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The Meeting

Many artists have a sense that art and life should be fused. We know that art does not belong exclusively in galleries, museums, or in institutional spaces, as creativity is everywhere and cannot be contained or made scarce. Even if we show our work in galleries and museums, we know that the majority of things we make will come back home to live with us. Every art object we make cannot be collected or sold; there are too many.

And so, for most of us, the question arises: How can I fuse art and life?

Should my art live in the streets, to support political protest?

Should my art live in a garden, to support regenerative life?

Should my art live in a home, to support maintenance and social reproduction?

Should my art live in a learning space, to support skill sharing and growth?

In 2013, I decided: my art should live in [meetings](#), to support discussion and debate about the [solidarity economy](#). This began a long exploration of ways to fuse my love of group processes with my love of object-making.

I am devoted to [meetings](#) where everyone attends voluntarily, where people are not obligated by a boss to be present. I spend

the majority of my time in [meetings](#) with two to twenty people that take place in community groups, cooperatives, artist-run spaces, and collectives; I prefer these spaces to [meetings](#) that happen in workplaces where workers do not get to weigh in on the conditions that they work within. In the best moments, in voluntary [meetings](#), there is a sense among participants that the process is spontaneous, collaborative, and transformative.

[Meetings](#) are what make my projects possible. I love to plan [meetings](#), to participate in them, and to think about them. I define a meeting as a scheduled gathering of people where participants are able to speak extemporaneously about a shared topic. At their best, [meetings](#) are a form of [mediation](#). They ask participants to reconsider [practices](#) and habits and potentially allow something new to emerge, both relationally and conceptually.

I define a meeting as a
scheduled gathering of people
where participants are able to
speak extemporaneously about
a shared topic.

For me, [meetings](#) of this form are a space for lifelong learning. Where else can you go to think with other people, to move from study to action, to build friendships, and to transform your understanding of the world, in community?

At a SolidarityNYC meeting in 2009, I remember finding out about the emergent cooperative movement in New York City, and being invited to bring my media-making [skills](#) to the work ahead. It was exciting to be sitting at a table with people who talked about how to connect worker-owned businesses to credit unions and community gardens across the city, and then to help as we did this by making videos, a [website](#), and graphics with the group. It was here that I learned about transformative organizing, as the SolidarityNYC collective invited members to gather every weekend to talk about the challenges we each faced in “becoming the change” we wanted to see in the world. Each

person would have 30 minutes, or an hour, to share the ways that they lived and worked through the contradictions of desiring a cooperative world and living in an extractive and exploitative one.

As an artist, I wondered: What might strange objects (sculptures) do to the conventions of [meetings](#)? Can objects open up space for [reflection](#) and the wild unknown? I wanted to do more than to make posters, [websites](#), murals, and traditional media for groups of activists and organizers.

I have always been interested in objects that can guide a space. I thought: There must be something more powerful than a sticky note or a [circle](#) of chairs for a meeting. As a [white](#), European-American person, raised agnostic yet celebrating a market-driven version of Christmas, I grew up with an impoverished cultural imaginary about aesthetically compelling, emotionally open, or directly democratic gatherings. My parents, their parents, and their parents all passed down to me a false [legacy](#) of “[whiteness](#)” as our general racial identity and heritage. Rather than being told about my German and Swedish heritage, for example, I was told that I was simply “[white](#)” with no connection to any particular ancestral lineage; without culturally specific rituals or objects that I might take [pride](#) in beyond assimilation into a dominant culture of [white](#), settler-colonial America. In this way, and many others, my parents participated in an unspoken project of assimilation into [whiteness](#) as a monolithic category.

What rituals for gatherings can I bring to gatherings? Again, I want to make objects for secular meeting spaces, but my family passed down no ritual objects or awareness of the specificity of my heritage that I could draw from. I started thinking about contemporary artists who have reimagined ritual spaces and objects from their own social positions and heritage.

