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# PLANTS AND ANIMALS

On Monsters, Cyborgs and  
Other Hybrid Creatures

May 25 - June 10 2018  
The Learning Machine  
3145 S Morgan St, Bridgeport, Chicago



# Territory Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that we sit on occupied Native land. This is the ancestral homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, including the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa. It continues to be a hub of trade, travel, gathering and healing for more than a dozen other Native tribes and is still home to over 100,000 tribal members in the state of Illinois.

Thank you to the [American Indian Center - Chicago \(AICC\)](#) for providing us with these words.

## Why acknowledge territory?

Territory acknowledgement is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or any public event. It can be a subtle way to recognize the history of colonialism and a need for change in settler colonial societies.

*However, these acknowledgements can easily be a token gesture rather than a meaningful practice. All settlers, including recent arrivants, have a responsibility to consider what it means to acknowledge the history and legacy of colonialism. What are some of the privileges settlers enjoy today because of colonialism? How can individuals develop relationships with peoples whose territory they are living on in the contemporary [...] geopolitical landscape? What are you, or your organization, doing beyond acknowledging the territory where you live, work, or hold your events? What might you be doing that perpetuates settler colonial futurity rather than considering alternative ways forward for [the territory on which you sit]? Do you have an understanding of the on-going violence and the trauma that is part of the structure of colonialism? - Allison Jones*

We invite you to use this map to locate yourself and identify which Peoples are native of the territory you sit on. <https://native-land.ca/>

*"How does feminist, queer, and magical theory disrupt our ideal of the evolving human? How does the Other, a creature of multiplicity, hybridity, and post-humanism, connect back to the land and to other species? As we evolve in conjunction with plants, animals, and the machine, in what ways will we intersect, hybridize, and reconvene?" -Tif Robinette*

PLANTS & ANIMALS: On Monsters, Cyborgs and Other Hybrid Creatures is a tentacular curatorial project comprising a series of performance, discussion, screening events on hybridity, ecologies and practices of inhabiting, interrogating Nature, and how we survive together.

Hybridity is offered here as artillery against the scourge of centuries old Western binaries. It is an invitation to once again think about the categories of machine/nature/human in more-than-human worlds, together with queer, feminist, and anti-racist politics.

Plants and Animals is about thinking-with other species. It is about rethinking our relationship to "Nature", and our understanding of the matters of care.

While some are growing plastic eating living organisms, others examine the relations between botany and colonialism, our organ-izational imagination, our relationships to harm, healing, monstrosity, and the potential agency of objects. In Donna Haraway's words, we are interested in sym-poiesis, the making-with, alongside with "self-making" practices.

Rebecca Ladida, curator of *Plants And Animals*

# A B O U T     I N / H A B I T

an independent expanded performance art series

In/Habit roving art series is dedicated to holding space for brilliant weirdos, fostering expansive collaborations between queer, feminist, BIPOC, radical thinkers and artists with various degrees of recognition in the (art) world. Over 250 collaborators/artists/curators and many more participants have been part of In/habit through the 13 events that we have created in the last 2 years and a half.

This multimedia roving art series acts as a trickster platform blurring the lines between the economy of practices in both DIY spaces/politics and institutionalized art spaces. Social transformation including the transformation of the way we work together is our horizon as well as our m.o.

The notion of inhabiting points to politics of space, bodies, dwelling, displacement, borders, taking up space, cohabitation and the making of habits. Each event tackles a specific theme and occurs at a different venue, ranging from DIY spaces to art galleries & centres, presenting performance art, installations, sound art, video, visual art, books, films and new media, as well as live music and Djs on occasion.

In/habit was co-created by Rebecca Ladida & Mitsu Salmon in 2015-2016

PERFORMANCE + VISUAL ART + NEW MEDIA +  
VIDEO INSTALLATIONS + SOUND + TALKS +  
COLLABORATIONS + SCREENINGS +  
IMMERSIVE ART + EXPANDED CINEMA +  
LEARNING + HEALING WORKSHOPS

# Multi-video Loops

## 1. The Learning Machines

### Marjorie Lemay

*Auscultation of the Heart*, 2011, 2:22 min.

Pixilation, light painting, 16 mm transfer HD

**Synopsis:** A little house in a mysterious and unpredictable forest is haunted by the ghost of a lost love story. *Auscultation of the Heart* is an heart beating rythme filmic experience about the irrationality of love.

**Artist Statement:** Sharing my fascination for the otherness, the unexpected and the surprising found and discovered in the wilderness or isolated habitats. I am using different cinematographic narrative approaches to work on a renewed view on Nature and the idea of the Wild. Wandering and trying to keep a personal, playful and naive approach to these discoveries, without the limitations surrounding rational scientific knowledge, and outside, also, but reflexing on, the natural science genre of documentation.

Reflexing on the state of things related to environment, human/animals interconnections, co-habitation and co-evolution, I am Interacting and collaborating with communities in regard to these issues in order to emulate interspecies friendship and respect of the Living. Exploring techniques that has a certain "obsolete" tag on them and using them in a renewed mode (collagraphie, paint on glass animation, polaroid emulsion transfer, super 8mm and 16mm hand processed films, hand drawing animation on paper, etc.)

I am searching for extreme spontaneity –rawness and the “feel of the matter” but in the same time, control, dedication and mannerism concerning work flow details I am creating for myself. I am exploring presentation modes involving multiplication of images and layering, intertwining of medias.

### Kera MacKenzie and Andrew Mausert-Mooney

*In a Perfect Fever*, 2015, 8:20 min.

Video

**Synopsis:** *In a Perfect Fever* riffs on a ubiquitous trick in film and television history, where the switching of a practical light — a light source within the frame — serves as a moment of conspiracy between filmmakers, characters, and audience, allowing drastic, even impossible changes to the scene while still functioning as a believable, diegetic moment. Unfurling like a dream, the video expands to consider recent psychological studies investigating empathy that find increased stress levels and shorter life spans for the individuals doing the caring. How do we name the value of this costly connection?

**Artist Statement:** Kera MacKenzie and Andrew Mausert-Mooney are Chicago-based interdisciplinary artists working primarily in film, video, live broadcast, and installation. They maintain individual and collaborative practices and together founded ACRE TV, an artist-made livestreaming tele-vision network (ACRETV.org). Their projects together have explored transmission; seams in the scenery; liveness, simultaneity and typologies of time; and the possibility and politics of making new images.

## **Meghan Moe Beitiks**

*Systems of Pain/Networks of Resilience (Moment 2)*, 2016-17, Video

**Synopsis:** “Systems of Pain/Networks of Resilience” is a creative exploration of observation and entanglement as means of overcoming pain. The piece centers around observation as a method in scientific, ecologic, social, personal, and therapeutic processes, as well as professional Audio Description. Working site-specifically, artist Meghan Moe Beitiks interviewed people from multiple locations who have personal or professional experience with processes of recovery. She edited the interview clips together to create scripts and performance scores for live performances and videos, depicting the actions of an androgynous person. The viewers’ experience of these visuals is both guided and interrupted by these interviews, and the narration of a professional Audio Descriptor. In (Moment 1), Audio Descriptor Katie Murphy creates a script compiled from Beitiks’ research and interviews to accompany her own Audio Description. The resulting video is a compilation of moments from Omaha, Nebraska, Germantown, New York, and Wassaucott, New York. Stigma and prejudice emerge as barriers to healing—acceptance, observation and listening, as common tools to accelerate it.

**Artist statement:** Our engagement with the environment begins in our perception of it. As an artist, Meghan Moe Beitiks researches human perceptions of non-humans, and use those findings as prompts to create multi-dimensional work. The research often includes interviews with people, as well as academic, cultural and visual research.

The work becomes a space within which Moe remixes and reexamine these understandings. She reaches across disciplines, forms and media in order to create the relationships she seeks in the work. It emerges as video, performance, installation, or some combination thereof. Research and impulse guide its ultimate realization.

