

**charge** // // // // //

>>> **practicum**

**Nov 8-9, 2014**

**Houston**

**arts** are being touted

**arts** economy is being researched

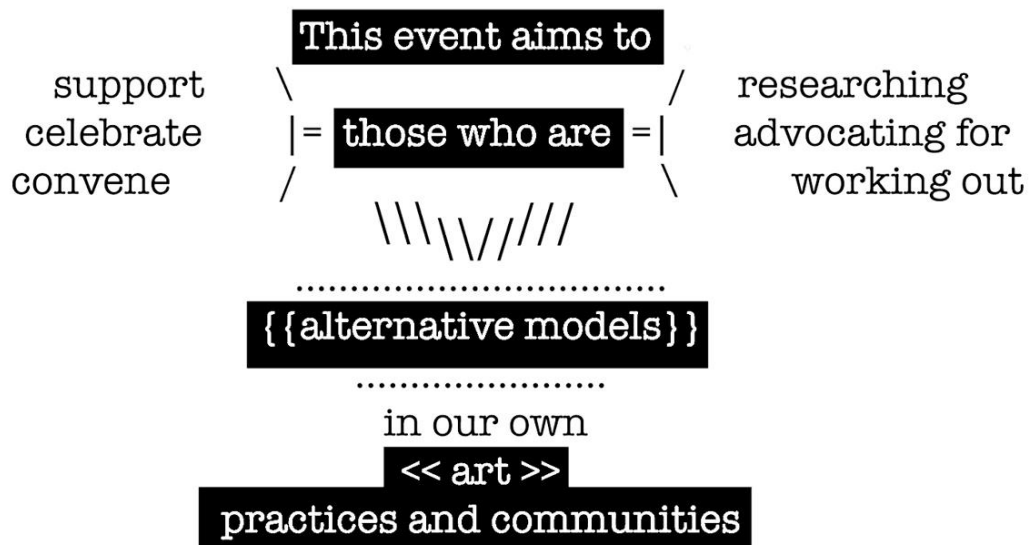
**arts** funding is being restructured

**arts** policy is being rewritten

but artists are not invited to the table

We have built our own table.

*you are invited*



**charge** is a two day practicum to **1.** platform and convene artist led alternative models **2.** open up conversations around equitable compensation of artists and **3.** consider artists' work in the larger economy.

The event will feature a selection of local and national presenters (artists, curators, organizers, and researchers) who have been commissioned to conceive and host discussions, direct actions, lectures, and workshops that explore conceptual, organizational, and economic models of sustaining one's art practice, engaging critically and generatively within the arts ecosystem as well as with broader communities, and advocating for equitable compensation along the way.

**charge** will focus on supporting, celebrating, convening and hearing real talk from those who've been:

- Piloting alternative models
- Experimenting creatively with how to sustain an art practice
- Intersecting arts and activist communities
- Actively intervening in current standards and practices of compensation
- Engaging both critically and generatively in the arts ecosystem
- Compiling research on how artists' work ties into the larger economy

Advocacy for equitable compensation of artists and more effective and sustainable models in the arts is nothing new. As Houston's arts funding policies are currently being rewritten and the city is undergoing a major cultural initiative, an event like this, centered on and starting with the artists is vital in establishing equitable policies for the future.

## ONLINE

**Houston Area Artists Report Survey Launch!**

>>>**The Present Group** - Compensation Foundation

((Supported by **Fresh Arts**))

## GRANT

The \$10 registration fee for **charge** goes to **charge** grant. All **charge** participants will be invited to submit written proposals online by January 4, 2015. The grantee will be selected via online voting by **charge** participants. The grant will be announced and awarded at a celebration dinner soon after.

## // SCHEDULE >>

### SATURDAY NOV 8

11:00 – 11:45 AM >>> *Laugh Yoga with Tony Day*

11:45 – 12:00 AM >>> **Welcome, Intro & Coffee**

12:00 – 1:00 PM >>> *Party Panel Slide Show & Tell Brunch* with Michelle Barnes {The Community Artists' Collective}, Nestor Topchy {Templo/Zocalo} and Beth Secor {The Effemera Museum}

1:00 – 2:30 PM >>> **Early Afternoon Sessions**

- Session A - *How to Frame Pauses, Holism, and Magical Thinking in New Arts Infrastructures: Build Your Own Utopian Artist-Run Project* ((lecture/workshop)) with Ayanna Jolivet McCloud {labotanica - Houston}
- Session B - *Gauging the Grey Area: A Human Spectrum* ((workshop)) with Lauren van Haaften-Schick {Non-Participation - New York} and Helena Keefe {Standard Deviation - San Francisco}
- Session C - *American Royalty* ((discussion/direct action)) with Gabriel Martinez {Alabama Song - Houston}
- Session D - *Co-dependency Anonymous* ((workshop)) with Dawn Weleski {Conflict Kitchen/City Council Wrestling/Bus Stop Opera - Pittsburgh}