For example:

The sculptor and performance artist Allison Smith writes that she is “motivated by a sense of accountability for harms caused by my

ancestors,” and has therefore “spent many years investigating the cultural phenomenon of historical reenactment as the ritualized performance of unresolved trauma.”⁵

The project *Game Remains, (Guelph)* created by Postcommodity in 2013, uses, as the collective describes, a “ceremonial conceptual framework” to “transform participants into musicians engaged in a community instrument of self-determination.”⁶

The mixed-media installation with video, *I prayed to the wrong god for you*, made by Tiona Nekkia McClodden in 2019, includes a ritual for the Santería/Lucumí god Shango as well as documentation of the creation of ritual objects.

The temporary shelter made for shared meals during the Jewish festival of harvest during Succoth, *Gardening Sukkah*, from 2000 by Allan Wexler.

Most *facilitators*—people who guide *meetings*—do not assume specific religious or shared cultural heritage in the majority of the community *meetings* I have attended. What objects already exist in these secular community meeting spaces? Sticky notes, clocks, fluorescent bulbs, ceiling tiles, formica *tables*, old plastic chairs. What excites me is the possibility that an object can produce a shared meaning within the context of a gathering; that it can guide meeting participants to some genuinely new space or thought or make the travel of reaching such a destination that much easier. I have also had to check my own assumptions in this process.

As an artist who spends hours each day *looking* at and making art, the references that shape the way I “read” any object, including the ones that I make, are far different from

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Artist’s *website*:
allisonsmithstudio.com/
s-t-a-t-e-m-e-n-t

6

Artist’s *website*:
postcommodity.com/*GameRemains*

many of the people I find myself in [meetings](#) with, who are not artists. For example, the giant [mycelium](#) head that I made was only used by [facilitators](#) and groups that already include theatricality and role playing as part of their meeting culture. In many of the [meetings](#) I attended, and offered objects for gathering, the [mycelium](#) head simply sat there, unused, as it seemed too strange or too much like an expensive art-object.

I grew up with an impoverished cultural imaginary about aesthetically compelling, emotionally open, or directly democratic gatherings

I finally accepted that my [glass water](#) clocks, my [mycelium](#) head, and my nets took too long to explain for the majority of meeting scenarios; they required a [facilitator](#) who would introduce them, and move the group from a culture of verbal discussion to a culture of movement, [haptic](#) awareness, and embodied leadership. Not wanting my objects to seem [elite](#), ritual-like, or untouchable, I began to develop *The Meeting Game*. This [game](#) asks participants to roll [spheres](#) across the table. I found that this [game](#) was approachable because the [spheres](#) live easily on a meeting table, imply movement, cannot break, and come in multiples so they do not seem precious.

What excites me is the possibility that an object can produce a shared meaning within the context of a gathering; that it can guide meeting participants to some genuinely new space or thought

The [game](#) visualizes the flow of dialogue, as each person starts out with the same number of [spheres](#), and a person must roll a sphere to another person, or “spend it,” in order to speak. In this way, the [spheres](#) act as a kind of currency. People can redistribute [spheres](#) without speaking, if they wish. When played in a meeting, the [game](#) has the effect of both slowing down the flow of conversation and exchange as well as making

visible who is speaking, how often, and to whom. In this intersection of artistic relation and social relation, I see an opening toward a new work culture and perhaps a new economic formation as well.

The **game** visualizes the flow of dialogue, as each person starts out with the same number of **spheres**, and a person must roll a sphere to another person, or “spend it,” in order to speak. In this way, the **spheres** act as a kind of currency.

I have long had an interest in community-generating currencies and other ways to imagine and visualize the flow of resources outside of our existing, capital-driven economy. For example, I did so at both Exchange Café ^{see chapter 4} as well as the **barter** networks TradeSchool.coop and OurGoods.org ^{see chapter 3}. I believe that the only way in which we will have a new economy and an economy that works for many artists is for artists themselves to begin the project of imagining, representing, and instantiating new organizations of **labor**, currency, and infrastructure. It is my lifelong ambition to make art that enables people to imagine and enact **practices** of solidarity economies.