Throughout the process, Moe reflects on relationships with nature and the non-human, and explores how those they connect to environmental stewardship. She wants her work to incorporate a self-reflexive dialogue with culture —how it is created, what meaning it produces, and how those meanings reflect on her own perceptions—in order to open up a greater dialogue.

Ultimately her work is a series of exchanges of meaning, a reflection on relationships-- with the goal of articulating connections between all entities.

## 2. Into the Ground

**Jan Brugger**

404 / Site not found , 2:10 min.

Video

**Synopsis:** 404 / Site not found is an “exquisite corpse” experiment. By adapting the surrealist parlor game to video editing, this work explores the medium’s relationship to collage/ assemblage, world-building from disparate parts, and the Frankenstein-esque way that a character can be created or interpreted. The “site” in this work is a dystopian environment that plays with ideas of reality and illusion through material surfaces, comedy, color and light.

**Artist Statement:** Brugger’s practice is centered on the ways in which bodies relate to the digital. Her videos and sculptural installations test the screen’s ability to influence the body and mind. By drawing attention to the screen and freezing the viewer, she turns the viewer into a static object in the composition of her installations. Meanwhile, the physical and digital objects on display are elevated to a lifelike status in the mind of the viewer, thus reversing the subjective roles of human and object. In this way, she emphasize how humans bring objects and screens to life, often at the expense of the user.

She uses cut, copy, and paste techniques to explore this division and connection. Her sculptures and digital works are constructed from accumulations of contrasting textures, colors, and references. Like a Dadaist word play or sound poem in which elements are joined together to make arrangements of rhythm and rhyme, she uses various materials and forms in her work as words combined to make “phrases”. Collage is a generative tool in her practice because she is able to explore her materials and subjects through humorously cutting and combining [www.janbrugger.com](http://www.janbrugger.com)




## Sin Kabeza Productions (Lisette T. Olivares + Cheto Castellano)

*SEED: Sow Rites and Transspecies Courtship Ritual*, 2018, 9:01 min,  
Video

**Synopsis:** Sin Kabeza Productions uses transmedia storytelling to propose transformative architectures of society that are inspired by multispecies worldings. Our activism focuses on envisioning and designing networked multispecies communities. Our attempt is to mine methodologies that enable society to move beyond the “blindness” caused by human exceptionalism and uncover what cultural anthropologist Eben Kirksey calls “biocultural hope” in the midst of co-constituted and symbiotic histories. Since 2011 our production focus has sought to enact response-ability to palpable political ecologies in the Anthropocene. Following the death of our beloved companion toy poodle, Luk Kahlo, our activist research has turned towards the relationships elaborated between species, and an interest in developing technologies to be used in multispecies ethnography, where intense affective encounters forged between free roaming dogs and anarchists in Chile, local activists and pariah dogs and India, a German hedgehog, and most recently, wildlife rehabilitation work with squirrels, white tailed deer, and raccoons in NJ, have transformed the way we approach our practice as artists. We work across diverse materialities to translate the affects that arise in our situated research. Recent works we have completed feature hands on work with wildlife in rehabilitation, and the line that has developed as a result of this work, which we call multispecies architecture, refers to both the constructed living spaces that adapt human dwellings for wildlife in rehabilitation, as well as a more expansive movement towards a societal restructuring that provides living arrangements that move away from paradigms of human exceptionalism to a celebration of co-evolution and the possibility of a more empathic mode of co-habitation.

**Artist Statement:** Sin Kabeza Productions uses transmedia storytelling to propose transformative architectures of society that are inspired by multispecies worldings. Their SF\* performances contend with the conflicted affects produced by the Anthropos/Anthropocene and the unfolding Sixth Great Extinction. Using situated research with plants, moss, algae, lichens, fungus, and animals that is animated by theory, music, sound, image, and corporeal movement, they move away from paradigms of human exceptionalism and towards a framework of symbiotic co-evolution in an effort to encourage radical co-habitation.



## Mitsu Salmon and Kioto Aoki

*Exploratory Conversations*, 2018, 3 min

16mm, b/w, silent

**Synopsis:** The second in a series of collaborative dance vignettes with Mitsu Salmon, this film is shot at the Lincoln Park Conservatory in Chicago and explores the ways in which bodies interact in enclosed constellations.

### *Mitsu Salmon*

**Artist Statement:** Mitsu Salmon creates original performance and visual works, which fuse multiple disciplines. She was born in the melting pot of Los Angeles to a Japanese mother and American father. Her creation in differing mediums, the translation of one medium to another, is connected to the translation of differing cultures and languages.

Salmon received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014. In 2005 she graduated from NYU where she majored in Experimental Theater, studying theater and visual arts. She has lived in India, England, Germany, Amsterdam, Japan, and Bali.

She has performed solo work at places such Performance Space 122, Dance Theater Workshop, Highways Performance Space and internationally at Hebbel Am Ufer, the Berlin Performance Art Festival, London Performance Art Festival and Urbanguild in Kyoto, Japan.

She has collaborated with England based theatre group, the Solvents, John Jesurun and extensively with Open Gate Theater. She has been awarded Los Angeles Getty Multicultural Internship Grant, Tisch Scholarship, SAIC MFA Grant and artist residencies at Earthdance in Massachusetts and at Villa Pandan Harum in Bali, Indonesia. [www.mitsusalmon.com](http://www.mitsusalmon.com)

### *Kioto Aoki*

**Artist Statement:** Reverence of complexity and haste have so far removed the photographic medium from its foundations that no longer does a 'photographer' or 'film-maker' have to experience or work with the tangibility of the fundamental elements of image-making. My practice is a call for the return to the fundamental. I search within the mundane, to bring attention to moments overlooked. I look for nuances of the fundamental elements of time, space, form, light and movement. My use of analogue techniques, a reverence for the fundamental and of slowing down, and the searching for quietude is grounded in a yearning for what I feel is a slowly disappearing sensibility and visual intimacy in our current fast paced world. Recent work considers with the space between the still and the moving image as well as a development of a series of dance-movement films.

# Single Video on Monitor

## Charles E. Roberts III

*The Garden, 2015*

**Synopsis:** The Garden is a science fictional exploration of the ultimate binary western myth in which the sexes rupture and reconvene in the petri dish of our planets primordial origins. Sound by Omar Padrón.

**Artist Statement:** Charles E. Roberts III is a multidisciplinary artist working with themes of collective mythology and folklore and those aesthetics of fantasy and horror that they have given birth to in modern visual culture. Physical elements from their video, sculpture and installation works often overlap and mutate as they travel from one media to another.

## Marina Cavadini & StrangeLoop by Eva Maria Lourdes

*Untitled, 2016*

In this video, my collaborator and I engage in sensual gestures of communication with a fern. We try to achieve an alliance across human and non-human and we focus on feelings because it moves us away from an understanding being strictly cognitive. Ferns date back two hundred million years before the flowering plants evolved. They reproduce via spores, which are located underneath their fronds. The audience witnesses our encounter with plants as we approach them wearing lace gloves. The white polka dots create a formal link to the plant's spores.





## Pei-Ling Ho

*Wonderland*, 2018

Video installation

**Synopsis:** *Wonderland* is an experimental, horizontal video installation in which PEI-LING creates a world which challenges the patriarchy. Passing through different natural sceneries one by one, she creates a fantasy world through digitized performance. Engaging with the piece by looking down into the projected boxed world, we observe Pei-Ling duplicating herself, responding to and reclaiming different natural environments. Through digital inhabitation of these sceneries, her performance invites critical reflection on femininity, family structures, multiplicity, and shifting perspectives of natural balance.

**Bio:** PEI-LING HO was born in Taipei, Taiwan with a complex cultural family background. She is an MFA student at the School of Visual Arts. Through performance, video, photography and mixed media, PEI-LING explores questions of gender identity and perception within various contexts, ranging from the conflict between exotic and local culture and the legitimacy of parents under social systems. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions including SATELLITE ART SHOW in Miami, WET, Performance Art Night in UK, WÄRM-FLASCHE EDITION 2017 in Berlin, 29th Festival Les Instants Vidéo in France, and more. She currently lives in Queens, New York. [www.peiling-ho.com](http://www.peiling-ho.com)



## Sin Kabeza Productions (Lissette T. Olivares + Cheto Castellano)

*Kiltr@*, 24:54 min

Video

**Synopsis:** *Kiltr@* is an emotive journey in search of alternate kinship approaches between people and street dogs. Through a series of interviews with artists, cultural institutions, and their companion species, as well as primary footage of dogs who live beyond the borders of domestic life in Santiago de Chile, we explore the co-evolutionary relationships between *kiltr@s* and “humans”, looking for clues about how they help each other to survive.