2:30 – 3:00 PM >>> **Snack Break**

3:00 – 4:30 PM >>> **Late Afternoon Sessions**

- Session E - *Fishing for Answers* ((presentation/discussion)) with Zach Moser {Shrimp Boat Projects/Workshop Houston/The Big Parade - Houston}
- Session F - *Gauging the Grey Area: Quiz Me* ((workshop)) with Helena Keefe {Standard Deviation - San Francisco} and Lauren van Haaften-Schick {Non-Participation - New York}
- Session G - *Party Out of Bounds* ((presentation)) with Aay Preston-Myint {Chances Dances - Chicago}
- Session H - *Just Give'em the Loot* ((workshop)) with Robert Pruitt and M'kina Tapscott {H.O.S.T - Houston}

5:30 – MIDNIGHT >>> **Dinner + Dance Party**

- *VHS Vinylandia* by Stephanie Saint Sanchez AKA DJ ESTEFF {Houston}
- DJ Flash Gordon Parks {Houston}

# SUNDAY NOV 9

**11:00 AM >>> Welcome & Introduction**

**11:15 – 12:45 PM >>> *Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.)*** ((lecture)) with Lise Soskolne {New York}

**12:45 – 1:00 PM >>> Snack Break**

**1:00 – 1:45 PM >>> *At Any Cost: Economics, Politics, and Value*** ((lecture)) with Alison Gerber {Yale}

**2:00 – 3:00 PM >>> *Lunch and Session Shares*** ((Pecha Kucha lite))

**3:00 – 3:45 PM >>> *Do What You Love And You'll Never Work Another Day In Your Life: Economic calculations and political battles*** ((panel discussion)) with Alison Gerber, Helena Keefe, Ayanna McCloud, and Zach Moser

**3:45 - 4:00 PM >>> *Open Floor Q&A Session***

## // SATURDAY >> SESSIONS

11:00 – 11:45 AM

**Laugh Yoga** by Tony Day

Artist Tony Day will conduct his **Laugh Yoga** session with the purpose of practicing laughter. Participants go through a series of guided exercises that give opportunity to create and sustain laughter to leave you feeling more connected, more relaxed, and more centered on the positive.

---

12:00 – 1:00 PM

**Party Panel Slide Show & Tell Brunch**

**Three Party Panel Hosts including Nestor Topchy, Beth Secor and Michelle Barnes**

Brunch Party Panel: As slide show plays whilst each of the 3 “hosts” sit at a separate brunch table to speak about their early work in Houston. The audience can mingle and hear from hosts at different tables. From the Art Workers Coalition, to locally Project Row Houses, some of the most exciting, game-changing approaches to valuing labor in the arts and artists redefining our right to the city are not just happening now, but were precedented decade(s) ago. We start the weekend by looking to our local histories to inspire and connect us to a longer heritage of artists “not waiting and just doing what we want” in Houston.

---

From 1989 to 2001, **Nestor Topchy** was Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Templo/Zocalo, a non profit artist-run performance compound he established on the site he originally pioneered along with with Rick Lowe and Dean Ruck. Templo/Zocalo was an incubator for experimental artistic activity, and gave artists of all disciplines a forum for creating, exhibiting and staging experimental and edgy works. The complex housed artists’ studios and living spaces, a gallery, indoor and outdoor stages, and embodied the belief that art is a creative and spiritual way of doing anything.

**Beth Secor** is a Houston-based artist. She received an MFA in Painting and BFA in Printmaking from the University of Houston. She is a lecturer in visual art at the University of Houston Downtown (UHD). Her work is represented by Inman Gallery. She moved to Houston in 1977. From 1977 - 1980 Secor was part of an art collaborative formed at the University of Houston and known as Den Wittenbahl Blitzler. From 1984- 1986 Secor was one of six

artist-in-residents at DiverseWorks in its original location on Travis Street in Houston. In 1986 Secor and Liz Ward received an NEA Interdisciplinary Grant to create an installation at Lawndale Art and Performance Space called a Retreat for K, based on the writings and life of Franz Kafka. In 1988, Secor and Ward received funding to create an installation inside of a silverstream trailer, which was entitled The Effemera Museum and that was shown at both Lawndale and The Orange Show. During the late 70's and 80's Secor worked for Lawndale, and later The Orange Show where she was a key player in the establishment of its education and outreach programs.

**Michelle Swain Barnes** is a Houston-based Artist / Educator / Pro-Activist / Administrator / Facilitator / Wife / Mother / Grandmother. She is Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Community Artists' Collective (The Collective). The Community Artists' Collective is a community-based 501(c)(3) organization that, since 1987, has led change in service to the community through the arts. The Collective), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, was conceived in 1985 by Michelle Barnes, artist, art educator and director of Barnes-Blackman Galleries and Dr. Sarah Trotty, artist and art educator at Texas Southern University. The COLLECTIVE was organized to meet the needs of the professional African American artists and with a special sensitivity to African American women artists. The mission of The Collective is to provide the educational and cultural link among African American artists and all communities, inspiring unlimited creativity. This mission is accomplished through programs of excellence in Education, Exhibition, Community Development, and Entrepreneurship generally in collaboration with other individuals, agencies, and organizations. Through this work, services that engage people in generally underserved communities, are bridged by the creative process to satisfactory products and experiences. The **COLLECTIVE** challenges local artists to make their own career decisions, to produce work, which truly reflects their unique vision, and to work with our organization or some other organized effort to give something back to the community from which we have emerged."

