



# **THE DISTRIBUTED EXHIBITION**

site specific artworks created for San Jose businesses and residents

To view the works in  
the exhibition, please call  
408.283.8155

A project produced by Sara Thacher for the  
San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art  
March 28 - May 17, 2008



## Observations on the Structure of the Distributed Exhibition

The Distributed Exhibition arose from a desire to mount an exhibition of works requiring a more personal viewing experience, one that requires a one-to-one interaction. I wanted to confront the participants with the questions:

*What might happen when artwork is created for a particular person, family, or living situation? What if private work-spaces and residences became formal places of display? What if the occupants became curators? What if the viewers became guests?*

Eleven separate sites are participating in the exhibition: four residential, six workplaces, and space with a foot in both camps. The people hosting the work and providing the sites to which the artists were asked respond also serve as the curators of their space. They selected the artist with whom they were most interested in working. After the initial introduction, the nature of this relationship has been primarily up to the individual artists and host-curators to define. Some have stuck with a more traditional curatorial structure while others have formed something more akin to a collaboration.

This experience began as something similar to a blind date for the artists. They each had the challenge of working within and responding to a predetermined set of conditions that they did not

choose for themselves. Each of the artists rose to the challenge, but they all responded quite differently. For many artists, this exhibition has been an opportunity to try a new approach to their practice of art making, because the inherent qualities of their site demanded a different set of responses than the spaces in which they have previously chosen to work.

For the majority of projects, prospective viewers must make an appointment through the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in order to see them. Because the works in this exhibition do not all dwell under the same roof and many take place in spaces not always publicly accessible, viewers might see the exhibition in a couple of ways. Some people may look through the project archives for each of the eleven sites at the San Jose ICA and decide to schedule a time to see the work. Others might encounter one of the artworks while visiting or doing business with one of the host-curators. This publication is designed to provide more context for each project in terms of the unique situation from which they emerged, and also present an opportunity for relationships between the individual works to emerge.

— Sara Thacher  
Initiator and Producer of  
The Distributed Exhibition

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## Curators & Hosts

## Artists

Ted Key and Leslie Rice, (8) Sarah Applebaum  
Notre Dame High School

Justin Marsh (12) Donna Chung

Alexander LaRiviere, (14) Alex Clausen  
Bicycle Accident Investigation  
and Faber's Cyclery

Marcos Pizarro, (18) Anne Devine  
Chair and Associate Professor,  
Mexican American Studies,  
San Jose State University

Anne Sconberg (20) Julia Goodman

Todd Madigan, (22) Laren Leland  
Sacred Heart Community Service

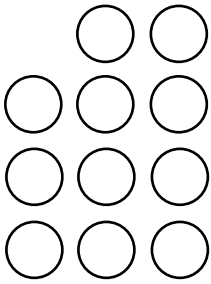
Thomas Heinrich, (28) Eric Morrill  
Data Marketing Inc.

Chuck and Karen Clifford, (32) Piero Passacantando  
Bicycle Express

Amber Lopez, (36) Adrienne Skye Roberts  
DiModa Salon

Kirsten Bontrager (40) Chung Truong

Mike Reandeu (42) Markuz Wernli Saito



**Curators & Hosts:** Ted Key and Leslie Rice,  
Notre Dame High School

**Artist:** Sarah Applebaum

Ted Key and Leslie Rice make up the fine arts faculty at Notre Dame High School, an all girls, Catholic day school right around the corner from the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. In fact, the students are often assigned to visit the gallery and respond to the latest exhibition.

When selecting an artist to work at the school, Ted and Leslie wanted an artist who would not only respond to the architectural or social dynamics of the site, but also include the students in the process and construction of the artwork. In describing their selection process, Leslie wrote:



*Instead of being merely a site specific art piece, I would like the artist to be actively engaged with students. I want the artist to facilitate a small group of student assistants. Whether this means helping design the art piece or helping to prep— I'm open. I feel that including the students needs to be an integral part of the piece, and I consider this non-negotiable.*

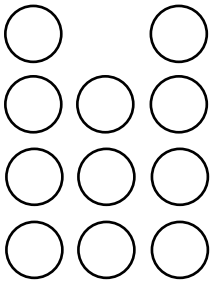


In reviewing portfolios, both teachers were struck by Sarah Applebaum’s work and felt strongly that she would be a good match for their students. Leslie Rice found her “appealing, especially because she is interested in creating a ‘people-specific’ work.” Sarah’s portfolio involved a great deal of knit environments and costumes created through a combination of ‘found’ and altered knitted sweaters or blankets. They also felt that the artist’s material choices would appeal to the large faction of student knitters on campus and offer them an alternative to “the traditional wearable mode.”



