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The SPACES World Artists Program (SWAP) offers residencies to international, national, and local artists who explore and experiment. SWAP supports artists in the creation and presentation of new work, while facilitating opportunities for collaboration with artists and audiences in Northeast Ohio. Chloë Bass is SPACES' 51st Artist-in-Residence.

SPONSORS

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CHLOË BASS

(Brooklyn, NY)

The Book of Everyday Instruction

Chapter One: you + me together

May 15 - July 10, 2015

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

The Book of Everyday Instruction is a project exploring one-on-one social interaction. For *Chapter One: you + me together*, artist Chloë Bass is inviting participants to hang out with her in and around Cleveland. This project is being presented by SPACES.

Hang out sessions will be comprised of activities that you (yes, you) traditionally do in a pair. For example: if you always walk your dog with one friend or family member, you can invite Chloë along for your dog-walking session in place of your usual partner. Or: if you only discuss your emotional challenges with one other person, you can invite Chloë to take the place of this person in discussion. Any and all activities, minus those that are explicitly sexual, are subject for inclusion in the project.

Appointments with Chloë are available from Saturday, April 4th through Thursday, April 30th. Please email Chloë with your name, your preferred date and time to hang out, your suggested activity for the hang out, and the amount of time you expect the activity to take. Hang out times (both time of day, and length of time) should be selected based on the time when you usually conduct the activity that you propose to share with Chloë.

The works in this exhibition represent time spent with 16 strangers. Some of these people were friends of friends, or SPACES board members. Some I met through my interactions with others. Some I found on Craigslist.

We shared activities ranging from the suggested dog walks, to neon sign returns and cemetery visits. The amount of time we spent together spanned from one to nine hours, and took place at all times of day.

Every day, I broke the most basic rule: don't get in the car with a stranger. Starting from this place of inadvisable behavior gave me an interesting kind of focus. Do we learn best through safety, or when we're reminded we must look more carefully?

Time spent together is imperfect. There is so much that we miss. Sometimes a great deal that we get wrong. I'm offering one attempt at a chronicle.

— Chloë Bass

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Chloë Bass is a conceptual artist based in Brooklyn, NY. She focuses on the co-creation of performances, situations, installations, and publications, all dedicated to deep questioning of the daily. Her current project, *The Book of Everyday Instruction*, is an investigation into one-on-one social interaction. Chapter One (you+me together) is premiering at SPACES; upcoming chapters will appear throughout 2015 at Salisbury University (Salisbury, MD), Elsewhere (Greensboro, NC), and R. Jampol Projects/Solo(s) Project House (New York, NY/Newark, NJ).

Chloë was the 2014 Bed-Stuy Create Change Resident for the Laundromat Project and the 2014 Honorary Fellow in Utopian Practice for Culture Push. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at the Bernis Center for Contemporary Arts, the Neuberger Museum, the James Gallery at CUNY Graduate Center, Momena Art, and Künstlerhaus Stuttgart. Her recent writing has been published in *Hyperallergic*, and is forthcoming in *Art in America*. Chloë holds a BA in Theater Studies from Yale University, and an MFA in Performance & Interactive Media Arts from Brooklyn College CUNY. You can learn more about her at chloebass.com. She welcomes correspondence on any subject at info@chloebass.com.

RELATED EVENT

May 17, 2 pm - 5 pm: Public presentation by the artist, "Games for two people," which will lead you on an exploration of interaction between yourself and another.

There are three ways to move through this exhibit. All are equally important.

ONE: Testaments.

Between April 4th and 30th, 2015, I hung out with 16 strangers in and around Cleveland. Out of each of these experiences, I created a single image and associated text representing a moment of our shared time.

Each image is really two photographs placed together: one of the instant photos I took during my time with a participant, “framed” by my hand in my own immediate home environment – the cottage where I stayed in Tremont. Both the images and the text reflect my own input into the shared time – a placement of myself in the time that ultimately belonged to others.

These 16 photo-and text-diptychs make up the bulk of the exhibit, and constitute a finished work as a series. They are meant to be viewed together. Each diptych is named for the person with whom I shared the day.

TWO: Evidence.

I have chosen to include the “evidence” items from the time together to demonstrate alternate ways of marking time. The full photo and text series stands on its own as one story. The story of the film trash is equally important to me: it’s an archive that built itself over the work of my shared days in Cleveland. The archive of accumulated materials means something too – each item links me back to a specific moment within a larger interaction. The full range of instant camera images is included to show moments of imperfection: what I tried and failed to capture, or what came out surprisingly clear even as the moments between myself and my participant may have been hazy.

Evidence items are carefully labeled and meant to be read.

THREE: Experience.

