FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER: WANDERING ART

Union Gallery is situated on the ancestral territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek, who have lived in kinship with this land, water and air for thousands of years.

Ne Union Gallery e'tho noṅwe nikanónhsote tsi noṅwe ne Haudenasaunee tánon Anishinaabek tehatihsnónhsahere ne óhontsa. Gimaakwe Gchi-gkinoomaagegamig atemagad Naadowe miinwaa Anishinaabe aking.

It is our understanding that this territory is included in the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Confederacy of the Ojibwe and Allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, this meeting place is still home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and beyond. To acknowledge territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. To acknowledge territory is to recognize and respect the leadership of the land's original inhabitants. We recognize Union Gallery's own complicity in settler colonialism, its present occupation and violent legacy. We acknowledge our collective responsibility to work actively in support of Indigenous sovereignty, and towards a respectful relationship with this place. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land with respect and care.

Thoughts on *From One Place to Another*, or Public Art (Again) — GHY Cheung

From One Place to Another: Wandering Art was a public art project that took place during the spring and summer of 2022. The project mobilized Union Gallery's new Wandering Art Station as an itinerant site from which artists could engage publics and public spaces in a variety of ways and at different scales. Over the course of the project, the station was used to connect with acquaintances and a broader "accidental audience" to participate in their project *Unraveling: It's up to you!* in Victoria Park.[1] More than just a stage for public art, the Wandering Art Station also functioned as a base for site research and a workspace for creation. The provision of a post from which artists could ideate and create precisely where they intended to present their work was meant to encourage, facilitate and normalize more sustained considerations of site, which within current discourses on the art-site relationship, tend to be treated as a "given" or underplayed in favour of the "relational" dynamics between artists and their communities and publics in place. This foregrounding of site-specificity as a commitment for public art was central to this project. Holding to the notion that siting art in public is inherently political, we asked how new models of site-specificity, reconfigured across an evolving range of resonances and savvy to the social, economic and cultural processes that organize urban space, might retain for public art a critical edge.

Although the project received support from the City of Kingston Arts Fund Adapt Grant, the project was no doubt thought timely in a way that satisfied many of the assessment criteria for the one-time funding program, most explicit in its address of pandemic-related closures and capacity limits that presented challenges to creating and presenting artistic work in-gallery. I like to think that the timeliness of the project also has something to do with its contributions to conversations around site-specificity. How public art is responsive to, conscious of, oriented by its site has certainly been on my mind during a time when our creative communities have been at once forced to "stay put" and encouraged to "explore" their local surroundings and communities in new ways.

From One Place to Another's timeliness must also be thought in relation to existing circumstances of public art in Kataraqui-Kingston. Since at least 2004, through the implementation of its first Public Art Master Plan, the city has supported a robust program of temporary, permanent and community public art projects. Among the work currently on display is Nicholas Crombach's *Horse and Cart*, a metal sculpture of a life-sized horse pulling a children's cart that stood quietly in our view on the day of Lee and Greta's performance, and continues to stand quietly in Victoria Park.

The city's descriptions of its Public Art Program largely uses "public art" and "art in/for public places" interchangeably. Miwon Kwon suggests in her book *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* that art-in-public-places represents a distinct paradigm in the history of public art practices, one most associated with civic "plop art" and corporate baubles indifferent to location and audience.[2] While this understanding of "art in public places" was not universal, with some artists and art administrators in the field of public art, for instance, preferring to refer to site-conscious work, the prevalence of the phrase did signify resistance to the notion of anything called "public art."[3]