## Proposal for A Bonding Experience

I'd like for all the students in your art classes to collaborate and make a group Sweater. Each student will contribute a sweater to the project. This can be any sweater as long as it's big enough for that person, has long sleeves and is knit or crocheted. The sweater can be their own sweater or someone else's. If anyone wants to find something really crazy I encourage them to go to a thrift store or see what their parents or grandparents might have in storage. Each student can embellish their sweater in any way they see fit. It can be silly, meaningful, boring, pretty, scary, etc. This will be their project. The sleeves of the sweaters will ultimately be sewn, knit or crocheted together by the students so that a circle of attached sweaters is created.



**Curator & Host:** Justin Marsh

**Artist:** Donna Chung

Justin Marsh has had a fair amount of curatorial experience, primarily with respect to the exhibition space, *Twelfth and Taylor*, which he has carved out of his private residence. These tend to be one-night events combining aspects of an art opening, a house concert and a party. Justin chose to work with Donna Chung, because he felt that his art community, the regular organizers and attendees of *Twelfth and Taylor* events, would benefit from exposure to her approach to art making.

Going into her first visit with Justin, Donna did not expect the formal considerations of a gallery to be one of her challenges in the context of this exhibition. Before her visit, Justin worked with the curatorial committee responsible for programming the space at *Twelfth and Taylor* to clear the calendar for Donna's work. However, this was not at all what Donna had in mind, and she struggled with a solution that would take in to account the whole situation embodied by the house, including the tension between its residential character and the public events that it hosts. The friction between satisfying Justin's expectations that she think

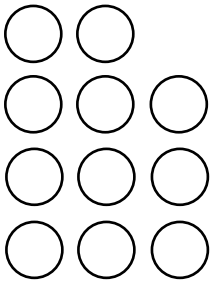
**like a two-headed  
llama trying to  
go in different  
directions**

of the space as a gallery and her own desires to work outside of that construct seemed at first to be insoluble. Donna described feeling "like a two headed llama trying to go in different directions."

The artist decided to orient her work towards the experience of visiting with Justin and seeing the residence's *Twelfth and Taylor* persona through slide shows on Justin's computer. The intimacy of this gesture evoked the dual nature of the house, at once formal exhibition space and casual living space. In order to address these two aspects of the space, Donna concluded that the gallery should be programmed as normal, and she would not consider herself to be a part of that show. Instead, her work will reflect, through her own lens, the combination of people and uses that the residence serves.



*“We picked oranges and ate them; they were really good.”  
— Donna Chung, describing her visit with Justin Marsh*



**Curator & Host:** Alexander LaRiviere,  
Bicycle Accident  
Investigation and  
Faber's Cyclery

**Artist:** Alex Clausen

Upon his first visit to the old, leaning wooden building where Alexander LaRiviere lives and operates Faber's Cyclery and his bicycle accident investigation business, Alex Clausen felt that he should not change a thing. He saw the layers of history, present in both the range of contemporary bicycles housed alongside their counterparts from the 1800's, and in the modern tools and newspapers spread on the wooden bar from the saloon that occupied the building in its first incarnation over 100 years earlier. Over the course of conversations with La Riviere, the artist became convinced of the importance of preserving the structure from the destructive eye of developers and the city of San Jose.

Clausen has done a great deal of work in private residences, primarily reordering and sculpting with the occupant's furniture and possessions. Because of the temporary nature of these installations, the photographs that he takes on site have primarily represented Alex's work. The month and a half time span of this exhibition, poses a new challenge for the artist, but also an opportunity. La Riviere's deep appreciation for the 'personality' and an understanding of the history of the space mark another significant difference between this site and the places that the

artist has worked previously, for which he describes his actions as “an attempt to change the way the resident views a fairly conventional domestic space.”

A primary concern for Clausen, having joined Alexander as an advocate to defend the property, is the question of how to make the exterior of the building more inviting and more representative of the beauty and history that it contains. On his first visit, the artist was especially intrigued by Alexander’s description of the social history of bicycles, explaining that when they first were made available to the public with air tires, they held a magical quality and cyclists described the experience as akin to ‘flying.’ The sheer number of forks, wheels, and fenders also appeal to Clausen’s formal, sculptural sensibilities. In addition to his work highlighting the outside of the building, the artist is interested in using his position to organize opportunities to share this rich environment and the knowledge of its proprietor with a wider audience.

