floor] I love when guys cut pipes. I love when they cut pipes and they leave them like that because it's not worth it."

M: "Who did that?"

J: "Probably the abatement guys...I don't hate on them for doing it because it's, you know, worth it. But like, they don't own the copper, but when they come across it, they're going to take it. That's just kind of how they roll."

M: "When you're in the business of resource reclamation, right?"

J: "Well, those guys are in the business of loading their own truck." (Schoen, Transcript: Tour With John)

Individuals that are able to express personal agency and ownership within a built environment use mark making; the political strategy of arranging and rearranging material objects.



Figure 4: "Encounter with Site, 127 Hammond St Entrance." January 2024.

Mark making with found material objects suggests aesthetics of change, both violent and caring.



Figure 5: "Found Material Objects, 2nd Floor."



Figure 6: "Found Material Objects, Hammond St Entrance."

Found material objects are representative of a social system. Found objects are at times perceived to be low-value, low-capital material objects depending on the value system that surrounds them.



Figure 7: "Limbswish" Metal spring and curtain tassel. Baroness Elsa Von Freytag Loringhoven. 1917.

"... In her flat she collected celluloid, tin cans, toys, gilded vegetables, iron, stamps, pins and so on. By adorning herself and her living spaces with these found objects, the Baroness was a living museum body, an archivist collecting New York City's contemporary consumer objects. It's smells, its junk, but also its most recent market products frequently stolen from Woolworth and Wanamaker's... She took the 'found object' as her raw material, systematically stripping it of its conventional semantic, utilitarian, and pragmatic meaning. By reclaiming in a radically new context- as performance art- she effectively decolonized it from commodity status. (Gammel)iii

In placing meaning and value on found objects, the source and context become important, yet still unknown.

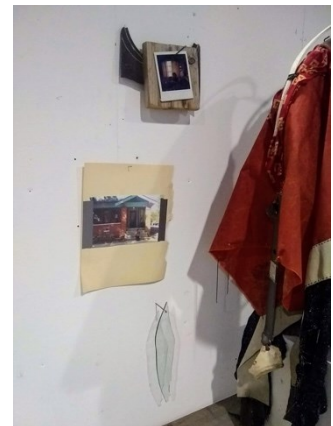


Figure 8: "Weight of Place" Found Object Multimedia Sculpture. Figure 9: "Close up 1." Figure 10: "Close up 2."

“Weight of Place is a sculptural study on displacement using found objects from travels along Interstate 80. The found objects were selected and arranged based on the unknown stories of their encounter and the meaning infused into the forms by the artist. The cloak, made from a discarded Thermarest camping pad, silk tie, Subaru seat belt. A table made from wood from the dump holds a compilation; an image of a houseless man named Jean sitting on the stoop of a stranger's home, a polaroid found in an abandoned Utah home. An open travelog left open to be leafed through, documents further material sourcing. Underneath the table audio recordings of a Comanche elder on his deathbed play on repeat.” (Schoen Portfolio of Work 2021-2024)

The artist working with found objects strives towards “systematically stripping it of its conventional semantic, utilitarian, and pragmatic meaning” (Gammel)

Artists respond to patterns and forms by arranging and (re)arranging patterns and forms.

Artists use mark-making to arrange and (re)arrange material objects as political strategy and as a reflection of the surrounding system of power.

Sculptural mark making which involves working in three dimensions, can be thought of as a site within the surrounding built environment.

Site is a location of activity and expression; a geographical type of mark-making. It is a microcosm of the built environment, just as it is a built environment itself.

Site can be a location of change or a “constructed situation; a moment in life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambience and a play of events” (Holmes)

“... the distinguishing characteristic of today’s site oriented art is the way in which the art works’ relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both subordinate to a discursively determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange or cultural debate.” (Kwon)^{iv}

Site is a perceived location and exists theoretically and geographically.

Site-work for the artist who works with sculptural mark-making and found objects, is the process of perceiving and constructing. Curiosity and observation are fundamental.

Find or make the spaces that can respond to change- or are the change.

Find aesthetics of violence- a brute instrument of change.

Find aesthetics of care- a tender instrument of change.

(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

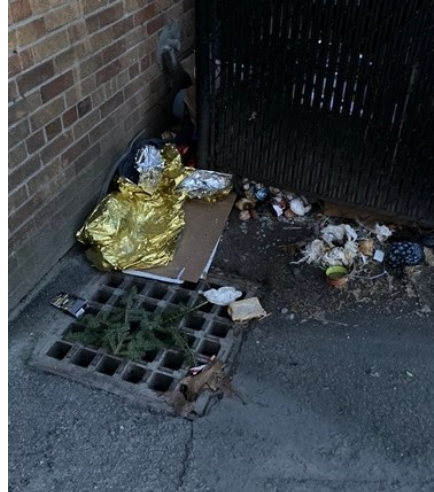
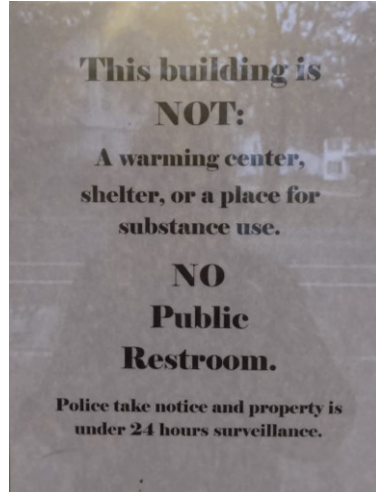


Figure 11: “Encounter with Site, January 2024.” Figure 12: “Encounter with Site, January 2024”



Figure 13: “Encounter with Site, sleeping bag under bus stop bench” January 2024.



Figure 14: “Encounter with Site. York St Sock Garden “March 2024.

Site-work begins with encountering a site. Over time this process expands to include observing the site and its corresponding situations as they unfold and change, leading to novel information, and experiences.

“In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.” (Debord)^v

Site-work indicates the potential to alter systems of power that are activated within the built environment. The places where for the person encountering, marks have already been made, and the built environment already built.

The artist observes, responds and creates patterns through site-work and mark making to further perceive what they have encountered.



Figure 15: “Site-Work, reflections 1. 3rd Floor”



Figure 16: “Site-Work, reflections 2”

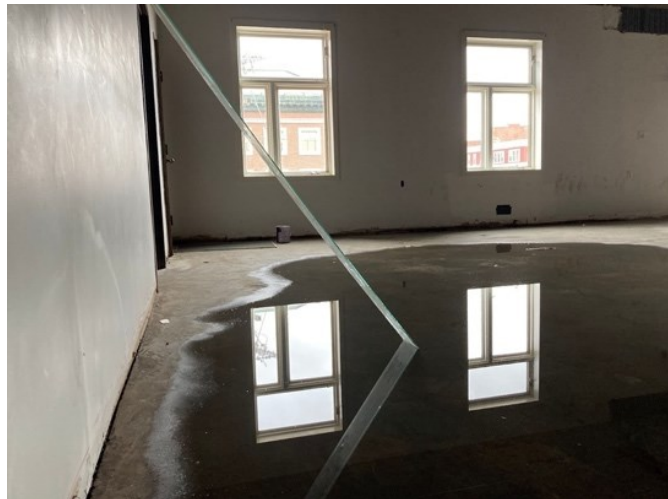


Figure 17: “Site-Work, Altering Reflections w. Found Material. 2nd floor” March 2024.



Figure 18: “Site-Work. Altering Reflections w. Found Material. 3rd floor.”



Figure 19: “Site-Work, documenting demolition, observing patterns.” April 2024.



Figure 20: “Exposition, contemplating patterns from Site, Lord Hall Gallery.” May 2024.

An artist who engages in this type of site-work, bears witness to change. The act of bearing witness inspires a response, “...not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living...”^{vi} (Cage and Doris)

The power behind observation and within bearing witness is in its nonlinearity. These are methods of a “radical involvement with the world.” (Doris) An involvement with the world that potentiates the shedding of layered indoctrinated thought contained within systems of pathological power and methods of control.



Figure 21: “Site-Work, the Artist Is A Microcosm.” April 2024.

Through site-work the artist perceives the built environment and comments on their perception of surrounding systems of power. The artist is a microcosm of the surrounding built environment. The artist is a site at a site constructing a site.

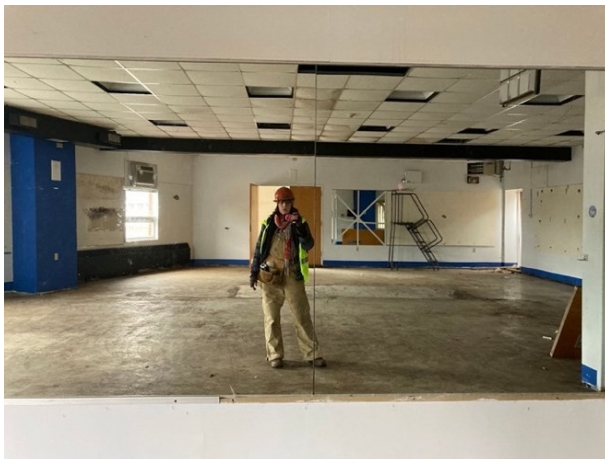


Figure 22: “Site-Work Selfie. March 11th 2024.”

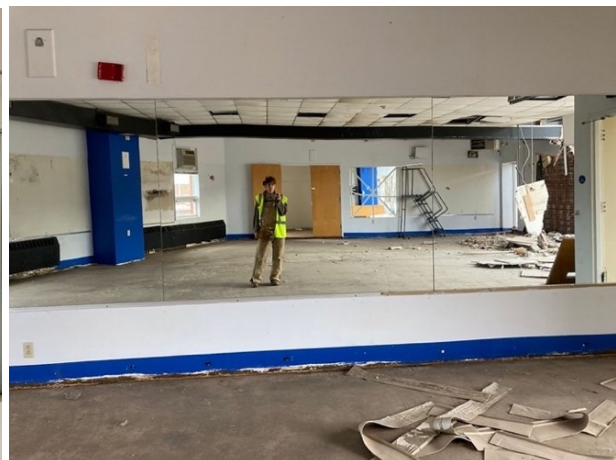


Figure 23: “Site-Work Selfie. March 14th 2024.”



Figure 24: "Site-Work Selfie. March 28th 2024."



Figure 25: "Site-Work Selfie. April 1st 2024."

Surrounding Systems of Power

“modernity’... it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity; it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction of ambiguity and anguish.” Marshal Bermann (Berman, All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity)

“Art is a state of encounter.” Nicolas Bourriaud (Bourriard)

Within systems there exists a language of tangible and intangible arrangement between the perception of self-oriented to a site of some kind that signifies an unfolding situation and a surrounding system of power.

The artist works within systems.

“We have to be transparent about our work within the system.” (Siepel)^{vii}



Figure 26: “Cycle of Self-Determination 1. Gina Siepel 2018 sculpture and performance. 7’Hx8’Wx2.5’D”



Figure 27: “Cycle of Self-Determination 1. Gina Siepel 2018 sculpture and performance. 7’Hx8’Wx2.5’D

Often this work and the corresponding arrangements are consolidated to a site within the built environment.

Bearing witness and site-work help an artist understand the form a site and system takes within a built environment; how a system of power behaves and develops over time, and how it is held together by larger, surrounding systems that may apply force to keep it in a particular shape.

127 Hammond St is an unusual nexus containing exchanges of time, conversation, material and negotiations of power. Before Alloy Group won the bid to demolish 127 Hammond St, it was subtly announced as being up for grabs. The request for proposal was listed on the website. The banner hung from the fence line. The meeting time was to be on Thursday at 9 o'clock in the morning. Who among the community would be able to attend? Not those who work jobs at that time. Not mothers or primary caregivers. The exclusivity of access is a clear demarcation of who is encouraged to receive capital resources and who is not. The process of public consensus is questionable. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 28. “Early encounter, clues to systems of power.” Figure 29. Early encounter, site ownership.” January 2024.



Figure 30: “Early encounter, facing Hammond Jan. 2024” Figure 31. “Early encounter, facing Court st. Jan. 2024.”

The systems of power that present themselves during site-work arrive in unexpected and meaningful ways. Bearing witness asks an artist to observe and engage in multiple ways to address the varied forms systems take within a site.

Social systems of power are nuanced and complex.

M: “Good morning”

E: “Morning. Find any money?”

M: “No, I’m not sure how to make money in this business.”

E: *“Oh that’s easy. Copper, aluminum, them pipes in that building are quarter inch thick copper pipes built that big, they weigh a lot and coppers like what 75 cents a pound now? 50, 60 cents a pound? All that metal could be turned in... What’s that?”*

M: *“Oh, this is an audio recorder. Is that okay?”*

E: *“Oh yeah yeah.”*

M: *“Do you remember when this was a Y?”*

E: *“Uhm I don’t remember when it was a Y but I do remember when they started tearing it down about two days ago. But, uhm, really, if you want to get technical this place would have housed every homeless person in this city and they could have coalesced in one spot and take the burden off all of these churches that are feeding us and giving us a place to stay. That could have one main facility. It’s three stories. They could have taken all the junkies and put them on the first floor, people that don’t use drugs or alcohol, the second floor and housing for like families on the third floor. I mean, to me, just a dumb person that’s homeless on the street can think of that. How come they couldn’t? Or, wouldn’t? That’s the problem, that they wouldn’t.”*



Figure 32: *“Front façade altered by demolition. February 2024.”*

E: *“I heard they’re going to put a prison here. That’s exactly what we need, more prisons. Technically they house the homeless but... I know that the homeless around here*

are doing drugs and drinking but I mean... See that white building? Behind that is an old school house from the 1930's. The back is cracked in half and it's falling down the bank. You crawl up in there- that's where I slept last night. In that abandoned building that's falling down. I can't get anyone to help me here- like housing, jobwise here. Like, I don't do drugs, I don't drink. I smoke cigarettes but I don't do all that stuff and you figure that a person is willing to do all that stuff willing to change his life, upgrade, [they] would get help. I need a job and a place to live so I can support myself and don't have to be a drain on the community. They stop housing people at the end of this month."

M: "How come?"

E: "It's warm enough to stay outside. I'm serious. I'm not lying, you can look it up yourself. They make it really hard to come in from the cold. I mean, they search you. I had one place take everything out of my wallet- everything- go through it and then shove the pile back at me. And that was just for a plate of food. It wasn't for a place for the night, it was just for a plate of food. I mean I'm not complaining. I'll survive. At least it's not cold out here anymore." (Schoen, Transcript Conversation on A Current Situation)

The built environment within a system of power can be thought of as a "theatre of power" (Carse) involving both "finite and infinite games" (Carse). Finite games, like systems of power that seek to maintain their position of power, are based on the external outcome and product-oriented experience. In contrast, infinite games are played for the purposes of simply continuing to play, continuing for the sake of existence, expression and unrepressed mark-making. If any force is applied to the game, it ceases to be infinite and is restrained to a finite system. The infinite game cannot be played inside the system of the finite.

The built environment is a system of power. Capitalism is an example of a finite game.

The built environment takes on finite systems of power through forces of flux and fixed states.

The built environment takes on infinite systems of power through forces of emergence and unobstructed exploration.

Within a site and the built environment, “power relations” (Foucault) are rooted in the “social nexus” (Foucault).

“Anti Homeless design is a case-in-point example of technological development that works to conserve social hierarchies...through their strategic combination with the system of anti-homeless laws, anti homeless technologies serve the interests of the already powerful and work to further subjugate the already disadvantaged. (Rosenberger)

viii



Figure 33: “Anti-sleep, anti-homeless design on bench at bus stop.” January 2024.

B: “With my luck there will be someone in the old church.”

M: “I know right. Well it’s a good thing they check every day to make sure there aren’t people.”

B: “Well and that and with the homeless population around here... So we had talked about demoing parts of the building as early as two or three years ago. But just [sigh] the front corner, bricks started falling off so they wanted to do a partial demo. Well, no, because the building intact has kept people out so if we left it like this people would be living in there by Monday. If we were done and we left it just like this...Yeah, you don’t see this unless you’re in Beirut or Gaza. Well look at these other places- not to get crazy

on you but look at Ukraine or Gaza. You see a hotel or something that looks like this now, but there are cars going by so they're still living. And you wonder back to World War II and everything. All the videos and films you can watch, people still lived in those cities that were being bombed. I don't know how they got to work or what they did to survive but..."

M: "[For]those that are currently homeless-it's the same type of survival mechanism that seeks shelter no matter what."

B: "I certainly hope we get this down quick enough where nobody decides to spend the night in there. I've been in it since- I've only been in here not four years yet but I've probably been in there fifty, sixty times walking through for different reasons and there's always been evidence of people being in there. Some of it never changed. Most of it never changed, so I don't think people were in there after the fact. (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations With Brian)



Figure 34: "Site-Work, basement mural intact surrounded by broken infrastructure." March 2024

The work of the artist who becomes acquainted with these systems is to comment on both beneficial (aesthetics of care) and pathological (aesthetics of violence) systems of power.

“Art-making: not as a leisure activity, solely or simply an expression of self, but as the most important medium that we have to communicate. Art-making which hides the seeds of how to be a human stitch in the tapestry again, passed for safe-keeping in the hands of our indigenous. Art-making as a means to mobilize the weapon. If armed struggle is the first action of finding a world beyond colonization, beyond what we can see, culture loads the gun. The role of the artist is to load the gun.”^{ix} (Gwendolyn)

The artist observes the systems within a site that permit or prevent expressions and arrangements of power. The artist must be brave in inquiring.

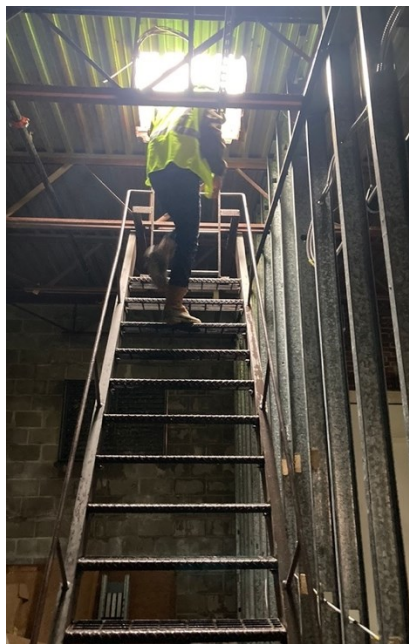


Figure 35: “Site-Work, investigating power and permissions.” March 2024

“I can’t stop you from showing up. You are free to watch and record, like any other member of the public. We do not approve of anything closer. Make your own deal. Between you and Alloy group.” Brian. Facilities manager. Phone conversation. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

A singular site within the built environment often contains multiple systems of power. The collision of these systems results in tension that can be used constructively, collaboratively or competitively. An established system of power often contains multiple mechanisms in place to function, manage power, and to control resources. These can be thought of as the infrastructure of a system.

Speaker 1: “Won’t even give me the time of fucking day. I been looking for a job- did demo for a lot of years- and they won’t even give me time of fucking day...just sucks, know what I mean? I’m more than qualified. I could run this whole show. I done it for years. Ran crews of fucking twenty. Ran excavators, the bobcats- [incoherent] - get rid of asbestos legally and...worked the water when it’s all apart you know...they think I’m some kind of chump, dude. I’m smarter than them combined, you know? I’m not joking. Pissing me off. No one’s giving me the time of fucking day...” (Anonymous and Schoen)

In a capitalist system of power, securing financial capital is a competition for survival. Through bearing witness to the struggle within the active, dominant system of power an artist can perceive the surrounding social issues more deeply.



Figure 36: “Site-Work: Alloy Group at work.” March 2024

Infrastructure changes are expressions of power in the built environment and reflect the system of governance that chooses the alterations and arrangements.



Figure 37: “Bangor Public Library. 09.01.1969. Bangor Daily News Article.”



Figure 38: “1969 Signing contract for new building at architects’ office 6/6. Bangor Public Library #1146”.



Figure 39: “Bangor Public Library. 1969-1973 Building YMCA. Corrugated tin visible.”



Figure 40: “Exposed corrugated tin from 1979 now visible in 2024.”

127 Hammond St is a constellation of powers, colliding and shifting, changing forms through force. It is a fluctuating, shimmering, liminal system- the spaces between an individual and society, between mark-making and the built environment, are symbolic and visceral. It is a relationship of eternal, cyclical flux, shifting from resolved to unresolved and back again. It is an unresolved friction of a floral bloom under an airtight glass case that arrives in scales and degrees. A fractal, then, is an example of a singularity organizing within a collective. At all degrees of magnification, the geometry repeats itself, unfurling in consistency within a changing shape. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

How the built environment is arranged conveys information about the intangible (state of consciousness, emotionality) and tangible (material existence) in the public sphere. Memories

and the intangible become increasingly important as the tangible site of an actual experience is altered.



Figure 41: “YMCA Builder’s Wall before demolition. March. 2024”

Admin ·

I SPY YMCA - OLD LITTLE POOL - Sharing of Memories Welcome.

In 1969-71, the old Y built in 1890-91 was taken down leaving only a small area where the small pool was. The modernized brick building was added on to this section Jan 1091.

Early in the demo process I asked a worker, John, if they found the small pool. He said he had been through the entire building and there was no small pool. I showed him the pictures. Later I learned in the mid 80s the small pool was covered over and used for a workout room / storage.

When the Jamie, the project manager entered that area, his excavator started bouncing up and down. Try to think of an excavator on a trampoline. He quickly backed off and said "Liz I think we found your little pool!!!!" (Unfortunately I pressed the wrong button on camera and didn't get a video of the bouncing. It was a sight to see!)

Jamie later he told me they were very glad I mentioned a small pool and they didn't fall into it.

P.S. I didn't add names of gals in pictures of small pool as it was done in a past post.

Figure 42: “I Spy The YMCA” in “You Know You’re From Bangor When” Facebook page.”

L: “So then on May 17 1969, they closed the doors to the original Y the 1890 building, they closed it for good....So ‘70 was the modernization. So the 1890 building had a time

capsule and I think it's the same time capsule that went into this building. Now this is interesting okay. Not a woman libber but I thought, huh, that building there used to be a YWCA on the building over there. The M got turned upside down now it says YMCA. Why is that, why? And I was mad. Was this a man's decision? Well it turns out my sister in law researched, the head of the directors of the YW decided to step down. She didn't want to do that anymore so she encouraged them to take the YM over. So that's why it's an M."
(Schoen, Transcript: Liz Brings Pastries)

The artist continues to observe systems of power embedded into the social context. Within systems of power exist strategically designed value sets. These value sets dictate the distribution of power and viability of an alternative approach.

J: "And not for nothing but the cost to get this matted stuff off these stairs. This would be literally probably a guy for about a day with a chipping gun and \$120 paddle bit to just knock that stuff off. And then you knock it off and you find out the decking's all rotted underneath. That's all going to get replaced, so it's like... That's developer stuff.... There are savers and there are tossers. I think you gotta have a balance. Developers didn't get the money they have by making bad decisions with their money. So it's gotta be economically viable for them to invest in....The maintenance is what kills you. And that's what falls off first when the money gets tight- is maintenance. A developer finds out that a municipality buys out a property like this and what's the first thing they do is low ball the shit outta ya to buy it because you know you think the city doesn't really care about the money but then they make more if they get it for cheap...If the city puts this up for sale or the county when it goes up for sale they're gonna say give us a bid- best price- and tell us what you're gonna do. Boston has, say if you're going to put in ten apartments two of them have to be considered low income housing. So, rent controlled or whatever the case may be. It is what it is... the developers- I'm not saying they are scumbags- but they don't build all the same units. They build eight nice units and two that pass code but they're not nice. So you know if you're in the low income one you're not getting the marble countertops or the high counter and all that."

M: *“There’s a class structure here.”*

J: *“Yeah for sure. Unfortunately, that’s the world. It’s all money driven.”*

(Schoen, Transcript: Tour with John)

R: *“It’s time and money and codes are usually the reasons why everything happens so in an old building, beautiful as it was, my guess is it did not meet the current fire regulations for exits and size of corridors and things like that...So my guess is the cost to renovate the building back in the sixties was exorbitant, they wouldn’t had ended up with the program they wanted. And that’s why they tore it down, put up this square box. My prediction is that the original building which was granite, the current one which is brick- the next one will be a metal panel or extruded fiberglass over styrofoam...It’s a lower cost approach to building it has high insulation value but it’s cheap...Because brick does cost more. But it lasts.”* (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 43: “Bangor Public Library. Archive #1210. 1969 Engraved cornerstones 6/10 TO GOD”



Figure 44: Figure 43: “Bangor Public Library. Archive #1210. 1969 Engraved cornerstones 6/10 FOR MAN”

Examining material objects that are used to design and build a site can expose the intangible yet embedded perceptions and social ideologies that exist within and inform the surrounding built environment.



Figure 45: “Bangor Public Library. 1969-1973 Construction along Hammond and Court St.”



Figure 46: “Deconstruction along Hammond and Court St.” April 2024

The (re) arrangement of material objects within a built environment over time may indicate significant visual similarities or significant differences in structure, function and perceived meaning. As the culture and social fabric shifts, so too does the built environment.

Artists look through the lens of their own perception in response to the collective cultural lens at the sites they encounter.

“It is compositionally hard to tell the difference between the dump and a homeless encampment, demo site rubble and site of war. The same crumpled textures, yet in the camp there is still a body. In the demo site there is potential for public involvement still. Aesthetics of the machine, aesthetics of violence, change in the form of loss of life, the ultimate dis-function of material and matter. As I reach down in between the crunched, twisted and deformed pool wall to retrieve the tiles I am reminded- my whole body senses- so symbolically and abstractly the act of retrieving dead bodies under rubble though I have never had this experience.” (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Artists can observe the patterns, behaviors, and conditions of power and the choices made to maintain power and through working with others, alter the pending trajectory of change. Artists can participate and intervene in alternative collectives of power.



Figure 47: “Rowe House Before Renovation. Photo: Sheryl Tucker of Project Rowe Houses.”



Figure 48: “Jasime Zelaya Art House Fall 2020. Photo: Project Rowe Houses”

Artists seeking for long-term interventions to the built environment may find collaboration and support outside of their discipline to yield fruitful conversation, implementation and lasting change.

Mark J Stern “... too many people were wanting to tear things down... people only look at the deficits- that are defined just by the negative. But there are all these other dimensions of those neighborhoods that get obliterated when we just apply that negative label to them. Part of our work in the arts was to say that there are resources and assets in these neighborhoods that are invisible or below the radar...”

Rick Lowe “... We all look probably ten or fifteen times a day at something and think about what it could be, what values may be underneath. But then there’s that other difficult step to actively engage and to try and uncover and reveal those things in a way that moves either yourself or other people to action, and that’s the difficult part. I’ve had situations where I can see the potential, but I can’t pass that understanding to the people in the community. It’s a struggle to empower others to be able to see it. That is where the collaboration, the coalition building comes in .”^x

Relationships

“I am fulfilled by meeting others needs” Erica Huggins (Huggins)

“Nobody’s free until everybody’s free” Fanny Lou Hamer (Hamer)

“We do not see the world as it is, we see the world as we are. Anais Nin (Nin)

Site-work -the integration of observation, sculptural mark-making and bearing witness- moves an artists' encounter from initially unfamiliar to familiar. To gain familiarity, the artist combines social and material forms. The artist constructs through building relationships.



Figure 49: “Two buckets of bricks await Liz Ashe, gift from Allow Group. April 2024.”

This kind of art working relies on a “geometry” of relationships, “observing the subtleties, complexities, and oddities of relationships between people.” (Lacey, We Are Here)



Figure 50: “Suzanne Lacey, Uncertain Futures Installation One: Interviews at Manchester Art Gallery 2021”



Figure 51: “Suzanne Lacey, Uncertain Futures: Installation Two: Interviews at Manchester Art Gallery. 2021.”

“In the second iteration of the exhibition, the group portrait of the dinner participants was installed opposite the Ford Maddox painting entitled “Work.” This installation reveals the research themes, the project development, and timeline of Uncertain Futures. The interview booth has been transformed into a “research space” where gallery goers can read interviews, look up data on a website, and contemplate the process and goals for the research. Now there are two windows on the outside of the booth where videos of the 100 woman celebration dinner are paired with snatches of their conversation.”^{xi} (Lacey, Uncertain Futures Installation Two: The Process)

Artists construct sites of social and material arrangements to provide a site of exchange that isn’t being met by other means. At times this exchange takes place inside the gallery or museum. At times this exchange takes place on the street.

