

Related Events:

Space by Proxy: Readings and Writings for *Precariat*

Sunday, February 18
3:00 - 4:30 pm

Space by Proxy grew out of a desire to bridge a visual experience with the written and performed word, all stemming from the inherent need to connect as people, artists, and citizens in the face of reinvigorated adversity. This event features readings and a limited edition chapbook by **Emily Martin**, **Sammi Skolomoski**, **Willy Smart**, and **Daniel Woody**. Co-organized with **Matthew Sage** of Patient Sounds.

Exhibition Reception

Sunday, February 26
2:00 - 5:00 pm

Celebrate the opening of *Precariat* with curator, Ariel Gentalen, and the artists.

About the Curator

Ariel Gentalen is a Chicago-based curator, writer, and educator interested in socially engaged art practices and interrogating art history through feminist and queer lenses. They are currently the Residency Coordinator at Hyde Park Art Center, Conference Manager at Third Coast International Audio Festival and HATCH Curatorial Resident at Chicago Artists Coalition. They received their Bachelor's of Arts in Art History and Women's Studies from California State University, Fullerton and their Masters of Arts in Arts Education from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Precariat is presented concurrently with the touring exhibition ArtAIDSAmerica, presented by the Alphawood Foundation in Chicago.

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5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org. Hyde Park Art Center is a unique resource that advances contemporary visual art in Chicago by connecting artists and communities in unexpected ways. The Art Center is funded in part by the: Alphawood Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Field Foundation of Illinois; Harpo Foundation; Harper Court Arts Council; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Joyce Foundation; Leo S. Guthman Fund; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Polk Bros. Foundation; Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust; and the generosity of people like you.

Drag Ball

Sunday, February 26
5:00 - 7:00 pm

Following the exhibition reception, join us for an evening celebrating queer culture featuring runway performances by **Petty Crocker**, **Abhijeet Rane**, **Shadiamond**, **The Vixen Tony**, music by DJ **Cqqchifruit**, and a community dance party.

Disappearing Queer Spaces: A Dialogue

Tuesday, March 7
6:00 - 7:00 pm

Artist **Oli Rodriguez**, scholar **Adam Greteman**, and another individual discuss how they explore the constant disappearance of Queer Spaces in their work and lives.

Precariat

Curated by Ariel Gentalen

Kanter McCormick Gallery
February 5 - March 12, 2017



Oli Rodriguez, *Eros & Psyché*, 2017, Archival pigment print, 42 x 42 inches.

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“Mommy feels very concerned about you ... mommy will feel at peace if you have someone by your side,” cries Leonard Suryajaya’s mother tearfully into a microphone. Captured in his video work, *Opa*, this is a familiar moment many young adults experience, when a parent is desperately looking for a sign of stability in their children’s lives. However, that comfort and stability is often unattainable for those living within the precariat class. This moment is a manifestation of how parents can often miss seeing their children as the whole, complex individuals they are, beyond the societal markers expected of young adults to meet throughout their lives.

The precariat class is defined by living a life that lacks predictability in job security, economic viability, as well as a sustained psychological warfare against the individual’s existence. In *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Judith Butler examines the idea of precarity as more than just an identity; rather, it functions as a social and economic condition that has the potential to produce alliances among those who do not recognize that they belong to one another. Intersectionality illuminates that the social categorizations of race, gender, and class cannot be separated in an attempt to pinpoint a specificity of oppression. It activates political, cultural, social, and institutional structures; it illustrates these issues as omnipresent yet, often perceived as invisible. Butler sees precarity as an issue that cuts across intersectional identities. *Precariat* embodies the idea of what it means to be a movement—to move together against these dominating forces and see precarity, “as a site of alliance among groups of people who do not otherwise find much in common and between whom there is sometimes even suspicion and antagonism.”¹



Installation view. On the wall: Angela Davis-Fegan, *Lavender Menace Poster Project*, 2013-2017, Letterpress printing, laser cut/etched text, and drawn vectors on various handmade and commercial papers, dimensions variable. On the floor: Betsy Odom, *Dirtbyke*, 2017, Foam, urethane plastic, paint, wood, and nylon, 40 x 48 x 18 inches.