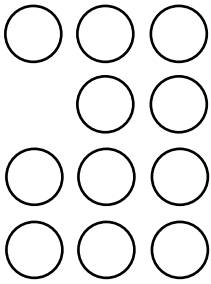




*Benjamin's Corner (Saloon), 1884  
photographer unknown*



*Artist's sketch of a possible intervention*



**Curator & Host:** Marcos Pizarro,  
Chair and Associate Professor,  
Mexican American Studies,  
San Jose State University

**Artist:** Anne Devine

Marcos Pizarro's office and other individual offices of the department of Mexican American Studies (MAS) make their home in a university building primarily devoted to athletic facilities. In the hall connecting the offices, wall mounted display cases devoted to the Olympic-class Judo team intermix with those dedicated to MAS. When Anne Devine visited, she was struck by the current lack of identity and disconnect between the department and the physical space that it occupies. Upon entry to the MAS corridor, two large frosted windows flank the door to the department's conference room. The MAS main office and Marcos's office are just down the hall. Over the course of the eight years that Marcos has inhabited this space, it has become filled not only with academic work but also with the presence of the professor's family.

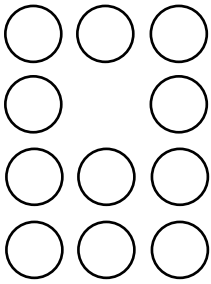


Marcos chose Anne because he felt a certain connection with the activist tones of the work in her portfolio. Based on her first visit and introduction to Marcos, the layering of personal and professional, the subtle interweaving of Marcos's biological and academic families, most interested Anne. She understood that this space has a story to tell about its occupants. Here, in this physical space, public and private are not polar opposites, but rather stops along a spectrum.

***this space has a story to tell about its occupants.***

Anne sees her role as an artist working in this space as one of reframing and making more visible the conditions that she sees already present in the space. The first step in her research began at the most private end of the spectrum; Anne conducted a portrait session with Marcos and his immediate family at their home. Using this as a starting point she will spend time in the office space highlighting moments in which public and private mingle.





**Curator & Host:** Anne Sconberg

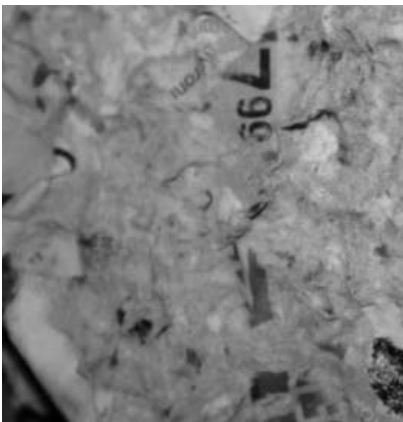
**Artist:** Julia Goodman

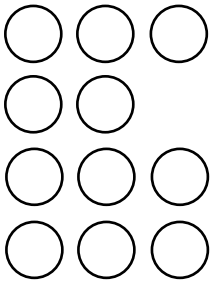
Anne Sconberg lives with her husband, Mark, and their young daughter, Charlotte, in a single-family, two-story house across from a large, grassy park on a quiet block. The aesthetic and tactile quality of Julia Goodman's handmade paper sculptures drew Anne to her work. Julia's recent work has centered on paper reconstituted from junk mail. In this current body of artworks, the process of gathering the raw materials, unwanted mail, is just as important as the final product.



As a curator, Anne enjoyed the idea of turning this wasted substance into an object of meaning and beauty. However, she worried that her recent move might have disrupted the flow of junk mail into her mailbox. Therefore, Anne and Julia plan to collect not only the Sconberg's mail, but also, in a door-to-door junk mail campaign, that of their neighbors.

Julia characterizes junk mail as words and graphics that are “fast, impersonal, and not open to dialog or interpretation;” She has recently concluded that the opposite to this form of advertising might be found in poetry. Julia sees this as a balance between the push of product-oriented consumer culture and the pull of more abstract notions of creativity and play. This new development resonates deeply with Anne's education in English literature and her appreciation for the sculptural possibilities of poetic verse. This sensibility presents itself in Anne's garden, where snippets of poetry are etched into stones that form the garden walls and line the walkways. Both Julia and Anne delighted in the similarity of their individual discoveries of the potential for sculpture in the written word.





**Curator & Host:** Todd Madigan,  
Sacred Heart Community Service

**Artist:** Laren Leland

When Todd Madigan and the rest of the staff members of Sacred Heart Community Service decided to that they wanted to work with Laren Leland, they felt the choice made perfect sense with respect to their organization's mission. They based their decision on Laren's familiarity with San Jose. She grew up in the nearby Almaden Valley and has worked on collecting and mapping memories of this area. This pairing came as quite a surprise to the artist, who had geared her portfolio toward

***she understood  
the emotional  
importance  
of home***

working in a domestic setting. When Todd and Laren first met in person, Laren expressed her puzzlement over their choice; Todd explained that he saw in her work that she "understood the emotional importance of home."