Speaker 2: "Oh and what a mess they're making. I wish they would be saving the brick so it could be built for a shelter for the homeless but they're not saving it are they."

M: "Some of it I think still has some asbestos probably, yeah, so I think even if they sprayed it all down I'm not sure it's good to still reuse it."

Speaker 2: "Aww.... I know the guy who built it- Ali Cole. I knew him and my mum did his daughter's wedding dress...dressmaker designer, specializing in bridals. And Jackie never walked a step in her life, born in Brooklyn, brittle bone disease. She wanted to be married with all her friends. A satin dress. They had thirty years together... She made a lot of wedding dresses in her career. One of the ladies was just over six feet tall."

M: "That's a lot of fabric!"

Speaker 2: "I've lived over in that building since '82. The brick building, first floor with the big bay windows and all the cactus plants. Do I own them or do they own me? They live a long time if they're treated right. I talk to them everyday. They've all got names. Prickly Pear's obvious, his name's Prickles. Fuzzy Gold Flowers, that's Lemon Fuzz, I mean what else could I do?"

M: "Well, we gotta be creative in life."

Speaker 2: "One had orange blossoms, soft, soft orange, so, oh you're Orange Blossom Special! You're welcome to come meet them. They're very friendly plants for the most part if you don't touch Prickles." (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations)

An artist builds relationships to learn. Like working with material to comprehend what a sculpture might convey, so too an artist works with people to understand what the social systems convey that surround the art making or issue being investigate.

"Artists- free agents- insert themselves into the most unexpected social environments in ways that break away from disciplinary boundaries, hoping to discover something in the process. It many take many years of this kind of work to find a true method to the madness of intruding upon and affecting environments whose populations do not always expect us... The key to a successful project lies in understanding the social context in which it will take place and how it will be negotiated with the participants or audience in question."^{xii} (Helguera)

To understand the relationships of power in a system of power that changes, an artist may need to understand the varied group roles and functions indicating who is vying for what resource and who is endeavoring for control.

B: "Nobody came forward. People commented but.. Oh it's too bad you couldn't do this, oh it's too bad you couldn't do that um, really, it's the best decision and most of it was geared towards housing, affordable housing even. So Penquis wanted the property for affordable housing but they wanted the building demoed... We looked at renovating the building and it was just too expensive. And it's not all dollars and cents but... this... everyday this building got in worse and worse shape and it was never going to start getting better so the sooner we made a decision the better and it is what it is. But what's gonna be here someday? I have no idea. Like you said, I've heard rumors but..."

M: "Well, we'll see what we can do about making some art about it."

B: "That's your thing, we go back to you singing a song. You could look at it and I could look at it and you come up with art and I look at it and say well that's worth fifty cents and I can burn that at home..." (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations With Brian)

The system of power between the social and material objects is an arrangement of form and dynamic and can be thought of as "social sculpture".^{xiii} (Finklepearl)

"A total work of art is only possible in the context of the whole society. Everyone will be a necessary co-creator of social architecture, and so long as anyone cannot participate, the ideal of democracy has not been reached." Joseph Beuys (Dahms)

To move within the changing built environment and participate in the emergent "social sculpture" the artist may attempt to form relationships, understanding that a "total work of art" (Dahms) may not be actualized.

A total work of art is an ideal that is often unattainable. Site-work is an endeavor that suggests pathways towards this idea yet may ultimately remain a symbolic work of art.



Figure 52: “First day touring 127 Hammond St. February 2024.”

How an artist handles this incongruity and unresolve varies. And yet, the choice to view the present moment and social material as an unfolding work of art may alleviate these senses of loss.

T: “This is my first job with Alloy.”

M: “Have you been doing demo long?”

T: “Oh yeah, basically my whole life. Used to do interior demo when I was a teenager then I moved up to doing like bridges and big buildings, power plants and stuff like that. Fun, but dangerous stuff.”

M: “I can see the appeal! Were you breaking stuff when you were little?”

[laughter]

T: “Yeah breaking myself more like it... My father did demo stuff too. I got to work with him for two years before he retired which was good. And I made my own name. I didn't- it was- I made my own name with him I didn't ride his coattails you know what I mean which he's friggen happy about. Cos some guys are like I'm third generation and they follow their fathers. No, I made my own name. The one thing is you have to have common sense in this type of thing. You can get messed up real quick, know what I mean. That's

one thing I have at least, a little common sense. Why I'm still here, a little common sense. Tell you what, back to work." (Schoen, Transcript: Getting to Know Todd)

Conversation and listening are strategies to deepen perception and comprehension of a site, built environment and system of power. Conversation and listening are fundamental tools the artist can use to understand others' experience of surrounding systems of power. The social dynamics and underpinnings that make up the mechanism of power is helpful for the artist who wishes to understand site.

M: "Hi...how are you?"

T: "Not bad."

M: "...Are you guys focused on the concrete today?"

T: "We're supposed to be. They called. The driver, he said he's off today so [it's] the boss who's supposed to be coming. It's 10 o'clock, still hasn't shown up."

M: "Okay well I might just document the metal section unless you will be working there?"

T: "No not today, we're loading up tomorrow. Just loading the concrete today."

M: "Okay. You know they say if you want to make god laugh, make plans."

T: "Ah true. Subject to change! 'Specially in this business. Just like the weather- wait a second." (Schoen, Transcript: Getting to Know Todd)

An artist draws from theories of social practice to engage with community at a particular site. The theory of social practice for many artists is connected to the politics of a particular culture. At 127 Hammond St the culture at large was capitalism.

"Contemporary capitalism produces passive subjects with very little agency or empowerment... participation is important as a project; it re-humanizes a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of capitalist production..." (Thompson)



Figure 53: "Site-Work, observing an abandoned space" February 2024.

J: "They get out at five o'clock in the morning or six o'clock in the morning. You know they get out, wandering, eventually they're gonna run into someone do drugs you know. Haven't done it in a long time, probably overdose, you know. The overdose of someone leaving rehab or leaving jail after months of not using and then going back out; they pick up right where they left off and some people live and some people don't. If not something for the jail at least a twenty four hour club or something you know. And some beds and counseling. Mental health and drug and alcohol counseling. So two things we need. They could do a whole bunch of stuff right there. Make a little park in here with a gazebo, a little basketball court, a little playground all fenced in and you got to go through the building to check in to play or do any activity so it keeps it a safe place. You could lock up your backpack in lockers so people aren't stealing your stuff you're not leaving your stuff and the risk of someone carrying a weapon or doing a drug deal in the little rec area or even in the building or the front of the building. A lot of places people go and they're like sharks circling around. Like, today's the first. They just closed all the warming centers and most of the hotels have upped their rates in the last couple of days. They know from last year what happened when it was March 21st and April 1st you had the Brick warming center closed down March 21st last year and then this year, because it

was warm and then it got cold. This is Maine, it's that time of year where it's spring during the day and back to middle of winter at night. Some of these people have been trying and looking for apartments and they're back out in the depression and turmoil and the cold you know? It does a lot on somebody, I know 'cus I been there, not long ago either...It's gotta be friendly, people gotta have breaks or they get burnt out and if it's not a paying position they gotta get more. They're getting desensitized and burnt out and there's a lack of compassion.” (Schoen, Transcript: On Care)

The artist acts relationally, seeking to “create a more convivial environment” (Helguera)

“An artist may create a community space in which people are invited to discuss books; another may propose a town hall meeting, another makes himself available to have conversations on the street, yet another conducts a series of interviews among local residents...^{xiv} (Helguera)

Socially engaged artworks center the involvement of the specific social whole or social system of power surrounding a site or within the built environment. Rather than the artist working in separation from the social sphere, artists focused on social systems of power are bolstered by the relationship to community.

“By creating situations in which artists and communities may work together to perceive both the differences that separate them and the similarities that connect them, these projects strive to activate the "space between" groups and individuals as a zone of potentiality, in which the relationship between contemporary art and life may be renegotiated. Fundamental to each project is a conception of art rooted in the cultivation of the creative spirit that lies within everyone as a powerful agent of both personal and social transformation.^{xv} (Morin)

The artist may be confronted with a spectrum of trust and mistrust upon entering an unfamiliar and established system of power. How they traverse this and from what vantage point they maintain an agenda is tied directly to how the artist forms relationships.

B: "...I will admit talking to you a few times I did wonder, I wondered if you're, and I apologize, I'm just curious with people, I wondered what your motive was and so talking to Scott I thought you might have showed up the first day with twenty people picketed and protested..." (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations With Brian)

The "socially committed" (Bruguera and Lack) artist involved in site-work may join a community for a duration of time. Engaging in personal conversation and connection unrelated to the artistic agenda is a part of joining a community for a time.



Figure 54: "Site-Work, gift of glass cube to community member Liz Ashe." April 2024.

“I meet Liz Ashe. Give her a square of glass from the pool. She thanks me and says ‘... I parked here last night and tears were streaming down my face.’ ”
(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

L: “Well, you know, I woke up this morning, and I said, these guys might get another snowstorm and I know, they're so delayed. And they're out of state. In motels and things. And I said, you know, I just want to do something nice, too. And so I told my husband, I'm going down Gosselin's and get him some donuts and some honey buns. And he goes, that's gonna cost you, you know, and I said, Okay! He's gonna give me some bricks and stuff. And he's gonna put a bucket aside. I want that fire alarm.” (Schoen, Transcript: Liz Brings Pastries)

Social relationships are connected to material objects, situations and systems through the everyday, perceived meaning and sentimental value in addition to a capital driven purpose or function.

Speaker 3: “Yeah, I'm just watching a little bit of it and I'm on my way again.”

M: “Yeah same, it's amazing to see.”

Speaker 3: “You gonna try and grab some of that metal and make something out of it?”

M: “Maybe!”

Speaker 3: “You can ask them, they'll probably give you some.”

M: “Oh yeah they're really wonderful, I have been working inside the building and outside the building.”

Speaker 3: “Must have a hard hat or something.”

M: “I do have one in my car.”

Speaker 3: “You gotta wear that. There you go, you gotta be safe. You don't want a bunch to come down clomping on your head! Be careful all that dust. Who knows how old it is, could have asbestos and other stuff in it... You never know- on the ground, mortar dust, not good to breathe in. In OSHA training you can't do that, got to get it wet, wet it down with a hose. Keep the dust down and stuff. See, where the leaves go the wind

goes. See that copper? Where the wind blows- yep. What kind of stuff are you going to make? Sculpture?"

M: "I don't know yet.."

Speaker 3: "See that tin? That sheet? Certain people, certain artists, they use that sheet of metal, put it as backsplash and that's worth a lot of money. It's an old style metal, it's created like that for life. You put a coat of urethane, looks like that forever. Now I am always fascinated with metals and junk and stuff. That's what attracts me to this style. I love poking my nose in construction dumpsters, looking to see what they throw away."

M: "Yeah! Do you build? Make stuff?"

Speaker 3: "Yeah I do, I do. And plus I recycle some stuff to make money on it. There's a wood yard out in Howland made a bunch of bird houses out of cedar, going to sell them this summer. Yard sale or something. Just something to do." (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations)

Site-work and sculptural mark making are ways an artist endeavors to respond to the abstract intangibility of social relations and emotions. Bearing witness can inspire the co-creation of site-work that is specifically designed to process change and produce a work of art.



Figure 55: "Close-up of site based, facilitated grief vigil. Candles from 127 Hammond St." April 2024



Figure 56: “Shroud Lantern for Moving Wounds” procession banner for *Threads* Exhibit. April 2024



Figure 57: “Documentation of collaborative on-site installation. *Threads: Interweaving Multiple Feminisms*. Rockland, ME.”

In site-work, creating a relationship creates opportunities to work with a multiplicity of skills and material outside of formal institutions.

Site-work in combination with socially engaged art practices allows a creative pursuit to be realized.

Endeavors of this nature require endurance. It takes time to develop an idea, and even more so to develop an idea with others. It is not uncommon for art works involving elements of social practice to take years to develop and come to a form of completion.



The installation of Running Fence, which was nearly 20 feet high. Photo: Private Collection/Wolfgang Votz/ Copyright 1975 Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation.

Figure 58: “Running Fence” Christo and Jean-Claude. Installation and Social Practice. 1972-76 CA

“The art project consisted of 42 months of collaborative efforts, the ranchers’ participation, eighteen public hearings, three sessions at the Superior Courts of California, the drafting of a 450-page Environmental Impact Report and the temporary use of the hills, the sky and the ocean”. (Jeanne-Claude and Christo)

Relationship building within an art work adds a layer of dimensionality that might not be visible in the physical manifestation yet are ultimately embedded dimensions within the culminating exposition.

M: “Hi Jamie, Oh hi Liz.

L: “You’re back! You’ve got your recorder this time!”

M: "Yeah I figured I'd catch some sounds."

L: "Oh- they found the pool! Well they didn't believe me when I first told them."

J: "Yeah when I was demoing this building from up there I remembered what this was. As I demoed it down I was moving some material and I saw the floor deflecting like that and I was like... that's not... That floor was framed with this stuff and it was built up about three feet higher than the dirt level."

L: "So when John first said that, I said, well you know you will find another hole in the ground and he goes there's no pool? And I said well and then I went and okay everybody help, help, help, what happened to the little pool and one guy said in the 80's it was filled in. The 1890 building was first there- you've seen pictures of it? So that was first there and that little piece you have left they added onto. You can see they added that new part onto that building. Why they kept that little piece I don't know. In 1958 they built a gym. I've got pictures of that. Then modernization came along and they decided they would modernize this so they tore down all the tourettes in the main part of the old building to construct that one and then- you can see where they added on right there to that pointed part of the building which is fascinating to me. I can't remember the old pool being blue... But these must be all the doorways that came down. Is that an actual elevator cos I don't remember that as a kid. That was added on with this building. So they kind of cobbled it up and I was glad to see it once you tore it down. I said, I know I'm right! That part of the building was old!"

J: "I wanna be right!"

[laughter]

L: "I wanna be right! Well, I don't want to be right, I want to be accurate."

J: "Well, yeah, I just don't want to be wrong. And thank you so much. I'm going to bring this up to the boys. Later today we'll be clearing this up all nice and won't be that busy and we can put some aside for you. We can fill up a few buckets, whatever you want."

L: "Then I'll have some memories! I'll put them in my fairy garden. I have a fairy garden with my grandkids down at our camp. We'll build something with them."

J: "There you go. We'll eat all the pastries and we'll put the bricks in this."
(Schoen, Transcript: Liz Brings Pastries)

Knowledge arrives through conversation. An artist working strictly in the studio is without this access.

The continuance and quality of a system is shaped by how power is communicated or shared within relationships.

In instances of change the system of power and the relationships that construct it also change. This shifts the artists corresponding methods on points along the spectrum of pathological to beneficial systems of power.

(Re)Actions to Change

“And as we transform, we see more things that need transformation, within ourselves and the world.” adrienne marie brown (brown, Let It Breathe)

*“Enlightenment doesn’t happen in a cave, it happens in the mouth of the lion.”
Buddhist poem (Ladha, Sacred Activism and contextualized spirituality (ep324))*



Figure 59: “Site-Work, horizon line of elevator used for light-work with glass; completely altered.”

A rupture to the built environment can be likened to a rupture of the public psyche.

Destruction removes the structure and container, exposing vulnerabilities within systems of power.

Ruptures are openings, sites or “territory of possibility” (Holmes). The removal of structure “changes the social map. Like a landslide, a flood or volcanoes do in nature”.^{xvi} (Holmes)

Jamie tells me that he thinks the site went to an auction. "It didn't get picked up... the building is in good enough shape to rehab it." We sit over coffee in Bagel Central. He has been in the demolition industry for twenty-seven years. We talk about the impact of change. He is in the business of it. He says the [public] allure is to "watch the change. The spectacle." He tells me he wishes to make a childrens animation that is like Bob the Builder. I joke, "but instead is Jamie the demolitioner!" He goes on to describe the cartoon as a way to educate kids on the machines and equipment, how a site is torn down and where the material goes, how it is recycled. We talk more about change. "The first instinct for people when they hear of tearing a building down is anger." Jamie recalls past demolition jobs- at a church an old lady picketed for weeks and one morning hauled a brick at Jamie's truck. "Could have been intercepted ten different ways. The time to throw bricks is a year ago. Throw it at the priest. The demolition guy isn't the decision maker."

Who is the first mark-maker, initiator of change? Who intercepts first? And how are particular forces of pressure put on systems to create change? He anticipates the job to go from February to March if everything goes well. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Changemakers hold knowledge.

Bearing witness to change makes clear the irony of the unlasting within a built environment that may have been designed with the hope of its lastingness.

Drawing from finite resources for a pretend infinite capital gain, the dissolution process felt when confronted with change suggests that even a built environment is vulnerable to changes' force, violently beyond control's reach. At the intersection of an individual body and a site of change, the emotional implications arrive as unsettled expressions lurched from their stations, like the heaving of a thousand ton metal from its post of so long. In its

emergency and cyclical nature, change becomes an ineffable substance of reality that is beyond a human's attempts to control. It stimulates such primal drives to control and change- to form and manipulate- regulate-deny-cease-stagnate the rhythm of abundant distribution. Surrounding social systems of power with a particularly hierarchical agenda strive to tame (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

When confronted with change the artist may grasp at tools of control, some useful, some futile. The artist may need to surrender to that which is beyond their control.

“At around 2:00pm on this day March 4th, 2024; the demolition and razing of the old YMCA building on Hammond/Courts streets here in Bangor (Maine) has begun! While it will be sad to see the old building go, we know that there’s a better future for this site. (Commissioners) Penobscot County Commissioners Facebook



Figure 60: “Site-Work, YMCA Builders Wall encountered, now rubble.” March 2024.

The public too, of which the artist is a part, also senses change and responds.

“Tippett: ...That’s very, very, very hard on us as creatures. That structure and certainty being stripped away....

Gilmore: ...The devastation completely shifts how people understand themselves in the world, understand themselves in relation to one another. Breaks relationships, creates new ones, and people are constantly trying to figure out how to learn new things to solve new problems, how to renovate old things to be adequate to new problems. And usually, some combination of the two.”^{xvii} (Gilmore)



Figure 61: “Shockspace” Multimedia Performance and Installation. 2021. Documentation of Performance.



Figure 62: “Shockspace” 2021. Artifacts from performance and altered installation.

As a performance on grief and the work of the artist, Shockspace consisted of tying and cutting golden thread, connected from altar to wrists, scattering broken glass and rose petals, sweeping with an industrial light affixed to a lopsided

broom, scrawling on brown butcher paper and dismantling the piece in its entirety after an unrehearsed amount of time. (Schoen Portfolio of Work 2021-2024)

Site-work through instigated explicitly in one location can include studies, research, projects, performances and a multitude of works that inform the final forms. Site Work is an aggregate practice.

Attempting to capture a lasting record of that which does not last, cannot last. In its explicit form the material is being crushed and removed from the site. The remaining documentation refers as a ghost... I muse on the sudden urge to stitch together pieces of rubble. An act of resistance that is ultimately futile. I then realize that this will be happening for a long time- the tension between destruction and healing. Inequities. The infinite unresolve. The tension. Binaries swirling, melding. The push/pull is eternal and always moving. The dance in the inbetween space is continuous. I am so propelled by this thought, so struck, that I sit on the steps of the other vacant lot that I walk by to get to 127 Hammond St. I sit weary but perched knowing that across the street there is a person sleeping in the alcove of a big brick church- knowing that behind me is a massive additional vacant site that could be claimed and transformed. Knowing that there is- out of design-a massive desensitization. Knowing that I feel out of control. Knowing that as Eva said this morning, "You don't have to be at the helm." So where am I in all that changes or is prevented from changing? (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 63: “Site-Work, 127 Hammond St is a Site of Change. April 2024.”

Material objects of the built environment are indications of relational experiences within social systems of power. Therefore, these material objects are laden with expectations of perceived and implied function and purpose of the material and the social.

The material conditions indicate the state of the social sphere.

M: “I didn’t realize how steep of a grade we’re on here.”

B: “It is. It’s going to be a lot to fill. But they don’t have to bring it up- what you see here. If you went out onto the street and you drew a line up right to here it would be at a slope- that’s what they would have to fill. They don’t have to maintain this level here so it is an enormous amount of fill but they just have to make the slope look like it was supposed to be that way kind of like this side hill here.”

M: "A retaining wall of some kind?"

B: "We don't know what we're going to do so we're just going to leave it. We're going to fill it in and leave it with dirt and then decide. If we put up a wall and then we decide to do something, oh shoot, now we have to take the wall out. So we don't want to spend money and throw money away to do something. So, we're trying to be fiscally responsible but sometimes we trip over ourselves when we're doing that."

M: "We're all humans trying to make it work."

B: "Nah, that doesn't matter."

(Schoen, Transcript: Conversations With Brian)

The sight of a material object being altered can stimulate cognitive dissonance and other emotions, prompting the realization that "all that is solid melts into air". (Berman, Introduction: Modernity- Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

The visual field is brimming with impermanence. Even the sound begins to change as the physical architectures that once stood as solid sound boards begin to be removed, torn down. The sounds of this work also move elsewhere- uncontained and altering. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Change is a challenge to the sensation of control, altering what is thought of as known.

Without a physical architecture to contain and ground, without a sense of permanency that the built environment can offer, memory in its place and story of the experience becomes the architecture to lean against when confronted with change.

L: I'll tell you another story. So anyway, that was a wooden structure. And some of my friends remember playing ball in it. I'm 75. And I don't remember that structure at all, except for postcards. And then that got torn down. And then the very next auditorium was a slanted thing. That was supposed to be an

architectural marvel. It was slanted like this. And that's where everybody else in Bangor that's my age; all the tournaments were there, all the basketball tournaments where their kids played ball. In the winter they flooded it for skating. So we could skate indoors there, then they built on a civic center behind it. And then all of that got torn down. The only thing I did during that construction, I got a picture of the auditorium just because they used to call the very top of the bleachers, the nose bleeds. I got one picture there but I didn't sit there and agonize, I didn't hurt because my time at the auditorium was brie. You know, I didn't play ball there like the boys that played ball there would feel sentimental. And there might have been square dancing that went on there but I didn't happen to be a square dancer. But this place... was, I mean, because my son learned, he learned to swim here and play ball here too.” (Schoen, Transcript: Liz Brings Pastries)



Figure 64: “Site-Work, pool wall lays horizontal.” April 2024



Figure 65: “Exposed portion of climbing gym; a stimulus for community member.” February 2024

R: “This is crazy! I used to run this climbing wall here! ...worked at this Y for eight years. This is a climbing wall. I used to run the climbing program. I love the Y. I went here as a kid. I worked here as a young adult. And now my kids go to the other Y...I always loved this building. Like, I always thought this Y was better. Except for the pool. I didn't care about the pool. So nuts.”

M: “I know, I know, everything is always changing but there are some things that are harder to witness changing.”

R: “Absolutely. I met my son's mom here- met my current wife here. There's a lot of history.”

M: “...How do we hold that- what do we do with that feeling?”

R: “Well one, the one is you know, pictures are the one things that elicit that emotional response. Emotional response, right- you remember, you have these memories but what happens after that? What happens after your memories are gone? You know? Gotta memorialize it.... You just also think where does all this crap go?... I'm sure this metal will be recycled. I know when they first closed the Y they had a huge yard sale for a lot of the stuff that was here. The pool that I was

talking about before, that was just filled with stuff- they took all the stuff and lined it up, and laid the stuff out. Ohh! Get it!!”

[the digger claws a massive portion of brick wall down, sound of crashing bricks]

M: “Do you have photos from your time here?”

R: “Well, when I worked here, it was before they had smartphones. So, it makes me wonder, no, most of the pictures I have from the Y around this time period are all from the summer camp. From the ropes courses and stuff. Crazy to think. I've been thinking a lot about this place, though, ever since I heard it was going to be torn down. But yeah, as far as pictures goes, no, not a lot. I don't know why they didn't, just before, rehabilitate this building. There was a lot of different things it could have become.”

M “...from what I understand, from a contractor's perspective... you know how like a surgeon is a surgeon is a surgeon?”

R: “Yeah, probably a nightmare.”

M: “In order to get that mold off, it would have to be one person with this one spray thing for like days, just for the stairs”

R: “Oh, and I forgot the asbestos they had too. They got all that out, right?”

M: “But there's still so much mold and water damage.”

R: “What a shame. (Schoen, Transcript: What a Shame)

The artist bears witness. The artist observes and listens.

Speaker 4: “I used to swim there.”

M: “Yes- so many people remember learning to swim there. What do you make of it all now?” [We are standing along Court street, the county offices behind us, the exposed I-beams stamped Bancroft and Martin, visible now like they were when they were erected. I gesture to the skeleton left- half innards, incomplete, snow coated rubble.]

Speaker 4: “Honestly? They could have redone the building instead of tearing it down, but...” He lifts his arm and shrugs, continuing to walk uphill.” (Schoen,

SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

M: “Kinda crazy, huh?”

Speaker 5: “Yeah. I hope they don’t put in another fucking parking lot. I hope it’s pretty.”

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Speaker 6: “They gonna put in a jail?”

M: “I think they’re going to fill it in. There could be an opportunity for something new.”

Speaker 6: “They could put something nice here. An activity place, something, you know. All kinds of possibilities.”

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Speaker 7: “It’s a historical building, they should have left it. I think they should have tried to savor it- to save it. Some of it anyway. Maybe redone it.

M: “What would you have liked to have seen?”

Speaker 7: “Just not to let it go. (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations)

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Figure 66: “Site-Work, documentation of deterioration.” March 2024

“It’s a shame when they tear down these whole buildings isn’t it?” We stand watching. Warped lines. Efforts to deconstruct. Organizing. Systems of chaos to order. Metal pile, brick pile other debris. Collected force. Other people join me to watch the view change. An unknown person crosses the street and pauses. ‘It’s made of brick- out of brick and steel. It will outlast us. It’s sad. This building, this space will be privately owned. More value that way.’ (Schoen, Transcript: Conversations)



Figure 67: “Documentation along Court St” February 2024.

Art-making and site-work are strategic methods used to process and sometimes encourage change.

“Emergent strategy understands that all is change. Space is never fixed by literal, physical dimensions. It varies according to histories, dynamics, emotional nuances, moods, pressures. It does change. We do change.”^{xviii} (brown, Emergent Strategies: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds)



Figure 68: “Horizons 1. Outdoor sculpture. Dimensions variable. Summer 2022”



Figure 69: “Horizons 2. Fall 2022”



Figure 70: “Horizons 3 Winter 2023”

“Horizons was inspired by Dick Higgins’ concept of an artist and audiences’ own horizons culminating or meeting on a shared plane, in a shared space. This piece was left on top of a hill from summer to spring and the horizon of audience and artist became largely not shared and instead a site of indeterminacy and encounter. Over time the piece became disassembled, moved, a site for rock piles and other arrangements of grasses and cattails.” (Schoen, Portfolio of Work, 2021-2024)

An artist must be able to withstand change. An artist may wish to anticipate change.

I arrive and the site has been razed. Though there are gaps in the fencing (someone broke the caution tape). I hear spring songbirds and it is quiet. No machines, though cars drive by. No loose copper or aluminum taps and dances against the skeletal sides of a building. All has been exhausted, leveled, settled into heaps. No bystanders to watch or make comment on activity. I wonder about the folds and curves of the i-beams. How they relate back to the tensions found here- how I might communicate this sign of a system deflated, exhausted by forces of another system hard at work but also exhausted from such intense labor. The great pull-down of over a century of labor. Because perhaps that is what in part I see- that others mourn- transformed, removed, the hope of humans to make a meaningful lasting mark. The silence of these piles still wafts a sense that something has happened here. An inhale. Pause. Suspended breath. Not yet released. Not yet full of entropic weight. Not all the way dead. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

As material objects within the built environment are altered, so too does the culture. The degree of decontextualizing and recontextualizing that happens within a system of change shifts the perceived meaning in the interconnected social system of power.

In one glance, patterns and tension points of power systems of varying degrees exist simultaneously. Hoisting beams to sturdy a ladder. Pushing a shopping cart full of the only possessions. Cloud cover moves gradually in. Machine swings from center. Swiftly delivering. Body leans over beam of the old original building. Matching the curvature to gently yet forcibly retrieve slate roof tiles. A fuzzy smiley face hangs from the lead crews SUV. I find out their names are Jeb and Matt. Tall figures, silhouettes on the roof, arched backs on the same horizon plane as the long arching back and arm of the excavator. We briefly talk. I find out they are with Sheldon Slate Co “the only slate reclamation in the state of Maine... doing our best to keep it out of the landfill... Hate to see an old building go but this had a lot of damage (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 71: “Green saran wrap covers rescued slate.” March 2024.



