



THE RESOURCE AND PUBLIC FORUM FOR ARTISTS WHO EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT

Annual Report  
2014



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SWAP Coordinator

Michelle Epps  
Community Engagement Manager

Marilyn Ladd-Simmons  
Gallery Oracle

Martha Loughridge  
Development Director

Christina Vassallo  
Executive Director

## 2014: YEAR IN REVIEW



### From the Executive Director

There are few public resources in Cleveland where people are invited to speak openly and critically about contemporary society. Since 1978 SPACES has encouraged artists and audiences to use art as a tool for exploring timely issues, including the current state of our city. SPACES serves as a venue for dialogue that starts with cutting-edge art and extends to a myriad of relevant social issues.

Through our mostly free programming, steadfast support of artists' visions, and commitment to bolstering art literacy, we have formed a creative community in the heart of Cleveland like no other. Our greatest contribution to the national cultural landscape is that we set a standard for how small alternative art spaces can help realize ambitious new artworks and make them accessible to audiences. We provide sorely needed resources for the creation and appreciation of experimental art, as well as an infrastructure that generates critical discourse and expands the notion of what art can do.



# Programs

In 2014 SPACES supported 12 major projects that helped us experience the world in unexpected ways.



*The SWAP experience afforded me the opportunity to create a long-term process of exploration that brings together my interests in research, spectacle, material, and performance. The residency has left me feeling inspired about the direction in which my work is heading.*

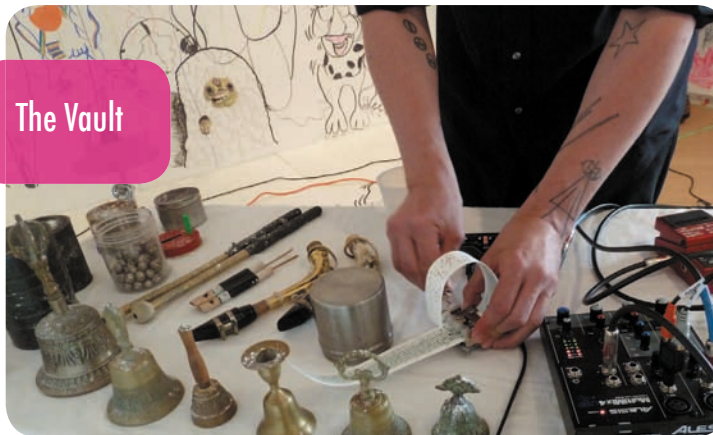
*-Jake Beckman,  
2014 SWAP artist*

## SWAP



SPACES awarded residencies to 4 artists hailing from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Bulgaria and Latvia. All artists were given the time, space, staff resources, connections to communities, and funding they needed to develop new conceptually-driven work. SWAP residents Migiwa Orimo worked with 13 Cleveland families, Jake Beckman developed a new machine/body aesthetic, Pavlina Mladenova conducted an audience survey of a local museum with CSU students, and Irina Špičaka debuted an experimental audiovisual projection mapping system.

## The Vault



4 Cleveland-based curators and 33 artists from around the world contributed experimental sound and video art to The Vault. Kirstin Rogers curated works from an international array of artists. Christopher Auerbach-Brown invited Northeast Ohio's finest avant-garde musicians to create works using resonant frequencies of The Vault space. Sarah Paul organized a selection of queer video art. Marilyn Ladd-Simmons developed a curatorial context for a crowdsourced collection of .gifs.

## R&D



6 R&D artists explored new ideas through 4 supported exhibitions. Lauren Herzak-Bauman (Cleveland, OH) addressed death and loss through contemporary ceramics. Thu Tran (NYC), Jason Eppink (NYC), Cassie Thornton (Oakland, CA), and Jess Hirsch (Minneapolis, MN) worked within a curatorial context that provoked lively discussion around collaboration and artistic authorship. Colin Lyons (Ontario, Canada) employed Cleveland's post-industrial landscape and construction rubble as material.

## Community Engagement Launch



In 2014 we took major steps toward investing resources in the ways our community members interact with, benefit from, and inspire our programming. We created the staff position of Community Engagement Manager to develop initiatives that offer new approaches to appreciating contemporary art and forge deeper connections between our audience and SPACES. The position will start in January 2015 and will expand on the activities of the Engagement committee of the SPACES board of directors.

# Events

SPACES presented 25 free and low cost events that expanded Cleveland's dialogue around contemporary art and connected the public to the creative processes.