Queers, the majority of whom were people of color, lost their lives. It can feel like perpetual violence: The Upstairs Lounge, Matthew Shepard, Brandon Teena, and countless since, including 27 transwomen in 2016 alone. Our deaths are public and political.

The nine artists featured in *Precariat* sit at the intersections of these experiences that make their lives, by definition, uncertain. Fundamentally, life as an artist presents an almost certainly unpredictable path, built on an economy that has no guarantee of profit or benefits. These artists are further united by the fact that they all identify as Queer²; together they illuminate the LGBTQ spectrum. This brings the idea of psychological warfare into distinct focus, because more often than not, the main narrative of a Queer life is one that is under the constant threat of attack. The stories popularly told are of bullying, on being outcast, and, ultimately, of death. The AIDS epidemic, which ravaged the community, was largely ignored by the government. And we continue to lose members of our community daily. The largest mass shooting in the history of the United States took place at Pulse nightclub last summer when 49 young

Although these artists are grappling with the historical and contemporary experience of marginalization and threat, there is consistent hope and resiliency within each work. These artists utilize coded symbolism and humor to explore the issues that arise out of living within these complex identities. Photographer [Oli Rodriguez](#) does this by placing Queer bodies in history where they have been erased. [Derrick Woods-Morrow](#) continues to immerse the viewer into his lucid dreams of what black manhood could be. [Ruby Thorkelson](#) colors a portrait of a shaken consciousness, inherently questioning her own ability to transform a broken system but welcoming the jolt of reinvigoration to work more diligently than ever. [Anna Showers-Cruser](#) creates a garden of earthly delights in response to feeling overwhelmed with anxiety for the future of healthcare for gender-nonconforming individuals. She amplifies the ridiculousness of conversion therapy as a tactic against our right to exist. [Amina Ross](#) presents the black body, questioning the prejudice unjustly placed on it, demanding a shift in social consciousness that has been too slow to change. [Kiam Marcelo-Junio](#) reflects our image, pointing us inward to consider what “don’t ask, don’t tell” really implies. [Angela Davis-Fegan](#) transforms anger at the desire for Queers to assimilate via the institution of marriage into rallying cry for Queers to unite together and werq. [Betsy Odom](#) continues her reverence for material, utilizing it as a form to provoke desire and investigation into how we inherently consider the feminine and masculine dichotomy. And [Leonard Suryajaya](#) tackles an idea of the future through mortality: knowing death is not the end—we leave our legacies in the form of our community families—to continue living.

This exhibition seeks to visualize the fact that no two people experience their fullness, including dangers and uncertainty, in the same way. Within the Queer community there exist both gender and racial inequalities, which mirror those in the heteronormative world. *Precariat* therefore, is here for femmes, butches, trans* and genderqueers of every race, religion, and representation. This space is an ode to what it means to live as the truest version of oneself in the face of daily, lifelong, and historic adversity.

Throughout the exhibition, you can find quotes collected from conversations with the artists around questions on how their identity feeds their practice and how their work responds to the themes of the show. These selections are small insights into their practices, which span medium and message, but all come back to the idea that art is transformative. Interpretation rests with the viewer, but *Precariat* presents a framework to explore how we might investigate the preconceptions we bring, and how we can actively shift them to find empathy and connection with each other.

Ariel Gentalen
Curator
Residency Coordinator



Leonard Suryajaya, *Mom and Peter*, 2015, Archival inkjet print, 50 x 40 inches.

¹Judith Butler, *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), Pg.27
²Queer as a term within the LGBTQ community was originally pejorative for gay, now being reclaimed by some gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered persons as a self-affirming inclusive and umbrella term for all persons non-binary. I use it here as an umbrella term, in which inclusivity comes first and foremost.