Etymologically, the term “quilro” comes from Mapundungun (Mapuche indigenous language) and was once used to classify a mixed breed of small furry dogs. In its everyday use *Kiltro* is a term that codifies species and racial hybridity and that translates as mutt, mongrel, or mixed breed. *Kiltro* is also the most common term used to classify the roughly half a million “homeless” or street dogs found across Chile. *Kiltro* is often used as a slur with a derogatory undertone, to devalue dogs without pedigree, or when used to refer to people who are of mixed race or who have indigenous ancestry. In this project we hope to resuscitate *Kiltr@* as a decolonization term, that resists against colonial and modern notions of purity across nature, culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality, and that reminds us of our co-constituted and co-evolutionary subjectivities.

For the past decade, feminists, anarchists, and artists have been primary agents in rescuing *kiltr@s* and resisting against the militarized extermination policies that threaten their survival; here we follow a few of them: Carmen Berenguer, a feminist poet, theorist, and audiovisual artist, helps us to investigate the social and cultural construction of the *kiltr@* in Chilean society as she introduces us to Obama, a street dog she adopted from Plaza Italia. In San Miguel, Marissa Niño, an animal activist and photographer, shares intimate portraits about the lifestyles of animals and people who traverse Santiago’s underground. In the municipality of La Pintana we follow the story of Estrella, a *kiltra* that became the first mascot for Pintacanes, a cultural and arts festival where residents use fiberglass clones of *kiltr@s* to reflect upon and re-imagine their own identities. From La Pintana we turn to Santiago Centro, where María, a semi domestic *kiltra* teaches “painter of light,” Cristián Galaz about freedom and the feminist politics of reproduction.

### Falak Vasa

*Bearded Flamingos: on 'Passing', 'Migration' and 'Camouflage'*  
Performance-Lecture, Video

**Synopsis:** “Bearded Flamingos: on ‘Passing’, ‘Migration’ and ‘Camouflage’” is a long-term on-going visual art and writing project that explores identity through the imagined icon of the bearded flamingo. The project rests at the intersection of (post)colonial and (post)human studies, exploring notions of ‘passing’, ‘migration’ and ‘camouflage’ as strategies of survival. Imagining the bearded flamingo as a augmented self that can play with temporality, watch but not be watched, and fly across/over/under/around borders, the project attempts to reinvent (rather than reverse) hegemonic conditions that center cisgendered heterosexual white men to offer space to the self, my self, the non-binary queer immigrant of color.

*Bearded flamingos exist.  
Bearded flamingos speak.  
Bearded flamingos queer.  
Bearded flamingos migrate.  
Bearded flamingos chew solid white clouds.  
Bearded flamingos swallow suspended white planes.  
Bearded flamingos drink nasty white tears.  
Bearded flamingos puke cishet white men.*

*Bearded flamingos appear when you're on a plane, you fall asleep at night, and then wake up an hour later and it's morning because you've been flying against time, and your body can't believe it so your vision is blurry and you look out the window to force time back into your body, and there they are, bathed in golden light, not of the sun but of themselves, flying like they don't give a fuck about where to go and how to arrive, heels and all, bearded flamingos.*

*Bearded flamingos think they're the shit.  
Bearded flamingos are.*

**Artist Statement:** My practice is a performative decolonizing and queering of power structures that center the perspective of the cisgendered heterosexual western white man. It is interdisciplinary, using video, photography, installation, writing, 3D animation, embroidery, and so on, but is always performative and of/for/by/against the body. Whether it is the anthropocentric construction of a romanticized ‘Nature’ and its binary separation from ‘Culture’, or the exoticizing of ‘international’ bodies and the marginalization of queer and trans people of color, my work disrupts and resists unapologetically. My practice rests between these intersections of (post)human and (post)colonial discourse and strives towards an intensive research-based methodology. Yet, it always comes from an honest place of wanting to thrive when I am only expected to survive. From this place of deep personal and critical investment, I turn to humor as a strategy that both invites and disarms, intrigues and complicates, slowly revealing layers of meaning within and beyond laughter. Lol.

# Installations + Sculptures + New media + Visual Art

## Alicia Rose Obermeyer

*Poodle/Strawberry/Lips Bumper*

Drawing, Chicago, 2018

**Description:** This piece can be seen as sequential drawings or as a short animation. Saturday morning cartoons were a formative media for Alicia as an artist, and between episodes there would be a “Bumper” that was used to keep viewers tuned in. The poodle, strawberry, and lips move and transform to create a short burst of awkward bodily movement.

**Artist Statement:** Alicia is a cartoonist, printmaker, amateur animator, and co-organizer of Learning Machine, an artist-run space in Chicago. Her work is an expression of unsophisticated urges and movements through anthropomorphic creatures. In the form of fruit, ice cream, or poodles, these creatures stumble out of her subconscious with reckless emotional boundaries and aimless meandering through fantastic landscapes. She draws inspiration from hand-painted food signs, “toxic” femininity, junk stores, Debbie Harry, and high-fructose corn syrup.

## April Lynn

*Dead wood*

Sculpture

**Artist Statement:** April Lynn is an interdisciplinary artist based in Chicago, USA. Their works include illustration, mixed media, sculpture, sound, movement, and performance. They are currently working with found dead woods, and clay sculpture. They also perform as part of Antibody Corporation, a Chicago-based performance organization.



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## Aurorae Parker

*Untitled*

Photograph, Guemes Island, 2016

Aurorae Parker's intention is to re-imagine rhetoric around human and non-human interdependencies alongside examining American id/entities, political privilege, and delineation of personal metaphysical manifestations. Focused on survival and sacredness in a time of surveillance, their work is aimed at learning, rebuilding and unearthing the grimoire of the unheard elements and the psychic-pathic return.



## David Nasca

*Hypothetical Biology Classroom Kit, Set 1A*

*Materials:* Aluminum, Acrylic, Hardware, Leather, Thread, Dry Erase Pens

*Dimensions:* 72" x 24" x 36"

**Description:** This project represents the beginning phase of a new body of work. Modular acrylic panels with hypothetical organ/ic structures attached to them can be clipped together to create fantastical hybrid systems. These acrylic panels can be written on in dry erase markers, combining the spirit of whiteboard brainstorming with the aesthetic vocabulary of scientific illustration. These provisional and erasable marks can begin to bridge the visual and conceptual voids between the organ/ic structures and allow for the creation of innovative biological systems.

**Artist Statement:** David Nasca makes sculptures that draw upon themes of queer futurity, reimagined biology, and personal fantasy. He contrasts materials and methods, playing the organic off the synthetic and the industrial off the crafted. He frequently utilizes leather, a material with a long association with specific—often hyper-masculine—subcultures and objects. However, his methods, which involve subverting these traditions of leather culture and craft, are more akin to the feminine vocabulary of fiber arts. Working in this disjuncture, he strives to create a world populated by human/object hybrids, futurist organisms, and post-op gender unassigneds with bespoke genitalia.





## Izzy True

*Our Friends Flash*

Drawing, 2018

*Dimensions: 12" x 9"*

These are our friends of the forest. We cannot escape their reproachful looks.

## Nicole Lane

*Untitled (Acrylic Box with Assorted Pieces)*

*Hot glue, hair, needles, ear plugs, expandable foam, fish hooks, milkweed, wood, grapefruit, rubber bands, latex, nylon, polyfill, ceramic, latex paint, wire.*

*Dimensions: 15 1/2" x 11 1/2" x 3"*

**Description:** Utilizing assemblage and small-scale sculpture, this piece draws attention to the fragile and the grotesque. Her work aims to reduce the body to a lump, a knot, a never-ending coil which eradicates our past knowledge of the human form.