Laren herself has always led a very comfortable life and never experienced deprivation of the sort that Sacred Heart sees daily. However, Laren's mother was born in Italy into an impoverished family; "they didn't have electricity, were often hungry, and literally slept with their livestock to keep warm in the winter." Her mother followed the

path of the American dream, and now both of Laren's parents are, as she says, quite wealthy. Laren understands and is grateful for the privileges that this advantage has provided her. At the same time she has struggled her whole life "to make sense of class, money, wealth, poverty."

### **Narrative and Notes from Sacred Heart Community Service**

I dressed up, thinking it was sort of an interview I was going to. I used the same entrance as the customers of Sacred Heart. I wasn't prepared for it. I was surprised to find myself incredibly uncomfortable. Conflicted. On one hand I think this project could possibly be helpful, on the other I felt like a privileged person who was there to comment on a situation that I know nothing about. Though, I don't think my project will be commentary... it will be more interactive than that. But overall, I felt like I was intruding. It made me overly aware of my own affluence, sparking in me something akin to shame.

I blundered my way around trying to figure out where I was supposed to go. Eventually I was directed to Todd's office. I waited a moment. He arrived and I instantly liked him. He's clearly compassionate, grounded, and very engaged in the mission of Sacred Heart Community Center on many levels.

He said that though their mission is to help the impoverished, they actually spend a lot of time focused on the affluent... because they try to bring the two populations together.

He took me on a tour of the facilities, meanwhile telling me the history, statistics of the population they serve, and stories. It was all quite overwhelming and engaging. I certainly felt my heart-strings tugged at.

They have a donation area, food distribution center, clothing center, and classroom/offices for education, housing, and job placement. Plus, of course, the offices for staff members.

Interesting programs they already have:

- Immersion: a group of volunteers come and work a full-day shift— part of the day in the food section, part of the day in the clothing. Todd encourages them to be in the moment, to really be open to the interactions they have with the customers. Afterwards he leads a 30 minute debrief in which the volunteers speak of their experiences. He said that they always start with the positive, then tentatively mention that not everyone was friendly. He has a dialog at that point about our culture's ideas of success, how people who end up as customers there may feel like failures, and how that feeling could lead to aggression as a way to take power back.

- Walking Tour: a pilgrimage to different sites that are important to the history of the organization. They walk to the house where the founder started operating, to the original church that housed them, etc. During the walk they relate the stories. They point out things you can see in the neighborhood that speak to the problems they are trying to help with. For example, there are handball courts— which is a prison game— because of the high likelihood that people in the neighborhood will go or have been to prison. They talk about the meaning of the graffiti and the neighborhood gangs. They work at locating the issues in a physical place.
- Homeless for a Day: an upcoming program where they will have affluent people actually experience parts of what the homeless go through. They will shop in the clothing section, put on those clothes, and be given a card for food at local shelters. The hope is that people will experience how hard it is— even for just a chosen afternoon— and will see how inadequate the help that is available is.

I'm intrigued by the three above programs. It seems that they are quite open to varied ways of having the different populations they work with interact. My project will be something like this-- more closely resembling a program, than say a painting on the wall.

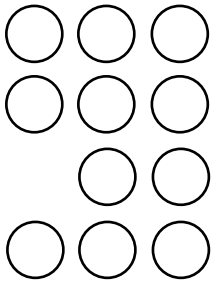
One anecdote ... on the importance of blankets: blankets are always fast to go because people don't have enough of them. With less than one per child, children end up sleeping together— leading to poor sleep, inability

to focus in school, and eventually major education problems down the road. Affluent people have extra blankets in their closets ... and have no idea how much of an impact they can make on the less fortunate.

I talked to Todd briefly about my proposal for the museum. I mentioned that in it I had expressly focused on residencies, on wanting to work within a domestic space. He said that that was actually particularly why he chose me ... because I understand the importance of a secure home.

My next step in the research for this project is to volunteer at the center. I believe my project ideas will surface as I spend time there.