---

1:00 – 2:30 PM

**Session A ((lecture/workshop))**

***How to Frame Pauses, Holism, and Magical Thinking in New Arts Infrastructures: Build Your Own Utopian Artist-Run Project***

**Ayanna Jolivet McCloud**

Why in order for things to be successful do they need to be endless? How do we develop arts infrastructures that are more holistic? How can an institution be structured as a living, breathing model/ organism? How can an institution be healing and energizing? How can we develop infrastructures that embrace uncertainty, failure, or pauses? What are some economic models that are more sustainable and attainable?

For her lecture, Ayanna will discuss past programs at labotanica and current studies on botanicas as sites for holistic, creative and subversive transactions, and efforts to relaunch labotanica as a botanica/ creative platform for artists and the community.

---

**Session Timeline:**

30 minutes (lecture):

The lecture will center on labotanica - it's past, break, and new directions.

20 minutes (lecture):

The lecture continues with a look at a few artist-run utopian models.

30 minutes (workshop):

The workshop will provide individuals with a take home model of their newly constructed utopian arts project.

10 minutes (wrap-up):

Participants will discuss highlights their projects and build a list of shared resources.

---

**Ayanna Jolivet Mccloud** is a Houston-based artist and writer. While minimal, her work is driven by explorations in materiality, physicality, and sensation. She has participated in exhibitions and residencies throughout the Caribbean, Latin America and in the U.S. and studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her creative practice takes on many forms including studio-based art, sound performances, community/ land/ site-specific installations, and writing/publications. She has also worked within art institutions throughout the U.S. for over 15 years, developing and contextualizing multidisciplinary programs.

**labotanica**, conceived by Ayanna has been a laboratory for unrealized works, works in progress, new collaborations, and a community resource. The name “labotanica” originates from botánicas which are often the sites of cultural exchange, healing, and magical thinking. Initially created as a blog, labotanica presented public

projects in collaboration with Polvo in Chicago, Diaspora Vibe Gallery in Miami, and found a physical home for two years in Houston at Project Row Houses, as part of a residency. Recent projects have included a temporary school/ residency program, a series of site-specific installations/ artist residencies, a series devoted to women in experimental music, a community-driven grants program, and a burgeoning library. labotanica is currently seeking start up funds to launch a botanica/ yerberia, which will allow it to develop a more sustainable money model and further frame art in more holistic and integrative environments.

---

**1:00 – 2:30 PM**

**Session B ((workshop))**

***Gauging the Grey Area: A Human Spectrum***

**Lauren van Haaften-Schick & Helena Keeffe**

We exhibit, we speak, we perform, we write, we produce — we love what we do. And often we feel compelled to say *yes* even when we don't feel comfortable with the terms of an opportunity. Which opportunities actually serve our work and support artists, and when can saying *no* to an invitation be a generative response? How can refusal lead to a conversation where both parties gain a greater understanding of their mutual stakes?

We will begin this workshop by reading from *Non-Participation*, a collection of letters in which artists decline to participate in various exhibitions and other events due to ethical, political, and personal reasons. These letters will serve as a starting point for discussing our own limits for participation.

Next, we will create a human spectrogram, where workshop attendees will position themselves along a spectrum to determine how they measure the value of various hypothetical opportunities. The hypotheticals presented will deal with the vulnerabilities and potential payoffs that come with taking risks in the art market, donating work and volunteering labor, and the creative and ethical choices one makes when resources are limited.

Finally, we will present the Artists' Rider, a template developed by Lauren van Haaften-Schick and The Luminary in St. Louis, modeled after a format typically used by musicians to negotiate terms with performance venues. With the complexities of the grey area in mind, we will endeavor to collectively modify and fill out the rider to reflect the ideal working relationship with an institution committed to truly supporting both art and the artist.

---

**Lauren van Haaften-Schick** is an independent curator and researcher from New York. Her current interests concern critical forms of circulation, and the legal and economic factors that influence the conceptual and



material manifestations of art, with a focus on early conceptual art and institutional critique. Recent presentations and articles include “Living Labor: Marxism and Performance Studies” at New York University, “Valuing Labor in the Arts” at UC Berkeley, and “Cariou v. Prince: Toward a Theory of Aesthetic-Judicial Judgments,” co-authored by Sergio Muñoz Sarmiento, and published in the Texas A&M Law Review. Her major exhibition and catalog “Canceled: Alternative Manifestations & Productive Failures,” first exhibited at the Center for Book Arts, NY, in 2012, has traveled to Albright College, Reading, PA, Smith College, Northampton, MA, and The Goethe Institut, New York, NY, among other venues. She is currently completing “Non-Participation,” a collection of artists’ letters of protest and refusal, to be published by Half Letter Press (Chicago/Copenhagen), and first presented at the Luminary Center for the Arts, St. Louis, MO, in June 2014. In 2011 she served as a research and database assistant for the late curator Seth Siegelaub and his work on art law and textile history. Additional post-graduate academic activities include the Art & Law Program in 2012, The Gallerist Programme Workshop at de Appel arts centre, Amsterdam, the e-flux Time/Store and the workshop “Market, Alternative” at Trade School, New York. She was a founding director of Gallery TK in Northampton, MA from 2004-2006, AHN|VHS gallery and bookstore in Philadelphia, PA from 2009-2010, and the independent curators group Extra Curricular from 2013 to the present. She received a BA in Art History and Studio Art from Hampshire College in 2006. She is a PhD candidate in the History of Art and Visual Studies program at Cornell University.