Imagine that the next time you walk into a meeting room and sit down, rather than getting out your laptop, iPad or notebook, you pick up a group of ceramic spheres and start rolling them across the table to signal who is speaking, who is not, and for how long. Imagine that addressing items on an agenda involves a collective somatic experience—the picking up and putting down of tactile things, the exchange of objects that invite a different kind of relationship with your peers. This is the work of Caroline Woolard.

—Curators Anna Harsanyi
and Macushla Robinson, 2019

The Meeting

Reflect

Idea in Public

Experiment

Timeframe

Inquiry

Commitment

Study

Experience



2019/2020
interpersonal dramas in
large-scale group work
learning how to be together
is the work itself
Trump 2017-2020?

Study

I will learn more **facilitation practices** and make objects for co-ops and groups.

Commitment

Experience

Person X is ruining the meeting!

I will use money from art institutions to support worker-owned business.

Inquiry

emergent
collective metabolism
individual vs collective
we are each stuck in our own minds
the time it takes for the group to change its mind, together
listening
not **listening**
agendas
rhizomatic structures
and in hand in hand
improvisation
collecting
trapping
ceiling tiles
floor tiles
formica
24 inches × 24 inches

centering
grounding
facilitation
beholding
group rest
collectivity
daily **practices**
being together
group work



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objects for meetings
like Clue
ritual
the artist with the candle
in the ballroom
continuous study
facilitation : sculpture
local facilitators using
objects I make
U.S. Federation of Worker
Cooperatives
Ombuds
DePaul Labor Education Center



rolling
balls
spheres
mycelium bust
Zeus
video
nets
ceiling tiles
daybed
website
events



Timeframe

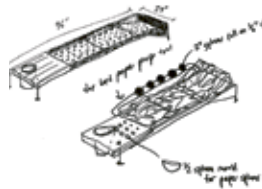
This is a short term
project due to institutional
invitations.

Idea in Public

Objects for groups that a
library patron can check out.

Reflect

Experiment



Study Center for Group Work
can contextual, local collective
practices be shared?
cultural appropriation
talking sticks
indigenous and colonial net
making
minimalist artists' nets
Eva Hesse
Jiro Takamatsu
history of ceiling tiles
"dropped" ceiling

"false" ceiling
air diffusers, smoke detectors,
sprinklers, CCTV cameras, and
neon lights
"debt ceiling"
"glass ceiling"
a limit
mycelial networks
transformative organizing
U.S.Federation of Worker
Cooperatives
disability justice

conflict transformation
Generative Somatics
Judith Leemann and
Kenneth Bailey
UltraRed
Center for Artistic Activism
SOVRN state Scott Benaglio
Process Work Institute

The Meeting

The Meeting

Gabrielle Lavin Suzenski, Rochelle F. Levy
Director of The Galleries at Moore College of
Art & Design

Think of the last meeting you were in. What did it feel like?

Gabrielle Lavin Suzenski, Rochelle F. Levy
Director of the Galleries at Moore, began her career in the Fabric Workshop and Museum's post-college apprenticeship program, which led to a full time position working with the founder/artistic director in coordinating the museum's relocation in 2006. She has an MBA in Entrepreneurship & Innovation and a BFA in Sculpture and Printmaking, both from Penn State University.

The Meeting presents a selection of recent work by New York-based artist Caroline Woolard (b. 1984, Rhode Island) that takes “the meeting” itself—the gathering of people for a formal purpose—as a site for artistic and social intervention. Themes of collectivity and [political economy](#) recur in Woolard's work, and after a decade of working in arts collectives and creating socially engaged projects, she recognized that she had spent at least half of her artistic life in [meetings](#).

Most people will spend over a quarter of their lives at work. For office workers, a large portion of this time will occur in [meetings](#). In *The Meeting*, Woolard evokes the human body through its absence in the banal physicality of offices. Electrical [outlets](#), ceiling tiles, and meeting [tables](#) intimate the [power](#) dynamics of [meetings](#). A tongue hangs from the ceiling. This array of sculptural objects, as well as a series of videos and a [game](#) placed on a boardroom table, reflect upon the unavoidable antagonisms of working together.