I am not suggesting that the continued use of "art in public places" here should be read as any more deliberate than a matter of diction, perhaps even whim and convenience. It is nevertheless a sign of opportunity, one that our project aimed to make the most of, to get over a lingering reluctance towards taking "public" seriously as a qualifier in "public art." Here, I think, is where the spirit of Kwon's book, and her conceptualization of site-specificity as a "relational" dynamic between artists and their publics, in the Program, and aligned with past public and interventional projects like *Parking Art in Parking Lots* from 2004 and *Acting Out, Claiming Space* from 2011. Following Rosalyn Deutsche's indispensable thinking on the relationship between art, urban space and politics, my hope for this project and its iterations in the future is this: that it builds on a vision of public art not constituted and self-satisfied by its location in so-called public space, a public art that reverses the conferral of publicness implied by the art-in-public-places formulation, that is, a public art that, in its relational dynamics, contributes to the publicness of its site, that is, to the publicness of spaces through careful considerations of site, and in doing so activates the potential for these spaces to be public.[4] These are not new ideas, but they are conversations worth having again (and again) as the meaning of publicness continues to change, vital to how public art might be enriching for civic life.

[1] I borrow the term "accidental audience" from the title of offsite collective's 1999 publication *Accidental Audience: Urban Interventions*.

[2] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 60.

[3] The argument against the term "public art" at the time, well-rehearsed but not entirely convincing, was that all art is public, and it was therefore unnecessary to distinguish certain work as more public. Further, if both galleries and the streets could be considered public, a transition from one location to the other only required artists to site their work "in public places" rather then developing a practice that engaged with the publics of, in, and, or not, the gallery. Graeme Chalmers, Glasgowbased artist, famously means. See David Harding, *Decadent Public Art, Contentious Form and Contested Practice* (Glasgow: Glasgow School of Art, 1997), 13.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to:
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Jennifer Demitor, for designing and building the Wandering Art Station.

Niki Boytchuk-Hale and Carina Magazzeni, for administrative assistance and keeping timelines on our collective minds.

Abby Nowakowski, for designing the event poster and bringing the enthusiasm, always.

Talib Ali and Simon Matthews, for lending your perspectives and expertise in documenting *Unraveling.*

UNION
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GALLERY

UNRAVELING: IT'S UP TO YOU!

Greta Grip + Lee Jones

Reflections — Greta Grip + Lee Jones

Introduction

Lee and Greta's project has been a brief years having surpassed in charts, graphs, and data through our screens that keep us up to date on the latest coronavirus messages. These colorful and resourceful field labs in search of healthy circulating air and free space are scattered in spaces by feelings and the ability to reflect on what we have learned.

Our project *Unraveling: It's up to you!* in Victoria Park consisted the operation: The city installation: an upcycled chair jacket made into mobile hangers and a mobile station with a table and chairs for participants to sit and write on the hanging jackets. The station was pulled around the park by Greta and Lee. The chair jackets were repurposed and available images and text that the participants contributed. We hit Greta's parents twice in Gananoque, and Kingston, Greta's hometown. The participants were approached and invited to participate in the project. Participants were given a pen and a piece of paper to write on, and then asked to hang the jacket on the station.

Interactivity/Position Experiment

Our project was a participatory experiment and participant's experience of the operation. We sat and waited for a interaction with other folks. We created questions about what people learned about their day through the experiment. These included the changes that the pandemic brought in their lives and what meaningful interacting has had with individuals began to raise many voices as the pandemic with others and our island.

Text Analysis

The initial materials were sparse with clothing that the audience answering on their (typically and through) website searches. The text type of responses were mostly comprehensive and thoughtful responses. The responses were mostly from people who were interested in the project and were willing to take the time to write and hang the jacket. The participants were mostly people who were interested in the project and were willing to take the time to write and hang the jacket. Lee, Greta, Jennifer Demitor, Niki Boytchuk-Hale, Carina Magazzeni, Abby Nowakowski, Talib Ali, Simon Matthews, Lauren Smart

Participant Interactions: Holding the pen under

Our project was a participatory experiment and participant's experience of the operation. We sat and waited for a interaction with other folks. We created questions about what people learned about their day through the experiment. These included the changes that the pandemic brought in their lives and what meaningful interacting has had with individuals began to raise many voices as the pandemic with others and our island.

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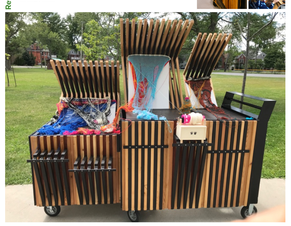
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