---

**1:00 – 2:30 PM**

**Session C ((discussion/direct action))**

***American Royalty***

**Gabriel Martinez**

Friends,

Join us from 1-2:30pm

for a brief look at Alabama Song

followed by a discussion of the meager effort

to secure artists’ resale royalties in the United States.

Alabama Song is a series of collaborations with experimental writers, musicians, curators and artists in an effort to produce a temporary space which allows for the collective experience of cultural events. The home of the artist is opened to the public at large and to artists specifically as a communal place for the staging of difficult works of art. It exploits two of Houston's specialties: irregular zoning and hospitality. Alabama Song aims to experiment with the traditional production, exhibition, and distribution of art. It places programming and dialog on equal

ground with objects and performances. It is an acknowledgement of the vulnerability artists face. In this session we will talk of the need for maintaining spaces dedicated to the discussion of emerging works of art and culture.

---

#### **Session Timeline:**

(45 minutes)

Presentation on Alabama Song:

'The Case for a Discursive Space'

'Some Thoughts on the Benefits of Exploiting One's Limitations'

'The Joy of Experiencing Culture Collectively'

Q&A

(5 minute break)

(15 minutes)

A look at the American Royalty Too Act of 2014 and its predecessors:

'An Inadequate History of Resale Royalties for Visual Artists in the United States'

(15 minutes)

'American Royalty Three Act of 2015'

A group discussion on possible improvements to the bill. How can we imagine what a fair deal might be for artists? What role do we as artists play in determining what is fair? What immediate changes could we suggest that might improve the bill?

(10 minutes)

Photographic session:

A life size cutout of the newly elected Texas governor will be available for selfies.

---

**Gabriel Martinez** lives and works in Houston. He intends to disrupt the rational use of space by passing and trespassing. He graduated with an MFA from Columbia University and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program before moving to Houston as a Core Fellow and artist-in-residence at Project Rowhouses. He is the director of Alabama Song and a Friend of Angela Davis Park.

---

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Session D ((workshop))

*Co-dependency Anonymous*

Dawn Weleski

This session will center around using the work of art itself as a retail institution that is self-sustaining and not dependent on arts grants; recontextualizing the project as something other than art for a large audience to garner outside funding (restaurant development, CDCs, donations, retail, etc.). Participants will workshop a potential budget for a project that they are currently working on or are brainstorming.

---

**Dawn Weleski's** practice administers a political stress test, antagonizing routine cultural behavior by re-purposing underground brawls, revolutionary protests, and political offices as transformative social stages. Recent projects include City Council Wrestling, a series of wrestling matches where citizens, pro-am wrestlers, and city council members personified their political passions into wrestling characters, and "I will not bomb Iran" (100 times), a curriculum designed and taught by Weleski to generate student-authored apologies on behalf of the United States. Her on-going project with collaborator Jon Rubin, Conflict Kitchen, a take out restaurant that only serves cuisine from countries with which the U.S. government is in conflict, has been covered by over 450 international media and news outlets worldwide, including The New York Times, Al Jazeera, NPR: All Things Considered, and BBC News. Weleski holds an MFA in Art Practice from Stanford University and has exhibited at The Mercosul Biennial, Brazil; the San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose; Anyang Public Art Project, South Korea; The CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco; Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Festival Belluard Bollwerk International, Switzerland; The Mattress Factory Museum, Pittsburgh; and 91mQ, Berlin; has been a resident at The Headlands Center for the Arts and The Atlantic Center for the Arts; and is a courtesy fellow at the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University.

---

3:00 – 4:30 PM

Session E ((presentation/discussion))

*Fishing for Answers*

Zach Moser

Zach Moser has spent his career attempting to resist the onslaught of global capitalism, with the past four years spent trying to undermine the shrimp commodity market. In this session he will explore the structures of the shrimp market and its telling similarities to the arts economy and its institutions. Artists' and fishermen's roles as romanticized primary producers in individually competitive industries with finite resources bind them together so intricately that hope for one could be hope for the other. We will ask:

- How have individual fishermen organized with each other to resist exploitation?
- In what ways have fishermen worked to develop alternative economic models to resist commodification and increase the viability of their profession?
- What were the successes and failures of these efforts?
- What role does government have in the economics of these professions?