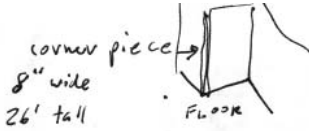


**Curator & Host:** Thomas Heinrich,  
Data Marketing Inc.

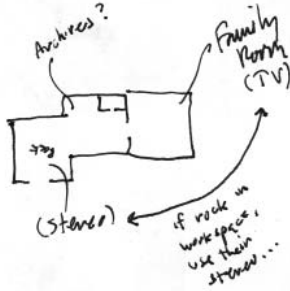
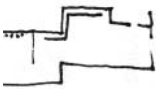
**Artist:** Eric Morrill

Data Marketing Inc. (DMI) administers a broad spectrum of direct mail campaigns primarily for, but not limited to non-profits and government agencies. They take a campaign full circle, handling everything from database management to design, printing, and analysis. This wide range of activities translates into a diverse group of work environments from office cubicles to warehouse space all under the same roof. Presented with this spectrum of possibility, artist Eric Morrell initially had ideas ranging widely, from an historical approach reflecting DMI's founding in 1974 to a more formal response to irregularities in the painted stripes on the columns in the warehouse.

DMI is also a family owned, community-oriented business, a fact visible in the approach on which Eric eventually focused. The Heinrichs use a corner of the warehouse space as personal storage, keeping furniture and various boxes there instead of a separate storage unit or home attic. Eric sees this installation as framing existing conditions in order to create something new, in a way that might recall his work in photography. Carrying this methodology into his work at DMI, his practice of "reconfiguring *things already there*" allows visitors and employees alike to appreciate the hybrid nature of this space in new ways.



hang something  
small in middle  
of wall?



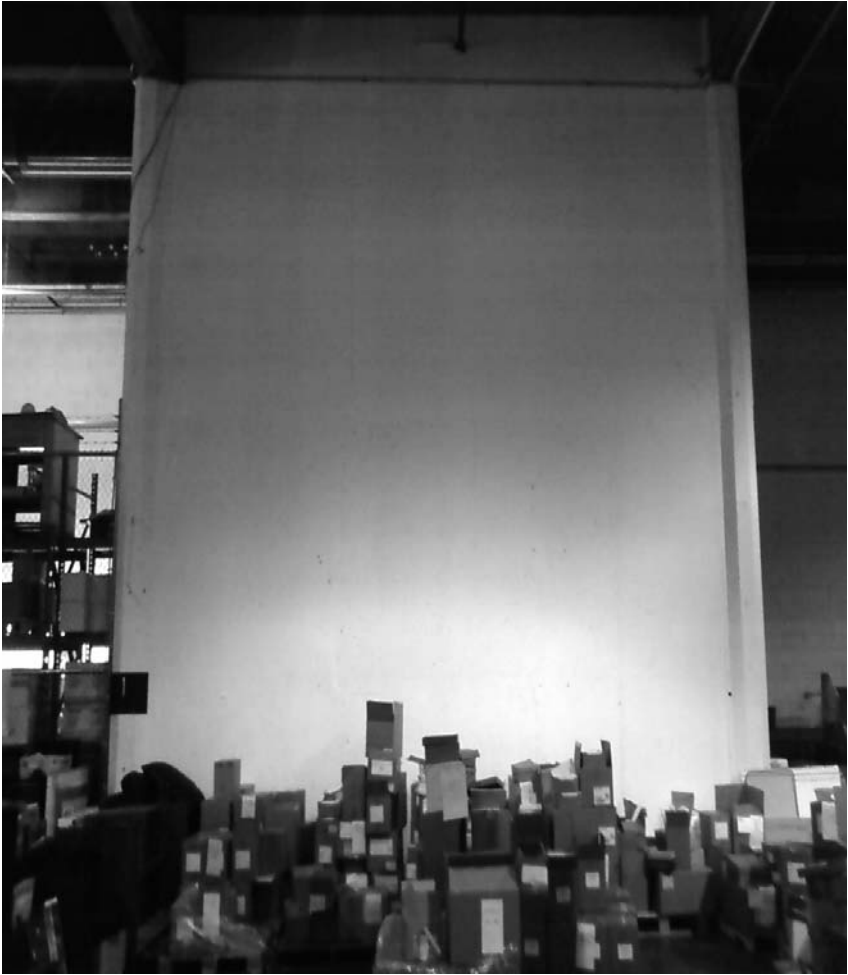
green bands: 12.8" high

< 59" around

Walls:  $\frac{25.5'}{0} \frac{21'}{0}$

plus some for pillars on corners  
maybe need to pick the green white?