**Artist Statement:** S. Nicole Lane's artistic practice is deeply rooted and dedicated to exploring her personal narrative of how her body belongs in a space that continuously brawls with her. She primarily works with latex material to create a dialogue with physical and emotional obstacles that her body imposes. Tools used for dilation, protection, and resilience are all necessary to Nicole's practice where she imagines objects that do not subscribe to any binary shape. Utilizing assemblage and sculpture, Nicole's work draws attention to the fragile and the grotesque and creates her ideal queer future.

Nicole's professional work as a journalist relies heavily on women's health, specifically, sexual health, and her late diagnosis of vaginismus and the discovery of pre-cancerous cells in 2015 forced her to reevaluate her space as a young, breathing, sexual human being. As her work corresponds to her personal pleasure with flesh and skin, it traverses beyond aesthetics and into her necessary recovery, both psychological and physical.

S. Nicole Lane resides in the Southside of Chicago where she works as a freelance journalist. Her writing has been published in Playboy, Rewire News, Ravishly, Vice, SELF, and other corners of the internet. Her column, "Intimate Justice" for Sixty Inches From the Center interviews Chicago artists who make sexually charged work.

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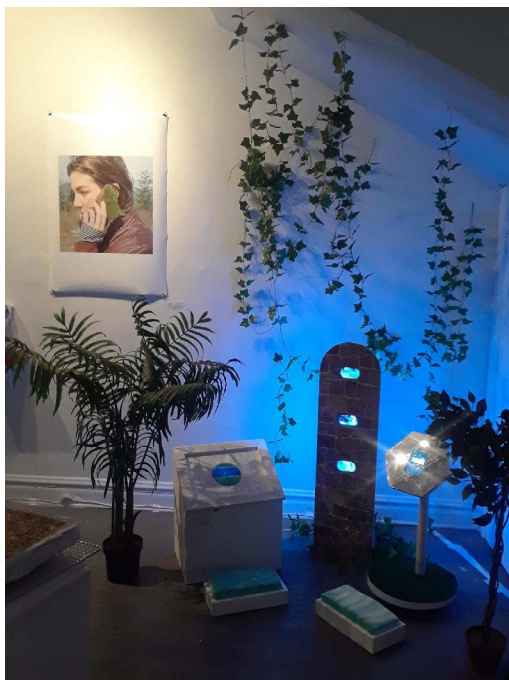
## Selden Paterson

*Integrative Ontological Practices by Beta Plus Systems, 2018*

New media

**Synopsis:** Integrative Ontological Practices by Beta Plus Systems, a recently-launched self-help system, is an organization designed to help modern, cyborg humans re-integrate the organic, human-built, and digital parts of themselves. Its teachings and healing regimens are available in a number of audio-visual forms, on- and offline. The foundation of IOP is the divide in humans' experience of & interaction with worlds they perceive as separate – the “natural,” the constructed, and the digital. IOP B+ aims to provide any cyborg interested in a wholer mind and self with the customized tools they need to dissolve their internal barriers, integrate their being, and de-partition their world.

**Artist Statement:** Selden Paterson is a Chicago-based futurist, contributing to the forward motion of humankind with her involvement in several lifestyle & technology projects. Selden's longtime position as COO at the first and only all-amenities-included extraplanetary community, her work with Beta Plus Inc.'s numerous improvement initiatives, and her stewardship of the foremost self-help system for modern cyborgs have brought her to recognition among innovators locally and worldwide. [www.selden.website](http://www.selden.website)



## Book Art

**Andrea Chu**

*Chrysanthemums in the Night*

5x7 intaglio etching on 7x9 paper, Chicago 2018

*Chrysanthemum: Voices of the Taiwanese Diaspora*, Book, 2018

Chrysanthemum is a collection of visual and written work, primarily by emerging artists and writers, that shares fresh takes on the Taiwanese diasporic experience. The anthology includes fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual art by over 20 different creators on the central theme of "liminality," or in-betweenness. The works collected explore what it means to be in the liminal space between identities, cultures, times, places, and stages.

Size: 5x8 in, 13x20 cm

104 Pages, 2018

ISBN: 9781389014314

**Artist Statement:** Chrysanthemums may not come to mind when one thinks about hybrids, but plants hold a profoundly liminal space in myriad aspects. Flowers are inherently and visually temporal, often showing the dynamism of growth and rest in blooming and hibernating. Flowers also show us the cyclical nature of life and death. Flowers, like many plants, have been cohabiting with humans for centuries, changing and being changed in a strange and eerie symbiosis. In Taiwan, internationally renowned chrysanthemums are grown out in the countryside, flooded with tropical sun in the day and fluorescent light in the night. These blooms are exposed to light all hours of the day using various contraptions in order to grow lengthy stems, for better use in arrangements. Like maize, chrysanthemums are manipulated by human hands but these human hands are also at the mercy of a crop for international trade. In all these ways, flowers are always changing to human needs, yet are still deeply connected to the land and the seasons as plants, which have consistent needs of water, light, and air.

Chrysanthemums in particular, are an interesting cultural hybrid. These flowers originate from east Asia, and many varieties have great large blooms and lush, colorful petals which considered exotic--oriental, even. Beautiful and ornate, chrysanthemums have great meaning in many Asian countries. But they are also humble and quotidian here in the states, our little autumnal mums. One flower, one species, can be orientalized while simultaneously very mundane, much like the people who have been brought to the states from the same places where chrysanthemums were birthed. Both prized and scorned, out-of-place or part of the background, as Others tend to be seen.

Chrysanthemums to have all kinds of hybrid meanings. As a Taiwanese American, Chu explores them as a symbol that bridges east and west, something natural yet altered by constructed circumstances, something not unlike children of diaspora. But it is so in a way that is not immediately obvious, nor always very comfortable. Yet there is beauty still, in the struggle, like chrysanthemums in the night.

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## Maggie Umber

Book and stamped paper

Maggie Umber's intimate drawings evoke a sense that life on earth, no matter how microscopic, can be immensely beautiful and complex.

— Jason Murphy

Umber captures the spirit of nature — its glory and grace — in her beautifully crafted, mixed media comics. — Alyssa Berg, ALPENGLOW

Maggie Umber's 270 is beautiful to experience and the narrative engrossing. I was pulled in to the reality of the Owls. A fascinating read, gorgeously depicted. — Mike Dawson, WHY DID THEY COME?

When 270°, Maggie Umber's second beautifully illustrated book on owls reached me I could not put it down until I had absorbed all its delightful owl and other artwork from cover to cover. This book will turn heads and make the viewers turn pages. The playful layout and creative and diverse artwork seduces the reader into absorbing the subtle but factual information woven throughout these pages. The words sometimes blend into the images, like grass, twigs and branches of the owls' habitats. Maggie has created a book of owls that reminds even the most objective owl scientists like me that there are other aesthetically pleasing ways to know owls. — Dr. James Duncan, Balmoral, Manitoba, Canada

**Artist Statement:** Maggie Umber is a cartoonist, painter and printmaker. She has published three graphic novels: Time Capsule (2015), Sound of Snow Falling (2017), and 270° (2018). Her work has appeared in two anthologies Warmer: A collection of comics about climate change for the fearful & hopeful edited by Andrew White and Madeleine Witt (2017) and The Shirley Jackson Project edited by Rob Kirby and published by Ninth Art Press (2016). Maggie is one of the publishers at 2dcloud. [www.maggieumber.com](http://www.maggieumber.com)

## Manal Kara

*Coyote Poop*

Coyote turds, wood, acrylic, resin, vinyl, metal hardware,

*Dimensions:* 24"x18"x3"

Taking inspiration from childhood classics such as Everyone Poops as well as specimen rooms found in national parks, this three-page book displays three coyote turds, its thick gauge clear vinyl pages and metal hardware calling to mind BDSM gear. Is it ecological archive or zoophilic scaterotica? Who's to say?