***Monster Drawing Rally is special and unlike most other events because of its emphasis on the artist's process. Where else can you go, and in one evening, interact with 100 artists being creative, learning, collaborating with each other, and producing art?***

***-Dr. Jon Logan, SPACES audience member***



Monster Drawing Rally

For the 4th year in a row, SPACES set the stage for extraordinary interactions between artists and viewers, as new drawings were created on the spot by over 100 of Cleveland's freshest artists. A family-friendly live drawing event, SPACES provided room and materials for families to create artwork and display it for the weekend. Monster Drawing Rally welcomed 500 visitors and raised over \$5,500 for SPACES' public programs.



Farewellcome

SPACES encourages artists and audiences to use art as a tool for exploring timely issues. The popular recurring event *Farewellcome*, which debuted in 2014, discussed the impact of mobile populations by greeting/bidding farewell to 8 creative professionals who were visiting, moving to, or leaving Cleveland. Representatives from peer organizations served as introducers, including Guide to Kulchur, MOCA Cleveland, Ohio City Inc., and Zygot Press.



Kid Art Reviews

In this new critical initiative we asked children, 5 - 12 years old, to write about their art viewing experience at SPACES. Participants were able to speak freely about the artwork on display and their reactions to it. Two reviews and conversations with SPACES staff were posted on the SPACES blog in 2014, and we will continue to post quarterly throughout 2015.



Unruly Potluck

SPACES teamed up with Cleveland Institute of Art and the Boston-based Social Practice Artists Network (SPAN) to present a wrap up discussion for the *Unruly Engagements* conference at CIA. The potluck was an opportunity for over 40 artists, community activists, students and other types of organizers to meet and get to know each other, whether they attended the conference or not.



# Collaborations & Partnerships

SPACES is not just a place for viewing art. It is also a vibrant community resource that has opened its doors to the creative offerings of Cleveland-based groups in need of a collaborator and welcoming venue.



*Partnering with SPACES fulfills a need in the childrens' lives, exposing them to art in a way that we would not otherwise be able to provide.*

*-Lynn Scott,  
Program Director  
St. Malachi Center*



Sistah Sinema

Sistah Sinema Cleveland is a monthly event showcasing cinema by and about queer women of color. Each screening is followed by a performance and/or moderated discussion. In 2014 SPACES hosted 7 screenings for Sistah Sinema Cleveland, with an average attendance of 30 guests. Founding Director Deidre McPherson has stated, "SPACES provided a safe space for queer women of color to have much needed dialogue that would otherwise not occur in our communities."



Malachi Center Summer Camp

SPACES hosted 47 children from a summer camp at nearby St. Malachi Center that serves families of Cleveland's near west side. The campers were guided through the art projects on view and participated in activities related to collaboration. Over the course of 4 weeks the campers created new artworks together, discussed what it means to share intellectual ownership, and ate nutritious snacks. The positive response that Malachi Center received from the children and camp counselors has led to a request for SPACES to repeat the program in 2015.



Write, Rinse, Repeat

SPACES partnered with Bridging the Tracks, a Larchmere-Buckeye community group, to realize a temporary mural. SPACES supplied the concept of stencil writing in a public location, the stencils, and spray chalk, and Bridging the Tracks took the idea and ran with it. Through a series of workshops, the group wrote a haiku, "Culture enriches a trusting community, each soul rebuilding," that was temporarily applied to the facade of a vacant theater. 150 people engaged with the workshops and public-facing intervention, with many more witnessing the activities as they drove by.



Musical Performances

No Exit New Music Ensemble has a regular performance home at SPACES and attracts audiences who have an interest in the music of contemporary composers. In 2014 we presented two events by No Exit, featuring world premiere compositions by Morton Feldman, Kaija Saariaho, Timothy Beyer, and Eric M. C. Gonzalez, among others. We also continued our partnership with Andrew Alden Ensemble, who accompanied Carnival of Souls with their unique mix of classical music and electronics, transforming the film into a live multimedia event.

# Organizational Capacity

In Nov 2013 SPACES sold its building, entered into a 3-year leaseback arrangement, and spent 2014 planning for the next steps. With one-of-a-kind programming, recognition as an innovative leader in the cultural sphere, sound fiscal management, and an engaged audience, we are poised for a new phase of our evolution.