Figure 72: “Neat and ordered slate stacks by Sheldon Slate Co.” March 2024

A system of power both shapes change and is shaped by change.

The shape of human body

The outline on the roof

A singular seeming seamless horizon line

Mimicking the arc and articulated machine of the great digger

Both break to alter and change.

(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 73: “Site-Work, horizon line of articulating body and machine 1.” March 2024



Figure 74: “Site-Work, horizon line of articulating body and machine 2.” March 2024

Walking home from a Bangor City Council meeting at which citizens ask for a public ceasefire resolution I noticed there is a shopping cart diagonal from the public library. I saw it last month when I drove by. I turned toward the alcove. Besides the big grey bear falling out of the shopping cart all I could see were haunted eyes- underlit by lamppost. How are these realities permissible at the same time?" (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Reactions to change are different depending on the perception, activity and degree of dominance of the particular system of power at work. Increasing the strength and force of a chosen mechanism of power is a reaction to change.

At the third public meeting on public restrooms and their placement in downtown Bangor and surrounding public parks. Concern over consent, critique of adequate communication. Vocal fears. Powerless. Entitled. Enraged. The public draws upon the only system dominantly presented and well maintained since the inception of city state.

'The city needs to prove it can help the children of Bangor stay safe.'

"'Blood, feces, needles are everywhere.'

'They need to be monitored.'

(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

The act of saving material objects from a site or system of change is a reaction to that which is changing/has been changed within the built environment. Material objects that are saved concretize what cannot be saved and that which does not last; a moment within time, a maneuver of force upon surface, a now changed built environment.



Figure 75: “Site-Work, pink flagging around I-beams in anticipation of exposition.” May 2024



Figure 76: “Site-Work, documentation of paused maneuver of force.” April 2024.

Next to these walls, destruction.

A short distance from here.

Is this what it feels like- sounds like- smells like

To be surrounded by violent change?

*Destruction without knowing when you too will become
A part of the rubble
There are no limbs under the brick I walk through
No one is wailing for their martyred mother
Pausing demolition John hands James a tall Starbucks coffee,
Throws trash to the side.
I stand on the inside of the fence, watching
the undones.
Lunch wrappers and snack trash dropped to the ground because
the whole site is a mess to be cleaned up.*

(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

CHAPTER 3

THE ARTIST SUGGESTS OTHERWISE

“We are realizing we must become the systems we need.” adrienne marie brown
(brown, *Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation*)

“The master's tools cannot dismantle the master's house.” Audre Lorde



Figure 77: “Altered “I live here bitch” 127 Hammond St. Bangor. February 2024

Ways of Working

Bearing witness is multifaceted.

“We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art. And very often, in our art, the art of words.” (Le Guin)

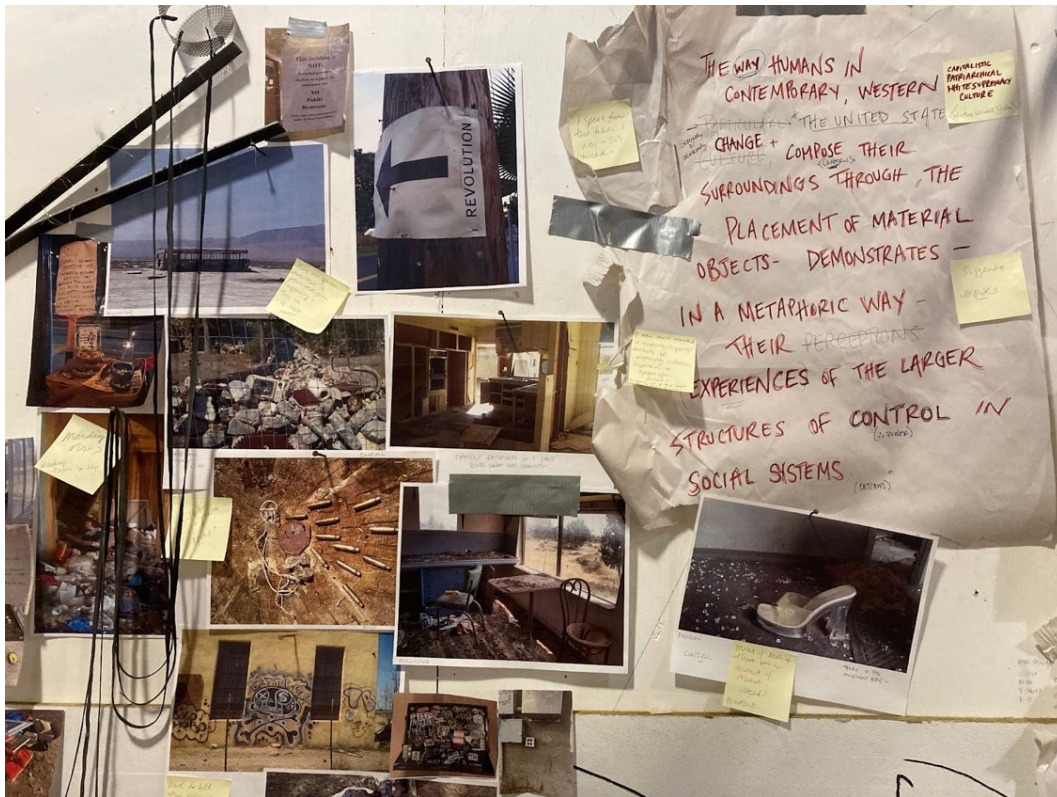


Figure 78: “Site-Work and Studio Research. Visual Mapping of Thesis.” December 2023

Intermedia is a way of working that incorporates multiple media and multiple facets.

Engaging in site-work and through bearing witness, the artist embodies intermedia by moving in the gaps between systems and simultaneously commenting on the surrounding systems of power.

“...Intermedia work, it could be said, occurs between media categories and perceptual categories. Understanding the power of intermedia work in general, and the Event in particular, calls for a cross-modal aesthetics of all senses as based in the interactions of hearing, touch, smell, taste and sight. The consideration of intermedial (and therefore intersensory) art therefore requires a simultaneously physiological and cultural framework for each sense as a cross-modal perceptual system.”^{xix} (Higgins)

For the artist engaged in site-work, the mechanism of an encounter leads to an intermedial process and practice.



Figure 79: “Site-Work, drawn to form, pattern and mass in process of reification.”

Artistic, intermedial ontologies can provide alternatives to dominant or pathological systems of power because they are outside of the prescribed system. The very existence of ways of working and ways of being propose a shift in focus. No longer centering the dominant system of power, artistic ontologies respond back to the system they are within as a means of separation. The process of responding back to that system is the exposition of ideas. Uncovering them illuminates arrangements outside of the prescribed, already built, already decided upon systems

and structures. These can be uncovered tangibly within the built environment and socially within systems of power.

An artist constructing work on the foundation of change must inquire on the nature and source of the dominant system of power to design alternatives.



Figure 80. “Site-Work, seeking replicating patterns 1.”

Figure 81. “Site-Work, seeking replicating patterns 2.”

Upon arrival find a system of tension points in matter and form. Find shapes a fractured system would take. These forms of debris can be rearticulated, possibly. Reimagine the release mechanism that pulled away-let go-released all that raw material from its teeth. Seek to understand this in other systems of power that change. Seek to identify social systems of power that promote inequality, oppression and dominance. Seek to understand the interrelationships that are active here. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

The artist must know the particular system of power before seeking to change it.

The task of becoming acquainted with an unfamiliar system of power and site within a built environment is difficult when the artist is unsure how to begin, what tools to use, or how to engage with the social and material systems of a particular site. Site-work brings the unknown into a more focused known.

In my small, feeble attempts to also exert force I stubbornly fixate on the copper pool grates along the wall. My pliers break under the force of attempted leverage- I have no hammer and do not wish to appear more vulnerable or like I do not know what I am doing so I grab a small copper pipe and brick and use a makeshift crowbar- soothing, reassuring myself that everything I need is here and not having the tools isn't a sign of being unprepared. But maybe it really isn't possible. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Artists work as interventionists, intercepting typical methodologies. Artists can be conscientious objectors. Artists can gather and devise new systems of working.

“Their name, a mixture of 'anarchy' and 'architecture', was conceived in informal conversation, one of the main ways through which the group collaborated. In 1974 they produced an exhibition of the same name, which encapsulated their critique of the modernist impulses of contemporary culture within which architecture was conceived as a symbol for that culture's worst excesses and drawbacks.”^{xx} (Schneider)

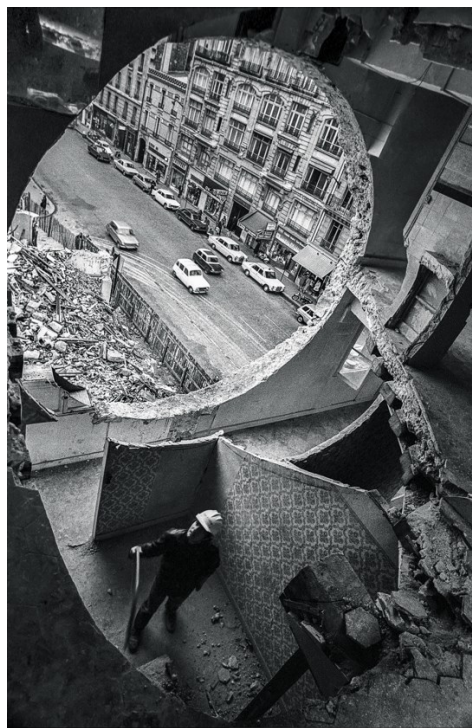


Figure 12: “Conical intersect 4” Gordon Matta Clark. 1975. Paris, France

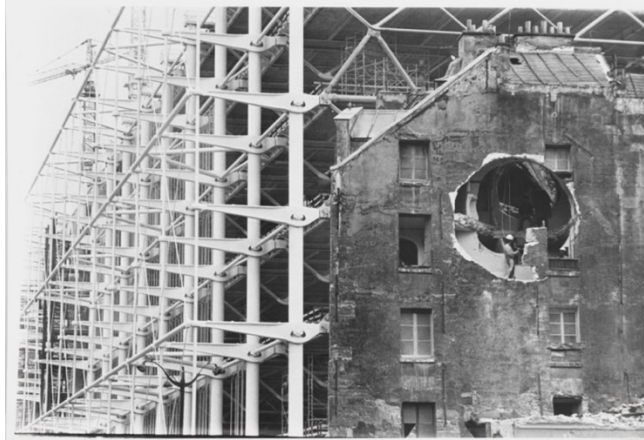


Figure 83: “Conical intersect 4” Gordon Matta Clark. 1975. Paris, France

In between Louise Bourgeois sculptures a group of artist activists circle up. A grief share has been called. This was the art. Of assembly. Bodily Assemblage. Out of the picnic basket came shell, feather, sage, candle, and signage for a free Palestine. Visitors to Mass MOCA were forced to move around us. We were an unexpected social sculpture. Mapping our grief we were not mapped on the exhibition floor plan. We were designing actions to speak to the soft violence of the arts industry. Alternative visionaries in the corporate imagination of high level funding. The Barr Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts are systems of power holding capital that gets dispersed through competition- artists write grants hoping for acceptance. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Intermedial art making and site-work require personal and public risk, and accountability. Both processes also require a critical assessment as much as they do intuitive understanding to keep in check the potential co-opting.

The cycle of dominant systems of power and capitalism co-opting artistic ontologies is a long-standing struggle.

“Without understanding that the manipulation of symbols has become a method of production for the dominant powers in contemporary society, we cannot appreciate the

forms of resistance to the power that come from numerous artists, activists and engaged citizens.” (Thompson)

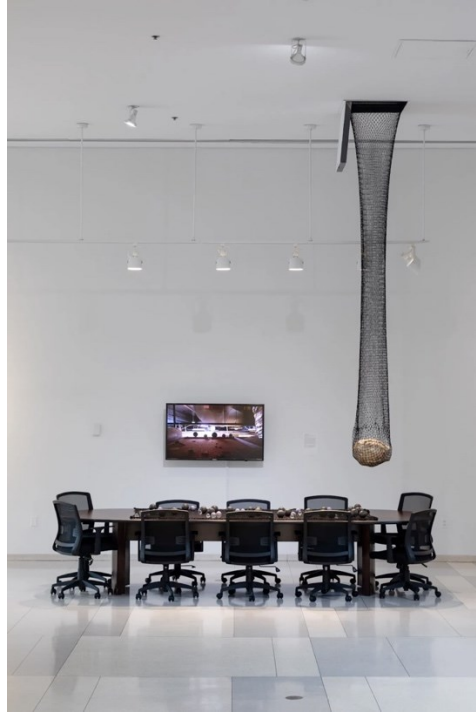


Figure 84: “The Meeting” Caroline Woolard. 2018. Sculptural object and game for difficult meetings.

“...it’s about the expansive potential of a material to suggest such a disparate range of concepts, like a network, but it’s also about a colonial net... the net itself would materially speak to a core tension in the socially engaged art world. When an artist represents a collective practice in an art context, the artist instrumentalized something that is deeply contextual. This has a colonial legacy, taking something that is so contextual, like a practice of facilitation within a specific community and appropriating it for the artist’s own purposes, making it autonomous from its original context.”^{xxi}
(Woolard)

An artist can look to political movements for allyship and tools to strategically work outside the dominant system of power and resource/capital distribution.

“Management of resources is constant. Everyone manages resources. Feelings and habits connected to our dominant culture [around money] are not a personal failing but a product of capitalism. So to intentionally counter, be specific and name other options and other ways to think about this. Push back. We don’t need all the resources. We just need enough to answer ‘what do we need to do to do the work.’”^{xxii} *A Bookkeeping Cooperative*

In a liberatory principled world view, values drive principles. The practice of intersectionality is a bigger ‘we’ that takes control over the means of production. This contrasts with the capitalist system of power that controls production for the gain of a few.

“...One, designers must refuse to design policing tools and should prohibit their work from ever being used for policing’s ends. Two, designers should resist and push back against the appropriation of design methods and discourse for policing’s ends. Three, designers must develop their knowledge and discernment of policing ideologies, and in turn, of abolitionist ones. Designers should fight to abolish literal cops and the ones in their heads. Freedom demands that, and nothing less.” Sarah Fathallah & A.D. Sean Lewis (Lewis)

The artist and activist imagine radical deviations from the dominant systems of power. The artist and activist work for an alternative.



Figure 85: “Women on Waves” setting sail to provide abortions offshore to countries where it is illegal

“Women on Waves sails a ship to countries where abortion is illegal. With the use of a ship, early medical abortions can be provided safely, professionally and legally. Applicability of national penal legislation, and thus also of abortion law, extends only to territorial waters; outside that 12-mile radius (or 2 hours sailing) it is thus Dutch law that applies on board the ship, which means that all our activities are legal.” (Waves)

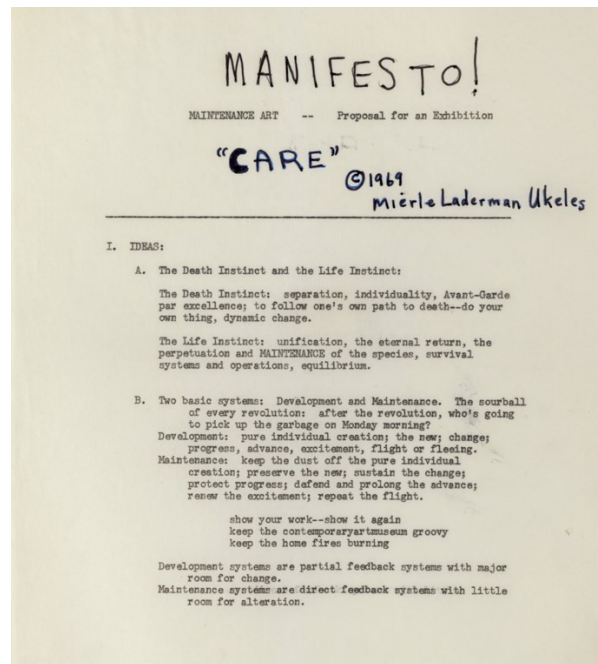


Figure 86: “Manifesto for Maintenance Art” 1969. Mierle Laderman Ukeles proposal for an exhibition^{xxiii}

Mutual aid “the radical act of caring for one another while working to change the world”^{xxiv}
 (Spade is a tool to subvert dominant systems of power and the corresponding material and capital resource distribution.

If change indicates the unlasting within the built environment and capitalist system of power, alternative systems of power such as mutual aid work, solidarity economies and alternative means of governance provide endurance within what changes.

In an alternative system of power there is multidimensional equity and multiple modes of subsistence endeavoring for “joyous consumption, fair distribution, and just transition”. (Medley)

The artist can extend the practice of site-work to facilitate redistribution beyond the immediate site and context. The artist can use the political power of mark-making to maneuver resources and material objects and address presenting needs. An artist can engage in mutual aid within their artwork, addressing multiple needs through multiple mediums and functions.

“Anarchists are not against power per se but a particular type of power-domination. At the heart of anarchists critique of the current social order lies the rejection of domination in all its forms...These hierarchical structures and relationships namely, capitalism, the state, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, imperialism and seller-colonialism are constitutive of a mutually reinforcing system of domination.”^{xxv} (Guerrero-Lopez and Hughes)^{xxv}



Figure 87: “The Joy Truck Project” 2021-2024 Mutual Aid and Social Practice; Mobile resource center

Material resources have value that can be extended beyond the consumers cultural understanding of shelf life and can be considered “gifts.”^{xxvi} (Hyde)

“There are many connections between anarchist theory and gift exchange as an economy – both assume that man is generous, or at least cooperative, ‘in nature’; both shun centralized power; both are best fitted to small groups and loose federations; both rely on contracts of the heart over codified contract, and so on. But, anarchism and gift exchange share the assumption that it is not when a part of the self is inhibited and restrained, but when a part of the self is given away, that community appears.” (Hyde)^{xxvii}



Figure 88: “The Joy Truck Project” 2021-2024 Mutual Aid and Social Practice; Mobile resource center

Artists engaged in social practice may apply the techniques of mutual aid and meeting community needs in their work- using the artistic practice as a conduit to resource distribution and filling in gaps that dominant social systems are unable to adequately address.



Figure 89: “The Joy Truck Project” 2021-2024 Mutual Aid and Social Practice; Mobile resource center

“The Joy Truck Project is a donation and grant funded traveling community resource center roaming the Maine Central Highlands. A mutual aid project, a social experiment and expression of a hybridized socially engaged art piece, The Joy Truck Project distributes free resources (naloxone, fentanyl test strips, clothes, books, art supplies and pop-up workshops) to rural and low income communities in central Maine.” (Schoen Portfolio of Work 2021- 2024)

The act of intercepting and/or redirecting distribution channels does not belong to artists alone.

A ladder went to Blue Hill. Clothing racks to a local vintage community store and center. Clothing to a homeless encampment. Hardware to a small business contractor. Glass and bricks to a local neighbor and informal community genealogist. Pool tiles to people who remember and wish for a tangible token. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

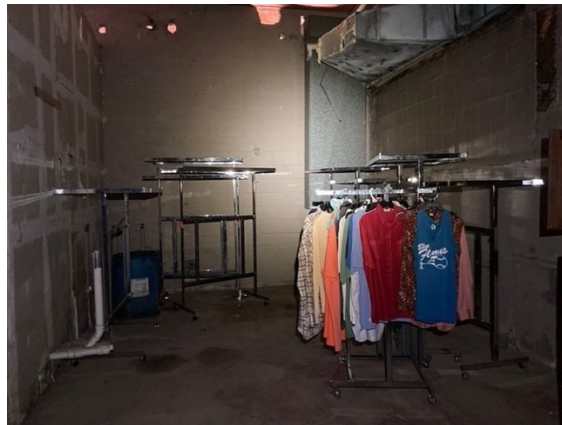


Figure 90: “Site-Work: Fully intact clothing racks encountered in the basement.”



Figure 91: “Comrades race clothing racks down Court and Hammond St”



Figure 92: “Site-Work: An Encounter With Functional Objects Set to Be Demolished.”



Figure 93: “Site-Work: An Encounter With Functional Objects Set to Be Demolished 2.”

The scale at which a demolition crew “sorts” means all metal is crushed together. This includes the filing cabinets, metal clothing racks, I-beams, lockers, door handles, metal lathe. This means the dental wax, table top paddle boards, toilet paper, lawn mowers will be pulverized together. The metal gets trucked. The concrete with rebar becomes crushed then used for fill in roads that easily flood. The wood gets trucked. The brick gets disposed of in a dumpster lined with special garbage bag-like material. Elvis and Rocky wear hazmat suits as they load it. The thin copper lining goes home in the bed of the company truck. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Contemplation

“Being and non being are not opposites, but merely different states which may happen to something. Death is a change in existence, not the negation of it... Silence is just as real, just as much a part of existence as sound.” John Cage

“Endeavoring to be seamless [means] surrendering to what we’re moved to do... without mental description, allow what’s there to coexist within us. Offer the essence back to oneself, to what caught our attention.” Bruce Towl



Figure 94: “Site-Work, bearing witness to angles, lines, reflections and light change.”

Art making and site-work are exercises in endurance and surrender.

The exposition, or display, of an artwork is an aspect of art making that is both a challenge and an opportunity for artists. Artists address this through degrees of contemplation.

Raw material, remnants of forces of destruction and masses crushed under force are removed and relocated to fit within the gallery site of special function. To put these materials on a plinth becomes troublesome. Does a folded i-beam or crumpled chair thoroughly communicate the chaos of change? The undone? The grief of change? Can it be heard through this material arrangement? Can it be heard through the tamedness of the new site- the gallery? (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Recontextualization, the process of re-pair, and rescuing found material objects are methods of control in the face of change. Re-pair and re-use insist upon alternative combinations and re-arrangement. Reformation of material suggests an end and a beginning abating potential completion.

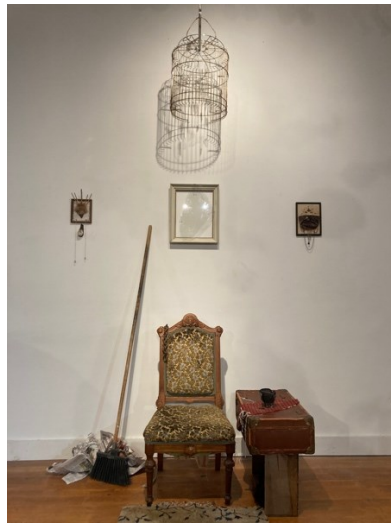


Figure 95: "Stay Awhile" 1.



Figure 96: "Stay Awhile 2."

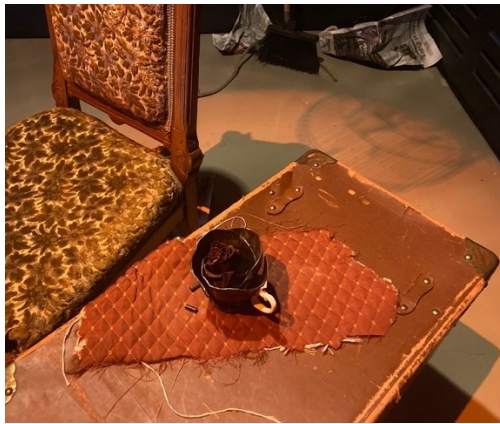


Figure 97: "Closeup Stay Awhile 1".



Figure 98: "Closeup Stay Awhile 2"

Constructed in response to continued tensions between the city of Bangor, homeless advocacy groups and residents of a local encampment in addition to the unresolved human condition while trying to make a home by any means in a state of instability and transience. (Schoen Portfolio of Work 2021-2024)

Just as bearing witness for the artist may be an act of reverence for an unfolding situation, constructing an exposition is a form of reverence. Reverence for material can be a strategic act of contemplation. The inclusion of a sense of reverence in site-work involves the use of symbol and metaphor. Not every artist function in this way.



Figure 99. "One hundred and seventy glass shards, golden thread, fishing line, 8' flatbar."



Figure 100. "Close-Up of glass and mirror pieces suspended". Figure 101. "Reflected light and ambient air flow."

One Hundred & Seventy Symptoms was made in response to multiple proposed sweeps of a homeless encampment that was estimated to displace one hundred and seventy

residents with no other place to go. One hundred and seventy pieces of broken glass was suspended by golden thread and fishing line from two portions of steel flat bar. (Schoen, Portfolio of Work 2021-2024)

When a material object is recontextualized it is shifted from its original location to a different site. This movement of form from one site to another can either support the integrity of the material object or degrade the integrity of the material object.

Identifying which system the material object embeds itself into when altered can help assess whether the new system can hold the integrity of the material object as it was found. The goal is continually investigate if the material object can function beyond representation and communicate the essence of the site-work.



Figure 102. "Site-work, aesthetics of change."



Figure 103. "Site-work, raw material outside of IMRC for processing."

The introduction of the gallery as a site for sculptural mark-making and found material objects is complicated. An artist in response may “dwell in the midst of this paradox” (Brezsny)

It is both a challenge and an opportunity for the artist working with found material objects.

Decisions for material curation may be dictated by the capacity of the artist and network of assistance available. Curation may be guided by the limitations of surrounding systems of power.

The gallery is a system of power.

The I beams have to be cut down.

The material to be felted along their rusted bottoms.

A plinth to protect the floors.

(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

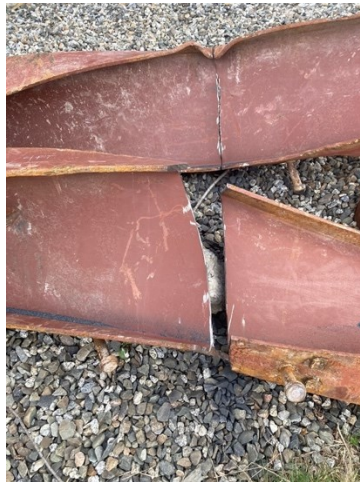


Figure 104. “Site-work, cutting steel I-beam down to size for gallery”

The artist can make curatorial choices that *create* a site or *respond* to an existing site. These choices have an impact and are often a combination of both. Creating a site builds new, unnoticed physical dimension or understanding that one might typically perceive. Responding to an existing site includes working without alteration to the existing structure or parameters.



Figure 105. “Collaborator Augusta Sparks ties red twine knots for “Sourcebound”



Figure 106. “Deinstallation of “Sourcebound”



Figure 107. “Beginning of Sourcebound.” Figure 108. “Sourcebound” 63’ of newsprint, twine

‘Sourcebound made in collaboration with Augusta Sparks, is a construction of alternating and overlapping lines made in contrast to the straight angles of the industrial building and backdrop above the viewer. (Schoen, Portfolio 2021-2024)

Instead, the artist works to reveal whether or not the art-making can function beyond a representation or documentation of an experience. The artist communicates an invitation to the audience to also have an experience.

“The Quiet in the Land: Everyday Life, Contemporary Art, and the Shakers is the first project organized by The Quiet in the Land. From May through August 1996, ten artists, as well as project director France Morin and project coordinator Tony Guerrero, lived, worked, and worshipped with the only active Shaker community in the world, in Sabbathday Lake, Maine.”



Figure 110. “Installation of table, plates and grandfather clock in memory of Shakers in Sabbathday Lake:”



Figure 109. “Close up of “*Communion; The Circle Series*” by Kazumi Tanaka”



Figure 111. "*The Quiet in the Land: Everyday Life, Contemporary Art, and the Shakers*”

An artist may choose to work towards abstract or literal expositions to communicate their ideas.

“I don’t want an art that points at a thing, I want an art that is the thing” Tania Bruguera
(Thompson, Pigeons on the Grass Alas: Contemporary Curators Talk About the Field)^{xxvii}

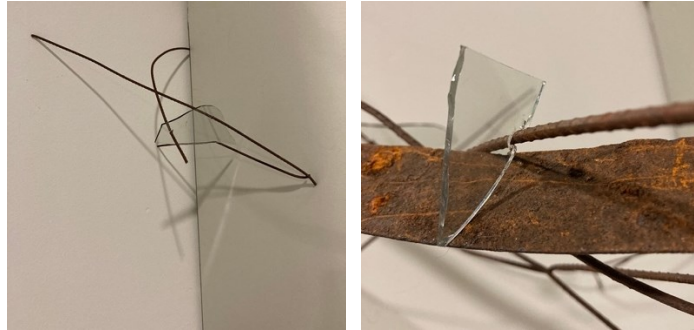


Figure 112. “*Heavy Living Giving Way To A Sigh*”. Figure 113. “Close Up of rusted metal casket band and glass”



Figure 114. “Exposition of tension and fragility through material curation.”