Manal Kara is a self-taught Moroccan-American artist living and working in Gary, IN and Chicago, IL. They have exhibited work nationally and internationally.  
[www.manalkara.com](http://www.manalkara.com)

## Suzanne Reid

### *Field Notes*

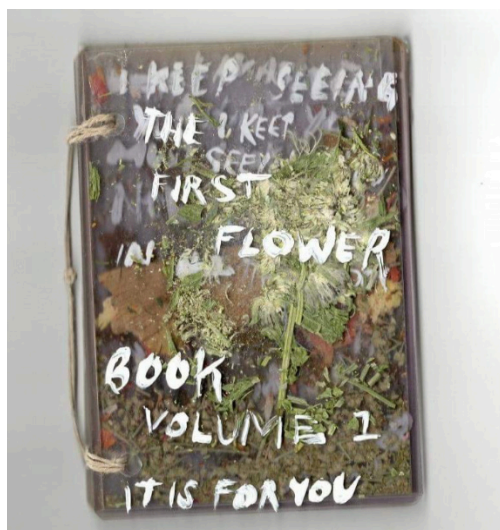
#### *Flower Book Vol. I & II.*

Plastic Collector Sleeves, Dried Flora, Twine. 2018.

We Have Learned That the Horticulturist is a Liar and The Botanist is a Thief. What is it to be an invasive species? No longer in our gardens; as far as the gardener is concerned. And then there is the woman in the Nursery; cordate-based and deeply-toothed. A short-lived taxa; a rich folklore never cultivated. The botanist who includes both genera in the species; protocarnivorous. Always buried, always blooming. Water it deeply but infrequently. Give it full sun. Everything wants to grow. Allow it to grow.

#### Contributors:

Sea Holly, Eryngium, Eryngium Emaritimum, Seaside Eryngo/Ranunculaceae/Narcissiflora, Anemone nemorosa/Windflower/Thimbleweed/Persian Buttercup/Crowfoot, Ranunculus asiaticus/Geraniaceae (Pelargonium x hortorum), Crane's-bill/Hydangea, Hortensia/Viburnum grandiflora/Viburnum x bodnantense/V. lantana x V. rhytidophyllum



# Living Organism-based ART + SCIENCE Laboratory Installations

## CV Peterson

*Mykitas Epoch - What We Do Pt. I*

Mushrooms

**Artist Statement:** We are willfully contributing to a plastic-based world ecosystem. But what if we start looking towards nature to replace the plastic that is so prominent in humanity's ecosystem?

"Mykitas Epoch- What We Do Pt. I" showcases the growth, or production, of a bio-alternative to styrofoam from the company Ecovative. A product that is currently being used by IKEA and DELL to package their wares. A product comprised completely out of fungi. Nature as material — nature as product. Nature that is replacing inorganic but that we must commodify. But hey, it's what we do.

## Mushroom handler

## David Sorich

David opened the Learning Machine 5 years ago. He is an artist, construction worker, and an Iraq war veteran obsessed with archival footage, history and learning. He photographs the most sensual scenes in construction sites and is growing the mycelium for CV Peterson's piece.

## Emily Eckstrand

As an interdisciplinary artist, my practice centers on connection, belonging and the politics of body. Grounded in the belief that art heals, and that creativity is a physical act, my work returns always to the source: the body. I examine historical narratives in both both individual and the collective body, human and non-human body. Within the framework of body, I find stories, and through sharing those stories, I strive to empower individuals and communities to navigate their own healing journeys, to address the pain of inter-generational trauma and encoded violence, as well as, inter-generational healing, to communicate experiences from the inside out.

In addition to working in installation, plant-based sculpture and participatory actions, I am a the folk-healing and healing justice practitioner. I create spaces to help process trauma and invest in healing justice frameworks. I have been trained in: Clinical Herbalism, Shamanic Initiation and am a student of Reiki, as well as, and a PHD candidate in Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture. I am committed to cultivating moments and spaces for healing across space and time. By unearthing my own stories, I am able to strengthen connections where the process creates awareness and understanding; this experience is ultimately part of the healing journey. I believe when we support wholeness and integration on individual, family, community and systems-levels that we affect generations-past and future at individual and collective levels.

## Jess Nicole Gorse & Erin Delaney

### *Fertile Design*

Installation, 2018

**Description:** Fertile Design is a design lab that turns food waste into bioplastics that repair and enrich the soil. Looking into the future of sustainably designed objects, we propose to create a closed circuit system of design that is functional and fertile. We are interested in designing objects that hold space through decay, and in its completion, reactivate, repurpose, and revitalize the space in which they were abandoned. Fertile Design connects us to the past when we had a deeper relationship to the earth and to the future when this might be possible again. This new future is a time informed with the cycles of the natural world and the disposable attitude of modern humanity untied through the designed embrace of a new material, Fertile Design.

[fertiledesign.net](http://fertiledesign.net)

**Jess Gorse - Statement:** Jess Gorse is a designer, material innovator, and futurist world builder. Her practice is built on researching ways in which to unite the natural world with designed objects. Gorse's work encompasses product, material, and speculative design seeking to build compassion for the environmental living system and the marginalized people who are often unheeded in design.

[jessicagorse.com](http://jessicagorse.com)

**Erin Delaney - Statement:** As a politically engaged artist, I utilize performance, music, and social practice as forums to engage the viewer's sense of proximity and generosity. I explore our human proclivity for alliance building and urge for community reclamation by activating spaces for resistance, feminist expression, and radical giving.

My performance work offers viewers insight into radical confusions with in my intellectual and corporeal experience of lives inside civilizations. Music functions in my practice as a transient gathering place, from which performers can stoke points of cultural and political relation. We give out healthy fruit at our shows. My social practice work addresses community service and development in Chicago, asking questions about democracy, urban histories, and public space.

The goal of my work is always to form alliances through art. I wish to always make known how contingent each of our vitalities are on one another's, and in turn to the vitalities of

## Kelly Lesniak

Kelly Lesniak is one of the organizers at The Learning Machine. She is a mixed media artist, who moonlights as a fabricator & carpenter. She uses trash to explore the mythology of our techno era. She has prepared the Learning Machine's edible and herb garden for the show.



## Lindsey French

*it takes time to process unintended harm*

poison ivy leaves gathered from Chicagoland parks, locally processed lard  
2018

**Description:** The leaves of poison ivy plants are pressed onto a substrate of lard to draw out urushiol in the manner of the scent-extraction, enfleurage.

Urushiol is not produced as a defense mechanism against humans, but rather as a way to retain water and to protect against fungal infections. For some people, contact with poison ivy can cause a reaction known as cell-mediated immune response. The urushiol binds to the membrane of your skin cells and interferes with their ability to communicate with other cells. Exposing oneself to poison ivy will actually make the reaction worse over time. It has a cumulative effect, causing increasingly severe reactions with each level of exposure.

**Artist Statement:** My work situates me sensually in different roles among plants, landscapes, and other materials as media, message, and facilitator of communication. I focus on feeling because it moves us away from communication being strictly cognitive. A recent body of work deals with *Toxicodendron radicans*, or poison ivy, and its toxic urushiol. In some alteration of the one who feels I treat my skin as a media for chemical communication. This strategy becomes a shared practice in the form of urushiol tattoos. For it takes time to process unintended harm, I borrow a scent extraction method called enfleurage to draw urushiol from poison ivy plants onto a substrate of lard.

Embracing a number of mediation strategies, I practice and propose alternatives to human-centered ecosystems. Draw from Anna L. Tsing's ideas of "contamination as collaboration," I consider how we (a multi-species "we") can support one another in taking necessary risks for social transformation. My role as a human in a global ecosystem is contingent, uncertain. From this profound vulnerability, I practice new myths of identity, assert quiet opposition, and hover in the slippages between self and environment.



