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YOU

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ME



# Between You and Me

By Shannon R. Stratton

As a founder of an arts organization, a curator, a teacher, and a director of an art school and artists' residency, I have long considered how arts organizations are hosts. My work in the field has been guided by some nebulous precepts on what it means to welcome guests, considering that these cultural places (museums, art centers, galleries, artist residencies, and classrooms) are temporary for visitors, even if they return and with regularity. That they do so from different points of entry and formality is one of the interesting puzzles about throwing this party—everyone's level of investment is at a different intensity, and everyone's needs, in order to feel truly welcome, are significantly different.

Culture is a vast and unruly concept. It is defined by the Oxford dictionaries as *the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively*. The collective nature of this attention is important. How do places for cultural engagement feel welcome to everyone?

Artists have long acted as intermediaries within communities—their art frequently doing the work of translation, processing current events, or augmenting perception. *Between You and Me* explores the ways artists consider relationships in their work: being neighborly and performing acts of radical hospitality, mentorship, service, and friendship. In other words: care. How do artists and arts organizations care about the communities they are a part of?

For the artists in this exhibition, the work (and poetics) of establishing connection is the foundation of their art. Each is committed to correspondence in the long term. *Between You and Me* highlights significant projects that demonstrate that commitment and a range of ways artists practice care, hospitality, and generosity within communities that echo the work done by arts and cultural organizations. In line with the Arts Center's past exhibitions and collection, which feature artist-built environments and artist world-building, *Between You and Me* presents a small selection of practices that testify to the ways artists create space for and between people, even

if temporarily. An "environment" is also an intentional atmosphere, the character of where and how people connect.

Chloë Bass's *The Book of Everyday Instruction* is an eight-chapter investigation into one-on-one social interaction. Unfolding in multiple cities, in public, in her studio, and within cultural organizations, Bass's project focuses on the nuance between self and other in close correspondence. Five years ago, Benjamin Todd Wills began writing letters to incarcerated citizens who never or rarely received mail. Eventually, he received a paper airplane from one of them. This plane, which so beautifully symbolized freedom, impelled Wills to ask other correspondents to mail him an airplane. He ultimately amassed around five hundred planes that visually connect viewers to neighbors currently serving time.

John Preus's "stoops" are part of a hybrid sculpture and design practice that combines reuse, community collaboration, and poetics in furniture making. These works intentionally evoke sites and occasions for dialogue. Christine Wong Yap has made exploring the process and conditions that beget belonging central to her work, developing a range of tools, games, and documents that guide participants toward recognition and acknowledgement of their course toward affiliation and fellowship.

General Sisters, founded by Dana Bishop-Root and Ginger Brooks Takahashi in North Braddock, Pennsylvania, began with the acquisition of a building for use as a general store in the neighborhood where they lived. Their foundational question—"How do we build a neighborhood grocery store, as neighbors?"—laid the groundwork for a collaboration in which they learn and develop practices that nourish a neighborhood conditioned by systemic racial, economic, and environmental oppression. To illustrate economic histories, Sara Clugage hosts dinner parties that draw on the culinary styles from different periods of art history, teasing out the interconnectedness of culture, labor, and wealth while guests hear short performative lectures and play trivia.

Nestled in the show is another "museum" curated by the Portland, Oregon-based Harriet Tubman Center for Expanded Curatorial Practice, coordinated by artists Lisa Jarrett and Harrell Fletcher. Students at the Harriet Tubman

Middle School learn about curatorial practice and art criticism across cultural fields, eventually applying their skills as a curatorial team working both in their school and at large. Fellows for this project are Bea, Elliot, Esperanza, Harrell, Joyce, Lisa, Nora, and Syncier. For this exhibition, they worked with Portland's Public Annex, which serves residents with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Run by artists, agriculturists, and activists, Public Annex seeks to create a truly integrated society. Its arts programs help artists with developmental disabilities pursue their practice alongside artists without disabilities. The student curators chose to showcase the work of Public Annex artist Lawrence Oliver. Oliver is a multidisciplinary artist whose work ranges from sculptural machines to drawings and objects inspired by nature, YouTube videos, cartoons, and video games.

All these practices foreground the many ways artists think about, and with, their communities to make things that host, support, nourish, connect, and care for those around them. In a gallery laid out as an interconnected community of spaces, we begin to see artists not as people on the margins, illustrating modern life, or commenting on current events, but as citizens and neighbors integrated into our communities and integral to crafting a rich and complex civic life.