---

**Zach Moser** facilitates collaborative and interactive investigations, designed to discover alternative methods of communication and new expectations of human potential. His work focuses on pursuing knowledge, alleviating the critical effects of injustice and participating in creative communities. He is co-founder of Shrimp Boat Projects, Workshop Houston and The Big Parade. **Shrimp Boat Projects** is an artistic investigation of the Houston region that explores the connection between a region's identity and its native landscape. As the last form of labor wholly dependent on this landscape, shrimping in Galveston Bay is the project's point of departure. The process of the project melds the daily work aboard a commercial shrimp boat, the F/V Discovery, active participation in the local seafood economy, public programming, and cultural production. More of this project can be viewed at the projects website. **Workshop Houston** provides youth with creative, technical, and educational resources. Workshop Houston's vision is to lay the groundwork for a just society by creating a community that provides youth with support, expanded opportunities and alternative definitions of success. Since its conception in 2002, **The Big Parade** has become a cherished event in the Oberlin community; bringing residents of all ages together in a homespun, imaginative, community arts event that depends on wide-spread collaboration and team work. Groups involved in the Big Parade work relatively independently, but towards a common goal: to represent themselves and the town of Oberlin in a joyous and spectacular event featuring music, dancing, costumes, bikes, art cars, floats and whatever else people can come up with.

---

3:00 – 4:30 PM

**Session F ((workshop))**

***Gauging the Grey Area: Quiz Me!***

**Helena Keffe & Lauren van Haaften-Schick**

Issues surrounding artists labor can be mired in conflicting ideals and realities. Adding humor and play to the equation allows for new approaches to old problems. This workshop will invite participants to consider ideas and tools developed by artists, curators and other cultural producers to combat murky logic and self-destructive habits. Together we will map the grey area and our place within it.

We will begin by looking at Helena Keffe's Standard Deviation, a broadside reflecting on the value of artists' labor. In addition to excerpts from texts related to art and labor, Standard Deviation features a flow-chart that determines whether one should work for free or not, forms of alternative currency, a Request for Funders template, Pablo Helguera's Artoons, and other provocations.

Next we will discuss, as a group, what major factors go into making decisions about one's practice and the opportunities artists are presented with. (Attendees who participated in our first workshop will benefit from having already discussed this in relationship to the Spectrogram hypotheticals.) Together we will select five key categories and then break into small groups to generate questions and scored answers which, once tallied, will lead to results in a cosmo-style quiz.

The collectively generated quiz will be printed at the end of the day and shared with all CHARGE attendees on Sunday.

---

**Helena Keffe** is a San Francisco based artist, teacher and cook who brings these identities together in projects that invite others to step along with her into unfamiliar territory. She recently co-organized a workshop-based conference with Shannon Jackson, director of the Arts Research Center at UC Berkeley, on the subject of valuing labor in the arts. Keffe publishes a broadside called Standard Deviation which serves as a platform for aggregating art and labor related texts, thought experiments, flow charts and alternative currencies. Keffe is the recipient of a Creative Work Fund grant and has created site specific works in diverse contexts including city buses, abandoned phone booths, the Berkeley Art Museum, San Francisco's Market Street, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Laguna Honda Hospital, the Oakland Museum of California, and the New Children's Museum in San Diego. Keffe received a BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and an MFA from UC Berkeley.

**3:00 – 4:30 PM**

**Session G ((presentation))**

***Party Out of Bounds***

**Aay Preston-Myint**

Aay Preston-Myint will speak on the history of Chances Dances, a queer dance party and safe space in Chicago, and the mission and methods of the Critical Fierceness Grant, an artist microgrant funded and administered by Chances. Participants will be taken through a narrative of the socio-economic conditions under which the collectively run party has evolved, with a focus on core values such as financial transparency, consensus, and community accountability. As Chances has grown from a messy Monday night party in a taqueria's back bar into an unofficial institution in its own right, we must redefine our position in relation to a changing art/activism scene and the trajectories of our organizers' individual careers over ten years in Chicago. As such, we often grapple with issues such as the limits of work, self care/community care, saying "no" and "yes," and the tensions and contradictions of a practice straddling fine art, nightlife, and social justice. Going into our tenth year of organizing and with some of our largest-scale projects imminent, we ask:

- Who should we aim to serve best through our work? How can we improve our outreach in order to make our mission serve the most diverse constituency possible?
- Are the practices that we support with our money and labor stable, and do they need to be? What are the conceptual underpinnings of creating experiences that are often temporary, contingent, and ephemeral?
- And perhaps the most challenging: what is the function of art in a community that lies at the intersection of many oppressive forces, and has urgent human rights needs?

---

**Session Timeline:**

(45 minutes) presentation

(45 minutes) question and answer

---

**Aay Preston-Myint** is an artist, printmaker, and educator based in Chicago, IL. His practice currently employs visual and collaborative strategies to investigate memory, memorial, self-reflection and self-projection within the context of queer community and history. In addition to his own work in interdisciplinary media, he is a founder of No Coast, an artist partnership that prints and distributes affordable contemporary artwork, is editor-in-chief of an online and print journal called Monsters and Dust, and serves as a DJ and organizer for Chances Dances, party

that supports and showcases the work of queer artists in Chicago through the Critical Fierceness Grant.

Since its founding in 2005, *Chances Dances* has sought to create safer spaces for all gender expressions, in which to bring together the varied LGBTIQ communities of Chicago. In 2008, the organizers of Chances created the Critical Fierceness Grant to expand our impact by offering financial assistance to individual artists or groups who identify themselves or their work as queer. Chances Dances uses the proceeds from our monthly dance parties and other events to fund The Critical Fierceness Grant, thereby reinvesting in the community that supports us.

