

The exhibition is accompanied by *EPIC SOMETHING*, a limited edition book filled with companion pieces to each of the displayed artworks. The book is available for purchase at the front desk of the Hyde Park Art Center.

Related Events:

All events are free and open to the public.

Exhibition Reception

Sunday, December 2, 3 – 5 pm

PUBLIC READING

Sunday, December 2, 2 - 3 pm

Local writers and artists will read excerpts from the *EPIC SOMETHING* publication.

TOUR WITH THE CURATORS

Sunday, February 10, 2 – 3 pm

About the curators:

Dan Gleason is a Chicago writer whose work can be found at Quimby's Bookstore. His stories have been on display at the Hyde Park Art Center, Northwestern University's Block Museum of Art, Antena Gallery, and Roots & Culture Contemporary Art Center. Gleason has performed readings at the Hideout, Myopic Books, Co-Prosperity Sphere, Salon Tress, and threewalls.

Zach Dodson is an active member of many arts communities, forging connections between the worlds of design and literature. He is the publisher of Featherproof Books, principle of Bleached Whale Design, and co-founder of The Paper Cave bookstore. His hybrid typo/graphic text, *boring boring boring boring boring boring boring*, came out in 2008 under the nom de plume Zach Plague. Dodson's writing has appeared in *Lamination Colony*, *Monsters & Dust*, *ACM*, and *30 Under 30: An Anthology of Innovative Fiction*. His design has appeared in *Proximity Magazine*, *MAKE Magazine*, *shelter*, and *Bagazine*. He orchestrated the 2009 literary roadshow The Dollar Store, is host of Chicago's Show'n Tell Show, and has twice been named to *Newcity's* Top 50 Literary Figures in Chicago. Dodson is an assistant professor at Columbia College Chicago.

Caroline Picard is a Chicago-based artist, writer, and curator. She is the founding editor of the Green Lantern Press and writes regularly for the *badatsports* and *Art21* blogs, as well as *Art ltd.* and *Proximity Magazine*. She recently published short stories, essays, and comics in *The Coming Envelope no. 5* (Book-thug), *Artifice Magazine*, *Anobium*, *MAKE Magazine*, and *Everyday Genius*; she has two contributions in volumes 1 & 3 of *The Graphic Canon* (Seven Stories Press, 2012). Picard's other books include *Psycho Dream Factory* (Holon Press, 2011) and *The Chronicles of Fortune* (Holon Press, 2011). She additionally runs The Paper Cave, an online bookstore dedicated to small press books, and performs regularly with Lady Rollins.

Twelve Galleries Project

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Hyde Park ARTCENTER

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The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by 3Arts, Alphawood Foundation; Boeing; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; Creative New Zealand; Harper Court Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; JP-Morgan Chase Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Orbit Fund; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**
Gallery 2, 5 & Cleve Carney Gallery

November 18, 2012 - February 23, 2013

Twelve Galleries Project presents *Quarterly Site #12:* *EPIC SOMETHING*



Heather Mekkelson, *Ends of Other Ages*, 2012, Telephone books, glue, pigment, plastic pennant banner, dimensions vary

Featuring Curators:

Caroline Picard
Zach Dodson
Dan Gleason

Artists Featured:

Jesse Ball
Irina Botea
EC Brown
Lilli Carré
Ezra Clayton Daniels
Edie Fake
Heather Mekkelson
B. Ingrid Olson
Frank Pollard
Aay Preston-Myint
Deb Sokolow
Bill Talsma
Viktor Van Bramer

Over years and years, the Chicago arts community has come to represent a tremendously experimental culture of exhibiting contemporary art, thanks to so many individual and collective initiatives. The Hyde Park Art Center knows this culture well, as it was founded to support and grow right alongside the experimental gestures of local cultural producers. When in 2008 I learned Britton Bertran and Allison Peters Quinn were developing *Artists Run Chicago*, an Art Center exhibition showcasing the energy and audacity of some of Chicago's most noteworthy artist-run and experimental spaces, I asked myself, how could I live in this city and not contribute to its internationally heeded definition of "alternative space," to its history of apartment, loft and industrial galleries, to its reputation of breaking the unwritten rules of presenting the vanguard? Twelve Galleries Project was and still is my answer to that multi-faceted question.

Twelve Galleries Project began as a roving curatorial program that placed artists into unusual spaces each month for one year. From JANUARY gallery to DECEMBER gallery, the shows were always thrilling and surprising. Especially exciting were the ways artists could transform a site and disrupt the routine of a neighborhood with their ideas every thirty days. But, as fast as it always does, the year ended, and so did the monthly galleries. However, this intense yet quick year of exhibitions came to a close at just the right time as curating solo and putting up a public exhibit with the input of so few people suddenly seemed to me less significant as a site for experimentation. Instead, I thought it important to try and exploit the interpersonal and logistical dynamics that take place behind an exhibition, to see what that arena of curatorial exploration might yield in conjunction with varying installation parameters. I realized that if I could somehow bring particular people together, to rely on their expertise, I could be part of creating some of the most exciting contemporary art programming in the city. Also, like the organizers of *Artists Run Chicago*, I felt a need to bolster and display the smarts of Chicago creatives who, in addition to being incredibly innovative in their artistic practices, are expert collaborators and sophisticated curators.