Shannon R. Stratton is executive director of Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency in Saugatuck, Michigan. Her past work with the Arts Center includes curating *Even thread [has] a speech* (2019) and *An Encounter with Presence*, a curatorial response to Emery Blagdon's *Healing Machine* (2017).

# For Further Exploration

The artists featured in *Between You and Me* each engage in research to inform their projects. Simultaneously, the research process allows artists to connect with others exploring similar subject matter both within and outside the visual-arts realm.

Here, at our invitation, each artist shares a list of readings that relate to their practices. This research material is included in a reading area in the gallery. The reading list acts as a bridge fostering further connection with the artists. It also offers an alternative avenue for engaging, beyond the gallery setting, with the ideas explored in *Between You and Me*.

## From Chloë Bass

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Bass, Chloë. *The Book of Everyday Instruction*. Brooklyn, NY: Operating System, 2018.

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. 3rd ed. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011.

## From Sara Clugage

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Alvaredo, Facundo, Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, Gabriel Saez, and Gabriel Zucman. "World Inequality Report: Executive Summary." World Inequality Report. Berlin, Germany: World Inequality Lab, 2018. <https://wir2018.wid.world/files/download/wir2018-summary-english.pdf>.

Carnegie, Andrew. *The Gospel of Wealth, and Other Timely Essays*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, n.d.

Derrida, Jacques, and Anne Dufourmantelle. *Of Hospitality*. Stanford University Press, 2000.

Fraser, Andrea, and Jamie Stevens. 2016: *In Museums, Money, and Politics*. San Francisco, Calif. : Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2018.

Goldstein, David. "Emmanuel Levinas and the Ontology of Eating." *Gastronomica* 10, no. 3 (2010): 34–44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2010.10.3.34>.

Krasner-Khait, Barbara. "The Impact of Refrigeration." *History Magazine*, March 2017. <https://www.history-magazine.com/refrig.html>.

Riley, Dylan. "Bourdieu's Class Theory." *Catalyst Journal* 1, no. 2 (Summer 2017). <https://catalyst-journal.com/vol1/no2/bourdieu-class-theory-riley>.

Saez, Emmanuel, and Gabriel Zucman. "Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, no. 2 (May 1, 2016): 519–78. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjw004>.

Shapiro, Laura. *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century*, with a new afterword. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2008.

Veit, Helen Zoe, ed. *Food in the American Gilded Age*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017.

## **From Lisa Jarrett and Harrell Fletcher**

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Finkelpearl, Tom. *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation*. Durham; London: Duke University Press Books, 2013.

Freire, Paulo, and Donaldo Macedo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 4th edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

hooks, bell. *Teaching Community*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Kohl, Herbert R., and Jonathan Kozol. *I Won't Learn from You: And Other Thoughts on Creative Maladjustment*. 2nd ed. The New Press, 1995.

Sobel, David. *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities*. 2nd ed. Great Barrington, Mass: Orion Society, 2004.

## **From General Sisters**

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Adnan, Etel. *There: In the Light and the Darkness of the Self and of the Other*. Brooklyn, New York: The Post-Apollo Press, 1997.

Davis, Angela. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Haymarket Books, 2016.

Delany, Samuel R. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. New York; London: New York University Press, 2001.

Fukuoka, Masonobu. *The One-Straw Revolution*, 1970.

Jenkins, Joseph C. *The Humanure Handbook, 4th Edition: Shit in a Nutshell*. 4th ed. Grove City, PA: Joseph Jenkins, Inc., 2019.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. S.I.: Penguin Books, 2020.

Klehm, Nance. *The Soil Keepers: Interviews with Practitioners on the Ground Beneath Our Feet*, 2019.

Maathai, Wangari. *Unbowed: My Autobiography*. London: Arrow, 2008

O'Neill, Paul, and Mick Wilson, eds. *Curating and the Educational Turn*. London: Open Editions/De Appel, 2010.

Penniman, Leah, and Karen Washington. *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*, 2018.

## **From John Preus**

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Allegro, John M., J. R. Irvin, Jan Irvin, Carl A. P. Ruck, and Judith Anne Brown. *The Sacred Mushroom and The Cross: A Study of the Nature and Origins of Christianity within the Fertility Cults of the Ancient Near East*. Anniversary edition. S.I.: Gnostic Media Research & Publishing, 2009.