The process by which an artist suggests an actuality may rely on the nature and mechanisms of material objects they choose. To communicate tension the artist may rely on strategies of balance with materials that when positioned on the edge of balance bring to mind catastrophe or precarity.



Figure 115. “*Heavy Living Giving Way To a Sigh*” 2021. Dimensions Variable. Nails, Rust, Glass.

The artist continues to contemplate and experiment.

The site holds marvel just as it exists- no artistry required, except for my predisposition to perceive raw material as beautiful. The installation art is the environment itself. The audience is encountering a site within a site- the gallery within another built environment. Can the audience grieve, inquire and bear witness too? The built environment through the lens of installation art is liminal, and shifting. What is the physical shape of power? Are there material architectures that indicate the composition of a theoretical system of power? Bringing this work into the gallery means to strive to get as proximal as possible to mimic that beauty in a de-contextualized system. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

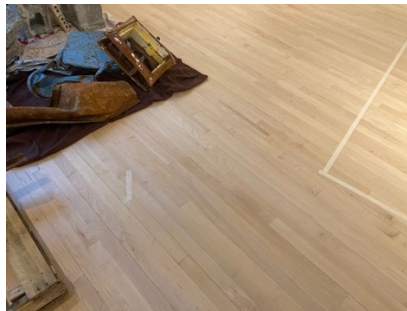


Figure 116. "Site-work, mapping out installation at new site, Lord Hall Gallery"

The curatorial choices an artist makes either supports the existence of material objects or distracts from what the material object itself communicates.

"We learn patience and endurance in following through a piece of work. We learn to respect material in working it. Formed things and thoughts live a life of their own; they radiate meaning. They need a clear form to give a clear meaning. Making something become real and take its place in actuality adds to our feeling of usefulness and security. Learning to form makes us understand all forming." (Albers)



Figure 117. "Site-work, repositioning I-beam onto pallets sourced from 127 Hammond St"

Through bearing witness and contemplation, the artist-self can be the articulating arm of the excavator, the wind propelling roof tiles and papering flung and flitting through air, the receiving foundation submitting to the weight of machine, breaking under sheer force. If composition at the site is created through gravity and force then let that be the action that is replicated for all materials. Threaded rebar hangs off the far Hammond St side of the building. Drapery, skeletal, heaved body as close as possible to total collapse but not quite. Still hanging, still suspended. Some brick are strewn on the ground under the weight, some are above. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 118. "Site-work, intensity of shadow mimics intensity of machine presence."



Figure 119. "Site-work, silhouette of excavator arm delicately lifts steel I-beam out from position."



Figure 120. "Site-work: High winds cascaded slate papering and shingles driving one into the ground."

(Re)Arrangement

“The manner by which we approach is more important than the thing we are approaching.” Alnoor Ladh (Ladha, In Conversations: Post Capitalism)

*“We have to learn to respond to conditions productively. We cannot master them but we can be guided by them. Limitation from the outside can stimulate our inventiveness rather than confine it. We need such flexibility of reaction in times of crisis.” Anni Albers
(Albers)^{xxvii}*

Sculptural mark making, documentation and the (re)arrangement of material objects from their original site to another creates forms that the original site, or system of power, could not encompass.

(Re) arrangement is an extension of site-work. (Re)arrangement is the process of recontextualizing found material objects.

Moving material objects that are perceived as valueless within a site of deactivation and demolition to a site of reverence and perceived value is an alternative way of working. This way of working becomes its own system of power. It is another way art making can become a subversive tactic to the primary system of power.



Figure 121. “Site-Work, observation of material 1.” Figure 122. “Site-Work, observation of material 2.”

The (re)arrangement of material objects is adjacent to the surrounding systems of power.



Figure 123. “Tools of Choice” 2021. Game piece artefact. Paper boats, 22mm bullet casings, envelope.”

Artists present site-specific material objects in varied degrees of transparency to endeavor to refer back to the original site (and source) of material-objects, culture and to comment on the systems of power surrounding the work.

When the war in Ukraine became a focus for NPR, broadcasted Ukrainian grief and anger became part of a poem crumpled in exasperation of violence repeating itself. This piece asked the audience to play a game of chance, to close their eyes and pick a hand, either retrieving a butcher paper boat or a 22mm bullet casing from a butcher paper

envelope to examine random yet pointed hypothetical complicities in an unfolding war.
(Schoen Portfolio of Work 2021-2014)

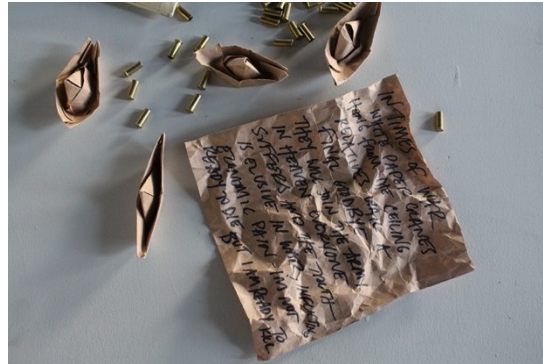


Figure 124. “Tools of Choice” Cover of envelope “Close Your Eyes And Pick A Hand”

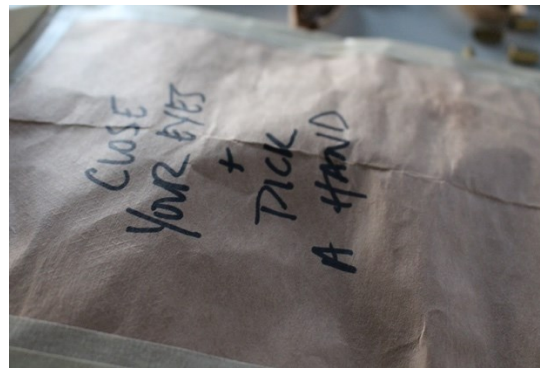


Figure 125. “Tools of Choice” Crumpled poem on war in Ukraine

Site-work- the integration of observation, bearing witness and sculptural mark-making- renews itself in the introduced site of the gallery.

In the gallery, an artist's work of bearing witness displays to an audience what they haven't likely directly experienced. At the moment of an exposition the original site from which found material objects are sourced has become unreplicable. Therefore, it is the replication of the *how* of the site, not a replication of the *what-the-site-is*.

This type of exposition and renewed continuation of the original site-work suggests the need for a renewed mechanism to let go of control, so that the embodied aspects of the exposition can come forward uninterrupted by the need for replication.

Pull a card to perform an action. Flip a coin to perform an action. Move within the blueprint, grid mapped by three structural points. Inversion and suspension- concrete compositional desires and wishes of artist power? I am coming up against my own edges of power desire, control desires, idea desires. The footprint is the base. Hold the integrity of the site in through sight. (As in don't suspend what wasn't). The artist sets the parameters based on... above and below. The visual field which is on-site has so drastically shifted. Pivot all material from its center? Work with my intuition and embodied understanding too. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

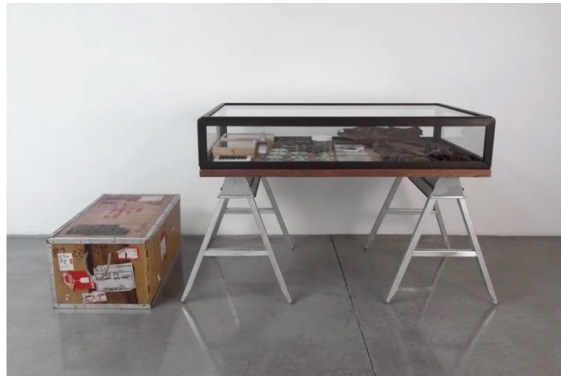


Figure 126. "Mark Dion "On Tropical Nature" 1991. Mixed Media. 55x102x40"



Figure 127. "Mark Dion "On Tropical Nature". 1991

The artist using chance operations in (re)arrangement seeks an element of decision making unburdened by judgements of value. Chance operations create a system of power. Leaving it up to chance to make the first mark lets the material-object communicate and exist clearly.

The action of pulling words from a hat dictates the visual vocabulary of the work, specifying which material is placed next.



Figure 128. “Site-Work: Installation Process: Hat, material cards, work gloves, notebook”

Based on curatorial strategies the artist may acknowledge that though site-work is narrative in process, the culminating form may not be narrative.

Site-work and bearing witness to change within the shared built environment necessarily uses elements of social practice and site-specific activities of perception, observation and conversation.

At times, the culminating exposition connected to site-work will draw instead on the aesthetics of material objects to communicate bearing witness to change. Site-work is not necessarily a direct exposition of site-specificity.

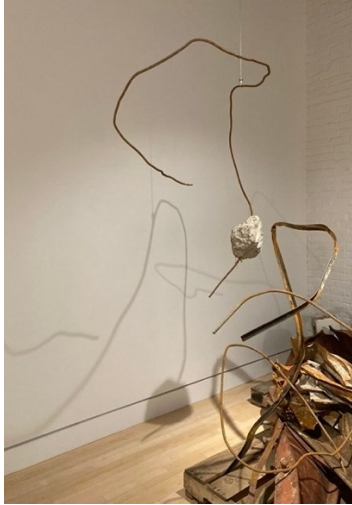


Figure 129. Site-Work: Early stages of installation, testing of suspension.”

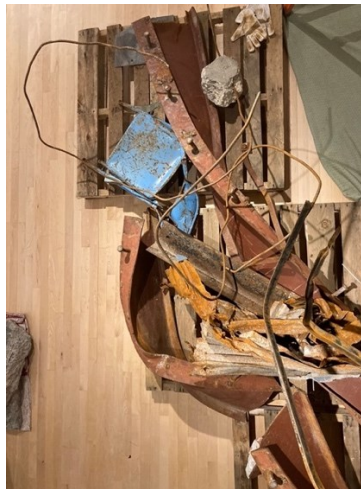


Figure 130. “Site-Work, installation, the view from above, embodying excavator and crusher”



Figure 131. “Site-Work: documenting light within new site”

*“...art and the social are not to be reconciled or collapsed,
but sustained in continual tension.” (Thompson)*



Figure 132. “Suspended shapes of final exposition.” Figure 133. “Light casting, captured within glass cube.”



Figure 134. “Strewn and arranged shapes of final exposition.”

Jotting down quick reflections from the opening: ‘I just had to tell you how sad this piece is- truly.’ Resonance with the audience who understands immediately the themes of change, death, transformation and chaos. ‘We don’t see the chaos because of how quickly it gets cleaned up’. We talk of similar dominant systems that clean up debris without the public noticing the fullness of what’s happening- trash bags disposed of, bodies disposed of, rubble disposed of. Sweep this away, quickly remove it . Two people remember the

pool and one asks what will happen next” (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)



Figure 135. “Close-up of materials, door handle gifted from crew”

The artist remembers their limitations. It would be a sculpture after all. A funeral pyre. An altar. An inhale. A sigh. An aggregate. A compression and a burst. A moment made of an unknown amount of moments spanning one hundred and thirty four years. (Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

Mark-making is the act of engaging with one’s surroundings by altering a surface, leaving it different than before the mark-makers arrival.

The artist endeavoring to work with change must remember that bearing witness is an invitation to work with the unresolved and cyclical. (Re)arrangement asks all who encounter a situation to look and then to look again.



Figure 136. "Final Thesis Exposition titled "127 Hammond St"

Keep finding or making the spaces that can respond to change- or are the change.

Keep finding aesthetics of violence- a brute instrument of change.

Keep finding aesthetics of care- a tender instrument of change

(Schoen, SITE-WORK: Record of Transcriptions and Reflections)

CHAPTER 4

SUMMATION

“To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction... It is to be both revolutionary and conservative; alive to new possibilities for experience and adventure, frightened by the nihilistic depths to which so many modern adventures lead, longing to create and to hold on to something real, even as everything melts.” Marshall Berman (Berman, Introduction: Modernity- Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

A manifesto is typically thought of as a public declaration of principles- on behalf of a personal or collective point of view- in regards to an issue and often in resistance to a dominant system of power. Manifestos contain a series of claims remarking upon an experience- asking the audience to consider a particular situation and point of view. Over the course of my research I was inspired by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engles in their work “A Communist Manifesto”, Abraham Burickson’s “Experience Design; A Participatory Manifesto”, and “100 Art World Manifestos” compiled by Jessica Lack.

The word “intermedia” coined by Dick Higgins in the Sixties referenced art making that resides between mediums; a way of exploring the space *between* artistic genres and an approach and process of making that resides outside of a prescribed way of working. It is because of my commitment to the academic rigor of an Intermedia degree that I chose to use a hybridized manifesto as container for my thesis work.

Throughout my studies I have been inspired by the artistic approaches of Dada-ists, John Cage, the group Situationist International led by Guy Debord, and socially engaged artists such as Pablo Helguera, Mierle Ukele Ladermsn, and Suzanne Lacey all whom sought to remove the division between art and life, construct change through experiential and experimental art making, by examining dominant, pathological systems of power and critiquing aesthetics of violence and hierarchy. I have been also inspired by the historical and contemporary parallel between political

movements, philosophies rooted in emergence, and creative, principle driven alternatives inviting necessary resistance and an embarkation into the unknown.

The scholarship of Intermedia necessitates the presentation of multiple displays of concept, in other words, exposition. It is important to me that the authenticity and interconnectedness between different forms of exposition not be lost or diluted in the format prescribed by the larger academic institution. In all forms of exposition, it is the material that must inform the system or container it resides within. To me, situated in the academy, a hybridized manifesto providing political declarations, poetry, experiential research as well as cited theory, was the best possible choice of container to hold my research content.

127 Hammond St Bangor ME 04401 is the physical address of a site that held multiple systems of power, that were activated and amplified over one hundred and thirty-four years of cultural and architectural arrangement and (re) arrangement. In this one location I observed labor systems, varied methods of governance and decision making, material redistribution, techniques of communication and public reaction to change. 127 Hammond St. contained and referenced multiple kinds of power systems at varied scale. I observed pathological systems of power- by which I mean a behavior of power that is maladaptive to the whole- observing at this site and in surrounding sites, styles of change-making that were designed to uphold a capitalist system causing harm to those existing within it and making it difficult to alter the systemic structure. At this site I also noted beneficial systems of power which I observed in relationally focused communication and behaviors of cooperation.

In this way 127 Hammond St became an emblem pointing towards and embodying larger social systems of power immediately surrounding it. Housing instability, inadequate resources for neighbors, issues of public consensus, uncertainty in the face of change and profit driven inequities were aspects swirling around this particular geographic location. Amidst this swirl were also intimations of other ways of working; the generosity of the demolition crew to provide access to material, set aside sentimental bricks for a community member and hold dialogue about the nature of change were potent indicators of beneficial systems of power.

From January through May I constructed a self-directed, informal artist residency at this demolition site- a location that became a nexus of vast experiential research which formed my position and work as an artist endeavoring to bear witness to change.

The process of bearing witness became the act of allowing the full complex and contradictory existence of this situation- this site- to come forward. Bearing witness became a process of humanizing the situation. Being present to and marking the existence of this changing became the most important activity I could engage in or pull from my artist toolkit throughout the research period. Bearing witness to the physical architecture of 127 Hammond St changing through deconstruction indicated daily a loss of a previous form and continually altered meaning as the social function and purpose of the physical site that once was began to dissolve and disappear. Bearing witness to the demolition meant surrendering to all that was changing and happening beyond my control.

Drawing from my position as artist and observer through repeated visits to this site, the process of bearing witness to change developed into an artistic research practice of unexpected depth. This would become what I called site-work. Defined as an intermedial process combining the use and arrangement of found material objects, theory, and community engagement. It became a process of elongated observation taking place on and off-site. The phrase “Site-Work” was well suited to all that I was engaged in- the term *site* in contemporary understanding holds both a geographical position as well as location of engagement and perception which occurs internally and outside of the self and collective. *Site* is personal and public.

Bearing witness began as observation. Observation began with curiosity, doubt, fascination, and confusion as I endeavored to understand the artists' work among a site such as this. I discovered that more often than not all I could do was observe the social and material patterns as they shifted and morphed. Making record, to refer to the existence of change was an integral aspect of Site-Work that concretized all that was beyond physical grasp. Writing poetry and commentary through prose became habitual practices. I was inspired by the autobiographical, reflective and investigative methods of Anais Nin and Sophie Calle. 127 Hammond St was too short term to be truly ethnographic, though it contained a particular kind of immersive style that is known in the sociological disciplines. My writing practice extended beyond the immediate site to include outer

scales of site-work; taking place at city council meetings, while on the bus, and at other sites of inquiry. This practice helped map my understanding of site and self as a microcosm within the surrounding built environment and social realm.

Site-work included documenting the change within the built environment using a cell phone camera and an audio recorder; capturing visual data, sounds of demolition and the surrounding downtown as well as commentary from passersby.

Through site-work I applied methods of social practice; engaging in conversation with community members to understand their experience with grief and perception of change, negotiating and communicating with Penobscot County Commissioners office and developing a working relationship with the demolition company, Alloy Group. Site-Work involved reclaiming and redistributing material objects. Still-functional items were redistributed among varied community. Building material remnants were collected- in buckets, backpack, by excavator and car- intended for further sculptural material mark making; a way to communicate all that I bore witness to.

It became clear over time that the artistic research practice I developed and called Site-Work as I defined it didn't just begin at 127 Hammond St. Through end-notes and portfolio images I have included, Site-Work is a clear elongation and continuance of work I constructed throughout my studies.

Maintaining the integrity of material, like maintaining the integrity of an intermedial process within this manuscript was central. The material objects I collected from 127 Hammond St were minimally altered. The largest I-beam was cut in three pieces so that it could fit through the gallery entryway and meet the stipulations of installing within the gallery such large raw material. Throughout the retrieval, transportation and installation, material objects from the site were largely unaltered. This was a curational choice I made that was informed by the nature of bearing witness and my experience of surrender. Each asked me to hold space for reality to be seen as truly as itself as was possible.

Bearing witness to change at 127 Hammond St was instructive on how to accurately and authentically convey the immensity of what the site offered within the gallery space. I used

strategies such as only suspending that which had been suspended on-site, adhering to placements that mimicked what I had directly observed as well as employing chance operations by pulling the sequence of materials to install from a hat. These strategies were useful in buffering any of my artistic choices that might inadvertently diffuse the essence of the site in the (re)arrangement process and distract from the potential visceral-ity of material. This way of working to me, placed an important, additional emphasis on artistic scholarship.

I made the decision to rely on material objects from the site themselves rather than any of my documentation of the site because to me the forms of material objects were the most appropriate devices to relay a situation that the audience themselves hadn't experienced. The form and material both detailed and in totality in these material objects conveyed the act of bearing witness to change far more thoroughly and viscerally than any other documentation could. To me, each object stood for themselves. Crushed, twisted, flattened, warped, broken, shattered were actions that I hoped carried from one site to another and endeavored to describe by constructing a culminating sculpture.

My commitment to pursue a degree in Intermedia has fortified and deepened a way of working in the world. At its core it is a commitment to processes that are constantly emerging and changing, and in this way engaged in a cycle of unresolve, what scholars of emergent strategies would call "generative tension". With this understanding I endeavored to make choices during research that expressed this process through varied forms of exposition. The four months of bearing witness and site-work, backed by three years of study, informed and made clear the importance of addressing multiple systems of power through multiple means and the nuance of positioning art making within and outside of known systems- to suggest subtly and not so subtly, alternative ways of working and the transformational value of looking again.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Site-Work: Record of Transcription & Reflection

1.12.24

Day 98 of genocide in Palestine. My search for an encounter continues. Or the encounter itself with debris. Leftover. I am looking for compositions of decomposition. Where a human used to be, a place a human used to occupy. Forced abandonment. Forces of change.

My role as see/ker

Builder

Observer

Participant

How space is used- made up of humans and material objects

1.14.24

What is the public sphere outside of a private property? Ask town for MAPS- will help situate where can or can't be- what type of occupation is possible-

Undated:

Instances of a social system of control that is BEYOND CONTROL (v. idea of out-of-control)

On the tracks alongside the hospital two eagles sat atop an ice jam- like two figures a top a rock on a hot summer day yet despite my want very much to make them like humans- to think of them like David or Chief- they are birds, it is January the river flows by is pocked and dotted and jagged with rugged ice chunk build-up. I almost listened to the voice in my head that said not to, to be content at the barricades- but so great was my need to get closer- to write- to by presence and proxy make a new system with my body- my sight- my ears as they accept cold winds and listen to sporadic ice cracking, a sliver moon- I am on the tracks- I did not wait for company to take myself here and for that I am fortified and better able to accept and invite when that moment arises. I am alert to the potential- all the possibilities of harm here- a surprise attack, the train, the cops, I fall- yet instead I breathe. I am grounded by- what? It is nameless yet I feel it.

Roberts Rules of Shit. Disruptors Prayer.

1.22.24

The woman with the grey cat hat is on the bus again. Yesterday she was greeted by the bus driver who hadn't seen her in a while. She said she had a stroke. We've just picked up a person wearing a blue baseball cap- the bus driver hollered to the rest of us- who dropped a grey glove? A couple sits slightly above me. Holding hands. One of them is wearing a keffiyeh. I remember how I wanted to make more visible patches- end the genocide. Behind them is a group chatting- high energy exchange- trouble with food and heat- hopes for land, to get out of Bangor. Brewer. Naming places as we trundle along that are no longer there- as we move through space, making changes through tracks and routes, we pass around time as we are shuttled to our destinations.

Undated:

Find or make the spaces that can respond to change- or are the change.

Find aesthetics of violence- a brute instrument of change.

Find aesthetics of care- a tender instrument of change.

Undated:

It felt contemplative and tired last night. There is a tension and anticipation- maybe the difference between night and day energy- public bus.

Undated:

And somewhere in here is the resistance to record- as I watch the woman in front of me gesticulate- in response to? She holds her hand up in a stop motion- both palms facing outward- checks her watch- can she feel me watching her? Record keeping in a public space is an example of a social system of control and power- internal system- data collecting//- real time observation, judgment, assumptions and bias course through me- it matters what I do with this information.

1.25.24

The Bangor UU sits three quarters up the hill along Center Street and has been a home. This composition will remain unphotographed. This is the site of someone's home- the structure is there- next to now a tarped bush is the wheels of a tent, a backpack left, all soggy now. The smell of food, hot and fried wafts from either side. A coffee shop up the hill, a fine dining establishment down the road. "Join Us In Liberty, Love, Happy 24" "Free Bean Supper Saturday 4:00-5:00" In the edges of this property I realize it is a shopping cart tucked in the bushes- made to be roof and walls.

Undated-

Bids- county commissioners on website. Penobscot County owns the building. penobscot.county.net previously by YMCA Bangor (have records- what happened) Anything prior- Bangor City Records. Demolished in next couple weeks. Contact with Demo Company. Info in Bids. City- condemning- placard- code enforcement? County Owned building: HR. Deeds 1814 records of purchase in Penobscot County Plans (GIS Mapping) Penobscot County BRIAN MACDONALD facilities director. Site Visit and Site Documentation.

Undated:

127 Hammond St is an unusual nexus containing exchanges of time, conversation, material and negotiations of power. Before Alloy Group won the bid to demolish 127 Hammond St, it was subtly announced as being up for grabs. The request for proposal was listed on the website. The banner hung from the fence line. The meeting time was to be on Thursday at 9 o'clock in the morning. Who among the community would be able to attend? Not those who work jobs at that time. Not mothers or primary caregivers. The exclusivity of access is a clear demarcation of who is encouraged to receive capital resources and who is not. The process of public consensus is questionable.

1.26.24

There is joy on the bus today. Purple hair, nails two times the size of her thumb- bags suitcase, walmart errands, groceries, a canvas larger than two seats, beauty product show and tell, youtube tutorials, strangers come together. We are on the mall boulevard, target, walmart, what remains as the working portion- occupied portion of the mall. It is snowing and I am glad for a warm seat... the chatting woman in front is serendipitously adorned and attied in the same spectrum of pastels, crimson scrunchie and pink on pink cheetah top, lavender glasses, metallic gold rose scrunchies and a lavender hoodie, grey lining, purple hair, french braided, light pink coat, pink nails, pink bag, white doiley type scrunchie, light baby pink coat

Undated:

“Truth and Reconciliation Over Retaliation”
Maine Housing Foundation?

1.30.24

Safety fence= tomorrow Thurs 1/31
Email: request permissions
Call to Jamie with Alloy

1.31.24

“I can’t stop you from showing up. You are free to watch and record, like any other member of the public. We do not approve of anything closer. Make your own deal. Between you and Alloy group.” Brian. Facilities manager. Phone conversation.

1.31.24

ALLOY//Jamie

Grab a coffee- better understanding of risk//limit to

Open to negotiation (PUBLIC BID)

Essentially ALLOY owns building and responsible,

Meet before 12 Thursday

2.1.24

On the morning before meeting with Jamie McGuinness senior demolition estimator I read about the necessity of war and violence in revolution- contextualized in Rojava

2.1.24

Coffee with Jamie-

Facilities for processing asbestos- out of Maine (Ohio?) Needs to be safe for demolition.

(survey-work-ISP-EPA-Hygeinest-DEMO)

“Public safety” Demo day- kids-allure- watch the change- spectacle

From perspective of driver. Lessons- recycling. Metal, brick, concrete, crusher, under roads

Feb-March

Auction- didn’t get picked up- building is in good enough shape to rehab it. “Who’s the end use?”

What \$\$ asking?

Least expensive way to refurbish is to show exposed concrete//brick. OLD YMCA leased from county. Multi-use. Front gym. Concrete Floor. Metal Stud. Some effort.

Change- first instinct when hear tearing down a building is anger. Could have been intercepted ten different ways. Time to throw bricks is a year ago. Throw it at the priest.

2.1.24

Jamie tells me that he thinks the site went to an auction. “It didn’t get picked up... the building is in good enough shape to rehab it.” We sit over coffee in Bagel Central. He has been in the demolition industry for twenty-seven years. We talk about the impact of change. He is in the business of it. He says the allure is to “watch the change. The spectacle.” He tells me he wishes to make a childrens animation that is like Bob the Builder. I joke, “but instead is Jamie the demolitioner!” He goes on to describe the cartoon as a way to educate kids on the machines and

equipment, how a site is torn down and where the material goes, how it is recycled. We talk more about change. “The first instinct for people when they hear of tearing a building down is anger.” Jamie recalls past demolition jobs- at a church an old lady picketed for weeks and one morning hauled a brick at Jamie's truck. “Could have been intercepted ten different ways. The time to throw bricks is a year ago. Throw it at the priest. The demolition guy isn't the decision maker.”

Who is the first mark-maker, initiator of change? Who intercepts first? And how are particular forces of pressure put on systems to create change?

He anticipates the job to go from February to March if everything goes well.

Undated:

Perspectives on points of pressure and times of interception- in tandem study NYC and direct action- how/when to put pressure on systems of power is important. The demolition guy isn't the first decision maker. Chalice and the Blade. What is to be done. Nodes- Locality. Redneck Gone Green Podcast. Tools in tool box: community banking, land trust, community budgeting, lottery voting. “You Make the Path By Walking” David Cobb. “Release The Result”. “The Goddess Does Not Need Me to Succeed” We are in early stage systemic collapse. End Stage Capitalism. When the powers that be lose control... Who Will I Lift Up As We Lift Up? What is a 501c4?

2.29.24

Transcripts of Tour With John:

M: “Does it feel like the properties are kept under surveillance, like super protected in a way?”

J: “No, no, no. I was saying, not the properties, it's like other contractors will drop by a site for a job that they bid that they didn't get and call, you know, like OSHA, for instance, if they see people without hard hats.”

M: “Oh, to try and get undercut.”

J: “Yeah, yeah.”

M: “Oh, so it gets a little cutthroat out there. It's dog-eat-dog world in the contracting.”

J: “Ohh, yeah.”

M: “Okay, okay. Wow, the light in here is amazing.”

J: “I was actually surprised, even yesterday, when Chris and I walked through, it was obviously raining and downcast. It was still pretty lit up.”

M: “Do you guys have the square footage? Like, do you have a map of this place, or is that... I can probably go to the county office and get that.”

J: "Yeah, I'll be willing to bet if Jamie would have that stuff."

M: "Okay"

J: "Maybe even off the top of his head."

M: "It's so neat, this... I've never seen this netting, that lattice work."