## Rebecca Ladida, with scent by Eleonora Edreva

### *Failings and Habitats*

Installation, 2018

Van, astroturf, scent, sound

**Description:** *Failings and Habitats* gathers audio recording of folks attempting to pronounce the names of the land on which they sit in the language of the Native peoples of these territories. This installation is set in a van, which is lined with astroturf and parked in front of the gallery during public events. May 25th, June 2nd and during our main performance event June 8 as well as June 9, see Dfbrl8r's Bubbly Creek Performance Art Assembly & In/habit | Cross-Contamination.

The scent component is a blend of essential oils from native trees of the Illinois forest (river birch, white oak, sweetgum, bald cypress, wild geranium, st johns wort, & prairie grass) made by Eleonora Edreva which is diffused in the van where visitors can also hear the audio recordings through speakers. This installation addresses our failings at speaking even basic words in Native languages and translating their knowledges: their language, but also their modes of inhabiting, their relationship to the land (botany, dendrology), and their social practices.

The irony and playfulness of a lined astroturf habitat not only invites one to revel in kitsch pleasures but points to our desire to appropriate and reproduce nature in a way that doesn't demand us to engage and is not that playful.

The contrast between the contemplative nook where one finds themselves immersed in a joyful scent (powerful antidepressant scents that also eliminates congestion for example) and the unease (and possible shame/kick in the ass) experienced in our collective failure exposed through the audio component requires that we sit with the trouble, perhaps unsettled. Like unsettled settlers. But it is more of a learning machine than a shaming machine. Many trees native to Illinois are endangered or threatened species. The collaboration toward making this scent is also meant to be a learning process about the state of the local forest. We shall share our learnings.

The futuristic looking van symbolizes the desire for conquest of space that is perceived as "available", like the Jetsons' "harmless" intergalactic colonization, pitching their glass vessel into space as if no aliens were there to say hello to and see how they live or if they even want "visitors" (they most probably don't want colonizers but who knows, maybe they imagine this as a nomadic encounter). The vehicle also embodies the American road trip dream where one riffs through the mileage but doesn't quite necessarily have to encounter anyone.

**Artist Statements:** Rebecca Ladida, see "About the curator" p. 32;

Eleonora Edreva is a scent and video artist born in Burgas, Bulgaria and raised in Chicago. Her work seeks to nudge people—to think about the sticky environmental problems that are easier to ignore, to engage thoughtfully, lovingly, and sensually with the micro and macro environments around them, and to spend more time navigating the world using their noses. She strongly believes that our sense of smell will have a part in holding off total environmental catastrophe and spends most of her time thinking through and experimenting towards what it could be.

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## Marina Cavadini

*Overlaps, Correspondences, Contradictions*  
Nepenthes, chains, acrylic, eggs, 2017

This installation includes synthetic (fluorescent acrylic) and organic (carnivorous plants Nepenthes) matter. It engages with the reality of plants eating animals, something so incompatible with the rigid pyramidal organization of nature.

One of the basic scientific definitions that separates plants from animals, states that the former are autotrophs. They can produce their own food because they do photosynthesis. Animals are, instead, heterotrophs. They are unable to make their own organic molecules and so must eat plants and/or other animals.

The work includes gestures such as feeding plants with proteins (eggs). This operation refers to Darwin's experiments described in his *Insectivorous plants* (1875), the first written document proving that some plants share animal's behaviors.

**Artist Statement:** I want to lick you. I want to peel you. My work stimulates a sensory experience. Intense details generate visual pleasure. Delicacy. Holes. Small offerings and the possibility of noticing or not noticing. You might or might not see. I respond to sites (floors, bodies). I have an urgency to animate the nocturnal side of things (behind the ears, the back of a fern's leaf). These liminal places are proliferating, sprinkled with shiny spores. Wearable sugar balls. Fantasy accessories which draw the attention to the boundary between the inside and outside, between back and front. Above and underneath. The operations (hiding, revealing, and choreographing) to which I subject things invite awareness, suspicion and sharpness of the senses. Biology informs my practice and creeps into the sphere of the sculptural as an unpredicted logic. My work incorporates processes of decadence, of reproduction, of mimicry, and of symbiosis.

## Whit Forrester

*The Electric Universe Theory*  
Installation, 2017

Through light plants are metaphorically conjoined in a kind of communion. Light itself seems to be charged with the capacity of weaving together space and time, relegating its arbiters - plants - as potential doorways to the place where it's metaphysics merge with the scientific discourse surrounding its location within scientific materialism.

The golden halo germane to representations of the Divine worldwide serves as a representational access point to the experience of interconnection through the haptic experience of electromagnetism. In this case the notion of ecosystem, community and circuit is run through the piece and completed through participation. Ultimately, the limitations of avrepresentstional strategy become a functional component of the piece, asking participants to continue seeking ways to electrically interconnect and create larger structures in the world through community.

## Whit Forrester, continued

**Artist Statement:** As principal actors in nature, plants-as-anchors-and-access-points energize the spaces of my research, photography, video, social projects, installations, and publications providing a focal point on the human connection to the idea of nature as a metaphorical realm. Here, photographic processes portray a locus where historical and contemporary aesthetic dimensions intersect. In my work I am trying to understand better these sites where histories of colonization and capitalism exist in tandem to our assumed relationships to the natural world, and to what is known as the Divine or spiritual.

In pursuing this relationship I am paying attention to practices of accumulation, manifestations of power, discourses around the transcendent and the material relationship between self, agential capacity for queer subjects and queering as a spiritual practice which is ultimately connected to ideas of decolonization.

Subsequently, the resulting works are intended to reveal the traces of power structures and guide our responses as both viewers and participants in the larger world. In exploring these aesthetic realms' or metaphysical environment's relationship to power, the natural world as the subject takes on multiple roles. It serves as a historical recipient, an active participant (equal in importance to our human physicality and spirituality), and ultimately that of a collaborative transformer for the social relationships that compose larger systems of economic and societal power. This is important because these forces mediate the flow of resources, materials, and labor which then fold back and re-mediate our relationships to and perceptions of the natural world. <http://www.whitforrester.com>

## Conceptual Bookshelf + Fake Nature Reading Room

For the duration of the exhibition, some collaborators have contributed books that have influenced their practices deeply. These books relate to care/hybridity/interspecies ethics/monsters/plants and animals and cyborgs, etc. Visitors are invited to consult this book/come read on gallery hours!

### May 25th Art Opening Music + DJs

#### Brother Tone

Brother Tone is a Hip Hop producer, DJ, and Emcee residing in Chicago, IL. He also is a founding member of the music collective Sunsurfers. You can find his tracks @ [soundcloud.com/brother-tone](https://soundcloud.com/brother-tone)

#### Florasim

Producer/DJ/Vocalist

Sonically exploding simulated flora, perhaps in reverse. You can find their tracks @ [soundcloud.com/florasim](https://soundcloud.com/florasim).

#### Christine Shallenberg

Songs that create a surprising and familiar environment for Plants and Animals, and Hybrids +++

# Cross-Contamination

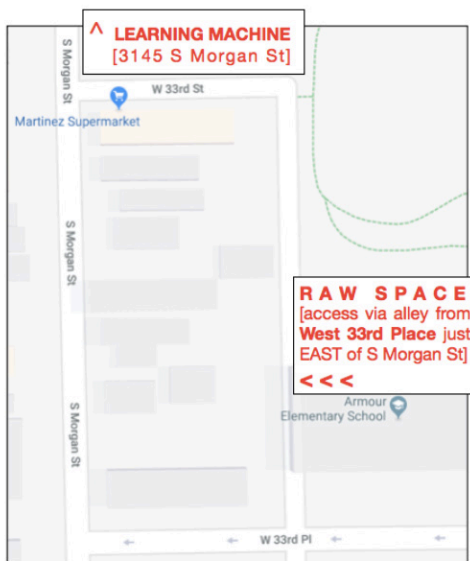
June 8 | 6pm  
with Dfbrl8r Gallery's Bubbly Creek Performance Art Assembly

**Bubbly Creek Performance Art Assembly** is proudly cross-contaminating with the In/habit roving art series project **PLANTS & ANIMALS: On Monsters, Cyborgs and Other Hybrid Creatures**. The cheerful sounding "Bubbly Creek" is the south branch of the south fork of the Chicago river and forms the western border of Bridgeport. It derives this nickname from gases bubbling out of the riverbed from decomposing animal waste dumped into the river a century ago by the Union Stockyards. It still bubbles to this day. Brought to notoriety by Upton Sinclair in his exposé on the American meat packing industry entitled *The Jungle*, the contaminated river is a revolting reminder of the harshness of industrial capitalism, exploitation of [often immigrant] labor, and disproportionate concentrations of wealth in America. From the Haymarket Affair in 1886 fighting for workers' rights, to the Pullman railroad strike in 1894 over corporate greed and poverty, labor issues were at the forefront of late 20th century social concerns and are [obviously] still relevant today. Bubbly Creek Performance Art Assembly celebrates the Bridgeport neighborhood and is an homage to Chicago's rich labor history and how it relates to and influences the local art community.