Barthes, Roland, and Richard Howard. *S/Z: An Essay*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.

Brown, Bill. *Other Things*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Cowdell, Scott, Chris Fleming, and Joel Hodge, eds. *Violence, Desire, and the Sacred, Volume 1: Girard's Mimetic Theory Across the Disciplines*. Reprint edition. Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

Critchley, Simon. *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*. Verso, 2014.

Cross, St John of the. *Dark Night of the Soul*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2019.

Danto, Arthur C. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art by Arthur C. Danto*. Harvard University Press, 1968.

Dillard, Annie. *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters*. Revised edition. Harper Perennial, 2013.

Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. Translated by A. A. Brill, n.d.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor, 1995.

Mitchell, W. J. T. *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*. New edition. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Nabokov, Vladimir, and Martin Amis. *Lolita*. 5th ed. New York: Everyman's Library, 1993.

O'Connor, Flannery. *The Complete Stories*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971.

Steiner, Rudolf. *How to Know Higher Worlds: A Modern Path of Initiation*. Translated by Christopher Bamford and Sabine H. Seiler. New edition. Hudson, N.Y: Anthroposophic Press, 1994.

Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. 6th ed. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 1992.

Zizek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008.

## **From Benjamin Todd Wills**

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Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Anniversary edition. The New Press, 2020.

Bauer, Shane. *American Prison: A Reporter's Undercover Journey into the Business of Punishment*. Reprint edition. Penguin Books, 2019.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002.

Mirza, Fatima Farheen. *A Place for Us*. Reprint edition. SJP for Hogarth, 2019.

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, and Eric Bogosian. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Reprint edition. New York, N.Y.: Berkley, 2009.



## From Christine Wong Yap

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- Brown, Brené. *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*. Reprint edition. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2019.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. Reprint edition. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013.
- Dockx, Nico, and Pascal Gielen, eds. *Mobile Autonomy Exercises in Artists' Self-Organization*. Amsterdam: Valiz/Antennae Series, 2016.
- . *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008.
- Fox, Elaine. *Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain: How to Retrain Your Brain to Overcome Pessimism and Achieve a More Positive Outlook*. New York: Basic Books, 2012.
- Haidt, Jonathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.
- Hunn, Sarrita, and James McAnally. *To Make A Public: Temporary Art Review, 2011-2016*. Inca Press, 2016.
- Keltner, Dacher. *Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.
- Kester, Grant H. *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Lippard, Lucy R. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*. New edition. New York: New Press, 1998.
- Lopez, Shane J. *Making Hope Happen: Create the Future You Want for Yourself and Others*. Reprint edition. Atria Books, 2014.
- Lyubomirsky, Sonja. *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. Reprint edition. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Martin, Paul. *Sex, Drugs and Chocolate*. London: Fourth Estate, 2007.
- Peterson, Christopher. *Pursuing the Good Life: 100 Reflections on Positive Psychology*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Pollay, David J. *The Law of the Garbage Truck: How to Stop People from Dumping on You*. Sterling, 2012.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. Reprint edition. New York, NY: Atria Books, 2012.
- . *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. Reprint edition. New York: Vintage, 2006.
- Sholette, Gregory. *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*. London; New York: Pluto Press, 2011.
- Tharp, Twyla, and Jesse Kornbluth. *The Collaborative Habit: Life Lessons for Working Together*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Thompson, Nato, ed. *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*. Reprint edition. The MIT Press, 2017.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Reprint edition. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Zimbardo, Philip, and John Boyd. *The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life*. 35089th edition. Atria Books, 2009.

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The artists in *Between You and Me* consider their engagement with communities, both at their respective homes and here in Sheboygan, to be works of art unto themselves. Accordingly, these artists will work with our community to explore ideas of hospitality, sustainability, education, and resilience over the course of the exhibition. As the year progresses, elements from many of these programs will be on display in the gallery. We encourage you to experience these artworks by participating and working directly with these artists.

**Check for programming updates at [jmkac.org/cares](http://jmkac.org/cares)**

*On Being Here (and There)* is supported by the **Kohler Trust for Arts and Education**, the **Frederic Cornell Kohler Charitable Trust**, **Kohler Foundation, Inc.**, and the **Wisconsin Arts Board** with funds from the **State of Wisconsin** and the **National Endowment for the Arts**. The Arts Center thanks its many members for their support of exhibitions and programs through the year.





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