A great deal of this project was shared in its most direct sense only between me, and the person with whom I was spending time. The other elements of the exhibit represent that time, but they do not entirely replicate or mimic it.

As such, your experience in moving through the exhibit is as valuable as the research experiences I had in making it. I am hoping to give you ways of marking your own time here – perhaps a time you can share with someone else in your daily life.

Imagine the space like a dance. Partner up.

(Activity cards have been provided.)

CHLOË BASS CRUISING THE DYNAMICS OF RELATION

Formally, the only thing interesting about cruising for sex (in a perhaps by-gone sense) was its indetermining intervention (in the Cage sense) into the sorting of human interactions. By allowing one syntax (sex) to override other normative syntaxes (codes of hierarchies, transactional politeness, domesticated courtship, etc.) and thereby drive a given semantic field (types and classes of person), otherwise unthinkable interactions could come about. A banker in the bushes with a dock worker. A professor in a porno theater with a vagrant. These are the kind of interclass interactions Samuel Delany categorizes in his book *Times Square Red Times Square Blue* (1999) as “contact” sociality. This he opposes to “networking” sociality, those forms of interaction which would operate within and according to the rules of particular syntaxes of given social groupings.

As easy as it might be to position Chloë Bass’ work in alignment with the task of imagining the kind of “contact” valorizing institutions Delany envisions at the end of his book, Bass’ project lies elsewhere. She presents us instead with a much murkier situation in which “contact” and “networking” are all but indistinguishable. Crucially, sex is the only thing explicitly off-limits in the open call for participation in this first chapter of *The Book of Everyday Instruction*. For Bass, the problem of this confusion of ways of being together precedes sex. For Bass, as worked through in *The Bureau of Self-Recognition* (2011-2013), the first question is the relation to the first other: one’s self.

Let's turn our attention to the culmination of the *Bureau* for a moment. What became squirmingly apparent as the subject matter of the show and book were the complex narcissistic dynamics at play in social practice and recent participatory arts at large. Videos depicting individuals variously describing their fields of expertise, visitors gazing into a vanity mirror while performing one of Bass' self-recognition exercises, indeed the entire quasi-therapeutic conceit of the project, seemed to work as a kind of narcissism-provoking ruse not unlike so many instances of self-help or social media, but in this case, with no form of output but the cold light of the gallery. But beyond such an exterior oriented self-reflexivity, and leading us back to the current body of work, the *Bureau* also included the series of photos entitled "Practice of the Daily." Here, the question of narcissism appears in its illegibility to a viewer. That is, a series documenting everyday scenes and objects that contain some form of investment for their photographer, but for a viewer remain empty. Narcissism laid bare in its incommunicability, legible as such by their place in the overall discourse of the exhibition.

If the *Bureau* invited us to occupy the coolly reflexive position of the analyst, *you + me together* offers something significantly more complex – inviting even, let's say, counter-transference. The constellation of works that make up the show offer a constant push and pull of intimacy and distance. Lost in the digital visual plenitude of a languidly outstretched arm (here we require the distinction between an experience invoking primary as opposed to egotistical narcissism) we stutter upon the photo within the photo in the subject's hand (the gap of marking an unsharable personal investment now legible in the image itself). Lost in that recursive vertigo of the images within images (a quotation suggested by the artist: "Vertigo as a symptom of profound attraction. An excess of desire.") we stutter against each print's descriptive photo mate. And lost in the meta-poetics of the gap between image and description, we stutter onto the various quasi-sociological presentations of data punctuating the diptychs.

Though constructed from traces of Bass' casual encounters throughout Cleveland, the setup of the space, the primacy of the photo-diptychs, the sensual weight of the images' materiality, reveal that ultimately we, her viewers, are now the primary object, the ones being cruised. Roland Barthes states in *The Pleasure of the Text*:

Does writing in pleasure guarantee – guarantee me, the writer – my reader's pleasure? Not at all. I must seek out the reader (must "cruise" him [sic]) without knowing where he [sic] is. A site of bliss is then created. It is not the reader's person that is necessary to me, it is this site: the possibility of a dialectics of desire, of an unpredictability of bliss: the bets are not placed, there can still be a game.

If the utopia of cruising was always already also the utopia of narcissism, personal or impersonal, Bass suggests something else altogether: a dynamics of relation, a dancing of position, an erotics of unending sequence.

— Bill Dietz

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Bill Dietz was born in 1983 in Bisbee, Arizona and has been based in Berlin since 2003. He is a composer, writer, the artistic director of Ensemble Zwischentöne, and co-chair of Music/Sound in Bard College's MFA program. With Woody Sullender he co-founded and edits *Ear / Wave | Event*.