As the first recipient of the Jane & David Walentas Endowed Fellowship, Woolard asks: Can a job be pleasurable? Does pleasure in work require self-determination? How do workers without bosses (i.e. worker-owners in cooperative businesses) transform workplace conflict? Woolard has taken the past year to learn [facilitation practices](#) from the United States Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#)

Study

Institutional
Invitation

(USFWC), the national grassroots membership organization for worker-owned businesses.

In cooperatives, unlike other businesses, workers share profits and participate in oversight, and often in the management of the enterprise, using democratic [practices](#). [Facilitation](#)—the skillful guiding of the meeting process—is a [key](#) part of running a cooperative or self-organized group, because people in horizontal groups such as a cooperative share [power](#) and must attend [meetings](#) in order to make decisions together. Woolard has learned conflict transformation techniques from [facilitators](#) at USFWC while developing sculptural objects that are used to facilitate [meetings](#). Sculptural objects like these will be available at the Free Library of Philadelphia in the spring of 2020 for library patrons to check out and use.

Can a job be pleasurable? Does pleasure in work require self-determination?

One set of objects is presented in framed nets. Cascading from the ceiling and hung on the wall, these nets “catch” and “trap” [facilitation](#) objects and make reference to both the fishing nets of colonial Philadelphia and to the minimalist, conceptual works of the artists Eva Hesse and Jiro Takamatsu. Here, square [walnut](#) frames [mirror](#) the shape and scale of ubiquitous ceiling tiles, suspended overhead in meeting spaces as “dropped” or “false” ceilings. By definition, the false ceiling is a surface that hides the infrastructure installed above it—air diffusers, smoke detectors, sprinklers, CCTV cameras, and neon lights—from the room below. In everyday speech, the ceiling acts as a metaphor for a limit which cannot be

[trusted](#). Think of a “[glass](#) ceiling” or a “debt ceiling.” The net sculptures fit perfectly in everyday office ceilings and have been installed in the gallery as well as in an unnamed office in the area.

This exhibition suggests that artists can bring studio-based sculptural techniques to an approach to art-making that emphasizes participation and dialogue.

The artist writes:

My approach arises from three desires I have: (1) to make objects that resonate in the field of art and that acknowledge the cultural specificity of the field itself; (2) to make objects that are used by [facilitators](#) in co-op and self-organized settings; (3) to allow myself to participate in a non-extractive way in [facilitation](#) settings and [meetings](#) with groups that are not concerned with the field of art. I want to offer my [skills](#) as an artist and honor existing, slowly developed, community-generated [facilitation skills](#) in the context of organizing for economic justice. For example, rather than putting co-op members on display for a museum performance, I will attempt to display objects that reflect upon co-op [practices](#).

Woolard has determined to present sculptural objects as surrogates for the social [practices](#) of cooperative [meetings](#).

The Meeting

I want to offer my **skills**
as an artist and honor
existing, slowly developed,
community-generated
facilitation skills in the
context of organizing for
economic justice.

While some objects are exhibited for contemplation on the wall, or trapped in the ceiling in a net, *The Meeting Game* invites interaction and rewrites the meeting script. Participation here occurs as visitors wait in the lobby at Moore, or as art classes gather around the table, rather than in a spectacular event in public space with the artist. At the boardroom table in the gallery, **facilitation** objects are available for use, to encourage new forms of interpersonal exchange. Viewers are invited to watch the video, learn how to play the **game**, and roll a ball that corresponds to a way of speaking. In doing so, viewers may become more aware of the flow of dialogue in any conversation. This **game**, developed in collaboration with USFWC's Executive Director, Esteban Kelly, will continue to be refined by the USFWC in nonart settings and also throughout the semester in workshops and public programs with the artist. In *The Meeting*, viewers are encouraged to be present with their concerns or curiosity about work, and about working together.

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INDEX: *The Meeting*

Caitlin Julia Rubin is a curator at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University. Since joining the Rose, she has organized exhibitions and projects by Mark Dion, Rosalyn Drexler, Jennie C. Jones, and Tuesday Smillie, among others, and collaborated with visiting artists to foster new, site-responsive initiatives, including Caroline Woolard's *INDEX: The Meeting* (2019–20).