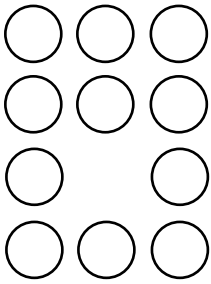
- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| <u>chest</u>  | Big Egg "box |
| Bikes         | Crab         |
| Farm x2       | Coaches      |
| Chairs        | Suitcase     |
| pony/gas/shed | Painters     |
| Hippy mirror  | Eaten/Tools  |
| folders       | Boatbox      |
| Garden        | Keg          |
| Cabinets      | Wagon        |
| TV            | Couch        |
| Tables        | Shelves      |
| Handbell..    | Football     |



*Boxes in the warehouse*



*The folding room*



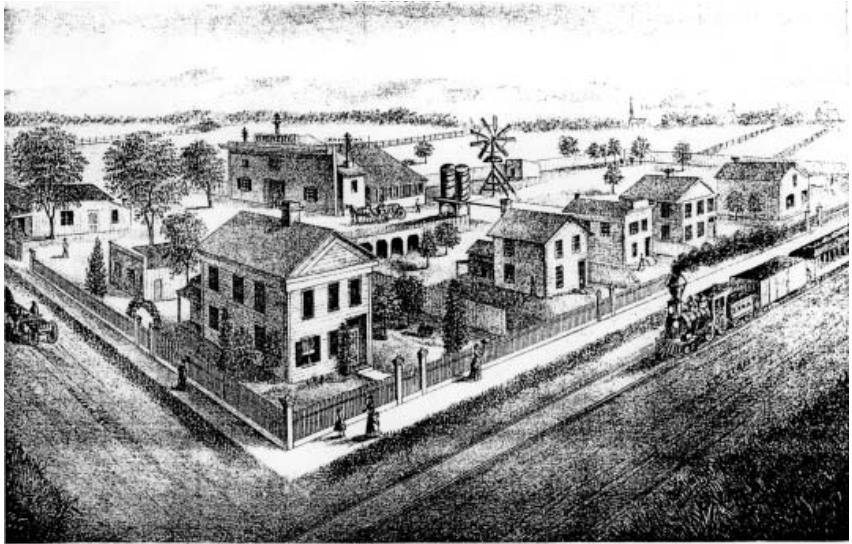
**Curator & Host:** Chuck and Karen Clifford,  
Bicycle Express

**Artist:** Piero Passacantando

Chuck and Karen Clifford have run their bike shop for over twenty years. In addition to providing excellent service, parts and repairs, they also act as a hub of neighborhood activity. The Cliffords were especially drawn to Piero's painting skill and his interest in the historical basis of 'commissioned' artworks. The artist describes his vision of a 'commission' as "a materialization of the process of conversation between the ideas of two or more people." The balancing act between the desires of the commissioner and the visual vocabulary of the artist appeals to Piero.

Piero and the Cliffords agreed that the project would take the form of a mural on the back wall of the parking lot shared with an adjacent apartment building and other small businesses, including a barber shop operating out of that location for over fifty years. Karen invited all of their neighbors to a combined barbeque and brainstorm session in the back lot. Piero and the Cliffords took this opportunity to meet with their neighbors and solicit ideas about the theme, look, and subject of the proposed mural.



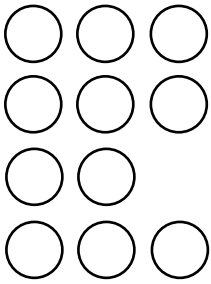


SAN JOSE BREWERY & RESIDENCE OF PH. DERR, COR. 4<sup>TH</sup> & WILLIAMS STS.,  
SAN JOSE, CAL.

Many of the residents suggested that the mural reflect some of the historical context of the site. Frank, the barber, supplied this image of the property from 1870; it depicts the former brewery and neighboring structures.



*Karen Clifford (far right) and a resident of the neighboring apartments discuss ideas for the mural.*



**Curator & Host:** Amber Lopez,  
DiModa Salon

**Artist:** Adrienne Skye Roberts

Amber Lopez worried that the employee break-room would be too difficult a place for an artist to work and feared that her space would be considered the “short stick” among the sites in the exhibition. She chose Adrienne Skye Roberts to work in her freshly opened hair salon, because she appreciated Adrienne’s “style and humor.” When Adrienne found out that her site would be a hair salon, she was immediately nervous. Most of all, her self-described “fear of hair salons” colored Adrienne’s initial reaction.

***The Story of  
Seven Haircuts***

She actively avoids places that cater to a media-saturated notion of feminine beauty, and for the past three years has exclusively cut her own hair.

However, these shared apprehensions faded after their first meeting. As a young girl away at camp, Amber also helped friends avoid a trip to the barber by giving them haircuts herself. With this shared history of renegade haircuts, Amber offered to teach Adrienne some of what she learned during her formal training and apprenticeship as a stylist. Using this education Adrienne began “The Story of Seven Haircuts.”