---

**3:00 – 4:30 PM**

**Session H ((workshop))**

***Just Give'em the Loot***

**Robert Pruitt & M'kina Tapscott**

The trajectory of an artist's career can often be evaluated by his or her work's position as a commodity within the art market. This is not the only evaluation of course but in terms of sustaining a practice long term, (Like your whole life???) being able to sell work can be a defining element. Strangely, the Artist is the one figure within the art economy that seems to gain least from this commodification. Where in this network, do we as artists, begin to lose out? H.O.S.T, early on, identified the spaces between the collector and the artist as one of the major gaps. Gallery spaces, Museum Auctions, and secondary Market sales usually strip the artist of a sizable chunk of income. H.O.S.T examines and attempts to form direct relationships between artist and collector. We assumed it could be a long term source of support. We will share some of our discoveries and challenges in moving through this process.

- How do you convince people to collect?
- Is there a race and class element to the idea of collecting?
- Are we only reproducing a flawed system and are we being contradictory to ourselves?

Houston Open Studio Tours (H.O.S.T) will present a two part workshop. Beginning with a short presentation about the creation of H.O.S.T, our series of programs and in particular, *Gimmie the Loot*, our annual artist grant. We will continue with a participatory performance wherein the audience becomes an impromptu funding board. This "board" will review and choose between 3 artist proposals to be performed before the audience to conclude the workshop.

**Session Timeline:**

(30 mins)

Presentation with short Q&A

(30 mins)

After directions from H.O.S.T, the workshop participants will convene as an artist board to select a performance work from 3 given proposals.

(30 mins)

The winning artist will enact their performance to conclude the workshop

---

**Robert Pruitt** (b. 1975) is a Houston-based artist well known for drawings, videos and installations dedicated to examination of the historical and contemporary experiences of African Americans. Combining elements of science fiction, hip-hop culture and comic-book graphics, each figure is at once politically charged, physically grounded and fantastic—a blend of willful self-determination and culturally conditioned myth. In addition to his solo work, Pruitt is a founding member of the artist collective Otabenga Jones & Associates. [www.robert-pruitt.com](http://www.robert-pruitt.com)

**M'kina Tapscott** is a Houston, TX native working in a variety of materials, with a practice that focuses on recontextualizing commonplace objects, historical accounts and pop culture through the lens of science fiction and cultural identification. Tapscott also works with a loose collective of local artists sometimes working under the name STACKS and is the Co-Director of Houston Open Studio Tours. She currently serves as visiting professor of art at Texas Southern University. [www.notthatthis.wordpress.com](http://www.notthatthis.wordpress.com)

**Houston Open Studio Tours (H.O.ST.)** is an artist created venture offering exclusive studio visits to its invited participants. We provide a space for open discussion about the practice of art making, and the art of collecting, in hopes of fostering more personal and supportive relationships between artists and collectors. We provide a relaxed but stimulating environment with transparent communication and pricing. The **"Gimmie The Loot"** fund is a yearly award given to an artist of color, living and working in the Greater Houston Area to assist in funding the completion of an already initiated artist's project. This \$1000 award is organized and granted by Houston Open Studio Tours.

---



**8:30 - MIDNIGHT**

***Dance Party***

**Stephanie Saint Sanchez AKA DJ ESTEFF**

***VHS Vinylandia***

Multi-Media Artist Stephanie Saint Sanchez AKA DJ ESTEFF rides again spinning and mixing Audio Awesomeness with her stash of VHS goodies salvaged from the now closed legendary Audio Video Plus.

Raised in Beaumont corrupted in Houston... Stephanie Saint Sanchez aka DJ ESTEFF is an award winning by any means necessary media artist, movie maker, instigator and curator with ties to many disciplines and artists. As DJ ESTEFF she has been spinning that delicious vinyl all over Houston and projecting select accompanying viddys amassed from her 10 years working a video storeclerk. [www.lachicanalaundrypictures.com](http://www.lachicanalaundrypictures.com)

**DJ Flash Gordon Parks**

Flash Gordon Parks is an Ethnomusicologist, Collector, and Documentarian from the city of Houston. As a record collector and DJ, FGP strives to reach the souls of people with music. He believes his job is not only to entertain, but expose the audience to music that may not be accessible in familiar arenas. Listening to his sets can be a mixture of a lesson in music history, walk down memory lane, and listening party for new artists, all the while compelling you to lose your inhibitions and dance. [www.facebook.Flashgordonparks](https://www.facebook.com/Flashgordonparks)

---

## // SUNDAY >> SESSIONS

11:15 AM – 12:45 PM

**W.A.G.E.**

**Lise Soskolne**

**((lecture))**

Nothing can easily be defined within the perpetually expanding and liquefying field of the arts. This is particularly true of its economy, in which a lack of transparency and regulation has continued to enable the exploitation of cultural labor. Without a precise definition of the labor being supplied by artists, the financial gain it creates for organizations, or the criteria being used to determine compensation, artists and cultural practitioners will continue to accept exploitation as a fundamental condition of participation in the arts.

Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) has been raising consciousness around this issue through education and information-gathering since its founding in 2008. In 2010 W.A.G.E. initiated the development of a certification program that would 'certify' non-profit arts organizations voluntarily paying artist fees meeting a minimum standard.