J: "That's called lathe."

M: "Lathe? Okay."

J: "Yeah. So, this is actually cement."

M: "Is that typical?"

J: "It's typical of a time period. I'm not sure when that became popular. If you had a hand demo on that, it's one of the most miserable substances on earth. Because it's about an inch of cement on top of that metal. That basically, so if you have to hand demo that, it's, one, extremely dusty, and two, that metal, the metal mesh will cut you wide open if you're not careful with it."

M: "So when you say hand demo, what do you mean?"

J: "So it's like, say we were saving the exterior of this building, and we were just doing an internal gut. This building's different, because we would have a machine, like a mini excavator, come in here and just rip it down. But if you couldn't, say this was a wooden floor and you couldn't have a machine in there, basically you have to hammer that crap off the wall."

M: "There's your gym membership, I guess, like you were saying."

J: "It's not fun, and it's not pleasant."

M: "What are those? Are those the kinds of things that you would mind if I pocketed?"

J: "Go for it."

M: "Thank you."

J: "Yeah, I mean, usually the first thing we do when we get to a job, like Chris did yesterday, is walk around and see what's even good."

M: "How to even begin?"

J: "Well, that too, but a lot of it's kind of like your own little treasure hunt."

M: "So what are you guys looking for? What are you guys looking at that is of interest? Like, what do you see that is valuable to you all?"

J: "You'd be surprised by some of the stuff that gets left behind. Like my buddy, Charlie, one time found a paper cutter, like a big industrial paper cutter. And, you know, he asked the owner of the company if he took it. He didn't. He ended up selling it for like \$5,000 a day."

M: "Whoa."

J: "Yeah. You don't run into good hits like that very often, but they do that. A lot of guys do like to go after the copper."

M: "Right. Now, is that something that you all can make?"

J: "Well, yeah, I think like for us it goes back to the company."

M: "Who's Russell?"

J: "I don't know. It's funny, like when you demo it, like if you knock the whole building down and you're peeling off the drywall, you'd be amazed at some of the stuff that's written behind it."

M: "What kinds of things?"

J: "You know, the guys who built it joking on each other and stuff like that."

M: "Oh, yeah, like writing like love mom or some other kind of dirty joke in the walls or something."

J: "Yeah."

M: "Yeah, there's such history, right?"

J: "Yeah. This place goes on forever."

M: "This is massive."

J: "I live just outside of Quincy. They had the Y was similar to this. Kind of old, not as functional as you'd like it to be for a gym. I mean, it's it had a pool and basically almost the same thing. I mean, different layout, but they built a new one. The new one's great. Plenty of room. All new equipment. Nice, new. You know, I think they have like two or three pools of that one. And it's just it's a better gym. You know, you can only do so much with existing structures. It's the inefficiency."

J: "We've saved a few doors in our day."

M: "Yeah?"

J: "We did a knockdown in Brighton. It was an office building and it had a small little bar. And Jamie and I have taken the bathroom door, one of the bathroom doors, and put it in his house."

M: "This is kind of creepy."

J: "This was a small gym at one point."

M: "So, I mean, people got in here, right?"

J: "I'm sure somebody was in here at some point after it was done."

M: "I'm just curious how, like, the debris all happened."

J: "Look at the wooden floors underneath here."

M: "So it was a basketball court?"

J: "Yeah. It was probably like a half court."

M: "And then I don't know what they put the stage in for, but there it is."

J: "I grew up in Plymouth, which when I was there as a kid, it was like all woods. When we were little, we, you know, would go on farther and farther every time. You know, you would wander around back there. And eventually we'd be wandering far enough, we found this, it must have been an old equipment shed for the Cranberry Bogs. But it had been out of use for years. And all like high school kids posted there. All kinds of graffiti."

M: "You made it your own. Is it because it's abandoned that it allows for all of that like fun stuff? Like if it were an actual formalized community center, no teenager would go. You know, there's something about that."

J: "I don't know what that is, but there's something"

M: "So this is going to be the first room to go, right?"

J: "That's the plan."

M: "So Monday morning, this will be it."

J: "Yeah."

M: "What is that?"

J: "It's the, if you act up in jail chair, so that space is for behind your arms when you're cuffed."

M: "No!"

J: "Yeah."

M: "Yeah, put that in your living room. Next cocktail party."

J: "I mean, that's awful, but it's actually... These are the kinds of things that I absolutely would take."

J: "I love when guys cut pipes. I love when they cut pipes and they leave them like that because it's not worth it."

M: "Who did that?"

J: "Probably the abatement guys. So, and I don't, I don't hate on them for doing it because it's, you know, worth it. But like they don't own the copper, but when they come across it, they're going to take it. That's just kind of how they roll."

M: "Well, I mean, when you're in the business of like resource reclamation, right?"

J: "Well, those guys are in the business of loading their own truck."

J: "City's [Worcester, MA] having some hard times too. So they were demoing this building that had been abandoned for quite some time and had been infested with homeless people so it wasn't in the best shape. And he said the first day they got there they had a police escort- they had a Worcester police escort to make sure everyone was out of it before they started demoing and I guess they were already in there. So I guess they got there and started the machines and started making some noise outside and a guy and a girl ran out of the building and locked the doors behind them and they were like you're not going back in there, ever!

I guess from what Charlie said they didn't go far after. They stayed basically on the site I guess basically the entire time they were demoing. They were like living there. But half way through the demo we noticed there was a big pile of change in the debris pile so we moved some stuff around and there was a fifty-five pound barrel with change in it quarters and bigger."

M: "And so what happened to the coins?"

J: "He split it with his laborer!"

J: "And not for nothing but the cost to get this matted stuff off these stairs. This would be literally probably a guy for about a day with a chipping gun and \$120 paddle bit to just knock that stuff off. And then you knock it off and you find out the decking's all rotted underneath. That's all going to get replaced, so it's like... That's developer stuff. But."

M: "At surface glance anything can seem like anything I guess".

J: "No, there are savers and there are tossers. I think you gotta have a balance. Developers didn't get the money they have by making bad decisions with their money. So it's gotta be economically viable for them to invest in. I mean, if you could get, you know, like a Habitat for Humanity or something like that, but how many house could you throw on this lawn? Maybe four, with everyone on top of each other?"

M: "You know, we have a trouble here, where one of the only low-barrier transitional homes is, they're losing funding, and they're the only transitional home that takes you if you have a substance use problem. But nobody likes that, right? Nobody wants to see that. And this is a downtown..."

J: "But it's readily apparent. Like, I was here, I got here Wednesday morning at 6:30, and, um, just to scope it out, and sat here for a couple minutes, and was like, all right, I'll go get a coffee. So, went down to Dunkn Donuts it's like, hooly, you know, it's as bad as it is in downtown Boston."

J: "Well, I've heard, I don't know how true it is, but, like, Maine's, like, one of the best states, for public assistance if you're homeless. That's what I've heard. There's the substance abuse angle. Obviously, mental health angle. Which is, I think, the biggest, most of the people that are substance abusers have a mental illness. You know, my girlfriend's a social worker, so, like. You've got to get your head right before you can get, you know, anything else right."

M: "And I think then you've got to get your feet dry. And your body warm to get your head right."

J: "It's a vicious cycle."

M: "It's complex. I think it's impossible to do alone."

J: "Oh absolutely. I don't know anyone families don't got something wrong with them. Everyone does."

J: "Well you even look at like a privately held property- you go up to Presque Isle and Caribou and drive out by like potato farms a barn which you know at one point was a beautiful barn but the roofs caved in and honestly the roofs leaking here- what's got damage and you know what's

structurally sound and what not... And the maintenance is what kills you. And that's what falls off first when the money gets tight- is maintenance. A developer finds out that a municipality buys out a property like this and what's the first thing they do is low ball the shit outta ya to buy it because you know you think the city doesn't really care about the money but then they make more if they get it for cheap. And I don't know what percent of say after this gets knocked down a developer comes in and says I want to buy this lot and comes in with a plan. If the city puts this up for sale or the county when it goes up for sale their gonna say give us a bid p=best price and tell us what you're gonna do. Boston has, say if you're going to put in ten apartments two of them have to be considered low income housing. So, rent controlled or whatever the case may be and it is what it is but the developers I'm not saying they're scumbags but they don't build all the same units they build 8 nice units and two that pass code but they're not nice. So you know if you're in the low income one you're not getting the marble countertops or the high counter and all that."

M: "There's a class structure here."

J: "Yeah for sure. Unfortunately that's the world. It's all money driven."

J: "Once we're done we gotta pull all the footings and foundations out. We're pulling things out of the ground, we don't have anything to put back in it. You don't want to leave that land exposed without something. Grass. You don't want just dirt. They might end up repaving the whole thing."

Undated:

On an unusually mild February night- after a meeting hosted by the party for socialism and liberation- after conversations weighing reform and revolution- being tired- having been doing this for 20 years- having the sense that capitalism is a narcissistic abuser and we must treat it as such- wanting hope to lead our liberation and yet we are tired- the ocean as metaphor for engagement- so we dine out afterwards at Ichibam- meeting to discuss extractivist pursuit by Wolfden Corporation to 375 acres of land north of patten- discussions continue and as I walk home past the Hammond St site set to be demolished a man passes me- zipping around a church "whewhewpewpew- have a good night sweetheart!" Another person rolls luggage up hill bent over from the weight of a backpack and... at the church that looks like an abbey I thought I saw a figure. I hear crunching. Notice footsteps up the stairs to an alcove- hidden from light the figure I had seen moments ago is moving snow to make a bed- a pausing place.

// All in this span of minutes I have yearned that the site not be torn down- that communalism could win.

Undated:

It is mild enough I can stop and write on a vacant under construction but well lit and unoccupied building. Granite window slab. I am still puzzling from tonight's council meeting- grateful that I facilitated a class to exercise my muscle in real time in letting go- so that when I realized it wasn't the time to bring my voice forward I knew that I brought my body still. Relief that others could speak to what I could not. People brought their voice forward to ask the city council to call for a ceasefire resolution. One member of the city council had written testimony in support. It was a fortifying space- to an extent. And yet the unsettling feeling that comes with small, tiny, incremental steps and the discomfort still lingered- I paused. Two folks headed to a spot asked me "sweetie you got an extra cigarette?" I said no, briefly wishing I did so I could hear their story. I noticed a shopping cart diagonal from the public library. I had seen it last month in the morning- there was no way to know if it was the same- this time there was a huge large-as-a-child stuffed grey and white bear half falling out of it among other things I couldn't distinguish. As I walked by- I turned my head towards the alcove. A young, maybe mid twenties grubby face stared back, and a friend further back. Haunted eyes underlit by lamppost. How are these realities permissible at the same time?

Undated:

Start day- Mon 3.4

On site 1st day- Tues 3.5

Estimated end date 4.22

Sorting okay. Go through building every morning don't know if someone is in there.

Undated:

Systems and Structures.

Inherently

Generative

Creative

Space

Making

Designs

Undated:

Civic Practice "projects that bring artists into collaboration and co-design with community partners and local residents around a community defined aspiration, challenge or vision"

When it comes to listing materials- how are they connected to concept? They are a part of the selection process.

Undated:

Curiosity and Care- chaos minded- unknown acceptance of change and movement (podcast)
Declaration v. question- how to infuse th unknown into statements. Whiteness- restore instead of generate?

Add Page on website about the replication of materials and specific object- what does it mean to carry to symbol and story through from piece to piece that doesn't stay in one whole...

Replicable shapes that represent an echo- from 127 Hammond St- stained glass lattice work
County and City struggle to pay for water meter at site John tells me. Water meter is \$150/day

Undated:

What is the shape of change?

Undated:

When art enters life... how does it approach?
Are we hunters stalking prey?
Preachers on a mountain?
Shadows of our history stepping through night
Smoothing on surroundings as balm
For cracking bleeding skins

Undated:

Transcript Getting to Know Todd

T: "This is my first job with Alloy."

M: "Have you been doing demo long?"

T: "Oh yeah, basically my whole life. Used to do interior demo when I was a teenager then I moved up to doing like bridges and big buildings, power plants and stuff like that. Fun, but dangerous stuff."

M: "I can see the appeal! Were you breaking stuff when you wre little?"

[laughter]

T: "Yeah breaking myself more like it. So the answer for your metal is Jamie. Your hard hat seen better days huh?"

M: "Yeah I know it just broke. This is my dads."

T: "My father did demo stuff too."

M: "Your father did?"

T: "I got to work with him for two years before he retired which was good. And I made my own name. I didn't- it was- I made my own name with him I didn't ride his coattails you know what I mean which he's friggen happy about. Cos some guys are like I'm third generation and they follow their fathers. No, I made my own name. The one thing is you hav to have common sense

in this type of thing. You can get messed up real quick, know what I mean. That's one thing I have at least, a little common sense. Why I'm still here, a little common sense. Tell you what, back to work."

Undated:

Direct action claims a third space. Prefigurative. This world does exist already. Creating in dignity and in struggle. Big object, slash pile. Public space occupation through blocking entry. Body Linking. Make it hard to be arrested. Create a mass that is tangled, heavy and takes a long time. Agitate. Disrupt. Success will provoke reaction. Invoke the fifth. Is there a way to introduce art copyright? To push disruption? Radical Cheerleaders- Demonstration Performance Art.

To this light source I say-
Hold me while
Everything
Changes

3.05.24

Transcript: A Shame

R "This is crazy! I used to run this climbing wall here! Yeah, worked at this Y for 8 years. This is a climbing wall. I used to run the climbing program. I love the Y. I went here as a kid. I worked here as a young adult. And now my kids go to the other Y."

M: "Do you know why they changed locations?"

R "Yeah, mainly because of the pool. So the other one has an olympic size. This one did not. But the other one didn't have a basketball, well, it had a basketball court, but it wasn't full-size. This one had the full-size court. This one had the full-size gym. They ended up taking the little court over there and making that the gym. And then they never built a basketball court over there. They always said they were going to and they never did. They never did. Ugh. Shame. But I always loved this building. Like, I always thought this Y was better. Except for the pool. I didn't care about the pool. So nuts."

M: "I know, I know, everything is always changing but there are some things that are harder to witness changing."

R "Absolutely. I met my son's mom here- met my current wife here. There's a lot of history."

M: "I think that's one of the things I am interested in. What are the ways we can build an altar or echo of things that can no longer be present right? How do we hold that- what do we do with that feeling?"

R: "Well one, the one is you know, pictures are the one things that elicit that emotional response. Emotional response, right- you remember, you have these memories but what happens after that? What happens after your memories are gone? You know? Gotta memorialize it."

M: "I know and I don't know that we have oral history traditions..."

Speaker 1: "Like other cultures?"

M: "Yeah- and do objects, like sculptures? That doesn't always provide the same kind of context."

R: "No. You just also think where does all this crap go? I know when they first closed the Y they had a huge yard sale for a lot of the stuff that was here. The pool that I was talking about before, that was just filled with stuff- they took all the stuff and lined it up, and laid the stuff out."

R: "Ohh! *Get it!*!"

[Crashing bricks]

M: "Do you have photos from your time here?"

R: "Well, when I worked here, it was before they had smartphones. So, it makes me wonder, no, most of the pictures I have from the Y around this time period are all from the summer camp. From the ropes courses and stuff. Crazy to think. I've been thinking a lot about this place, though, ever since I heard it was going to be torn down. But yeah, as far as picture goes, no, not a lot."

M: "I mean, you know, one thing that is interesting is like, okay, so now there's this, this was a site of community, right? This was a site of like deep community. And one thing that I've heard from the county is that, and the Alloy construction people, is that they're going to have to fill it in and make a parking lot, right?"

R: "Wow."

M: "But the thing that I'm wondering is, what happens next, right? There's an opportunity with all the things that are happening in Bangor around housing, you know, around like, there's a lot of need for a community space. So, I would be. I would be curious about, you know, putting a little pressure on, on the county to consider."

R: "Absolutely. I don't know why they didn't, just before, rehabilitate this building. There was a lot of different things it could have become."

M: "...from what I understand from a contractor's perspective, right? Like, you know how like surgeon is a surgeon is a surgeon?"

R: "Yeah, probably a nightmare. It's a nightmare."

M: "They were showing me some of the steps that had been, in order to get that, the mold off, it would have to be one person with this one spray thing for like days, just for the stairs, right?"

R: "Oh, and I forgot the asbestos they had too. They got all that out, right?"

M: "But there's still so much mold and water damage."

R: "What a shame."

3.6.24

Never made it back to continue the performance.

A constellation of change.

Metal truck only took half- not what [crew] mapped out. Shifting focus. Positioning myself in a place where I can only witness change that I have no control over- bearing witness to a loss-

holding space for the grief of varied degrees from folks as we watch change- manufactured paid for destruction at a variety of degrees. I can't do anything else but bear witness (in these moments) how to make art that could...

While I quote passer-by's commentary- just this morning as we stood as shapes in front of shapes that are no longer. Is it possible to know control?

“It's a shame when they tear down these whole buildings.”

3.8.24

I only have an hour today- Todd's sugar is off and they have paperwork to do back at the office. Hoping for Monday. Found clothes, clothing racks- today's a material day.

ROOF
TAR
INSULATION
METAL
BARTRUSS
QDECKING

Undated:

And still, people observe, take photographs. Also archive and document a changing landscape. “People are here all day- never been photographed as much anywhere as I have here.” Jamie.

Undated:

We stand watching. Warped lines. Efforts to deconstruct. Organizing. Systems of chaos to order. Metal pile, brick pile other debris. Collected force. Other people join me to watch the view change. An unknown person crosses the street and pauses. ‘It's made of brick- out of brick and steel. It will outlast us. It's sad. This building, this space will be privately owned. More value that way.’

Undated:

Transcript Conversation on A Current Situation

M: “Good morning”

Speaker 1: “Morning. Find any money?”

M: “No I mean, no I'm not sure how to make money in this business.”

Speaker 1: “Oh that’s easy. Copper, aluminum, them pipes in that building are quarter inch thick copper pipes built that big they weigh a lot and coppers like what 75 cents a pound now? 50, 60 cents a pound? All that metal could be turned in... What’s that?”

M: “Oh, this is an audio recorder. Is that okay?”

Speaker 1: “Oh yeah, yeah.”

M: “Do you remember when this was a Y?”

Speaker 1: “Uhm I don’t remember when it was a Y but I do remember when they started tearing it down about two days ago. But, uhm, really, if you want to get technical this place would have housed every homeless person in this city and they could have coalesced in one spot and take the burden off all of these churches that are feeding us and giving us a place to stay. That could have one main facility. It’s three stories they could have taken all the junkies put them on the first floor, people that don’t use, do drugs or alcohol second floor and housing for like families on the third floor. I mean, to me, just a dumb person that’s homeless on the street can think of that, how com they couldn’t? Or, wouldn’t? That’s the problem, that they wouldn’t. I heard they’re going to put a prison here. That’s exactly what we need, more prisons. Technically they house the homeless but... I know that the homeless around here are doing drugs and drinking but I mean..”

Speaker 1: “See that white building? Behind that is an old school house from the 1930’s. The back is cracked in half and it’s falling down the bank. You crawl up in there- that’s where I slept last night. In that abandoned building that’s falling down. I can’t get anyone to help me here like housing, job-wise here. Like, I don’t do drugs, I don’t drink. I smoke cigarettes but I don’t do all that stuff and you figure that a person is willing to do all that stuff willing to change his life, upgrade, it would get help. I need a job and a place to live so I can support myself and don’t have to be a drain on the community.”

Speaker 1: “They stop housing people at the end of this month. It’s warm enough to stay outside. I’m serious. I’m not lying, you can look it up yourself. They make it really hard to come in from the cold. I mean, they search you. I had one place take everything out of my wallet- everything- go through it and then shove the pile back at me. And that was just for a plate of food. It wasn’t for a place for the night, it was just for a plate of food. I mean I’m not complaining. I’ll survive. At least it’s not cold out here anymore.”

Undated:

Sitting in a

Space of

Almost

Plans made

Culture shifts
Needs change
Ideas constrict
Framed
Electrical wired
And then...
An artist creates a
Short term
Residency at a
Demolition site-

Undated:

Next to these walls, destruction.
A short distance from here.
Is this what it feels like- sounds like- smells like
To be surrounded by violent change?
Destruction without knowing when you too will become
A part of the rubble
There are no limbs under the brick I walk through
No one is wailing for their martyred mother
Pausing demolition John hands James a tall Starbucks coffee,
Throws trash to the side and pauses the demolition-
I bear witness to it all.
I stand on the inside of the fence, watching
the undones.
Lunch wrappers and snack trash dropped to the ground because
the whole site is a mess to be cleaned up.

As I retrieve a rusted rebar from tin (aluminum?) struts- I scrape and drag and move along the peeling floor with it- As I do, swift motion asymmetrical rhythm in response to te destruction beyond these standing walls. A small feather shifts and is now the central altar.

BEARING WITNESS.
SEEDING A COALITION
EXPAND THE CONVERSATION
BE CLEAR ON ROLE IN INITIATION

Undated:
Transcript on Care

J: “They get out at five o'clock in the morning or six o'clock in the morning. You know they get out, wandering, eventually they're gonna run into someone do drugs you know. Haven't done it in a long time, probably overdose, you know. The overdose of someone leaving rehab or leaving jail after months of not using and then going back out; they pick up right where they left off and some people live and some people don't. If not something for the jail at least a twenty four hour club or something you know. And some beds and counseling. Mental health and drug and alcohol counseling. So two things we need. They could do a whole bunch of stuff right there. Make a little park in here with a gazebo, a little basketball court, a little playground all fenced in and you got to go through the building to check in to play or do any activity so it keeps it a safe place. You could lock up your backpack in lockers so people aren't stealing your stuff you're not leaving your stuff and the risk of someone carrying a weapon or doing a drug deal in the little rec area or even in the building or the front of the building. A lot of places people go and they're like sharks circling around. Like, today's the first. They just closed all the warming centers and most of the hotels have upped their rates in the last couple of days. They know from last year what happened when it was March 21st and April 1st you had the Brick warming center closed down March 21st last year and then this year, because it was warm and then it got cold. This is Maine, it's that time of year where it's spring during the day and back to middle of winter at night. Some of these people have been trying and looking for apartments and they're back out in the depression and turmoil and the cold you know? It does a lot on somebody, I know 'cus I been there, not long ago either...It's gotta be friendly, people gotta have breaks or they get burnt out and if it's not a paying position they gotta get more. They're getting desensitized and burnt out and there's a lack of compassion....”

3.12.24

In this space I dream of what could be
I write and record myself- to map the inspiration
Not knowing how to begin I hit tap recorder
Climbed the escape ladder
And began sharpening my pencils
Small seeming unrelated acts in a place of epic change- large scale

I can't tell if the rapport is waning. Am I still bearing witness?
Moving with purpose and intervention even when the context of work is so vastly different-

(I move 8ft rectangles of glass pane like I know what I'm doing)

All I could do is sharpen my contractors pencil with my knife- no introduction- no more than a simple hello- to take this moment personally would be unnecessary.

When business matters arise the demeanor can change-

Scene- artist crouched on ground (making rubbings) of peeling unfinished soon to be crushed floors under gravitational pull of a natural sky light- heavy breathing and footsteps and voices- a meeting is in progress- of what I have no idea and clearly it isn't for me- I wonder if I should approach more assertively- more from my masculine energy- if that would create a connection that in this context artist crouching so starkly shifts.

Undated

//Maybe the tension exists between my imagination and reality of the context I am in- Demo site. Material objects to be moved, torn down, removed. I wonder now if I know the definition of demolish...

//Does the impulse to seek light and replicate patterns come from a need to save or create when I know things won't last?

//Each visit I don't know what I will encounter. Knowledge that the substance of this space- the material objects that make up the surroundings- the bare rooms, exposed skeletal structures- peeling walls and molding floors- knowing these spaces will be gone I look to the shadows and casted light instead.

//I finally remembered to wear a mask.

Undated:

Transcript Weird On Site

“Oh hey, good timing.”

“For you?”

“Oh, I don't know”

“You look busy”

“Yes! Thank you for letting me be weird in this space.”

“Absolutley, it's a nice mix. Your weirdness, our weirdness.”

Undated:

Light and shadow. RAPIDITY. Responding to intent- removal.

Undated:

Transcript Historical Building Should Be Saved

“It’s a historical building, they should have left it.”

“Oh, what’s that? Which part was historical?”

“Huh?”

“You said it’s a historical part”

“I think they should have tried to savor it- to save it. Some of it anyway. Maybe redone it.

“What would you have liked to have seen?”

“Just not to let it go.”

Undated:

Transcript They Could Put Something Nice Here

“Pretty wild right?”

“Yeah, geez.”

“They just started yesterday. I think it’s gonna take them eight weeks.”

“They gonna put in a jail?”

“I think they’re going to fill it in. There could be an opportunity for something new.”

“They could put something nice here. An activity place something you know. All kinds of possibilities. Good piece of land there.”

3.14.24

HOW TO PLAN FOR THE DAY WITHOUT SEEING WHAT IS HAPPENING

Pulling prints and making frottage bar seem almost pointless. Maybe it will be sketches outside on the paper- with small ink marks- rust spots. Frottage bar next week.

Perhaps like any site- Any moment-

The arrival is the step into the unknown. Over and over again-

This mornings arrival I am greeted by many more trucks

More crew

Retrieving tiles

Removing debris

I keep the recorder on the ground. Bangor Public Works parked for a moment. Observing, pointing fingers. The postman for the second time has stood up on the ridge- above the fenceline.

Undated:

//today I will just get sounds- an observer- though in my pack I still have
Mending, stitching and threading- paper from under slate- glass from the gym

(TASKS FOR MONDAY)

I got glass

And paper for the heart lantern

Undated:

Transcript Checking in With John

M: "Are there any materials I should be rinsing off?"

J: "It wouldn't hurt just to get the dust off."

M: "But it's not embedded into the material"

J: "No, no."

M: "I was also wondering if I should get flagging to flag the pieces I'm thinking about?"

J: "Yeah, yeah if you want."

M: "But I probably won't get to that until the morning but will you have gotten to the metal pile?"

J: "No I don't think so, he's still trying to line a truck up for it so..."

3.17.24

Chris- how are you guys doing? Or some other question indicating he thought I was a part of the crew. From Colorado. Lived in Bangor 10 years. Why are they tearing down the whole building though? I did my best to describe how I saw it- that just as a surgeon is a surgeon s a surgeon, a contractor is a contractor- the building is not economically viable to bring back to code- too much damage, too much \$- not worth the time. I then posed a question- would the formula be any different (or equation) if there was community availability to offset the perceived economic cost? Chris suggested volunteers but then wondered about liability... It could be a playground. I've heard rumors. A Trader Joe's. Affordable Housing.

Undated:

In one glance, patterns and tension points of power systems of varying degrees exist simultaneously. Hoisting beams to sturdy a ladder. Pushing a shopping cart full of the only possessions. Cloud cover moves gradually in. Machine swings from center. Swiftly delivering. Body leans over beam of the old original building. Matching the curvature to gently yet forcibly retrieve slate roof tiles. A fuzzy smiley face hangs from the lead crews SUV. I find out their names are Jeb and Matt. Tall figures, silhouettes on the roof, arched backs on the same horizon plane as the long arching back and arm of the excavator. We briefly talk. I find out they are with

Sheldon Slate Co “the only slate reclamation in the state of Maine... doing our best to keep it out of the landfill... Hate to see an old building go but this had a lot of damage.

This morning Todd told me stories of his neck hurting so much from looking up at the wrecking ball. At each interval of my “oh wow” and enthusiastic exclamations- he shrugs- he has seen this all many times before. I need to be careful (or read sophie calle again and annie lemieux) public-private and use of observation has ethical implications.

Undated:

On letting go-

On maintaining a sense of control

As artist

Is mending and stitching a need for control? The visual resistance that is ultimately futile (i am not a nihilist)

Undated:

Attempting to capture a lasting record of that which does not last, cannot last. In its explicit form the material is being crushed and removed from the site. The remaining documentation refers as a ghost... I muse on the sudden urge to stitch together pieces of rubble. An act of resistance that is ultimately futile. I then realize that this will be happening for a long time- the tension between destruction and healing. Inequities. The infinite unresolve. The tension. Binaries swirling, melding. The push/pull is eternal and always moving. The dance in the inbetween space is continuous. I am so propelled by this thought, so struck, that I sit on the steps of the other vacant lot that I walk by to get to 127 Hammond St. I sit weary but perched knowing that across the street there is a person sleeping in the alcove of a big brick church- knowing that behind me is a massive additional vacant site that could be claimed and transformed. Knowing that there is- out of design-a massive desensitization. Knowing that I feel out of control. Knowing that as Eva said this morning, “You don’t have to be at the helm.” So where am I in all that changes or is prevented from changing?”