Caitlin Julia Rubin, Assistant Curator,
Rose Art Museum, 2020.

In the Fall of 2019, the Rose Art Museum debuted a new initiative, INDEX at the Lee Gallery. INDEX seeks to experiment with new formats for engagement in the museum's galleries; within its ongoing program, two artists per year are invited to create site-responsive and participatory projects. Though centered in the museum's Lee gallery, the influence of these projects radiates across the whole of the Rose Art Museum's spaces and processes. Each artist engagement is, at its base, an invitation to disrupt and make room to rethink what the museum does, and by what means it might build community and space for collective action. It was very early in our brainstorming about INDEX that I realized I knew the perfect person to lead the charge of its first installment: Caroline Woolard.

As the Rose Art Museum's inaugural INDEX artist and the museum's 2019–20 Ruth Ann and Nathan Perlmutter Artist-in-Residence, Woolard chose the meeting as a site for artistic and social intervention. Her INDEX entry, *The Meeting*, invited participants to explore more open, aware, and intentional exchanges, designating the Lee Gallery as a space for generative dialogue. Combining the formal language of her sculptural [practice](#) with [tools](#) and techniques used for group [facilitation](#), her central work *The Meeting Game* (2019–ongoing) built off of the conventional meeting format to open an investigation into different systems for collaboration and cooperation.

Spurred by Woolard's proposition, museum visitors, organized groups, and university classes collectively contributed to *The Meeting Game*'s evolving platform, using it

The Meeting

to think through ideas and to foster discussion. Members of the Brandeis University community hosted open conversations centered on specific, challenging topics: how to talk about politics at the dinner table, cultures of bullying on campus, and even the occasionally intimidating nature of contemporary art itself. Over the course of Woolard's residency, *The Meeting Game* continued to be refined in workshops, public programs, and the addition of sculptural [facilitation tools](#) constructed in collaboration with students, faculty, and staff at Brandeis.

These [tools](#)—new balls, nets, experimental mats for [game](#) organization, and sculptural busts for directed conversation—were shown in various stages of development, displayed on and adjacent to *The Meeting Game*'s playing surface. Their inclusion allowed visitors to engage not only with the means and methods for collaboration, but also the fabrication of objects that structure these engagements.

Woolard began to create sculptures using [mycelium](#), the vegetative root structure of fungi. Activated and tended over time, this living material can expand into shaped form. At the Rose Art Museum, partnership with the Brandeis MakerLab and the support of their Impact Maker Program enabled Woolard to expand the processes of her studio within the gallery. In a mold rendered from the digital scan of a carved bust of Zeus—an object found by Woolard in the museum's permanent collection—Brandeis sculpture and biology undergraduates packed and then cultivated a [mycelium](#) mixture. In the Rose Art Museum's Lee Gallery, they grew a sculpture. The use of this [mycelium](#) might be read as a material metaphor for Woolard's

approach to a [socially engaged artistic practice](#)—a [practice](#) in which she seeks, through meaningful collaboration, to activate and ally latent and often disparate energies into generative form. In her work, and through her INDEX project, Woolard asks: what potential exists within our own community, and how can we connect through conversations that will allow us to work, in better ways, together?

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fig. 1-1
Research image of ceiling
tile taken by Caroline Woolard
in 2017.

The Meeting

Idea in Public

IMAGINE A GROUP GATHERING

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Invitation

IMAGINE A GROUP GATHERING

The Meeting



This project would not be possible without the [labors](#) of Ecovative Design, Firefly Finishes, Susan Jahoda of BFAMFAPhD, Esteban Kelly, Zaq Landsberg, Maine Thread Company, Alex Mallis, [Meerkat Media Collective](#), Daniel Ramos, Hannah Rawe, and Corinne Spencer. Additional project support comes from Brandeis University, Bennington College, the New School, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Tenthaus in Oslo.

fig. 1-2
The Meeting (detail), 2018-2020,
[mycelium](#), boardroom office table
 and chairs, [walnut](#), [nylon](#), pop-
 lar, acrylic, hardware, per-
 formance, dimensions variable.
 Installation at The Galleries At
 Moore. Photo by Joseph Hu.