Developed over the past 4 years in dialog with artists, arts organizations, writers, sociologists, labor historians, and critical theorists, W.A.G.E. Certification was established as a policy at the 2014 W.A.G.E. Summit. This past January, A.K. Burns, Howie Chen, Andrea Fraser, Alison Gerber, Stephanie Luce, Andrew Ross, Lise Soskolne, and Marina Vishmidt gathered in New York City, along with key staff members of the arts organization Artists Space, which represented the institutional side and functioned as a test case. Over two days, participants debated, negotiated, and arrived at a set of principles and fee calculation that now constitute W.A.G.E. Certification.

Core Organizer Lise Soskolne will present W.A.G.E. Certification, the first program of its kind in the U.S. that establishes a sector-wide minimum standard for compensation, as well as a clear set of guidelines and standards for the conditions under which artistic labor is contracted. The presentation will outline how the program works as well as the research and logic behind its development.

---

**Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E)** is a New York-based activist group whose advocacy is focused on regulating the payment of artist fees by nonprofit art institutions, and establishing a sustainable model for best practices between artists and the institutions that contract their labor. Since 2008 W.A.G.E. has delivered speeches, made videos, held open meetings, teach-ins, coffee klatches and workshops, W.A.G.E. RAGING in panel

discussions and symposia at museums, galleries, conferences, festivals, schools, summits, and art fairs. Four years after The 2010 W.A.G.E. Artist Survey gathered data about the payment practices of New York City non-profits, W.A.G.E. has established a certification program that publicly recognizes those institutions paying artist fees meeting a minimum payment standard. W.A.G.E. Certification was established as a policy and regulatory tool at the 2014 W.A.G.E. Summit and was launched in October 2014.

**Lise Soskolne** is a Canadian-born artist and Core Organizer of W.A.G.E. She has 17 years of work experience in non-profit arts presenting and development at venues that have included Anthology Film Archives, Artists Space, Diapason Gallery for Sound, The House Foundation for the Arts (Meredith Monk), Participant Inc. and Roulette Intermedium. In 2007 she founded and managed the arts component in the broader regeneration of Industry City, a 6.5-million sq ft industrial complex on the South Brooklyn waterfront. Its goal was to establish a new paradigm for industrial redevelopment that would not displace artists, workers, local residents or industry but would instead build a sustainable community of working artists in a context that integrated cultural and industrial production.

---

1:00 – 1:45 PM

*At Any Cost: Economics, Politics, and Value*

Alison Gerber

((lecture))

How do we talk about the value of the things that we do? What are the analogies we draw, the arguments we make, the bases of value we point to when we say: what I do is worth doing?

In my research, I look to the varied things that we say and do when we say our work has value. I map the types of accounts that are broadly shared in contemporary art practice, and write about the patterns that can be seen again and again in these accounts. I use these patterns to understand how artists make sense of the value of artistic practice both in economic terms and in other ways, and I use my empirical work to work out a theory of social processes of disagreement about value. I'll talk about this work, and about commensuration, the unwieldy term that refers to the social processes by which multiple parties come to agree on value. Imagine a scale – the old-fashioned two-pan balance we use as the symbol for justice. Social studies of commensuration ask how we calibrate that scale, how we come to balance it, and why that point of balance varies so strongly by time and place. I promote a perspective on social processes of commensuration that foregrounds conflict, contention, and disagreement in valuation.

Valuation matters. And a sociological perspective can help us to understand it because valuation is something that we do together. We know that the value of things is not determined by their qualities or by an unseen, godlike hand. Even the “invisible hand” of Smith’s market moves, like the pointer on a Ouija board, not thanks to ghostly spirits but to animal ones – we move it ourselves, together. And when we talk about value, we’re not just talking about money. We’re talking about what we do, who we are, and who we want to be.

---

**Alison Gerber** is a sociologist whose research focuses on artists as workers, value in working life, and working life as public life. She investigates the ways that artists, broadly defined, account for the value of their own practice, looking to artists as a lens through which to investigate valuation in contemporary working life. Her current projects aim to develop a theory of disagreement and revaluation in economic and political processes. Alison is a doctoral candidate at Yale University and a junior fellow of the Center for Comparative Research and the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale. She holds a BA and BFA from the University of Minnesota, attended Critical Studies at Malmö Art Academy / Lund University, and holds an MA and MPhil from Yale. Alison lives in New Haven, Connecticut.

---

**2:00 - 3:00 PM**

***Lunch and Session Shares***

**((Pecha Kucha lite))**

6 minute presentations on each of the Saturday sessions from the session presenter and a participant briefly describe what happened in the session, and share any relevant breakthroughs in conversation and/or takeaways.

---

**3:00 – 3:45 PM**

***Do What You Love And You'll Never Work Another Day In Your Life: Economic calculations and political battles***

**Moderator:** Alison Gerber

**Panelists:** Helena Keefe, Ayanna McCloud, and Zach Moser

**((panel discussion))**

Questions about value don't have to be economic questions. We can decide, together, that they are political questions, with political solutions. But then they're more complicated; they don't have one right answer, one best answer. How should we think about value in the arts - how do we want to think about value in the arts?