3.19.34

“Work is the blackmail of life” Jamie

Building contractor approached me.

Just Jamie on site.

Roof collecting tiles

Won’t get to that section for a while

3.20.24

Transcription: Conversation on Hammond St Watching Demolition

M: "You don't see this everyday."

Speaker 2: "Nope. Too bad metal wasn't up in value- not valued much now.."

[Inaudible speaking over clanks of corrugated in scraping against concrete and steel]

Speaker 2: "What're ya walking around seeing the sites today?"

M: "Yeah, this is part of my research..I am an artist and I have been researching this site."

Speaker 2: "Used to be a YMCA back in the day, I think. Then a church. Then a buncha other businesses renting it for a while... I guess Bancroft built it..."

M: "Apparently, yeah"

M: "This is a big change!"

Speaker 2: "Yeah it is, it is... that's what you gotta do when you make- gotta make way for a new building. You gotta tear it down and separate all the stuff from it. Back then you used to take all that stuff, throw it in a big hole and bury it, now they throw bricks in a hole somewhere and bury it but now they recycle it and make money on it.

M: "And on the other side they're taking the slate off."

Speaker 2: "Yep I see that. Cost a lot of money to put slate on a roof on now a days.

[whistles]

So what is that a new vape pen or something?"

M: "Oh this? No, this is an audio recorder. I've been collecting sounds of it all."

Speaker 2: "Some of these contractors have big shears that cut up-that could actually cut it right to pieces. But this is old equipment. But this is what you want when you tear buildings down is old equipment you don't have to worry about. So that's what you do research and stuff?"

M: "I make art! I write and I make sculpture."

Speaker 2: "You gonna take stuff from the job site and make stuff with it?"

M: "Yeah- yeah maybe. I'll be here throughout the job."

Speaker 2: "I know they have bunch of copper around the beams. Thin copper. Not really thick copper. Like paper"

M: "Yeah like paper."

Speaker 2: "It's not worth very much it's so thin plus all that junk on it. Cement mortar. Gotta take it all off. You can see right there that first layer of brick- like he's going to grab- they put mortar in between bricks to hold it together and stuff. You going to school? Doing a project?"

M: "Yeah- I am in graduate school."

Speaker 2: "Yeah I know by looking at the building there are two different agd buildings. Part where the slate roof is is an older addition, then they built on to it, built the YMCA over here and stuff. Kept adding on then adding on, did it when they had budget and money and stuff. Grew up and needed more money and thing and stuff. What he's doing now is breaking up the concrete of

the floor to get all the rebar out. In some places you can't bury rebar and concrete so you got to recycle all that rebar."

M: "Yeah."

Speaker 2: "So you originally from Maine or what?"

M: "Yep."

Speaker 2: "Whereabouts?"

M: "Piscataquis County."

Speaker 2: "Dover?"

M: "Yeah, yep."

Speaker 2: "I live in Howland. My brother lives in Piscataquis county."

M: "Nice."

Speaker 2: "Bradford."

M: "Oh, yeah, okay. I might walk down to the cotner but it was really nice chatting with you."

Speaker 2: "You too, you too."

M: "Good luck to you."

Speaker 2: "Yeah, I'm just watching a little bit of it and I'm on my way again."

M: "Yeah same, it's amazing to see."

Speaker 2: "Yesterday when I was walking up the hill they were tearing the wall down on this side out and I was down by where the post office is and then- then when it fell it fell right in- pushed that fence right out. Broke a couple. And it friggen fell right in the road. All the way across the road it did. Lucky no cars were there."

M: "Yeah that's a tight spot. I don't know if they thought about that when they built it."

Speaker 2: "No, no.."

M: "They probably didn't think it was going to get demolished huh?"

Speaker 2: "No, no. What it was, was when he started tearing it down, when he tore it by section, a whole big section come right down and fell, boom! Of course when it fell the motion momentum threw it up that way, kicked out the fence. A lot of weight in that stuff. Thousands of pounds coming down. And it's coming down dead force. Ten ton, twenty ton and more. Come with force- bang- drops. It's a pretty neat process. You gonna try and grab some of that metal and make something out of it?"

M: "Maybe!"

Speaker 2: "You can ask them they'll probably give you some."

M: "Oh yeah they're really wonderful, I have been working inside the building and outside the building."

Speaker 2: "What're doing with stuff? Making pictures? Drawings?"

M: "Yeah, writing, taking sound."

Speaker 2: "Must have a hard hat or something. You gotta wear that. There you go, you gotta be safe. You don't want a bunch come down clomping on your head!"

M: "Yeah, really!"

Speaker 2: "Be careful all that dust who knows how old it is, could have asbestos and other stuff in it. You never know- on the ground, mortar dust, not good to breathe in. In OSHA training you can't do that, got to get it wet, wet it down with a hose. Keep the dust down and stuff. See where the leaves goes the wind goes. See that copper? Where the wind blows- yep. What kind of stuff are you going to make? Sculpture?"

M: "I don't know yet.."

Speaker 2: "What kind of stuff you grab?"

M: "Glass."

Speaker 2: "Old glass in there?"

M: "Yes and some of the mirrors from the gym and on the third floor triple panel glass, hopefully some metal."

Speaker 2: "See that tin? That sheet? Certain people, certain artists, they use that sheet of metal put it as backsplash and that's worth a lot of money."

M: "Totally- it's a good aesthetic."

Speaker 2: "It's an old style metal it's created like that for life. You put a coat of urethane, looks like that forever. Now I am always fascinated with metals and junk and stuff. That's what attracts me to this style. I love poking my nose in construction dumpsters, looking to see what they throw away."

M: "Yeah! Do you build? Make stuff?"

Speaker 2: "Yeah I do, I do. And plus I recycle some stuff to make money on it. There's a wood yard out in Howland made a bunch of bird houses out of cedar, going to sell them this summer. Yard sale or something. Just something to do."

3.20.24

If humans (inhabitants of a system) have a biological imperative to control their surroundings then is the face of change- what is there?

Disbelief

Reaction

High Emotion

Grief

Change is loss

//patterns and tension points

Human reclamation

In one glance

Pushing shopping cart full of the only possession

Walking downtown hands in pocket red reflective sunglasses

Undated: Transcript: Looking for Work

Speaker 1: “Won’t even give me the time of fucking day. I been looking for a job- did demo for a lot of years- and they won’t even give me time of fucking day.”

M: “Oh- they won’t?”

Speaker 1: “Nah, it just sucks, know what I mean? I’m more than qualified. I could run this whole show. I done it for years. Ran crews of fucking twenty. Ran excavators, the bobcats- [incoherent] - get rid of asbestos legally and...worked the water when it’s all apart you know...they think I’m some kind of chump, dude. I’m smarter than them combined, you know? I’m not joking. Pissing me off. No one’s giving me the time of fucking day.”

M: “Oh- I am sorry dude.”

Speaker 1: “ Yeah, yeah. They don’t even have their company name out here.”

M: “Oh, actually it’s Alloy- on the other side it’s- on their truck, I think.”

Speaker 1: “Yeah I looked all last night and this morning and I couldn't find it.”

M: “ Yeah I don’t know what any local work would-”

Speaker 1: “He just said I had to go through corporate, them, they said. These guys, they run the show here. They got two laborers up on the roof there and from what I’ve seen they’re literally worthless, know what I mean? I mean they’re just collecting a paycheck, not really doing much, know what I mean? I see two pieces of styrofoam fall, move across that roof all morning. Me and one other fucking guy could, you know...but two pieces of equipment here, bobcat, excavator- they should be moving.”

Undated:

String of pearls
String of concrete
Chunks and rebar
Threaded through-
Beads so elegantly
Swinging through the air like the weightless
Aerated lift of a
Feather or leaf
Finally letting go from the tree

/what comes out from under pressure

/juxtaposing//

Serra and bent I-beam

Gaza and rubble

Portals for Balance

Observation allows the steps to become visible

Rob Breezny Abide in the contraction. Dwell in the midst of those paradox

Relationship wheel of persistence will endure through conflict

AMB “we live in a polarized world. Need to hard, Need to heate. Heartbreak.

Andrew Harvey “Sacred Activism”

Undated:

Instead of encountering remnants like I thought I might, I am bearing witness to the cycle of a “whole” system that is about to change. I am bearing witness to a site/space/place changing that I have little connection to- except witnessing how deeply others do. This mutuality of a shared affect, despite varied time scales is a critical aspect to solidarity. Questions of the future of the site continued and were wrestled with by locals, as raw material continued to be wrestled in the iron teeth of excavators.

Undated:

Pulling one headphone back I hear

“I used to swim there”

Yeah so many people remember learning to swim there what do you make of it all now?

I gesture to the skeleton left- half innards, incomplete, snow coated rubble.

“Honestly? They could have redone the building instead of tearing it down but..”

He lifts his arms and shrugs.

3.22.24

Declarations for Beginning Work

I arrive and allow the unfolding

I stand firmly in the unknown

I choose to bring my self

//what is it about a scene of disarray? Immobilized and incomplete- seing shapes bokeh, or thought of chaotic given our need for spatial controls (Aesthetically)

Silence of piles

Sense that something happened here (recall work of “Stay Awhile”)

/Suspended pieces add to the sense of incomplete- of inhale and pause- not yet released. Not yet in full entropic weight. Sense of incongruity when our expectations of wholeness is met with fragments- pieces and parcels. Shapes of an undone. A moment is always undone- incomplete?

Undated:

IBEAM FOLDED: An Aesthetic contrasting expectation

Can this communicate the sensation of chaos? Undone? Grif? Infinite Unresolve?

What is it about a scene of disarray? Indicators that not all is well. Finally, a visual confirmation of what the ruling class doesn't want us to embody. Immobilized and incomplete. Seeping.

Shapes broken. Or perceived as chaotic given the engrained need for a sense of aesthetic spatial control.

Undated:

CHAIR SURROUNDED BY DEBRIS

Undated:

Devotion to

The broken

Reverence of

Repair

Carrying forward

With fragments

The fray the fringe

3.27.24

I have wondered what they will do with the spring snow we just got- I arrive- it is just Jamie. Slowly deliberately crumbling- I feel almost out of practice- out of touch- out of style- I will deliver cookies. I leave them on his truck.

Undated:

Altered

Structures

Altered sounds

The echoes are changing.

The reverberations of soundwaves are

shifting based on the increasing absence of shapes

Undated:

Colonialist origins- origins of a system- social systems of control in the US 21st century can't be separated from...Industrial labor forces that intervene in the social sphere and desires for shared labor "Right" kind of alteration Gina Sapiel

Undated:

Not paving in. Building out- foundation out- basement out- fill to match the grade- substance fill- not rainy or muddy- nothing beyond a daydream- ground will take a while. July.

Undated:

The Rock Church- source for stained glass? City Condemned- doing things without permit- county didn't own at the time- church came in, took all heat pumps.

Undated:

At the time of this writing individuals and the artist in question (?) are working within the imperial core. The United States of America, also known as Turtle Island, in the 21st century, a time shrouded in CAPITALISM neoliberal patriarchal... existing//current LARGE SYSTEM=capitalism

Undated:

Power dynamics

Mechanisms of power

Behavior of power

Visualization of power

Exposure of

Pillars

Columns

Supports

Structural forms

System for the artist is the composition and relationship between stimulus, perception, imagination and for artists who make objects, raw material as responding to data.

(ECONOMY- ECO-SYSTEM)

Undated:

Contextual review? Speculative futures- "the best way to predict the future is to create it"

BERLIN FUTURES. What is speculative fiction?

Undated:

THEORY, HISTORICAL PRECEDENCE AND DISCUSSIONS/LITERATURE. ARTWORKS FROM CONTEMPORARIES AND PREDECESSORS ARE ALSO STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS THAT ARE EMBEDDED INTO PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SAME SYSTEM OF POWER SEEN IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Undated:

Nietzsche “we have art in order not to die from the truth”

ART//metaphor because if we look directly at the truth it would be unbearable- who said?

Anais Nin?

Undated:

127 Hammond St- REFLECTIVE OF- imperial core- how?

Global system of violence “at the time of this writing”

Undated:

127 Hammond St is a constellation of powers, colliding and shifting, changing forms through force. It is a fluctuating, shimmering, liminal system- the spaces between an individual and society, between mark-making and the built environment, are symbolic and visceral. It is a relationship of eternal, cyclical flux, shifting from resolved to unresolved and back again. It is an unresolved friction of a floral bloom under an airtight glass case that arrives in scales and degrees. A fractal, then, is an example of a singularity organizing within a collective. At all degrees of magnification the geometry repeats itself, unfurling in consistency within a changing shape.

Undated:

It is compositionally hard to tell the difference between the dump and a homeless encampment, demo site rubble and site of war. The same crumpled textures, yet in the camp there is still a body. In the demo site there is potential for public involvement still. Aesthetics of the machine, aesthetics of violence, change in the form of loss of life, the ultimate dis-function of material and matter. As I reach down in between the crunched, twisted and deformed pool wall to retrieve the tiles I am reminded- my whole body senses- so symbolically and abstractly the act of retrieving dead bodies under rubble though I have never had this experience. The multiple rings that make up a sphere. As daily social media feeds are full of scenes of war and genocide- of active apartheid in multiple sites, of the united states as a key supporter, the system is filled, the

realities converge, are ensnared, become entwined, are actually subsets of the same dominance, the same system of power drives these instances of force and change.”

Undated:

Transcript Rob Frank on the Phone

R: “It’s time and money and codes are usually the reasons why everything happens so in an old building, beautiful as it was, my guess is it did not meet the current fire regulations for exists and size of corridors and things like that. I know it was mostly residential for the Y, they had much smaller rooms. They were probably dangerous from a fire perspective and it would have been exorbitant to try and renovate that building and make spaces that were accessible, safe for egress so that and to rebuild a granite building that at the time in the sixties when most of the stone masons were probably dealing with brick it’s now hard to find brick masons so you can only imagine that as building materials change over time it’s tougher to find people to renovate the old ones. So my guess is the cost to renovate the building back in the sixties was exorbitant, they wouldn’t have even ended up with the program they wanted. And that’s why they tore it down, put up this square box. My prediction is that the original building which was granite, the current one which is brick- the next one will be a metal panel or extruded fiberglass over styrofoam like 99 Franklin, the Ethos Building they call it. It’s a lower cost approach to building it has high insulation value but it’s cheap. It’s cheaper so you can build more and many people are being driven to that so if they do go with a brick structure it will probably be following a very hard fought local referendum to build something. Because brick does cost more but it lasts. You know- we do fire stations. And the average age of a fire station we’re replacing is over 75 years so it shows you that while people may say the building is designed for twenty or thirty or forty years the reality is, most people will outline the design life of the building and are forced to maintain it so what we consider, our designs are five to hundred year old buildings when they’re public. Otherwise, we’re doing a disservice.”

M: “In your experience working with municipalities and local communities, do you see local engagement in your work and in the design process?”

R: “Absolutely. To a certain degree, yes. Obviously we don’t let a committee design a fire station- it’s designed for firefighters by firefighters but the exterior look and feel usually takes on some of the local character or at least it should and that’s where the community can weigh in some of that but for highly specialized building you need high specialized decision making. Hospitals are similar. Schools, we call them community center. Nonetheless they’re designed for educators that need that space but generally they’ll have whether artwork or installations or reference to original buildings- Hampden Academy for instance. If you look at the new academy and then photographs of the one that was built in the late 1700’s early 1800’s you’ll see the same brick pattern of the original academy repeated six or seven times down the wall so we basically took the spirit of the original building and put in a new highschool.”

M: “It can be nuanced to figure out how to memorialize things.”

3.29.24

Two instances of off-site work worth mentioning- Maybe three observations.

1. Archives with Greta- urban renewal of the 60's/70's- match with philosopher Marshall Bermann, Marx and tie in to current conception of industry as seen with site as emblem (even more key why a crushed I-beam with use of light might prove to be a successful exposition/exhibit.

2. Conversations with josh- subtly calling me out on unseen white supremacy? That it is common in a white supremacy cloaked in nonprofit status to seek results over relationships- How does an artist generate an idea- ethically sound- integrity bound- to the public?

3. Remembering yesterday- a walk with Brian- facilities management- he told me I looked exactly like his HS girlfriend. I tried to ignore this.

And in general I wonder- as Greta and I spoke about the cumulative- the cycles of known and unknown- the speed by which we encounter each other is faster than pen to paper- (history) and this (go back to Brian) is the ultimate tension- the speed of modernity is not relational.

Undated:

HOME

4.2.24

Serendipity and Surrender. Liz Ashe- her father was a mason and electrician. Give her a square of glass from the pool. She thanks me and says ‘... I parked here last night and tears were streaming down my face.’ ” “Parked here last night and tears were streaming down my face!”

4.2.24

Public Restroom- art element. Maintenance from parks and rec ranger? Change? Done by... Modeling after Portland and Lewison. “At the third public meeting on public restrooms and their placement in downtown Bangor and surrounding public parks. Concern over consent, critique of adequate communication. Vocal fears. Powerless. Entitled. Enraged. The public draws upon the only system dominantly presented and well maintained since the inception of city state.

‘The city needs to prove it can help the children of Bangor stay safe.’

‘Blood, feces, needles are everywhere.’

‘They need to be monitored.’

‘Until we clean Bangor Up’

Difficult to prevent access because of behaviors we don't like. Concerned about children. Inevitably this turns to housed vs. unhoused. "They could have a gun you never know. Homeless people go in and using needles." Prevention/ location aligned with outreach? Livable Community Committee (Bangor) monthly meetings... Multiple resources can be addressed at the same time. Encampments need bathrooms too. Go where the need is. Privilege. Humanity Newsletter. Partnership as Strategy

4.3.24

Transcript Conversations with Brian

B: "They're offices are right here in Bangor. WBRC. The person you would want to speak to is Rob Frank. If anyone is able to find floor plans it would be him. He might charge a fee but if you just call him and ask to speak to him and tell him what you're doing he might send you something."

M: "Okay thank you!"

B: "You weren't here, thank fully you weren't here when that building com over- that middle section they were over her touching something and the whole building went that way and landed in the street... It happened Monday I think. Hundreds of bricks in the street. Luckily we didn't hit any cars. Two people were just walking by and they heard something and they ran. Good thing they ran. We were lucky we didn't hurt someone and I'm glad you weren't in there or something obviously."

M: "I didn't realize how steep of a grade we're on here."

B: "It is. It's going to be a lot to fill. But they don't have to bring it up- what you see here. If you went out onto the street and you drew a line up right to here it would be at a slope- that's what they would have to fill. They don't have to maintain this level here so it is an enormous amount of fill but they just have to make the slope look like it was supposed to be that way kind of like this side hill here."

M: "A retaining wall of some kind?"

B: "We don't know what we're going to do so we're just going to leave it. We're going to fill it in and leave it with dirt and then decide. If we put up a wall and then we decide to do something, oh shoot, now we have to take the wall out. So we don't want to spend money and throw money away to do something. So, we're trying to be fiscally responsible but sometimes we trip over ourselves when we're doing that."

M: "We're all humans trying to make it work."

B: "Nah, that doesn't matter."

[wry chuckle]

4.3.24

In a world where we have the illusion of immediate gratification of technology- of order of sleekness of newness- the sites of disarray, destruction, discard point to the (“IRONIC TRUTH”)??

Emotions of change. From the time with Liz. Preservation of history. Consent. Questioning. Difficulty in describing thesis. Who is an artist? What does an artist do? How to describe thesis to a five year old?

4.5.24

Transcript I Hope It's Pretty

“Kinda crazy huh?”

“Yeah. I hope they don't put in another fucking parking lot. I hope it's pretty.”

[car alarm honking, creak of machinery, debris falling, sounds of metal scraping on metal, bricks crashing on bricks, safety reverse alarm on small excavator loading brick]

Liz Brings Pastries

M: “Hi Jamie, Oh hi Liz.

L: “You're back! You've got your recorder this time!”

M: “Yeah I figured I'd catch some sounds.”

L: “Oh- they found the pool! Well they didn't believe me when I first told them.”

J: “Yeah when I was demoing this building from up there I remembered what this was. As I demoed it down I was moving some material and I saw the floor deflecting like that and I was like... that's not.... Cos I was gonna climb down in there. That floor was framed with this stuff and it was built up about three feet higher than the dirt level.”

L: “So when John first said that, I said, well you know you will find another hole in the ground and he goes there's no pool? And I said well and then I went and okay everybody help help help what happened to the little pool and one guy said in the 80's it was filled in.”

J: “Is that when they added the big pool? Was the big pool there too?”

L: “No, this is how it went. The 1890 building as first there- you've seen pictures of it? So that was first there and that little piece you have left they added onto. You can see they added that new part onto that building. Why they kept that little piece I don't know. Except maybe the pool. In 1958 they built a gym and they dedicated that the big pool over there and big gym and they added that onto the old building. I've got pictures of that. Then modernization came along and they decided they would modernize this so they tore down all the turrets in the main part of the old building to construct that one and then- you can see where they added on right there to that pointed part of the building which is fascinating to me. I can't remember the old pool being blue

but they added- who knows. But these must be all the doorways that came down. Is that an actual elevator cos I don't remember that as a kid. That was added on with this building. So they kind of cobbled it up and I was glad to see it once you tore it down. I said, I know I'm right! That part of the building was old!"

J: "I wanna be right!"

[laughter]

L: "I wanna be right! Well, I don't want to be right, I want to be accurate."

J: "Well, yeah, I just don't want to be wrong. And thank you so much. I'm going to bring this up to the boys. Later today we'll be clearing this up all nice and won't be that busy and we can put some aside for you. We can fill up a few buckets, whatever you want."

L: "Then I'll have some memories! I'll put them in my fairy garden. I have a fairy garden with my grandkids down at our camp. We'll build something with them."

J: "There you go. We'll eat all the pastries and we'll put the bricks in this."

L: "Well, you know, I woke up this morning, and I said, these guys might get another snowstorm and I know, they're so delayed. And they're out of state. In motels and things. And I said, you know, I just want to do something nice, too. And so I told my husband, I'm going down Franks and get him some donuts and some honey buns. And he goes, that's gonna cost you, you know, and I said, Okay! He's gonna give me some bricks and stuff. And he's gonna put a bucket aside. I want that fire alarm."

L: "Did you group up in Bangor? No? So she's fallen in love with this building for her thesis but I've loved this building since I was four years old and I'm seventy-five now."

M: "I really love it here."

L: "Well it's gotten better. As far as the quaintness of downtown and stuff. They brought downtown back. But the homeless situation is drastic here. In fact, if I don't know if you've walked up behind the fence up there, but there was a wall and then there's ofcourse just that one driveway, so the Y gave them kind of some kind of privacy. It's the bottom of the hill. And there was needles and there's clothes up there. Dirty junk up there. And the Riverwalk. It was a mess. And you know there's people living down there."

M: "Last night I went to the public restroom meeting. It's the final meeting."

L: "Are they're gonna have them?"

M: "Well, that's it's quite the discussion, right? I mean, when we think about change, lots of people are concerned about like, has there been enough consensus? Was there enough community discussion, funding has been approved to start. Funding has been approved to build these models of expanded portapotties."

L: "Are they still thinking about putting them down by the buses?"

M: "That's still up for debate because of the extensive community input right. So they were thinking about putting them in the park. But people are saying, Why are we putting them in the

park? When we could put them near the Bangor library? Because the beamer library closes. So does the city hall. So put some strategic downtown.

L: "Oh and they go in there to get warm."

M: "So I think there's some intertwining issues of how do we make sure that resources like a public bathroom that everybody needs to use I mean, I walked here today, and I was like, shoot, I gotta pee. Luckily, I can buy something from a store to be able to use the restaurants, right? I don't necessarily want to use the construction Porta Potty. I think it's really hard to address."

L: "See I can't imagine, knowing the homeless population here. And what they do. Okay. First of all, let me back up. You know, I've grown up here all my life. And we never had a homeless population. They're coming from out of state a lot of them, most of coming in from out of state because the warm country, the warm states, don't, don't let them hang on the streets. And they started coming in and a lot of maybe being with people too. And I absolutely know that some people become homeless because of nothing they did. They either someone kicks them out, or they you know, financially lose a job and all that I get that. But I've never gotten the drugs, because I don't do that. Even as a teenager, I didn't do any of that shit. My girlfriend works for Community Health and Counseling Services. And I was feeling sorry for all these homeless people. Because they were they were that tent variety down there. That tent community down there was my playground as a kid. So I grew up on a street called Holland Street that is now dead end. Holland street comes into Ohio. And Wiley Street is right here. So Holland Street is where I grew up. I'm living right here right now. So I have not even moved out of my own neighborhood. And when I did, oh, once, it was still in the neighborhood. We all walked down here, but that whole, we would go for days and be down there, you know, for a whole day down there playing in the river. And it was dirty, then it was polluted. And we used to watch this crap coming right out of the sewers, and oh, yeah, it was all polluted. And then in the 70s somehow they pipelined it to get to Hampden, but kids used to swim and the turds would flow by I mean, I didn't swim with turds."

L: "The best untold story is the 95 bridge that goes over the valley Avenue like this. If you go down to Valley Avenue when you look up underneath the bridge, there are 17 compartments. And the reason you know is because there's a set of pipes here are set of pipes here. So that's a hollow bridge and we were kids and then okay, so So say you're on Valley Avenue and you go this way. There's a slant going right up. And like a ladder there sometimes. And you look up and there's a square at the end. That's it, that's a door. And on the other end, there's another door. When we were kids, and they were building it, they didn't lock anything. So when they were gone, when the construction were gone, we would play in there. And we would take our flashlights and go through. So that's how, you know there's 17 rooms, and in the middle, well most of them you can you could get through like this, you know, like, and then right in the middle, there's a more thicker one. And you had to climb up some little metal rebar steps, crawl through this cubby hole and then go down. And apparently the theory back then was that hollow

bridges don't freeze overs quickly. Anyway, so we played in ther. Below that we played in the graveyard there. And below, the further down the graveyard, there was a sand pit, there was a quarry in some sand. We used to take cardboard, you know, pieces of cardboard boxes. It's like, but I thought it was not real, because it's not there anymore. So I thought maybe that's not really a real memory. So I went to the graveyard. And I went to the office and I said, I walked down the path, he says by yourself. And I said yeah, he said don't do that anymore. And I said, Well, I did. And I said, and I used to go to go to left to quarry. But it's all blocked off now with all your trees and stuff. And he goes, there was a court, I've got a picture. So he showed me the picture. And I did take some pictures, pictures of the picture. And I was gonna post it. But when I got home, it was sunlight. I was doing it. And when I get home, they didn't come out. So I gotta go in the office and ask him to take a picture.”

M: “So what happened?”

L: “It got filled in. Just like this.”

M: “It's another example. Somebody even was talking about one of the days that I was here, where everybody was watching on the Hammond street side when he was crunching it down. And there were some folks and they said, Well, do you know what the Cross Insurance Center was? before? And I said, I have no idea. And he said nobody does.”

L “That's not true. There's people that do know”

M: “I think the sentiment of like, what are the throughlines between place change, site change, how do we memorialize?”

L: “Yeah, well, I can tell you it all. My age for my age, my point of view for that, there's more. If you look at the auditorium piece, there was a wooden structure. And it was the first auditorium. And they used to have a lot of musical festivals and events here. It's all on this Bangor site, you just have to type it in.

M: “On your Facebook site?”

L: “You Know Your From Bangor When”

M: “So you’ve basically been creating a city of Bangor genealogy. Are you a part of th Historical Society? Do they know about it?”

L: “They have their own website. Yeah, Matt, I think if he knows. I’ll tell you another story. So anyway, so that was a wooden structure. And some of my friends remember playing ball in it. I'm 75. And I don't remember that structure at all, except for postcards. And then that got torn down. And then the very next auditorium was a slanted thing. That was supposed to be an architectural marvel. It was slanted like this. And that's where everybody else in Bangor that's my age; all the tournaments were there all the basketball tournaments where their kids played ball. In the winter they flooded it for skating. So we could skate indoor skating there, then they built on a civic center behind it. And then all of that that got torn down. The only thing I did during that construction, I got a picture of the auditorium just because they used to call the very top of the bleachers, the nose bleeds. Right? Right. I got one picture there but I didn't sit there and agonize, I didn't hurt because my time at the auditorium was brief. Go to a game. You know, I didn't play ball there like the boys that played ball there would feel sentimental. And there

might have been square dancing that went on there but I didn't happen to be a square dancer. But this place was, I mean, because my son learned, he learned to he learned to swim here and play ball here too. So, so anyway, so once I got that down, I said I knew it. I knew it. That quaint little building that was 1890. And that's the new building that they added on to it in. I got the timeframe on that website.”

