Related Programs

Center Days
July 22, 1-4pm
Celebrate the opening of Multiples & Multitudes at our Center Day with art-making activities inspired by the themes of the exhibitions on view and more!

William Estrada Mobile Street Art Cart Workshop
August 12, 10am-3pm, and October 14 during Center Days 1-4pm
William Estrada leads a drop-in print workshop activating his Mobile Street Art Cart on display in the exhibition. The activity expands on print-making as a tool for political activism, education, and highlight local voices and issues across Chicago.

Family Portrait Sessions
August 27 at Hyde Park Flea, 12-5pm
Hyde Park families, both familial and chosen, are invited to have their portrait taken by William Estrada as a part of his ongoing FAMILY PORTRAIT PROJECT. This portrait series’ focus is to provide families with a physical photograph that honors their story.

Building Legacies in Public and in Practice
October 5, 6-8pm
Join exhibiting artist William Estrada and Cesáreo Moreno (Chief Curator of the National Museum of Mexican Art) for a conversation that traces parallels between the practices of Estrada and the late artist and activist Carlos Cortéz (1923-2005). The conversation will highlight the influence of Cortéz onto generations of Mexican-American artists in Chicago and pay particular emphasis on shared values and methodologies present in Estrada’s and Cortéz’s practices. This program is a collaboration between Hyde Park Art Center and the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA) on the occasion of the exhibition William Estrada: Multiples & Multitudes and the centennial commemoration of Carlos Cortéz’s legacy.

Generous support for this exhibition is provided by:

Hyde Park ART CENTER
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; Arts Midwest; Chicago Artists Coalition; Chicago Community Trust; Dick Tracy Foundation; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; 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. Gythman 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.

William Estrada is an artist whose art can be found in parks, community gardens, libraries, YouTube, classrooms, galleries, and community gatherings of all kinds. Through his work in print-making, photography, performance, installation, sculpture, painting, and design (as well as many hybrids), William aims to reimagine public and educational spaces to unite people and amplify local voices. William’s art is often collaborative and always made with an audience in mind. His audience’s participatory role is designed into the structure of his work, which consists of making space physically or metaphorically for others to express themselves politically and artistically. Thus, the title of this exhibition makes reference to William’s capacity to engage multitudes of people through his practice and to his ability to create platforms that are useful tools for others to make and represent themselves.

Several of William’s useful artworks are included in this exhibition through ephemera or installations. Estrada’s RADICAL Printshop (2018-ongoing) is a pop-up print shop that takes residency in communal spaces for community members to use. His Mobile Street Art Cart (2015-ongoing), a classroom on wheels designed to offer art workshops anywhere, is presented here as a sculpture that will be activated during the run of the exhibition. Arte with Maestro William (2020-ongoing), a bilingual YouTube channel that offers free art lessons taught by William for families to follow along, also plays in the gallery. Estrada’s Family Portrait Project (2014-ongoing) is a mobile photography studio operated by the artist that provides free printed portraits for families in Chicago neighborhoods. One-hundred-and-forty of the resulting photographs (from a total of over 15,000 so far) are included in the exhibition, a record of the longevity of this generous offering. These projects have been designed as invitations for others to create, as venues for the artist’s performative community interventions, and as visual artworks in their own right.

The projects described above are present as video works, prints, installations, and sculptures that will be activated by the artist during impromptu and planned performative events throughout the run of the exhibition. This body of work, exhibited together for the first time, allows viewers to perceive the importance of presence and action in the artist’s practice. In these projects as well as in others in the exhibition, the artist takes on the role of teacher, facilitator, photographer, and city-planner, putting into practice a radical imagination – the capacity to envision and create different futures that challenge the status quo and move us towards a more just and sustainable world.

Drawing inspiration from the Chicano Art Movement in the United States and Taller de Gráfica Popular in Mexico City –two movements that were committed to making art accessible and used art as a tool to circulate relevant sociopolitical messages—William’s work is radically accessible to communities. Like artists from these movements, William’s career as an artist started with mural painting. His mural practice, which started in Pilsen in 1998, is still ongoing and his work continues to live in public spaces. William’s work is reproduced inexpensively or can be found online, and is made by, with, and for community members. Collective making is a core value of his practice. William’s prints leave space for participants to intervene in their own voice, as in “Mad Libs,” allowing for the work to be completed and owned by participants. William’s collaborators include people he encounters briefly like exhibition visitors or chance encounters in the park or students, fellow teachers, interdisciplinary artists and more. Several of William’s collaborators are acknowledged in the artwork labels.

In 2021, William was awarded a year-long residency as part of the Jackman Goldwasser Residency program at Hyde Park Art Center, which provided him a free studio space and research and professional development support. During his residency, William worked with Jasmin Cardenas on the Puppets + Resistencia project included in the exhibition and his RADICAL Printshop took residency in his Art Center studio, inviting others to take advantage of the space and resources. There was a stack of prints outside his studio door throughout the residency for anyone to take them home. Some of the prints that William generously gifted to our visitors are included in the exhibition. In the style of protest signs, they deliver short, empathetic messages about community love and care. Inspired by Mexican hand-painted signs, the palette of the prints is bright, like the hopeful messages they convey.

It’s clear that William is not an artist who works alone. In the process of developing this exhibition, he struggled with the idea of calling this a solo exhibition. Despite his collaborative spirit, a solo exhibition of his work has been long overdue. The time is ripe to examine William’s accomplished decades-long practice and it is a distinct honor for him to receive the first solo exhibition to take place at Hyde Park Art Center given his deep history with the organization. William taught in the Art Center’s summer camp for the Art Center for 13 consecutive years, between 2005 and 2018. His work has been exhibited here as part of group exhibitions and he has participated in countless public programs. William’s work has brought joy and has empowered countless visitors and class takers at the Art Center over the years. We are thrilled to celebrate, bring attention to, and foster critical dialog around William’s significant body of work through this exhibition.

Mariela Acuña, Curator of Multiples & Multitudes and Exhibitions and Residency Manager

About the artist:

William Estrada is an arts educator and multidisciplinary artist. His art and teaching are a collaborative discourse that critically re-examines public and private spaces with people to engage in radical imagination. He has presented in various panels regarding community programming, arts integration, and social justice curricula. He is currently a faculty member at the UIC School of Art and Art History and a teaching artist at Telpochcalli Elementary School. He has taught art at the Art Center since 2005. William is currently a faculty member at the UIC School of Art and Art History and a teaching artist at Telpochcalli Elementary School. He has taught art at the Art Center since 2005. William is engaging in collaborative work with the Mobilize Creative Collaborative, Chicago ACT Collective, and Justseeds Artists’ Cooperative. His current research is focused on developing community-based and culturally-relevant projects that center power structures of race, economy, and cultural access in contested spaces that provide a space to collectively imagine just futures.