Performances oscillate between  
**LEARNING MACHINE** [3145 S Morgan Street]  
and  
**RAW SPACE** [alley just east of Morgan at W 33rd Place]

**The Learning Machine** is a DIY space in the Bridgeport neighborhood that presents visual art, screenings, discussions, performances, and social practice. The storefront and back garden provide an underground platform for Chicago artists to celebrate, contemplate, and question artistic discourse and innovative modes of display and production.

**Raw Space** is an alternative exhibition venue in a large garage owned by Zhou B Art Center near the mouth of the alley just east of South Morgan Street at West 33rd Place next to Armour Elementary School. There are no restrooms or running water at this location. Please be respectful of our neighbors.



## Other Bubbly Creek Assembly events:

DAY 02 | DE\_composition | SAT 09 JUNE | 6PM

guerrilla street performances in bridgeport

follow us @DFBRL8R for exact times and locations

featuring performance art by: Michelle Murphy | Rebecca Ladida | Maria Luisa

DAY 03 | re.GENERATION | SUN 10 JUNE | 6PM

ZHOU B ART CENTER | 1029 W 35TH ST

featuring performance art by: Rebirth Garments | Hee Ran Lee | Maryam Taghavi | Forced into Femininity | Eunjin Choi

**DFBRL8R** [also known as Defibrillator Gallery] was formed in 2010 as a platform for Performance Art. Contextualizing performance within the realm of visual art, DFBRL8R embraces artists who look to the body in concert and conversation with time, space, object, nature, architecture, or society. Bold and courageous programming aims to provoke thought and stimulate discourse surrounding under-represented voices and time-based practices. Working with both established and emerging artists, DFBRL8R is dedicated to fostering local makers while invigorating Chicago with artists of exceptional calibre from around the world. DFBRL8R raises awareness, appreciation, and respect for the medium of Performance Art.

**Zhou B Art Center** is a private non-government funded complex that facilitates the exchange of contemporary art between Chicago and the international art community. Founded in 2004 by the Zhou Brothers in Chicago's historic Bridgeport neighborhood, The Zhou B Art Center has a mission to engage in cultural dialogue through contemporary art exhibitions and international programming.

Bubbly Creek Assembly is made possible with support from **Zhou B Art Center**, **The Learning Machine**, **In/habit roving art series**, **DFBRL8R**, **Lagunitas**, **The Reva and David Logan Foundation**.

Defibrillator is made possible with support from *The Reva and David Logan Foundation; Apis Mellifera Fidelity Charitable Grant; Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust; Martha Strutters Farley and Donald C. Farley, Jr. Family Foundation; Zhou B Art Center; DFBRL8R Board of Directors; and generous contributions from our loving community.*





## Benji Morino

### *Performance*

I am a queer artist currently living in Chicago. I use my body, makeup, and fashion as a medium for my art. I've been performing in drag for 3 years, and I've been designing some of my own clothing for 2 years. I express fantasies through portraying a certain idea or character and I make clothes to help create a certain silhouette for these "characters" whether the aesthetic be more masculine or feminine. I find drag or "gender bending" to be very important to my art & queer visibility. My performances and creations have been displayed under the light of night life. Mostly performing at night clubs & music venues.

## Carole McCurdy

### *FIVE STUD STUD*

### *Performance*

**Bio:** Carole McCurdy is a Chicago-based artist and performer whose work addresses grief and anxiety, duty and resistance, and the absurd mysteries of embodiment. She received a 2016 Lab Artist award from the Chicago Dancemakers Forum and was a Fall 2016 Sponsored Artist at High Concept Laboratories. She's performed at spaces including the Chicago Cultural Center, Epiphany Dance, Links Hall, Hamlin Park, High Concept Laboratories, De-fibrillator Gallery, and Movement Research (NY). <http://www.carolemccurdy.com/>

**Artist Statement:** FIVE STUD STUD is a project in development that scares me because it points to my own complicity in violence. The performance relies on and abuses props, putting out a call for audience participation. As a movement artist and unselfconscious practitioner of long- and short-term self-harm, I've recently begun trying to think about manifestations of violence and group behavior in organisms. I'm troubled by daily news and personal interactions that won't let me ignore the violence and oppression upon which my cushy lifestyle and carnivorousness are based. I'm stuck in May 2017, when I needed to intervene between neighbors during an episode of racist and sexist harassment. And I'm haunted by foggy memories: childhood cruelties I suffered and perpetrated; the time I probably actually did as a teenager once toss multiple slaps at my mother's face; a lecture by Lawrence Weschler about Ed Kienholz's piece "Five Car Stud" that can never be digested.

**Project Description:** FIVE STUD STUD is a work in progress, and tonight's exercise (participatory if so desired) plays with the violence embodied in our creaturely and acculturated selves, entangling connections between harm, restraint, tenderness, anxiety, courage, and bluff.

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## Caroline Joy Dahlberg

*Therianthropy*

Performance

**Bio:** Caroline is a performer and sculptor based in Chicago, IL. She received her BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, and recently graduated with her MFA in Sculpture from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work uses theatricality and kinaesthetic engagements as methods of evoking corporeal intimacy and simultaneous comfort/horror in the uncanny.

**Artist Statement:** My objects have lumpy bodies. They are endearing and ham-fisted, soft and fleshy, and empathetically pathetic. Their textures have the quality of something wet and internal. Emphasizing the skin that holds in organs that holds in liquid. They propose that selves are inherently split in two: our social selves (the who of who we are) and our physical selves (the proprioception with which we feel our embodiment). The costuming of self-image holds in our bodily materials like a metaphoric skin, with sagging or bulging areas that call attention to the fact that our physical selves are consistently in flux. Falling apart and back together, with tension that works its way in and out. We catch ourselves in the act of becoming, act of decomposing, feeling several levels of containment shifting. Struggling to catch pieces before they can fall out. With this lack of structure, intimacy becomes a comfort. Dissolving the barriers set up by the social skin, we can imagine ourselves entangled with other bodies and landscapes. Using visceral materials and kinaesthetic engagement, my work is asking for closeness separated by a thin membrane.

**Project Description:** Therianthropy is an act of becoming. Morphing from human to animal and back again. When Deleuze and Guatari's masochist adopts the signifiers of a horse, it is not an imitation of the horse, but rather an applied logic of "what happens to a horse can also happen to me". In subculture, costuming is used to work its way around social scripts to get at a desired interaction. Using qualities of symbols and objects for what they can do (rather than what they are) to manipulate the play of social theater. Costuming allows our characters a different set of rules.

Using the aesthetic of fetish counterculture, Caroline Joy Dahlberg dons a cat costume as a mediator to negotiate closeness with members of the audience. The work takes place in its own environment filled with objects that are familiar, but with an uncanny logic. During the second half of this work she applies a costume of herself over her cat costume and sits facing the wall. Facing her shadow, situated away from the audience in a "non-performance".