With these things in mind, I launched the Quarterly Site Series in 2010. Every three months over a three year period, I have invited three visual and conceptual artists-, graphic designers-, writers-, performers-and/or already curators-cum-curators to collectively organize a show. For lack of better way of putting it, I have used the Quarterly Site Series to effectively curate curators, who then curate artists and artworks in spaces ranging from non-traditional places like apartments and alleys to non-profit organizations and commercial spaces to email and the Internet. Each triad of curators implements a curatorial plan unique to their interests and relationships with one another. By extension, this multi-tiered program recognizes and attempts to clarify both the unwieldiness and the merits of independent curatorial projects and spaces, while giving participants the opportunity to expand on what exactly it means to curate. But more than that, the series has allowed a huge number of people to take part in a profusion of exhibitions that been exhilarating and important contributions to the history and discourse of curating and exhibiting contemporary art in Chicago.

Therefore, it is fitting that the final exhibition, *Quarterly Site #12: EPIC SOMETHING*, rounds out Twelve Galleries Project's Quarterly Site Series with an invitation from the Art Center. This last show, put together by curators (and writers) Zach Dodson, Dan Gleason and Caroline Picard, twists and turns like any good story through two floors and multiple rooms as it ponders artists' ability to use narrative amorphously to embody art and literature. And *Quarterly Site #12: EPIC SOMETHING*'s curatorial premise presents an apt metaphor for Twelve Galleries Project: though its story has not yet ended, Twelve Galleries Project will keep growing, changing and manipulating the experimental exhibition and curatorial fields. It will continue on its collaborative adventure, creating one epic something after another.

Jamilee Polson Lacy

Founding Director of Twelve Galleries Project

Curatorial Statement on *Quarterly Site #12: EPIC SOMETHING*

One of the main threads that permeated conversations around *Quarterly Site #12: EPIC SOMETHING* was how narrative emerged from visual work — the more we curators Zach Dodson, Dan Gleason, and Caroline Picard talked about it, the more we became fascinated with that emergence. It seemed almost magical, and the most similar parallel we could think of was the act of reading text on a page. Simply put, text is a smudge of ink on paper, yet at the same time it directs the imagination, creating a point of access to another world of hypotheses and stories.

The selections of paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures included in this exhibition serve a similar purpose; the artwork functions both as a surface for mark-making and a guide to another world. This is perhaps directly apparent in Deb Sokolow's work, where her regular use of second-person pronouns positions the viewer in the narrative structure provided. In *de Kooning's Bell System (Version 3)* the viewer is invited into the narrative history of painting. On the one hand, Sokolow uses art historical and celebrated figures, the abstract painter Willem de Kooning and his wife and Elaine, nested as they are in a modernist canon. On the other, the artist takes liberties with that history, inserting herself upon it with fictional additions that seem almost like interventions of the present onto the past.



Frank Pollard, *Agency clean suit*, 2007-present, Acrylic on wood, 7 x 11 inches

Irina Botea has a similar interest in playing with the order of time, but using the mechanisms of a camera instead of drawing. In her first video *Out of the Bear*, Botea inhabits the once forbidden hunting residence of Romania's former dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, Botea "surfs" the architectural site in an attempt to "release the tensions in the house's history." In so doing, Botea superimposes herself in the present, onto the past. The result is almost cartoony — another thread that seems to permeate this show: the way the aesthetic continually bumps into a graphic sensibility.

An analogous experience occurs in Botea's *Photocopy*, when participants in a political movement try to recreate and reenact their experience immediately afterwards. Once again, an active creation of narrative is presented as it coalesces between performers for the viewer. Can the viewer apprehend the event that preceded the reenactment? What happens to an event when it is translated? Can we grasp the socio-political significance of a house from Botea's intervention?

And then too, with Mekkelson's work —she creates narratives out of objects, objects that seem familiar to us, and often distressed, worn in. Yet Mekkelson is perhaps the quietest magician of all, because all the distress we see in the personality of her objects is fabricated. These phone books are not old. Mekkelson found them new and then painstakingly crafted their worn look of time and history, almost as a way to create empathy in a viewer for an inanimate object. More importantly, the work raises the question— where does narrative emerge from and how can we be so sure of its magic?

One thing is for sure, though: storytellers of any kind require a certain amount of magic and mystery. And each artist represented in *Quarterly Site #12: EPIC SOMETHING* expertly demonstrates a range of tricks without revealing what is behind the curtain.

Zach Dodson, Dan Gleason, and Caroline Picard

Co-curators