M: “So do you remember the urban renewal project here in Bangor?”

L: “I do. But you know, I was a teenager.”

M: “There's something really interesting about the cultural shift there.”

L: “Well, they voted for it. So people were pissed off. They think that the Union Station, they think the Union Station came down with urban renewal, and that's not so. The railroad stopped coming to Bangor. And so the building needed- it was on a structural bad place, that whole plaza where it used to be, it's not a strong place because of the river. And the railroad took it down. Urban Renewal took down a lot more. So like I remember all the warehouses and all that kind of stuff. The Bijou, that kind of hurt me because I spent a lot of time there. It was a movie theatre. And that was a big deal.”

[looking at photos on I Spy the YMCA on Facebook on Liz's cellphone]

“So, open house with a new wing and the pool and gym. Okay, so remember now that's me going there. That's me going there and this and this too. So therefore, that's why I know what the old building was still there because the tourettes and everything. I hung out there, I played pool with the guys in the front room and the pictures are in here. So then May 17 1969, they close the doors to the original Y the 8090 building, they closed it for good. And then the wrecking ball. So 70 was the modernization. Actually go back- there was a time capsule in the old building in the first one.... So the 1890 building had a time capsule and I think it's the same time capsule that went into this building. And then, this is when they merged. Now this is interesting okay. Not a woman libber but I thought huh that building there used to be a YWCA on the building over there. The M got turned upside down now it says YMCA. Why is that, why? And I was mad. Was this a man decision? Well it turns out my sister in law researched the head of the directors of the YW decided to step down she didn't want to do this anymore so she encouraged them to take the YM over. So that's why it's all YM instead.”

M: “They could have made some money by realizing the sentiment of this building goes way back. And I'm not the only one. There's a lot of people.”

4.10.24

Hands too cold to hold audio recorder. Phone battery died. In the distance a crew is roofing- their figures are visible now that the horizon line has changed. Behind me the city trucks are filling in potholes

4.11.24

Today even though the rain was slight and will probably rain more tomorrow I refused and resisted the urge to see the stie on purpose- I told myself not to go see it- pretend it doesn't exist- work with what I already have- Allison Grey try not to go back to the river- set it aside it won't be there forever- seeing in the theory and try again for tomorrow.

The Role of the Artist Is To Load The Gun Ismatu Gwendolyn

Toni Cade Bambarra- irresistible revolution

George Macunas Fluxus

4.12.24

Whatever resistance I felt yesterday was replaced by determination- I had some thought that surely though I only had an hour that I would arrive to see Todd and John and the two hispanic men working- that I could confirm the sizes of the I-beam, decide which pieces to put in the exhibit- make a plan for Monday and...“I arrive and the site has been razed. Though there are gaps in the fencing (someone broke the caution tape). I hear spring song birds and it is quiet. No machines, though cars drive by. No loose copper or aluminum taps and dances against the skeletal sides of a building. All has been exhausted, leveled, settled into heaps. No bystanders to watch or make comment on activity. I wonder about the folds and curves of the i-beams. How they relate back to the tensions found here- how I might communicate this sign of a system deflated, exhausted by forces of another system hard at work but also exhausted from such intense labor. The great pull-down of over a century of labor. Because perhaps that is what in part I see- that others mourn- transformed, removed, the hope of humans to make a meaningful lasting mark. The silence of these piles still wafts a sense that something has happened here. An inhale. Pause. Suspended breath. Not yet released. Not yet full of entropic weight. Not all the way dead.”

Undated:

That push for great heights into the unknown ether. Great expectations at the time. And still. Now the wind blows on crumpled metal, heaps of bricks and mortar. The foundation holds the remnants. They are not discards because the rubble still has a destination. All material is to be removed. And with it? A site of cultural history.”

DETERMINING WHICH MOMENT-EXPERIENCE-IDEA IS WORTH CONCRETIZING FROM OUR INTERNAL RESOURCES

4.13.24

Elizabeth Gilbert

“You are afraid of surrender because you don’t want to lose control. But you never had control. All you had was anxiety.”

4.15.24

En route. Late to site. Energy required to maintain- to heave, haul oneself against the gravitational pull. Whether one is well resourced or not has a great deal to do with how well they can put it all back again once it begins to spill out and over (built environment. Personal ability-... abilism) (expand)

PULVERIZER (actions and behavior)

[John] Forgot about vacation. Bid 8 week job. Lost two weeks. Concrete and metal has to get pulverized. All gets recycled. Systems of communication.

4.17.24

Chatted with the man who drives the truck for Freedom Paving and Earthworks today. The concrete and rebar gets crushed and is used to fill roads. Beginning to ask “how did this get like this?”

In an environment of labor, to not labor is not socially okay. That “ideless” or “observation” is not okay. I fervently write to prove myself. These nuances of behavior an important addition. Of artist in Demo site. Material is flung. States of being and place are changing.

“Well a homeless shelter wouldn’t bring them anything. It’s too bad. That building was a big building. Could have renovated this to be my house. Renovated this and made a huge homeless shelter. Could have housed all of Bangor. But that’s just my opinion.”

4.17.24

\$200/ton scrapyard trucker.

Fred- aquarius and makes aquariums. Remembers City Beach- 2 or 3 year sober house at site.

According to Sean and Ginny the janitor had a small office where circle window inside pool was.
“Can I bring a sledge hammer? Want to give them (pool tiles) to people I know”
“Change is good it’s just you know...”

Undated

Transcript Liz Wants To Know

L: “I want to pick your brain. What I’m trying to figure out- I don’t have my zoom camera. See that alcove? Then there’s another alcove over here which starts where the blue is? That must be somehow... we came down through the lockers but to come down to the old pool they had to watch through that hole which was at the end of the pool through an observation room so somehow right behind that excavator there was some kind of room or hallway or something. I don’t think they’re going to uncover the old pool. I asked him if he was going to have to dig out the old pool and he said that wasn’t part of our contract to level the land.”

4.17.24

In my small, feeble attempts to also exert force I stubbornly fixate on the copper pool grates along the wall. My pliers break under the force of attempted leverage- I have no hammer and do not wish to appear more vulnerable or like I do not know what I am doing so I grab a small copper pipe and brick and use a makeshift crowbar- soothing, reassuring myself that everything I need is here and not having the tools isn’t a sign of being unprepared. But maybe it really isn’t possible.

4.18.24

Engaged in alerting Elvis, Rocky, John and Todd that I am there- to say good morning- “Those cookies were good!” Mental note- get more for care package. Todd and I talk about SUBJECT TO CHANGE. I wonder what he means when he says “especially in this business.” He talks about the machines- Volatility within or designed/planned/built environment- even machines are fallable.

I am engaged- observation shifts to- noting color patterns- now fragmented as highlights to rubble and ruin. But the memory is clear- of a time when the vibrant red and yellow was the wall where they kept the lawn mowers- I see the lavender wall paper (painted sheet rock) and wonder if I will spot the horseshoe that was tacked up above the doorway-

Do I introduce urgency? Do I fixate? The body of my beloved or signs of my own home- I hold no deep time meaning here- I am new to this place- yet bearing witness to wholeness deconstructed still has an emotional impact. They will load the metal pile tomorrow- the guy who takes the concrete hasn’t showed. They will load and sort CDS instead.

This site is driven by the economy. To ask Scott- what was the financial incentive?

1. collect the old bricks in the yellow bucket
2. Text Ginny and Sean- how many pool tiles?
3. Review patterns- observe motions

Undated:

Transcript Subject to Change

M: "Hi Todd how are you?"

T: "Not bad."

M: "I'm just here, like I have been. Are you guys focused on the concrete today?"

T: "We're supposed to be. They called. The driver he said he's off today so the boss who's supposed to be coming. It's 10 o'clock still hasn't shown up."

M: "Okay well I might just document the metal section unless you will be working there?"

T: "No not today, we're loading up tomorrow. Just loading the concrete today."

M: "Okay, You know they say if you want to make god laugh, make plans."

T: "Ah true. Subject to change! 'Specially in this business. Just like the weather- wait a second."

M: "There are so many moving parts here."

T: "With the machines and everything you always have something break, overheating."

M: "Is John here?"

T: "Yeah."

M: "Okay well maybe I'll just do a loop around and let him know I am here."

T: "Sounds good."

4.18.24

Late lunch with Trisha. Backseat full of metal. Scrap- why am I shoving my car full of what they are disposing of? Her questions and comments- governance isn't bad- it doesn't necessarily mean hierarchy. Nice white lady-isms are dangerous. How do we imagine together? Do things differently? How does co-opting happen in movement work? Movement work instead of improvement-advancement-progression. The difference is...

Undated:

Navigating spaces and systems of power means

Observing-

Arranging-

Questioning-

Undated:

(THE ARTIST)
I build a microcosm of mimicry
In form
Shape
Contour
Emotion
Sensation
Imagination
Information
Consequences.

How to radiate this experience of this site back to CAPITALISTIC SYSTEM OF WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE. Watch the labor? Hierarchy of crew?

<OBSERVATION IS A RADICAL ACT IN A SYSTEM THAT REQUIRES PRODUCTION>

Note- Rocky is shorter. Elvis is taller.

Note- usefulness of gift of jars from Matt for collecting red brick dust- to layer down inbetween force of chopping/slamming-

THE INSTALLATION OF THIS WORK SHOULD BE/NEEDS TO BE DOCUMENTED

Draping- with weight
Dripping- suspended over an edge-
weight layered-
Holding position
Marks of force
Remembered

Is it considered [] when there isn't consent?

Undated:

Reaches into pocket. "Here you go-" He holds out an orange ping pong ball. A pause. Oh Whoah I exclaim. As he walks away he turns back "It's the only thing intact"

4.18.24

Rocky walks up to me. I see him holding between thumb and pointer finger a thin piece of wire- Que Pasa? Everyone seems to be a little more languid today. Machines aren't working- the cement truck never arrived.

4.18.24

Transcripts: Rocky Gives Me A Metal Heart

M: "Hola."

R: "Hey."

M: "Que Paso?"

R: "Ja I don't know, look like a heart, right?"

M: "Oh it does, thank you! Thank you."

R: "You're welcome."

M: "It is a quiet day, huh."

R: "Quiet, yeah."

M: "Will you and Elvis be back, proxima semana?"

R: "No we are, no- sometimes they switch people. Last week was another guy. Week before, another guy. We be twice here.

M: "Well it has been nice sharing space."

R: "Yeah. I think they live over in Massachusetts."

M: "My aunt lives in Massachusettes... Are you all waiting?"

R: "Yeah I think they taking a little bit of a break but we will leave. Only me and him. They stay here tomorrow too."

M: "Como se dice Buen Viaje y tambien Safe?"

R: "Si."

M: "Como se?"

R: "Seguro or Cuidado"

M: "Si, buen viaje con cuidado en el carro. Mucho Gusto"

R: "Watch you step whatever you see over there some time you try to step on brick."

M: "Yeah there are some holes!"

M: "De donde?"

R: "Dominicana"

M: "Y usted? Dominica Republica?"

E: "Si."

M: "How long have you been in en los Estados Unidos?"

R: "Me? Estados unidos? Since 1988."

M: "That's as old as I am!"

R: “You see the old bridge over there? Tyngsboro? That big bridge? The other side? Same thing. Tyngsboro. They will do a new one. In Tyngsboro. They will be working on it.”

M: “That’s a big job. A lot of work.”

4.18.24

I resist the urge to capture all the forms, patterns, shapes within my visual field that yell so very clearly of a disruption to the ordered built environment. Of any urban, public downtown. Infrastructure companies participating- caterpillar? Look into relationship of companies.

Undated:

In the final chapter- what do I NEED from this site? Actually? What lessons? Material objects? Voices? Stories?

Undated:

Nosing. Nudging. Clenching. Grasping. Squeezing.

4.19.24

Remember visuals upon falling asleep. Kaleidoscopic fabric of universe yet protrusions of rebar, wire, concrete chunks like firework explosions and repetition

Undated:

B. The installation of the work- the collection- the curation- composition. Must also follow//embody the mechanisms that are forwarding them. Communal- anarchist principles- non hierarchical governance.

A. If the artist endeavors to embody the observations in their work the practice of the swinging and the aesthetic- imbue. Not only does the artist use mechanisms of form but-

Undated:

Biological Imperative for survival exists in human/species forms. And in systems and designs. Capitalism is a man made construct. Synthetic design. Intervention with Generatives.

Undated:

“Systems are mediated by capital” Trajectory of demolition of 127 Hammond St is steeped in capitalism. Subversion looks like... Alternative systems

Undated:

Contextual review? Post-Industrial Land Transformation: An Approach in Socio-Cultural aspects as catalysts for urban development.

Undated:

UDO KULTERMAN Art + Life. Mutual influence. Enrichment, Crossing Boundaries-dissolving. To occupy the inbetween. Artists interested in the practice of Intermedia...

4.22.24

CORAS PREDATOR. Waiting in line. Operator collects own material. Todd rocked his truck. Behavior of Power and Passivity. Agreeing for the work to begin. Man with local concrete waits in line. VOLVO. HITACHI. MACK. This week- loading out and crumbling foundation.

Undated:

Car= 8ft long

Hear piece= 9 ft long *CUT

Beam= 8' 6.5" less than one foot wide

Sm. ibeam= 5 ft long 2 ft widest point

Big ibeam= 10 ft at longest point curved. 4ft 9" widest point.

Undated:

Clean fill. Building roads out thru swamps. 2 years. Volunteer work with the Ukrainian army. War has gotten funny. Now it's done. 'Just didn't cope here.' Breech/discharged. Cujo, after Stephen King. Mortared. 'I liberate cities and it's the people. Call me Captain America'. Here, can't do it, end up in prison. 'If you stick up for anybody here you go to prison. I'm in the army. Whatever I do is justified.' War is a money machine. The meat grinder. Non nuclear can't fight nuclear country. Zelinsky is a multimillionaire. 'We use WWI machinery. Getting the creeps. My 7th tour. I hate to tell them they're going to die. I think I have to stay to the end. Keep my pack hung up. But you go back.' Cujo. Freedom Concrete Trucking Co.

4.23.24

From Liz//

Small hole// - coaches would watch dives to see underneath. Swim team boys would go with the girls when they practiced down there to take a peek.

4.23.24

Configurations. Layers. Negotiations. 1880//time capsule. "I just want a little piece" Today we got kicked out for taking bricks. INDICATIVE OF A SYSTEM OF CAPITAL AND MATERIAL PRESERVATION, POLICING and CONSERVATION. Material objects as extensions of human (read again Anni Albers)

4.23.24

Transcript Getting Kicked Out for Bricks

B: "Hey guys, hey, someone told me we had people crawling around the job site."

M: "Oh I'm sorry!"

B: "I'm here to kick you off."

L: "They- they know about us."

M: "Liz here is just picking up bricks."

L: "I was the one that brought all the donuts here. Were you here that day?"

B: "No I guess I missed that. We missed the donuts."

L: "Are you going to be here tomorrow?"

B: "We're always here. We've been kicking people out who've been picking up bricks."

[inaudible conversation, high winds, long screeching and crashing sound]

B: "...No I don't, I really don't. There might be people that have ideas but no one knows exactly."

L: "The church which is over here would love to have central parking but I don't think they can afford the lot."

B: "Now that they've got the building down... I know years ago they talked about putting a jail here. That's not going to happen. I know people had said it could be an office building, it could be a parking garage... it's ultimately the county's decision though. It's county property. We tried to sell it. And we got offers that wouldn't even cover cleaning this up never mind the lot. Maybe they'll try and sell it once it's cleaned up."

M: "Do you think there will be a chance for community discussion?"

B: "That's for the county commissioners. There's always an option for public comment."

Undated:

Despite the roar and grumble of machines and trucks- the clinking and dropping of lighter sorted material by hand still resounds.

Humans extend far beyond personal capacity with the use of technology.

Recall the passerby in early site-work who said "easier to destroy than create"

Undated:

DECISIONS ON MATERIAL:

Trust that what I have is enough. That I am working in scales. A microcosm of MACRO which in itself is a smaller emblem of a larger system. Not everything can be seen-shared- much in this artwork is embedded.

4.23.24

Lessons in multiple senses of ARTICULATION

Alteration, worldviews, unusual sharing of space and material.

4.24.24

New private property signs up at church that has the alcove that been used as a home that I wrote about this winter.

Undated:

Incessant- need to know

Inability to access-

Bearing witness to behaviors to capture-

To hold on to what

Is beyond control-

I hesitate to fully immerse myself-

For fear of exasperating the one community members' emotions around lack of access and control.

Undated:

Articulations of an Excavator:

Intentional

Focused

Directional

Planned

Strategic

Lowering

Spinning

Pivoting

Pushing

Crushing

Shoving

[tattered shapes of industry]

WIND
DUST
DEBRIS
PILES

Undated:

Todd passes out of the gate in the small loader- the bucket is lifted up high overhead-
I am walking back to collect pieces of foundation-
I make a motion like break dancing- to raise the roof- he tries to do a wheelie
“You should try it sometime! All it is, is moving levers.” He shows me forward, backwards,
motions up and down. I have to wonder if he has been drinking.

Undated:

Bearing witness to desperation makes saving items less appealing.

Undated:

WOODEN PALLETS= 40” W x 4’ L (x2)

Undated:

It is from a singular position and pivot point that the machine can arc-reach-lower and lift before
depositing- left/right/forward/backwards
PERHAPS IT IS NO WONDER INDUSTRY- URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND WESTERN
IDEOLOGIES ARE CONSTRUCTED IN A GRID
And if this is so... the exhibit must also respond/behave/be laid out in this way

Undated:

An exposition... TO BUILD UP THAT WHICH HAS BROKEN DOWN

Undated:

What will I find if I walk the perimeter? Floor plan has foundation lines. LINES AND ANGLES intercepted, intersected, bifurcated by PIECES, PARCELS, FRAGMENTS.

Undated:

THE APPLICATION OF FORCE//MAKES SOME MATERIAL OBJECTS UNUSABLE
WHY ARE HUMANS IMPRESSED BY DELICACY OF MACHINES

That which is designed as mighty- forceful-large could produce intimate and soft actions

Undated:

The aesthetic of soft violence- VISUAL FORMS

Curvatures

Twists

Tendrils

Arcs

Round edges

CONSTRUCT WITH THE TYPICAL WESTERN BUILT ENVIRONMENT

UNDERSTANDING OF TIME

Undated:

Surrounding this site are other signs of historical significance- across the street are (2) four chimney 3 story homes. The Penobscot County building has copper tourettes.

Undated:

THEY TRY DESPERATELY TO FIX THE ORANGE EXCAVATOR

Undated:

I realize after hoisting cement blocks and foundation chunks that maybe I subconsciously feel the need to express labor as though my work is not labor. Also, after commentary from Liz, after feeling shy about having out my cutting tool (which I will test at home instead), after seeing the labor done by machine and by hand and wondering at the hierarchy within the crew that describes or creates access and job descriptions... Must I make my work known? Viewed and recognized? Visible so it is understood? These are questions often asked of art work production itself- of the relationship between artist and audience. The convergence of this- on-site - in public- within a community- HIGH VISIBILITY in action and yes I am even wearing the vest...

Undated:

So very Western to

INVENTORY

LIST

CATEGORIZE

NUMBER

CLASSIFY

What other methods can I employ AS AN ARTIST?

Undated:

The shape of this work is a bloom and a burst. A mimicry of an exploding, chaotic center, a radius growing, contracting, constricting, expressions and pressures of power through change.

Undated:

Inversion?

Suspension?

DECONSTRUCTED BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LEVELED AND LAYERED

Undated:

OR IS IT RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM that propels the might of a single bodys (my body- artist body-labor body) forward. Unassisted, alone- I imagine carting pieces- Maybe I can ask a friend...

5.1.34

Dropped off gift basket today.

5.6.24

First visit since delivered gift basket on May Day- labor day. I had texted Jamie to ask and how that I am her- at dusk- light reflects now off of the windows of the county building- a setting sun, an exhausted machine, a site almost altered in totality- A fat black and white cat inspects the john deer enclosed excavator- crouching when noticing my presence. Cars drive by. The prominence of the methodist church is remarkable. The pile of foundation and rebar is shrinking. The cat climbs the ridge to where often the postman would document the demolition.

5.7.24

The wind against piles of crushed tin and metal lathe creak the same as they did at the site- but they are a small fragment of the whole- disembodied- saved portions- removed limbs- preserved- just a piece. I think of Liz Ashe again, “I just need a piece!”

5.8.24

Full install today- car loads of lighter material- cinder and foundation. A “milder” sized i-beam. And then, the big body I felt I was butchering- altered- lain strewn- a potential unlocked. A handtruck hauled the first long legged limb- my physical self propelled it. A pink bow of flagging tape flapping- used to indicate to whomever might possibly notice that it is belonged with the other items with pink flagging- It was a downpour. I walked, breathed, felt the weight of so many hands that poured molten metal into form, who hoisted with wench- this piece held so much structure.

The fold, the center of body with me and Sean, who also retrieved the items from the site and delivered to the IMRC.

The legs- campus safety stopped to apologize for removing the brick door stop used at the back door- an assertive shorter man without my asking assured me I would need his help. We hoisted the last leg into my car after he showed me his truck bed- I am amazed at the lack of acknowledgment of my knowledge and assumption of my speaking knowledge that implies he has more. Nonetheless- this is how the last long legged piece entered the new site for view.

LIVING INSIDE CONTRADICTIONS AND WANTING IT TO BE THE TRUTH

5.17.24

Jotting down quick reflections from the opening: ‘I just had to tell you how sad this piece is- truly.’ Resonance with the audience who understands immediately the themes of change, death, transformation and chaos. ‘We don't see the chaos because of how quickly it gets cleaned up’. We talk of similar dominant systems that clean up debris without the public noticing the fullness of what's happening- trash bags disposed of, bodies disposed of, rubble disposed of. Sweep this away, quickly remove it . Two people remember the pool and one asks what will happen next.

APPENDIX B.

Portfolio of Work 2021-2024

The Joy Truck Project.



The Joy Truck Project. 2021. Dimensions variable.

The Joy Truck Project is a donation and grant funded traveling community resource center roaming the Maine Central Highlands. A mutual aid project, a social experiment and expression of a hybridized socially engaged art piece, *The Joy Truck Project* distributes free resources (naloxone, fentanyl test strips, clothes, books, art supplies and pop-up workshops) to rural and low income communities in central Maine.

Weight of Place.



Weight of Place. 2021. Dimensions variable. Found objects.

Weight of Place is a sculptural study on displacement using found objects from travels along the I80. The found objects were selected and arranged based on the unknown stories of their encounter and the meaning infused into the forms by the artist. The cloak, made from a discarded Thermarest camping pad, silk tie, Subaru seat belt. A table made from wood from the dump holds a compilation; an image of a houseless man named Jean sitting on the stoop of a stranger's home, a polaroid found in an abandoned Utah home. An open travelog left open to be leafed through, documents further material sourcing. Underneath the table audio recordings of a Comanche elder on his deathbed play on repeat.

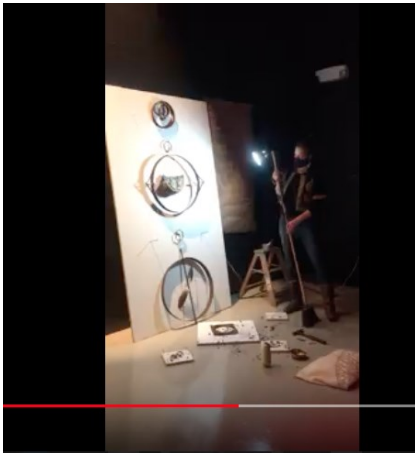
Bittersweet Piece.



Bittersweet Piece. 2021. Dimensions Variable. Bittersweet vine and window panes.

Bittersweet Piece is an outdoor installation drawing patterns from the light within trees to investigate methods of occupying space with material forms. *Bittersweet Piece* poses the question; What do humans and light have in common in their expression of presence and power?

Shockspace.



Shockspace. 2021. Performance. Dimensions variable.

As a performance on grief and the work of the artist, *Shockspace* consisted of tying and cutting golden thread, connected from altar to wrists, scattering broken glass and rose petals, sweeping with an industrial light affixed to a lopsided broom, scrawling on brown butcher paper and dismantling the piece in its entirety after an unrehearsed amount of time.

Migratory Imperative.



Migratory Imperative. 2021. Suitcase, sound, burnt sari fabric.

An art object, *Migratory Imperative* incorporated a soundscape of burning fire, chanting and EDM (electronic dance music) files broadcasted from inside the suitcase quietly so that only upon approach to the suitcase and investigation of the burnt fabric would one hear the sound and notice the tag reading “Migratory Imperative” typewritten on brown butcher paper and attached by a small chain. *Migratory Imperative* acted as an emblem for the global refugee crisis as well as other imperatives to move; domestic violence and other sudden changes within the home necessitated immediate and urgent relocation.

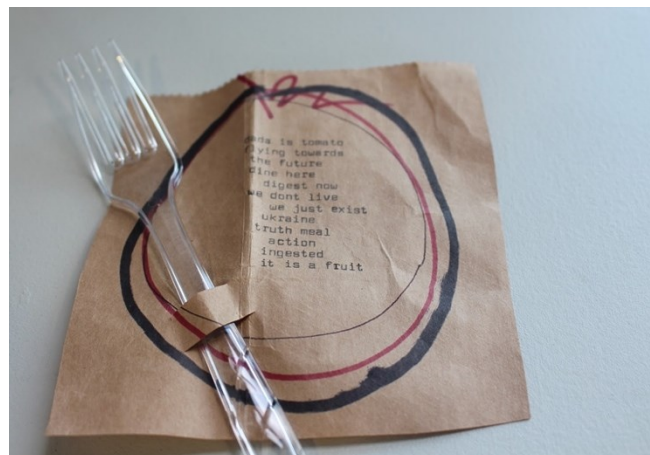
Tools of Choice.



Tools of Choice. 2021. Artifacts from participatory game. Dimensions variable.

When the war in Ukraine became a focus for NPR, broadcasted Ukrainian grief and anger became part of a poem crumpled in exasperation of violence repeating itself. This piece asked the audience to play a game of chance, to close their eyes and pick a hand, either retrieving a butcher paper boat or a 22mm bullet casing from a butcher paper envelope to examine random yet pointed hypothetical complicities in an unfolding war.

Dada is Tomato.



Dada is Tomato. 2021. Artifact from Group Activity.

Inspired by the philosophical teachings of Dadaists and Fluxus scholars, *Dada is Tomato* was presented to a group for contemplation as a pretend table setting. Each square of brown butcher paper contained a typewritten poem referencing a quote heard on NPR regarding current global events of conflict.

Apology to the Earth.



Apology to the Earth. 2021. 3"x 5" 7". Brass bowl, rust pieces, green and red thread, sewing needle, dried baby's breath, white river rock, birch bark, bicycle mirror.

In response to Yoko Ono's Acorn Series Poem IX, *Apology to the Earth* was constructed with the incongruencies between industry and environment in mind. Throughout the construction it became clear that even in the act of mending is an inescapable violence even alongside the beauty of repair.