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## Erin Evans Delaney

*Weeding Walking Choir*

Performance

In Collaboration With: Clitoralieggh, Najee Chatman, and Kenan Serenbetz

**Artist Statement:** As a politically engaged artist, I utilize performance, music, and social practice as forums to engage the viewer's sense of proximity and generosity. I explore our human proclivity for alliance building and urge for community reclamation by activating spaces for resistance, feminist expression, and radical giving. My performance work offers viewers insight into radical confusions with in my intellectual and corporeal experience of lives inside civilizations. Music functions in my practice as a transient gathering place, from which performers can stoke points of cultural and political relation. We give out healthy fruit at our shows. My social practice work addresses community service and development in Chicago, asking questions about democracy, urban histories, and public space. The goal of my work is always to form alliances through art. I wish to always make known how contingent each of our vitalities are on one another's, and in turn to the vitalities of earth. [erinevansdelaney.com](http://erinevansdelaney.com)

**Project Description:** Erin Delaney is leading a choir celebrating the magical and medicinal qualities of otherwise common plants. Referencing the traditions of ambulatory singing, the group offers guidance through a multi-locational arts event. Look out for opportunities to follow the choir.

## Julia Mellen

*babababe*

Performance

**Bio:** Julia Mellen is an artist and educator working out of Chicago.

**Project Description:** This piece is working off of Lygia Clark's *Baba Antropofagica*, which was made using the ideas of the *Cannibalist Manifesto*, a product of the Brazilian Modernist movement. The manifesto (this is a very generalizing description) basically is a warning to the colonizers and Western culture that, yes, Brazilians are cannibals. It threatens that we will take your respectability politics and your culture and we will eat it, and regurgitate it to make it better than it ever could have been without us. It thwarts the effects of colonization to our benefit. This fit into my personal narrative not only as a Brazilian, but also as a worker who uses the subjects of my oppression as a woman and as an "exotic" to be my source of income and growth.



## Michelle Lacombe

*Untitled (the oyster)*

Performance

**Bio:** Michelle Lacombe (Montreal, QC) has developed a uniquely conceptual body-based practice since obtaining her BFA from Concordia University in 2006. Her performance work, often short in duration, uses simple gestures, mark-making, and strategies of discomfort to explore the evocative quality of the unspectacular, as well as to complicate the reading of her body. Recipient of the 2015 Bourse Plein Sud, her work has been shown in Canada and abroad in the context of performance events, exhibitions, and colloquiums. Her artistic practice is paralleled by a commitment to supporting undisciplined forms of art making. She is currently the director of VIVA! Art Action.

**Project Description:** Pulling from histories of representation surrounding the mermaid, Venus, and nymphs in water, this performance activates the white cis-gendered female body (the artist's) as a landscape for material transformation. A continuation of the artist's interest in the feminist watery body, the work evokes notions of resistance, metamorphosis, and fertility, proposing a new take on common Western feminine archetypes.

## Rebecca Ladida, with scent by Eleonora Edreva

*Failings and Habitats*

See page 23 for project description and page 32 for artist statement.

## Ryan Greenlee

Performance


**Bio:** My work draws from the primordial oozy soup of intuitive play. It engages the modes of communication that are extra-sensory and the senses that communicate beyond understanding. I'm curious about the mechanisms that regulate that which repels and compels. In the elbows of ecosystems I'm taffy-teasing out the public in the private, the body, dreamscapes, digital landscapes, windows, recordings, portals, and wells. I'm concerned with boundaries, access, and the tools we use to create and destroy boundaries. This work is also refracted in the conspiracy of No Nation Art Gallery and Tangential Unspace Lab.

**Project Description:** My performance will be a 1 hour durational where I float submerged, nude, in a water tank of my own making placed at eye level. People will be invited to pour 20ml vials of colored oils into the tank where the shadows will project onto my body like roving bacterial mat clouds. Recently a \_\_\_\_\_ grew inside them. An organism, small and innumerable divided into their \_\_\_\_\_, triggering an \_\_\_\_\_ response that redirected their body's energies toward \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. The resulting fever rose to a level that became \_\_\_\_\_ in itself. A friend witnessed - and intervened. This friend gathered many \_\_\_\_\_ and boiled them into a \_\_\_\_\_. Illuminated, then, was the path to \_\_\_\_\_ in a bubbling \_\_\_\_\_.

## Whit Forrester

*The Electric Universe Theory*

See pages 24-25 for project description and artist statement.



## About the Curator

### **Rebecca Ladida, co-creator of In/Habit with Mitsu Salmon**

I am an independent curator-artist, practice-based researcher, DIY producer and activist whose practice is hinged around the performative, and often marked by excess. Through repetition, intensity and parody I seek to hone the concepts of intersectionality not only as an analytical framework, but as a practice rooted in queer-feminist kinship and collaboration, and deeply influenced by the politics and philosophy of punk. In my work I am exploring themes of violence, denaturalizing strategies and emancipation in the here and now, how we conceive and engage with space/bodies and borders/boundaries, and the representations and identification processes involved in sexuality, gender, and race construction.

The kind of curating that I have developed is akin to a spatialized mashup practice through which we can tackle questions and hypotheses revolving around the ways in which we inhabit the world/space/our bodies/our relations, and always cultivating hybridity. It is a performative, conceptual and material art practice geared toward social transformation, holding space for folks to foster modes of being – modes of recognition and social relations – that aren't granted by the State, its institutions, and capital. Acknowledging performance's capacity to generate different modes of recognition/inhabiting/knowing/feeling, my practice is occupied with minoritarian belonging. I am interested in the survival of the weirdos, queers, femmes and freaks. They are my collaborators, audience, and participants.

# THANK YOU TO

## our community partners

The Learning Machine

DfbrL8r

Lagunitas for June 8

And everyone mentioned below!

## our catering sponsors for the art opening

Niu B Sushi

Chelsea McFadden Vegan Chocolates

## our collaborators

Joseph Ravens & The Bubbly Creek Performance Art Assembly

No Nation Art Gallery & Tangential Unspace Lab

Patchwork Farms for inviting our reading group to use their land

Filmfront for hosting a screening - tba!

Special thanks to all the Plants and Animals' exhibit artists, performers, djs & healers mentioned in this program whose practices have propelled this curatorial project, thank you to Joseph Ravens for the support and cross-contamination process and performance event on June 8! Thank you Kelly Lesniak, David Sorich, Marina Cavadini, Alex and Alex, Cv Peterson, Alicia Obermeyer, Charles Roberts, William Amaya Torres, Ajax Giwa, Selden Paterson, Lindsey French, Caroline Joy Dahlberg, Whit Forrester, Michael S McKiernan, Holly Chernobyl, Aurorae Parker, Betty Devoe, Here, Eduardo Trujillo, Carole McCurdy, Erica Freedman, Rob Sevier, Kerry Couch, Ryan Greenlee, Charissa Laisy, and Avery for your precious help installing, producing or lending us gear and props for the exhibit. Thank you to Eleonora Edreva, Leo, Sarah Nawotka, Nabil, Ike Floor, Matthew Schneider, David Sorich, Erin Riley, Jess Lee, Shelagh Abriel and Emily Eckstrand for their contribution to the van installation Failings and Habitats by Rebecca Ladida. Thanks to Marina Cavadini, Falak Vasa and Pei-Ling Ho for flying in for this!

Thank you to the Learning Machine residents for their hospitality: Alicia, Kelly, David, and Maggie <3

Thank you Sarah Nawotka for building and designing this program with your very wide scope perspective.



**Healing Tentacle, June 2nd, 2pm-6pm**  
The Learning Machine, 3145 S. Morgan St. Chicago, IL

While Plants and Animals wants to hold space for caring-together, this Healing Tentacle is also be an occasion to inhabit the exhibition space in other ways.

**Healing Tentacle Contributors**

Nada Circle Auricular Acupunture by Chiara Galimberti	Izzy True - work from “Our Friends’ Flash”
Blue Island Traditional Medecine	Queer Cuts in the yard
Body work by The Energetic Body	by Nabil & Suz Evans
Reiki by Damascena Healing Arts	Herbal tea by Emily Eckstrand
Yoga for Staying with the Trouble by Marcelyn Cole Yoga	Brujita Holistic Skincare
Tarot by Sarah Luczko	Korean Face Masks+++
Charts reading by Whit Forrester	