The Meeting

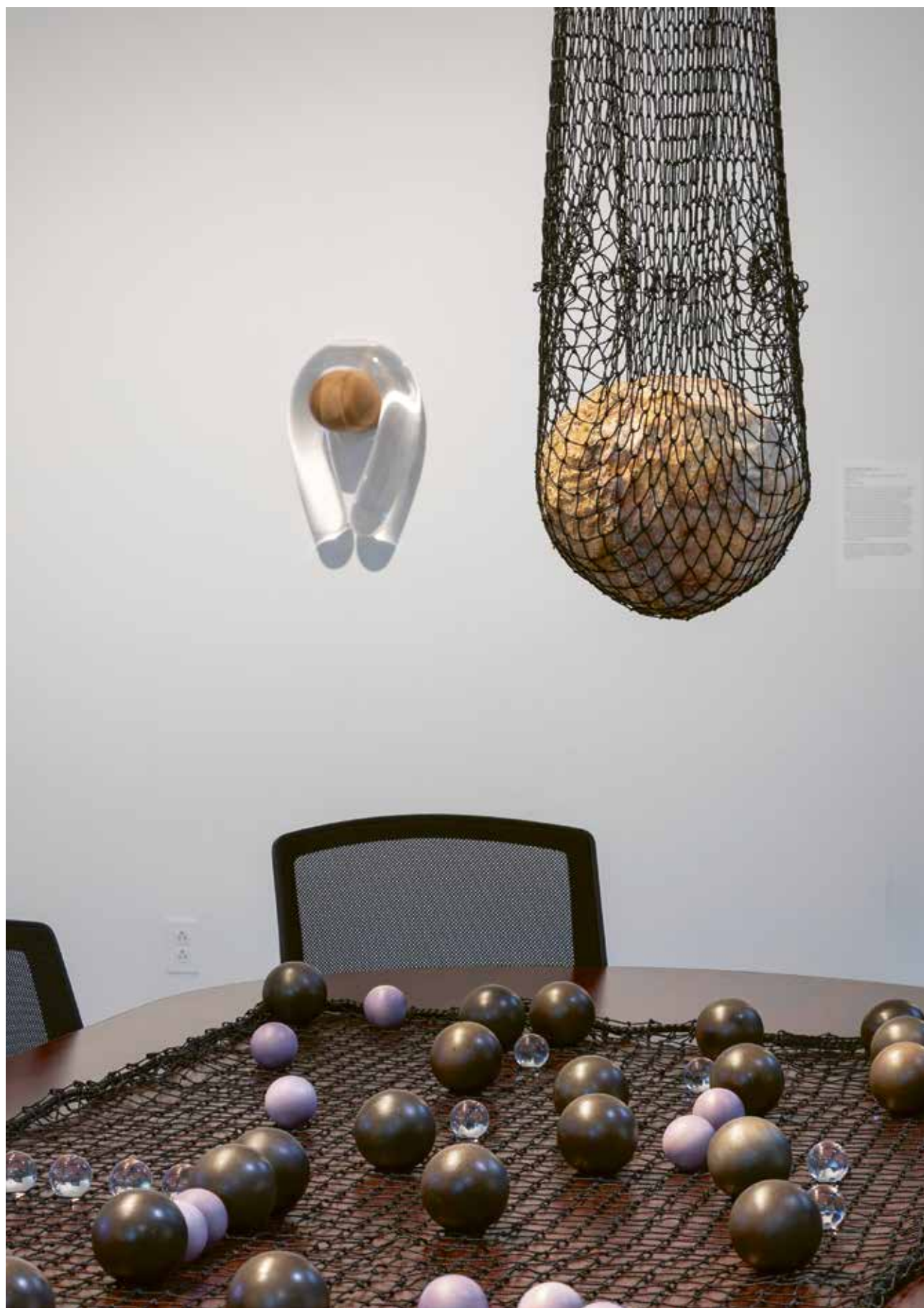


The Meeting Game (in progress) invites interaction and rewrites the meeting script. At the boardroom table, [facilitation](#) objects are available for use, to encourage new forms of interpersonal exchange. Visitors are invited to watch the video, learn how to play the [game](#), and roll a ball that corresponds to a way of speaking. In doing so, viewers may become more aware of the flow of dialogue in any conversation. This [game](#), developed in collaboration with the US Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#) (USFWC) Executive Director, Esteban Kelly, will continue to be refined by the USFWC in nonart settings and also throughout the semester in workshops and public programs with the artist.