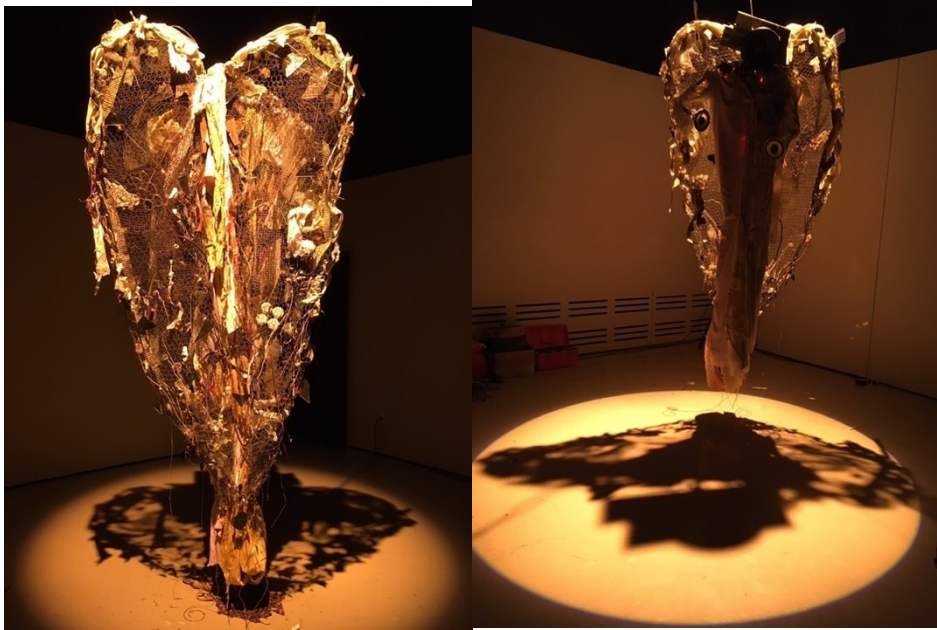
Horizons.



Horizons. 2022-2023. Outdoor Installation. Dimensions variable.

Horizons was inspired by Dick Higgins' concept of an artist and audiences' own horizons culminating or meeting on a shared plane, in a shared space. This piece was left on top of a hill from summer to spring and the horizon of audience and artist became largely not shared and instead a site of indeterminacy and encounter. Over time the piece became disassembled, moved, a site for rock piles and other arrangements of grasses and cattails.

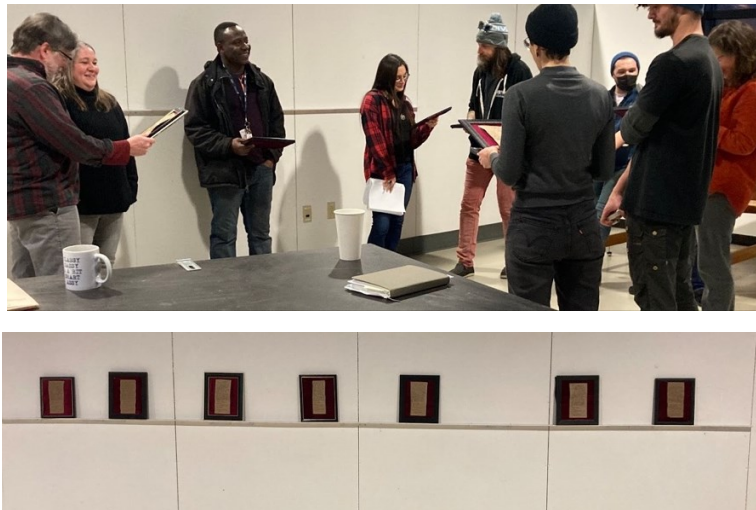
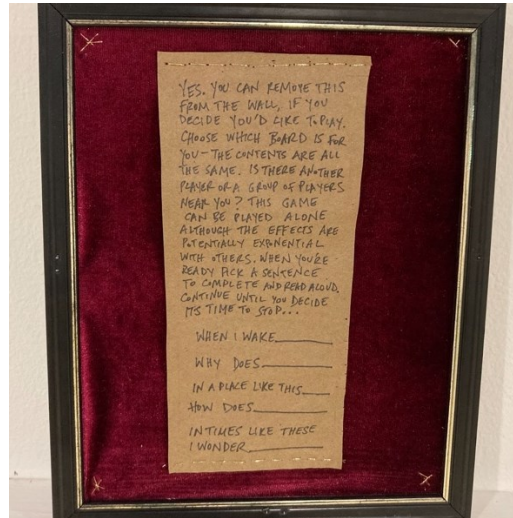
The Angel of America: A Media Operetta (in the form of an exploded pop song).



The Angel Of America: A Media Operetta (in the form of an exploded pop song)
2022. Found objects and audio.

Collaborative sound installation with Nate Aldrich, Steve Norton, Brooke Wentworth, Duane Ingalls, Greg Welter. *Angel of America* invited visitors to enter a four speaker room containing an 8ft angel figure constructed from found objects, chicken wire, mud and marsh dyed textiles which projected found sounds and field recordings.

Agree to Begin.



Agree to Begin. 2022. Participatory Game. Dimensions Variable.

“Is it social practice or participatory?” In *Agree To Begin*, the artist facilitates an experiment in groups self-organizing to see how they might or might not work together. In the gallery where often visitors are bystanders, this piece offered an opportunity to step outside of prescribed behaviors.

Heavy Living Giving Way To A Sigh.



Heavy Living Giving Way to A Sigh. 2022 . Dimensions variable.

In direct relation to the concept of the life-death cycle and the tensions accumulated through exposure, inequities, and precarious-ness, *Heavy Living Giving Way to A Sigh* was constructed relying on tension and weight distribution of broken glass and rusted materials to nails along the wall.

One Hundred and Seventy Symptoms, Unhoused.



One Hundred & Seventy Symptoms, Unhoused. 2022.

One hundred and seventy glass shards, golden thread, fishing line, 8' long steel flatbar. *One Hundred & Seventy Symptoms* was made in response to multiple proposed sweeps of a homeless encampment that was estimated to displace one hundred and seventy residents with no other place to go. One hundred and seventy pieces of broken glass was suspended by golden thread and fishing line from two portions of steel flat bar.

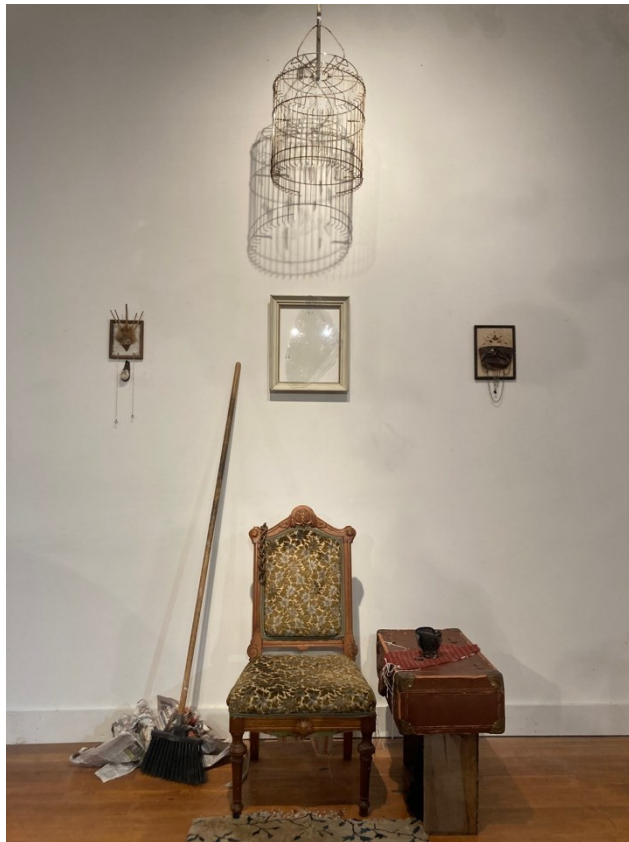
Stay Awhile 1.



Stay Awhile. 2022. Dimensions variable. Found objects.

A scene set with found objects from the local transfer station, and artists home. Constructed in response to continued tensions between the city of Bangor, homeless advocacy groups and residents of a local encampment in addition to the unresolved human condition while trying to make a home by any means in a state of instability and transience.

Stay Awhile 2.



Stay Awhile. 2023. Dimensions variable. Found objects.

Abode.



Abode. 2023. 10"x 8" x 5"

Rust, plaster, burlesque beads, linen, mica, mirror, cement, copper armature.

Incomplete artifact from larger undocumented installation. *Abode* explores the impulse to create home and belonging in contrast to inevitable decay. *Abode*, exploring themes around individual space in a crowded room, the interiority of homes and caverns. Industrial material is foundational.

Source Bound.



Source bound. 2023. 63' long, dimensions variable.
Red Cord, newsprint ribbons, gold thread.

Collaborative performance and site-specific installation with Augusta Sparks. Made in response to the process and theory of collaboration and mutuality, Sourcebound is a construction of alternating and overlapping lines made in contrast to the straight angles of the industrial building and backdrop above the viewer.

Shroud Lantern for Moving Wounds.



Shroud Lantern for Moving Wounds. 2024. Dimensions Variable. Found objects. Collaborative Banner Procession for Threads; Interweaving Multiple Feminisms, In Community Practice and Study.

Shroud Lantern For Moving Wounds was a facilitated vigil and invitation to burn candles for all that needed burned in grieving. Participants were handed candles sourced from 127 Hammond St demolition site. The heart portion of the banner was filled with glass and mirror, red thread from a deceased neighbor, shower curtain, threads and rusted political sign armatures. Procession took place in downtown Rockland, Maine.

So Tender, So Violent.



So Tender So Violent. 2024. Dimensions Variable.
Glass, golden thread, magnum bullet slug, twine net, step ladder.

Addition of interpretive wedge floor piece as one of eight wedges and collaborative piece for *Floor Piece (after Harmony Hammond)* as part of *Threads; Interweaving Multiple Feminisms, In Community Practice and Study*

APPENDIX C.

Manifesto on Artists' Rights by Tania Bruguera

Words read in "Expert Meeting on Artistic Freedom and Cultural Rights"

Hall # 21, Palais des Nations, seat of the United Nations Organization

Geneva, December 6, 2012

Art is not a luxury. Art is a basic social need to which everyone has a right.

Art is a way of building thought, of being aware of oneself and of the others at the same time. It is a methodology in constant transformation for the search of a here and now.

Art is an invitation to questioning; it is the social place of doubt, of wanting to understand and wanting to change reality.

Art is not only a statement of the present, it is also a call for a different future, a better one. Therefore, it is a right not only to enjoy art, but to be able to create it.

Art is a common good that does not have to be entirely understood in the moment one finds it.

Art is a space of vulnerability from which what is social is deconstructed to construct what is human.

Artists not only have the right to dissent, but the duty to do so.

Artists have the right to dissent not only from affective, moral, philosophical, or cultural aspects, but also from economic and political ones.

Artists have the right to disagree with power, with the status quo.

Artists have the right to be respected and protected when they dissent.

The governments of nations where artists work have the duty to protect their right to dissent because that is their social function: to question and address what is difficult to confront.

Without the possibility to dissent, an artist becomes an administrator of technical goods, behaves like a consumption manufacturer and transforms into a jester. It is a sad society where this is all social awareness creates.

Artists also have the right to be understood in the complexity of their dissent. An artist should not be judged first and discussed later. Artists should not be sent to jail because of proposing a "different" reality, for sharing their ideas, for wanting to strike up a conversation on the way the present unfolds. If the artist's proposal is not understood, it should be discussed by all, not censored by a few.

If one publicly expresses and evinces ideas in a different way from that of those in power, governments, corporations and religious institutions too easily declare that one is irresponsible, wanting to use guilt and incite the masses to violent reactions as their best defense strategy, instead of processing criticism and calling for public debate. Nothing justifies the use of violence against an idea or the person suggesting it.

Governments have the duty to provide a space for self-criticism in which they are accountable for their actions, a space where the people can question them. No government is infallible; no human being --even if elected-- has the right to talk for all the citizens. No social solution is permanent and it is the artists who have the opportunity and the duty to suggest the imagery of other social alternatives, of using their communication tools from a space of sensitive responsibility.

Artists suggest a meta-reality, a potential future to be experienced in the present. They suggest experimenting a moment which has not yet arrived, a situation of "what if that were this way." Therefore, they cannot be judged from spaces in the past, from laws trying to preserve what is already established.

Governments must stop fearing ideas.

Governments, corporations (today they are like alternative governments), and religious institutions are not the only ones with a right to build a future; this is the right of citizens, and artists are active citizens. That is why artists have the right and the responsibility not only to think up a different and better world, but to try to build it.

Artists have the right to be activists (part artists/part activists), because they are an active part of civil society, because art is a safe space from which people can debate, interpret, build, and educate. This space must be defended because it benefits us all: art is a social tool.

Governments should not control art and artists. They should protect them.

Artists have the right not to be censored when gestating their work or during the research process of conceiving it. Artists have the right to create the work they want to create, with no limits; they have the duty to be responsible without self-censorship.

Society has the right to have its public spaces as spaces for creativity and artistic expression, since they also are collective spaces for knowledge and debate. Public space belongs to civic society, not to governments, corporations, or religious institutions.

Freedom of artistic expression does not emerge spontaneously. It is something one learns to reach leaving behind pressure, emotional blackmail, censorship, and self-censorship. This is a difficult process that should be respected and appreciated.

Artistic censorship not only affects artists but the community as well, because it creates an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship paralyzing the possibility of exercising critical thinking.

To think differently from those in power does not make you irresponsible.

In moments of high sensitivity (wars, legislative changes, political transitions), it is the duty of the government to protect and guarantee dissident, questioning voices, because these are moments in which one cannot do away with rationality and critical thought and it is sometimes only through art that many emerging ideas can make a public appearance. Without dissent there is no chance of progress.

Socially committed artists talk about difficult moments, deal with sensitive topics, but, unlike journalists, they have no legal protection when doing their work. Unlike corporations, they have no significant economic backing. Unlike governments, they have no political power. Art is a social work based on a practice that makes artists vulnerable and, as is the case with journalists, corporations, and governmental or religious institutions, they have the right to be protected because they are doing a public service.

The right to decide the value of an artistic statement is not a right of those in power. It is not the right of governments, of corporations, of religious institutions to define what art is. It is the right of artists to define what art is for them.

Art is a complex product without a single and final interpretation. Artists have the right of not having their oeuvre reduced or simplified as a schematic interpretation which may be manipulated by those in power to provoke and, consequently, result in public offenses directed to the artists, so as to invalidate their proposals.

To create a space for dialogue and not for violence against works of art questioning established ideas and realities, governments should provide educational platforms from which artistic practice may be better understood.

We must be cautious about the increasing criminalization of socially committed artistic creation under the rationale of national security and the need to control information because of political reasons with the purpose of censoring artists.

There are many types of strategies for political censorship. Political censorship is not only exercised through direct political pressure, but censoring the access to economic support, creating a bureaucratic censorship postponing production processes, marginalizing the visibility of a project by drawing artists away from legitimization, and distribution circuits; controlling the right to travel, deciding who has the right to talk on what subjects; and, at times, even using "popular sensitivity" as censorship. All these are decisions taken and conducted from political power so as not to be challenged.

On the other hand, there are artists who are internationally acknowledged and admired because of being activists in their countries of origin and who, at a given time, for one reason or another, migrate and establish themselves temporarily in other countries where they find a new type of censorship, a censorship that relegates, pigeonholes, and sets them inside a limited mental geography where they are only allowed to talk critically of the country they come from and not the country to which they have arrived. This is a situation of censorship in which artists are relegated to being uni-dimensionally political: a used political object.

The process of discovering a different society, the inner negotiation required to understand the place of arrival and the place one has left, is inherent to contemporary condition, which is, increasingly, a migrant condition. This is a condition that artists embody and on which they have the right to express. After all, a national culture is the hybridization of the image those who do not live in the country have of it and all present day by day build, wherever they have originally come from.

We cannot ask artists, whose work is to question society, to keep silent and resort to self-censorship once they cross a territorial border.

Artists have the right not to be fragmented as human beings or as social beings.

Artistic expression is a space to challenge meanings, to defy what is imaginable. This is what, as times goes by, is recognized as culture.

A society with freedom of artistic expression is a healthier society. It is a society where citizens allow themselves to dream with a better world where they have a place. It is a society that expresses itself better, because it expresses itself in its entire complexity.

There is no other type of practice in the public sphere providing the qualities of the space created by art. That is why this space must be protected.

Governments have the duty to protect all their citizens, including those who may be considered uncomfortable because they question government or what is socially established.

Critical thinking is a civic right which becomes evident in artistic practices. That is why, when threatened, we should not talk of censorship, but of the violation of artists' rights.

ENDNOTES

[i] “Bittersweet Piece” is an example of mark-making. It is an example of an artist perceiving the environment and strategic construction of a mark on surroundings. The installation of glass embedded into a series of bittersweet vines simultaneously mimicked, paid homage and responded in a material way to the artists’ experience and perception of light moving through trees.

[ii] Karl Marx is most well-known for his life work as a philosopher, writer and revolutionary socialist. In response to overwhelming oppression and exploitation of the working class, Karl Marx wrote a series of essays and manifestos, most famous “*The Communist Manifesto*” which has been referred to over decades as a guidepost to theoretically-and in actuality- redistribute power to the classes most exploited. In this quote he is suggesting that in a capitalist society, the makers, builders and producers are the ones whose labor, in short, their mark-making, do not make for themselves, but are governed by the surrounding system that exploits the makers.

[iii] Baroness Von Elsa Freytag Loringhoven known as the mother of dada pioneered in her time all that was known as avantgarde. She was and continues to be a longstanding inspiration and instruction on how to lead an artful life through subversion of existing oppressive systems of power. Her sculptural work with found objects correlated with her use of body adornment with found objects, creating commentary on poverty, standards of feminine beauty and the value of commodity within and outside of the art market.

[iv] Miwon Kwon, author and art theorist has written extensively about the historical and contemporary use and cultural definitions of ‘site’ by artists. Here in “*One Place After Another*”, she talks at length of the complexities and shortcomings of naming a site as a point beyond a geographic location. It is both necessary and convoluted and is in keeping with the contradictory nature of the human condition and the artist’s role within culture.

[v] The Situationist International, a group of artists, thinkers and political activists inspired by Dada-ists and Karl Marx sought to dissolve if not disengage completely from the systems of power that surrounded the formation of the capitalist market, political sphere and citizen mobility. The group was organized and active from 1957 to 1972 and in the early stages used artistic strategies such as derives and psychogeography- methods of redirecting individuals out of prescribed notions of behavior and reality and into constructed situations. These methods were unique yet similar to those that would emerge from Fluxus artists later in the 60’s with Events and Scores.

[vi] Here, John Cage, an avant-garde composer of the 40’s highly influenced by Zen Buddhism references letting go of control so that one might see the world as it really is. This appeared in his works and collaborations which deeply embraced indeterminacy and chance operations- tools

used later in the installation process of *127 Hammond St.* Surrender in favor of reality became an underpinning to the conducted research throughout and is explored in the second section of this thesis manuscript.

[vii] Gina Siepel is a contemporary artist that in 2024 visited the Intermedia department as a part of the ongoing visiting artist lecture series. Here, their work “Cycle of Self Determination” draws upon the function and tradition of craft combined with performance to create an intermedial, sculptural performance conveying their message of futility within capitalism and the “American Dream”. This is an example of sculptural mark-making.

[viii] Robert Rosenberger in “*Callous Objects: Designs Against the Homeless*” writes about strategies used by those who have decision making power and capital within the built environment. He cites the complexities of power exchange throughout the need for social and cultural infrastructure that leaves those without (homes, financial capital, regular means of subsistence, access to basic hygiene) an ability to participate in the development of the shared built environment. Instead, they are pushed further to the margins with designs that subtly and not so subtly indicate they are not welcome to rest.

[ix] Ismatu Gwendolyn, a contemporary writer and activist speaking to the importance of artists acknowledging the power they hold in reflecting culture that surrounds them. Radical notions such as the artist loading the gun held by culture and used to alter forces of power and oppression implies that it is the responsibility and work of the artist to make art that signals a way forward.

[x] In an interview in *What We Made*, compiled by Tom Finklepearl, artist Rick Lowe and Professor of Social History and Urban Studies Mike Stern discuss public perception of value and how artists and community members can bolster perceptions of potential in what most are perceiving as impossibilities or beyond repair/alteration. In this conversation both Rick Lowe and Mark Stern recognize the importance of shifting perceptions to shift how power is wielded among people and resources, such as housing. In 1993 Rick Lowe alongside a multidisciplinary collaborative founded Project Rowe Houses taking derelict and defunct ‘shotgun houses’, preserving and reviving them into culturally significant and locally appropriate gathering, living and working spaces.

[xi] Suzanne Lacey perhaps could be called the mother of social practice in the United States. Her long term and large-scale communal projects range from video, to performance, to installation and revolve around themes of labor, incarceration, rural and urban poverty and sexual violence. In *Uncertain Futures* themes of work and aging are addressed through a deeply collaborative project combining interviews, research, and aesthetic displays of findings as well as gatherings. The iterations of *Uncertain Futures* poignantly took place in the gallery as a site. While these interactions could have been hosted elsewhere, it is important to note how this decision on the

part of Lacey, signified even more so the role art and the gallery system can take in alternative ways of using space, and market to talk about the very injustices at the hands of the surrounding system of power.

[xii] Pablo Helguera; another influential artist working in-between the lines of art making, sociology and class struggle remained deeply invested in the practice of socially engaged arts; art making that is only possible through input and connection from the community the artist is working within. Though the artist residency at 127 Hammond St was a short term engagement, the sensitivity to being present and aware of the power dynamics, as well as the nuance of recording commentary from passersby was central to the quality of interaction and became embedded information for the final sculptural exposition.

[xiii] Tom Finklepearl references Joseph Beuys, a founding performance artist at the forefront of Fluxus who understood the social-spatial realm to be just as material as the matter that made up the space (or shared, built environment). Social sculpture, here, references Beuys concept that art has transformational capacity to shape human interaction.

[xiv] Pablo Helguera, author of a guidebook titled “*Education for Socially Engaged Art*” advocates for the use of creative and political pedagogy for artists working with communities. He writes about common issues artists might face when working with community, the varied ways an artist can build relationships and quite importantly he distinguishes between symbolic social practices and actual or communicative social practices. He goes on to write that Socially Engaged Art relies on actual social actions. It is important to acknowledge here that the culminating exhibit *127 Hammond St* was ultimately symbolic. The information gathered through conversation and engagement led to a symbolic exposition rather than an action-based art piece that endeavored for local organizing around the future of 127 Hammond St.

[xv] Frances Morin, contemporary art curator and historian, like many socially engaged artists viewed the role of an artist as facilitator, connector, and signifier of the potential for humanity to be curious, creative and connected. *Quiet In The Land: Everyday Life* was an example of facilitating artists spending time with community members unlike their own- namely, a Shaker community in Maine. The exhibit was constructed through the experiences each artist had during their time there, and each exposition was drastically different from the next, demonstrating further the potential for individual perception, bearing witness and mark making to communicate facets previously unknown to the public.

[xvi] Brian Holmes author of article *Affectivist Manifesto: Artistic Critique in the 21st Century* notes the importance of rupture and change in enabling the individual (artist) to break out of the silo of self and to become affected to deeply feel and act, to break open. He leads into the referenced quote by stating “Artistic Activism is Affectivism.”

[xvii] In this interview “*Where Life is Precious, Life is Precious*” between On Being podcast host Krista Tippitt and writer, professor and abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore discuss the impact of ruptures in the framework of society that cause psychosocial upheaval- change, the force that can shift drastically human nature and need for power and control. For Gilmore, who advocates for a total removal of the carceral system, this knowledge is potent. This type of awareness of the impact on human psyche was apparent in my own portfolio as well as on site at 127 Hammond St as witness to the sentiments expressed by community members.

[xviii] adrienne marie brown has authored a series of books (“*Emergent Strategy*”, “*Holding Change*”) advocating for getting in ‘right relationship with change’ drawing upon complexity theory and the work of science fiction writer Octavia Butler. To understand that life is complex and constantly emergent dovetails with the study of Intermedia. Much of the community record and transcription as well as the poetry written during the research period at 127 Hammond St was held within the container of thought provided by adrienne marie brown.

[xix] Hannah Higgins, daughter of Dick Higgins who coined the term Intermedia in the 60’s understood that all is flux. Here, Higgins references the “Event” an important aspect of Fluxus artists at the time suggesting that though there was a push for the dissolution of arts pedestal and move into the realm of everyday life, there was still an integrous centrality to each unique material, medium or aspect of art making that though structurally combined, couldn’t be altered despite the changed forms. Here Higgins suggests a core respect for the kaleidoscopic weaving that is found in Intermedial works and processes.

[xx] Here Schneider references the work of artist Gordon Matta Clark with others in their collective called “Anarchitecture.” Their work exists as guidepost and reference for artists that are thoroughly committed to both fusing and unfurling action and belief systems. Alone and in the collective, Matta Clark worked to construct an alternative system of power as an interventionist and interceptor to the way things are typically done in the built environment has been strategically and deliberately altered. An alternative perception has been devised and displayed.

[xxi] Caroline Woolard, contemporary artist and advocate for alternative systems such as a Solidarity Economy, discusses the use of design and material to provide a path towards a different function, social behavior and shift of power. Woolard’s sensitivity to the artists power to do so, to shift cultures and communities is displayed here in this work titled *The Meeting* (<https://carolinewoolard.com/project/meeting/>) where art objects and games are introduced to invite different ways of addressing difficult and stagnant meeting experiences. “*Arts, Engagement, Economy: The Working Practice of Caroline Woolard*” provides a template for working with systems collaboratively and through an intersectional lens.

[xxii] A Bookkeeping Cooperative: <https://bookkeeping.coop/home/> Example of individuals putting effort towards operating outside of the prescribed capitalist system- offering artists, non-profits managers and culture workers innovative methods of understanding and managing finances in a capitalist system.

[xxiii] Mierle Laderman Ukele alongside Suzanne Lacey, Lucy Lippard and other feminists and activist pushed against forces that defined women and the laboring class as less than with new theories of caregiving. *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!* sought to make visible that which is so often hidden- unacknowledged labor by the sanitation department in the art world as well as the caregiving labor of women and mothers. Laderman Ukeles' proposal was to leverage her self as artist, and mother and instead of creating works of art she engaged in all jobs the sanitation department normally would. Famous images include her washing by hand the steps of institutions.

[xxiv] Dean Spade in *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis and the Next* advocates for radical methods of caring and tending to one another in the absence of systemic care and very real presence of systemic violence and oppression. Mutual aid is one framing to consider resource distribution and capital distribution that exists outside of the prescribed methods of capitalist exchange. The Joy Truck project draws upon the Mutual Aid philosophy and actions and the material redistribution of items from 127 Hammond St were echoes of mutual aid at work.

[xxv] From *Issue No 32. Power from Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, authors Enrique Guerrero-Lopez and Cameron Hughes write “*Popular Power in an Age of Protest and Pandemic*” citing the core of anarchist practices; dissolving hierarchies in favor of mutualism that doesn't reinforce domination but instead connection, care, shared resources and availability to gain resources based on individual need and capacity. This style of thinking and maneuvering through the social fabric is a key example of alternative ways of working that some artists endeavor to embody either through the process behind a culminating work of art or through varied socially engaged art practices.

[xxvi] Lewis Hyde, in “*The Gift: How The Creative Spirit Transforms The World*” offers readers a thorough compilation of cultural shifts that both inhibited and bolstered cultures to exist through mutuality and gift-giving throughout time. He opens by suggesting that in contemporary markets, gift giving, which in his assessment is at the heart of what an artist does, is altered in ways to make mutuality networks possible while within the capitalist structure.

[xxvii] Tania Bruguera, referenced also in Appendix C in *Manifesto on Artists' Rights* is a Cuban contemporary installation and performance artist that is politically involved, and in the past has

experienced arrest by the Cuban government for her work. This quote speaks concisely to the use of direct action through art rather than symbol or abstract representations. What is implied is that the function of the politically driven artist is to embody the essence of what is happening rather than what the artist, market or public might want to perceive it as. Bruguera here seems to make the distinction of work that brings the collective closer to the truth rather than creating distance between the engagement of reality.

[xxviii] Anni Albers, in *Material*, leads the maker and artist through a series of poetic reminders on the great need for a relationship between artist and material, or medium. Anni Albers was a textile artist, visual designer and an advocate for experiential knowledge through material making. Her sensitivities and dedications to the relationship to making guided much of the research period and installation phase of the culminating exposition *127 Hammond St.*

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Merrilee Schoen is an interdisciplinary artist working and living in Penobscot and Piscataquis County Maine, original and unceded territory of the Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy). She attended SUNY New Paltz and graduated with her Bachelor's in Psychology in 2012. Merrilee's current artistic research practice uses art-making and writing to co-construct community projects, reflected through decades long work in human rights advocacy and current frontline work in rural mutual aid projects. She uses art-making as a tool in service of social repair, working to dismantle pathological social systems of control and power and imagining new ways of being in community. After receiving her degree Merrilee will continue pursuing projects that center the arts and activism. Merrilee is a candidate for the Masters of Fine Arts degree in Intermedia from the University of Maine in August 2024.