*The organization and exhibition space are meant to be as flexible as possible in order to support a wide range of possibilities within its walls. With this kind of malleability, SPACES is designed to change and grow with whatever comes next.*

*-Josh Usmani, Scene*



## Strategic Planning

In mid-2014, staff and board developed a transition “bridge” plan to guide SPACES as it prepares to relocate. Goals set forth include diversifying our revenue stream by expanding efforts to cultivate individual donors, investing in infrastructure to develop more earned revenue, attracting new board members, plan for potential interruptions in programming, and leverage the excitement of our relocation to broaden our audience.



## New Leadership

SPACES led a nationwide search for a new Executive Director in late 2013. Christina Vassallo, former ED of Flux Factory in Queens, NY, relocated to Cleveland and began as ED of SPACES in February 2014. She has been systematically reviewing all aspects of the organization with an eye toward bolstering board and staff capacity, preparing for an upcoming relocation, launching a capital campaign, and continuing to guide SPACES’ artist-driven mission of supporting the creation of experimental new work for presentation in NE Ohio.



## Board of Directors

Our upcoming relocation has garnered significant interest from community members, resulting in the appointment of 11 new board members and 100% board commitment to SPACES’ annual fund and capital campaign. At 27 members, half of whom are working artists and creative professionals, the SPACES Board of Directors is nearly at capacity; our goal is to grow the board to 30 members. Leadership transfers in 2015 from John Farina, who has served as Board President since 2011, to Thomas Starinsky, who has been leading the Relocation Committee.



## Capacity Building

In preparation to begin a capital campaign for our upcoming relocation, SPACES showcased the importance of our mission-driven work and how moving into a new facility will enable us to better serve our community. We hosted one of our most successful benefits ever—offering work by over 100 artists from our expansive community—and became an early adopter of mobile bidding in the Cleveland visual arts sector. We also started to develop a membership plan that will connect supporters to more engaging benefits.



# Annual Attendance

Approximately 3,050 visitors.

# Number of Artists Served

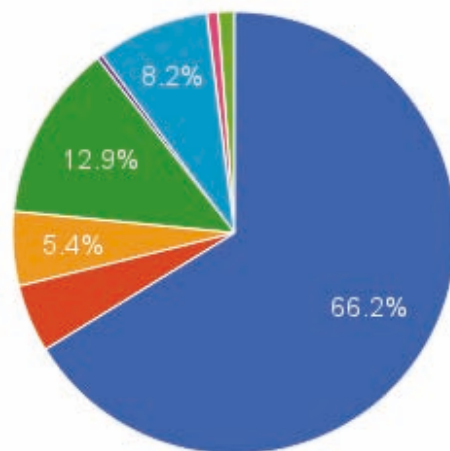
50 artists participated in 12 major projects, 35 artists were included in 25 related events, and 194 artists contributed to fundraising events (like the Annual Benefit and Monster Drawing Rally). 32% of artists hail from NE Ohio, 38% arrived in Cleveland from throughout the US, and 30% from around the world.

# Government & Foundation Support

Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, CEC Artslink, Cleveland Foundation, Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, George Gund Foundation, John P. Murphy Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Ohio Arts Council, and Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

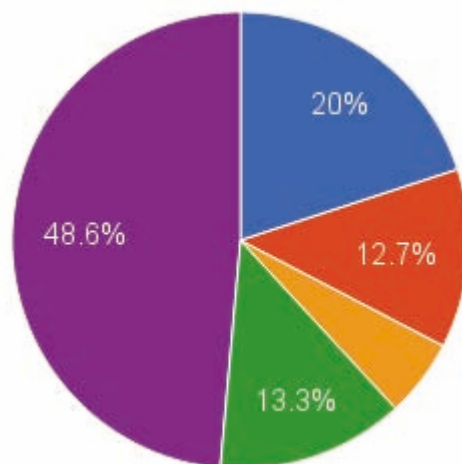
## 2014: SPACES BY THE NUMBERS

### Operating Revenue



- Grants - \$266,464
- Individuals - \$19,907
- Donated Services - \$21,763
- Art Sales & Subscriptions - \$51,862
- Memberships - \$1,435
- Special Events - \$33,054
- Rental Income - \$3,200
- Other Income - \$4,854

### Operating Expenses



- Program Services - \$92,086
- Direct payment to artists (honoraria, commissions, materials) - \$58,466
- Occupancy - \$25,288
- Administrative - \$61,270
- Personnel - \$224,037