The single-channel video was made possible by Alex Mallis, director of photography and editor, and Meerkat Media. Meerkat is a production company cooperative and arts collective committed to making films through a non-hierarchical collaborative process.

fig. 1-3
The Meeting, 2018-2020, [mycelium](#),
 boardroom office table and
 chairs, [walnut](#), [nylon](#), poplar,
 acrylic, hardware, performance,
 dimensions variable. Installation
 at The Galleries At Moore.
 Photo by Joseph Hu.

The Meeting



A marble is significant both in its physicality and in common sayings in the English language.

Physically, any sphere implies motion; it has no single base. A marble is a wonderful example of what we do as sculptors: consider material in space, responding to [gravity](#). Within art disciplines, Sculpture is the place where [gravity](#) is considered most.

In common sayings, a marble holds so much. Think about common English-language figures of speech that have to do with marbles. For example, marbles have to do with sanity, “losing your marbles;” or betting for everything, “for all the marbles;” or with speech, having a “mouthful of marbles.”

Who is said to be sane, who has “lost their marbles”? Who has “all the marbles” to risk playing with and losing? Who is understandable or does not have a “mouthful of marbles”?

Larger [spheres](#) and balls hint at these common sayings, without being so direct.

fig. 1-4
The Meeting (detail), 2018-2020,
[mycelium](#), boardroom office table
 and chairs, [walnut](#), [nylon](#), pop-
 lar, acrylic, hardware, per-
 formance, dimensions variable.
 Installation at The Galleries At
 Moore. Photo by Joseph Hu.

fig. 1-5 (overleaf)
The Meeting (detail).

The Meeting





fig. 1-6

The Meeting, 2018-2020, [mycelium](#), boardroom office table and chairs, [walnut](#), [nylon](#), poplar, acrylic, hardware, performance, dimensions variable. Installation at The Galleries At Moore College of Art & Design. Photo by Joseph Hu.

fig. 1-7 (pages 80-81)

The Meeting (office view), 2019, [mycelium](#), boardroom office table and chairs, [walnut](#), [nylon](#), poplar, acrylic, hardware, performance, dimensions variable. Installation in The Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School. Photo by Levi Mandel.

fig. 1-8 (pages 82-83)

Modular Daybed for Touching Art, 2020, steel, aluminum, [walnut](#), poplar, acrylic, newspaper pulp, [mycelium](#), organic cotton, kapock, hardware, 80 × 15 × 38 inches, dimensions variable with adjustable components. Installation at Rose Art Museum. Special thanks to the University Ombuds, Ecovative, DIY Natural Bedding, Juju and Jake, and Ian Whitemore for help creating this project. Images: Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Mel Taing.

fig. 1-9 (pages 84-85)

Still from *The Meeting Game*, single-channel video loop, produced in collaboration with Alex Mallis and Meerkat Media, 2019.

fig. 1-10 (pages 86-87)

Still from *The Meeting Game*, single-channel video loop, produced in collaboration with Alex Mallis and Meerkat Media, 2019.

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Art, Engagement, Economy: The Working Practice of Caroline Woolard (fall 2020).
More information at CarolineWoolard.com.