---

**3:45 – 4:00 PM**

***Open Floor/Q&A***

**Facilitated by Alison Gerber, Zach Moser, Ayanna Jolivet McCloud and Helena Keefe**

**((public discussion))**

Open floor Q&A session for *charge* participants. This is a prime opportunity to be heard... to respond to the weekends discussions and voice your thoughts, inspirations and offer feedback.

---

## // HOUSTON ARTISTS REPORT >> SURVEY LAUNCH

The Survey will be **live** on November 8, 2014.

**The Compensation Foundation** is an online platform for collecting, sharing, and analyzing how contingent workers are compensated. The Houston Area Artists Report will focus on gathering anonymous compensation data directly from the individual visual artists that work here. It aims to make evident the current landscape of support for artists while the city of Houston embarks to determine the future of that support.

The Compensation Foundation is a project **of The Present Group**. Run by Eleanor Hanson Wise and Oliver Wise, The Present Group is an arts based think-tank and creative studio, focusing on leveraging new technologies in support of the arts. Other projects of The Present Group include an art subscription service, a web hosting service that funds an intermittent arts prize, Art Micro Patronage - an experimental exhibition platform showcasing and funding artwork online, and The People's E-book - a free online tool to build e-books better.

The Houston Area Compensation Survey was created by The Present Group's Compensation Foundation originally as the Bay Area Artists Report, but adapted for use in Houston with support, in part, from **Fresh Arts**.

### **Houston Area Artists Report aims to:**

- make evident the current landscape of support for artists while the city of Houston is determining the future of that support
- supplement data about artists with data by artists
- enable artists to access data outside their personal network
- enable artists to make more informed decisions about their careers
- provide artists a way to track the quality of their professional opportunities over time
- enable institutions to track their relevance and degree of reciprocity in the community
- empower artists and hosts to negotiate compensation agreements
- identify city-wide and organization-specific norms
- aid innovators as they develop new policies and tools to serve and present artists
- provide funders with reports from those who they intend to support but don't usually hear from
- create a more competitive environment and a higher level of accountability for presenters
- create a more supporting and transparent field of opportunity for artists
- exhaust less creativity on exploitative gigs and foster more creativity with good opportunities
- platform and increase that which makes it viable for artists to stay here
- publicly visualize how the arts ecosystem works together here in our city

Advocacy for equitable compensation of artists and more effective and sustainable models in the arts is nothing new. As Houston's arts funding policies are currently being rewritten and the city is undergoing a major cultural

initiative, this survey, centered on and starting with the artists is vital in establishing equitable policies for the future.

### **What Will Be Done With the Data?**

We will build visualizations once there is a significant data pool to draw from. Houston Area Artists Report is hosted by the Compensation Foundation platform, whose Bay Area Artists Report visualizations appear [here](#).

### **All information is anonymous.**

For a piece of data to be displayed on the website it will need 5 reports. So for example, no arts organization will appear until 5 interactions with it have been recorded. Information about a sub-category of artists (e.g. Mid-Career, Painters...) will only be presented after there are 5 artists within that sub-category. No individual paths will be able to be tracked from venue to venue.

### **In Our Own Backyard:**

*"According to a study by the Urban Institute, artists in the United States are often underpaid in relation to their education, skills, and societal contributions.i In the case of Houston, a high degree of wage disparity persists among artists, both in terms of geographic location and the different disciplines that make up a given artist occupation. Meager earnings are one of the chief reasons why increased funding remains such an enduring need for artists. Examining the earning levels for individuals whose primary source of income comes from arts-related occupations shows how viable it is for a person to pursue a career in the arts in the Houston region. As an indicator, income levels for artists can lend insight into how hospitable our region is for working artists, as well as better inform funding decisions. "Low wages often signify a lack of sufficient opportunity for workers with a certain skill set. When comparing how much money arts workers in Houston take home against their counterparts in competitor regions, the numbers initially seem to indicate that Houston is failing to keep up with its peers. In fact, Houston ranks last for mean hourly wages in arts occupations among the 13 other regions considered. Houston is distinguished, however, by the low cost of living its residents enjoy relative to other major U.S. cities – something that the arts community has benefitted from as well." -Center for Houston's Future Report*

### **The Big Picture**

*We believe it is essential to make visible the landscape of support for artists because it also matters in the wider economy. The labor economy is changing. Experts predict that "contingent workers," will reach 40% of the workforce by 2020. These workers, from artists to business consultants, cooks to interns, have been left out of labor policy and are often unfairly compensated for the work and financial risks they assume.*

*As entities of all sizes turn to a more flexible, decentralized, on-demand workforce, we need ways to ensure that workers are getting a fair deal, that these new arrangements are sustainable.*

Public, anonymous compensation data will prove invaluable for activists and organizers advocating for their own communities, but it will also be useful to anyone who cares about where the economy is going and how to make it just and equitable for the long term.

**charge** is co-organized by Jennie Ash and **Carrie Schneider** and presented by Art League Houston. This event is inspired by *Valuing Labor in the Arts: A Practicum* presented by **The Arts Research Center (ARC)** at UC Berkeley.