# The Story of 7 Haircuts Travelling Home Hair Salon

hair cut  
in a salon

vs.

home  
hair cut

a traveling home hair salon  
in which "consumers"/"participants"  
control the environment/surroundings.

what I'll need



toolbox

- scissors
- comb
- H<sub>2</sub>O BOTTLE
- clips
- smock
- apron for me  
to wear  
(logo?)

wash  
hair?

Before & after  
photos



& keep the hair?  
& record the conversation

photograph  
surroundings



*Hair cutting lesson at DiModa Salon*

## The Story of Seven Haircuts: Invitation

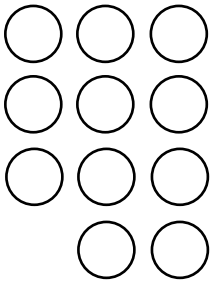
I will be offering a traveling home hair salon service in which I come to your private residence (or studio) to cut your hair. You choose the length or style, although keep in mind that I'm in art school, not beauty school!

In coming to your private spaces you have control over the environment of the hair salon, including the music, space, other activities, people present, etc. For example, next Sunday I'll be going to the East Bay to Mike Goodier's house for a haircut during the NASCAR race and will be bringing some beers to drink (after all, some fancy hair salon's offer wine to their costumers!) As someone who cuts their own hair and friends' hair often and is admittedly terrified of hair salons, I am interested in the very different experience and space of a home haircut and salon.

I'll also be documenting the conversation and exchange that occurs during the haircut, as I have noticed in my limited experience with salons, that they have the ability to facilitate a unique exchange between two people, perhaps due to the intimate act of washing and grooming someone else.

Please let me know:

1. What time works for you
2. What you'd like done to your hair
3. Where you'd like your haircut to take place
4. Anything specific you would like to take place, be present during the haircut

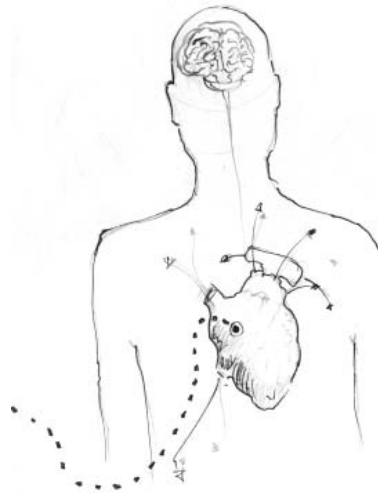


**Curator & Host:** Kirsten Bontrager

**Artist:** Chung Truong

Kirsten Bontrager curated Chung Truong into her three story townhouse primarily because his work appealed so strongly to her aesthetic sensibilities. Chung's interest in "art that can also touch an individual and not just the masses" piqued Kirsten's intellectual interest in the situation of the work to be created within the rental she shares with two other roommates.

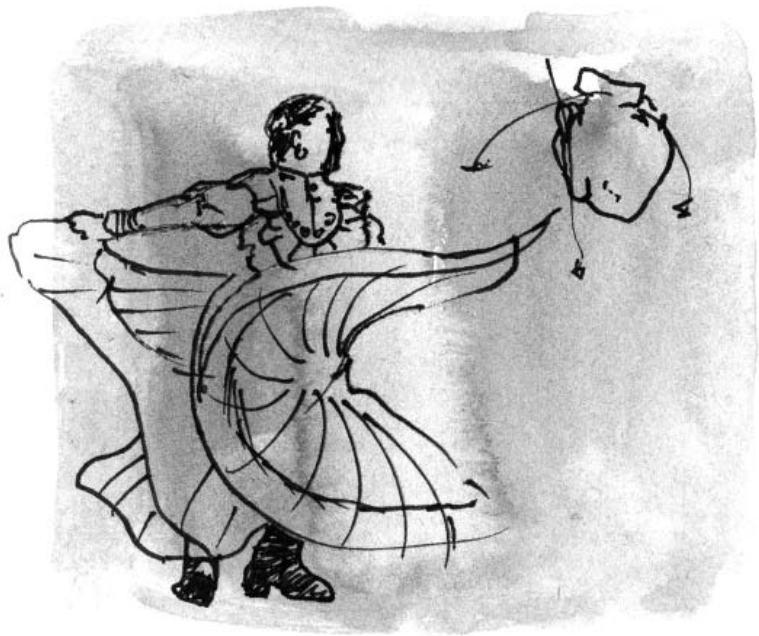
Chung's ideas changed dramatically after his first meeting with Kirsten. The artist took note of special moments in his host's life, including the significant role of Mexican folklórico dancing in her formative years. She described growing up in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in Phoenix and being mesmerized by the dancers' vivid twirling skirts. In the fourth grade,



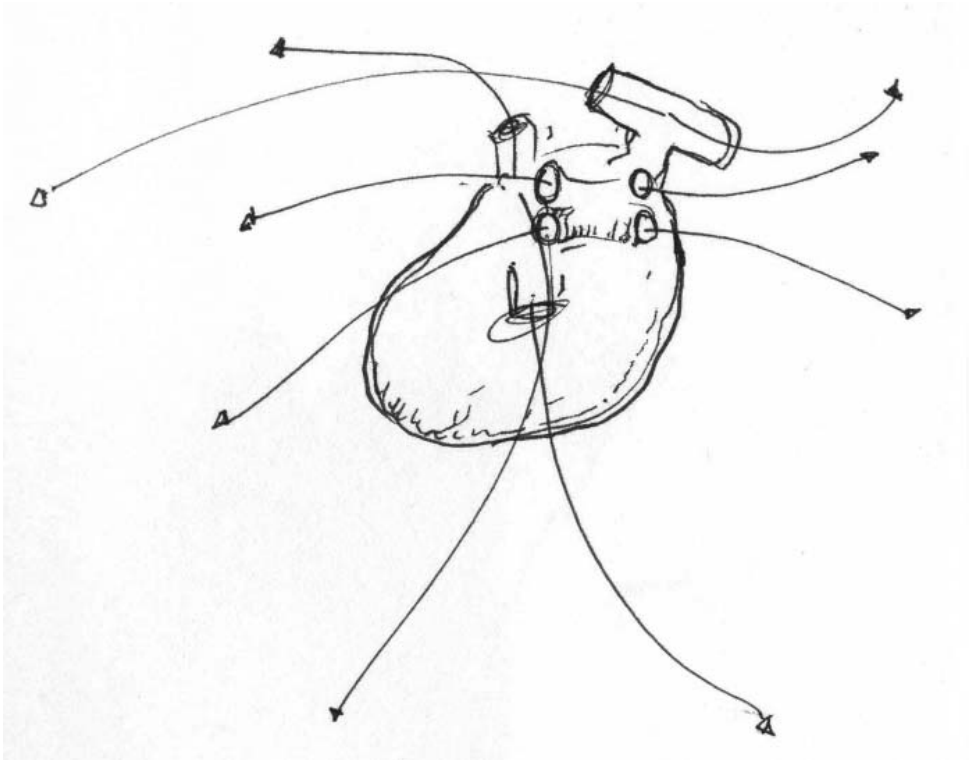


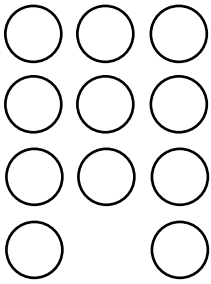
her mother made her a folklorico costume. In college she studied folklorico dance. Impressed with her natural talent, her professor invited Kirsten's to participate in the closing ceremony for the National Rodeo Competition in Las Vegas.

Taking images and impressions like these back to his studio, Chung began a series of studies evoking these descriptions. Once these sketches make the transition into a finished form, Kirsten will select a few that resonate most deeply with her and, together with Chung, install them in manner that reflects the personal narrative contained within the works.



*Preparatory sketches by Chung Truong*





**Curator & Host:** Mike Reandeau

**Artist:** Markuz Wernli Saito

Markuz included a detailed description of a proposed project revolving around projected images and neighborhood involvement in the materials that he sent in for the hosts' consideration. This idea appealed to Mike Reandeau and his partner, Norman. They invited Markuz to work with them in their picturesque Queen Anne Victorian. The elements that most excited Markuz in his original proposal actively involved the neighborhood in the creation of the piece. The element that spoke most strongly to Mike was

***the specific requirements of the space would not accommodate both visions***

a vision of a daily routine of projecting a slide-show onto an outwardly facing window. When Markuz, Mike, and Norman met, they realized that the specific requirements of the space would not accommodate both visions.

Although Markuz could conceive of ways to satisfy his host's expectations, those solutions were not very exciting to Markuz himself. Markuz decided to back away from the initial idea altogether and take a fresh look at the situation. As a consultant and restorer of Victorian houses, Norman flies all over the country to pursue his calling. The house that Norman and Mike share has been considered down to the smallest detail from

top to bottom, inside and out. The interiors are completed with hand painted wallpaper and carefully chosen furnishings. Behind the house, a Roman style garden complements the exterior. Mike and Norman work hard to maintain this backyard space as “an oasis” from their busy block. All of these details, including the obvious care that the couple have applied in creating and maintaining their personal residence speak volumes to Markuz, and guide his response to the space.



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