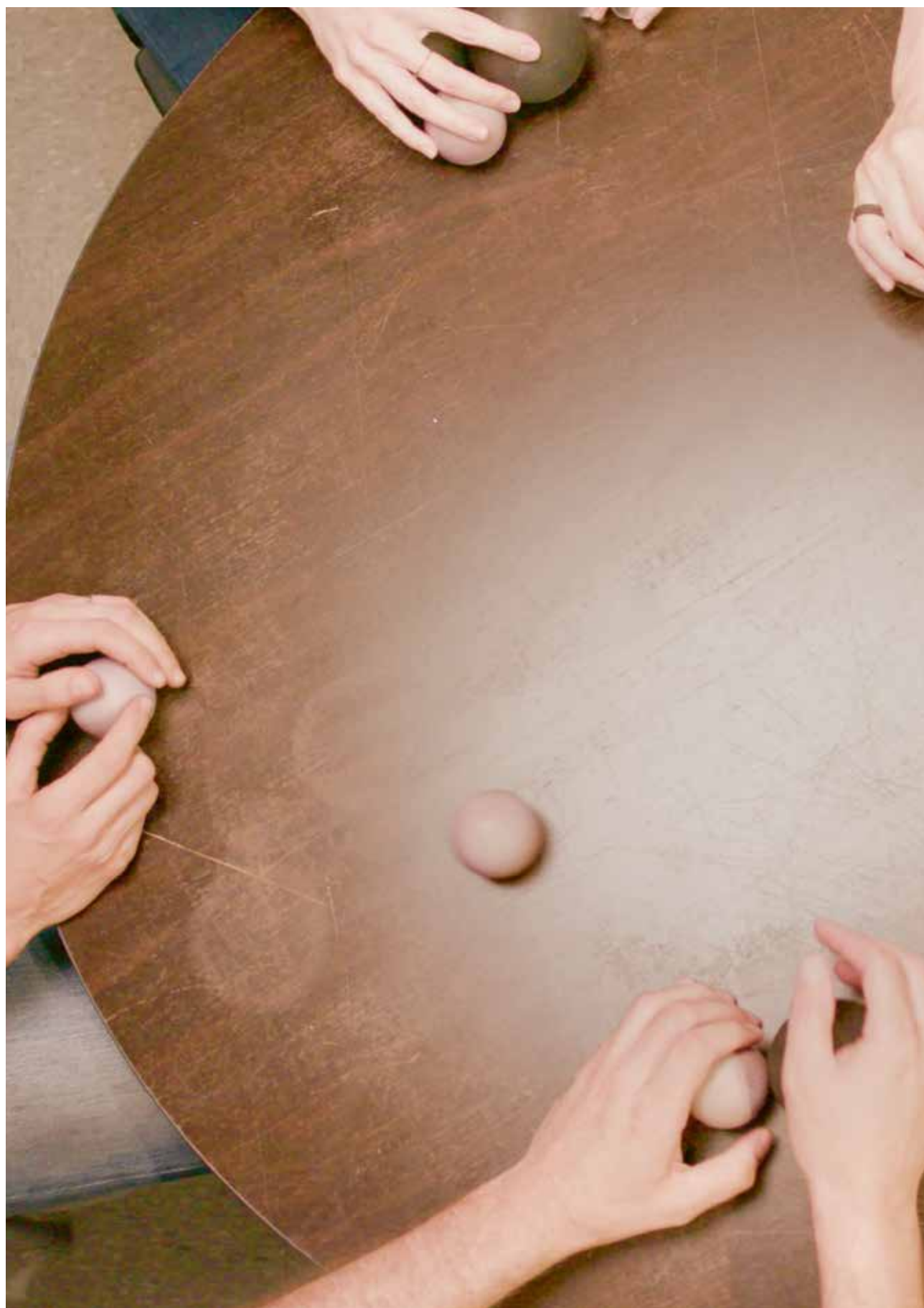








fig. 1-11
The Meeting (gallery view),
 2018-2019, mycelium, walnut,
 nylon, glass, hardware, per-
 formance, dimensions variable.
 Photo by Daniel Chou.

fig. 1-12
 Caroline Woolard, *Untitled*
 (Objects for Facilitation),
 2018. Video still by Herman
 Jean-Noel.

The Meeting



fig. 1-13
Caroline Woolard, *Untitled*
(*Objects for Facilitation*),
2018. Video still by Herman
Jean-Noel.

Institutional
Invitation

Ephemera

Woolard has selected ephemera that serves as visual reference points for *The Meeting*.

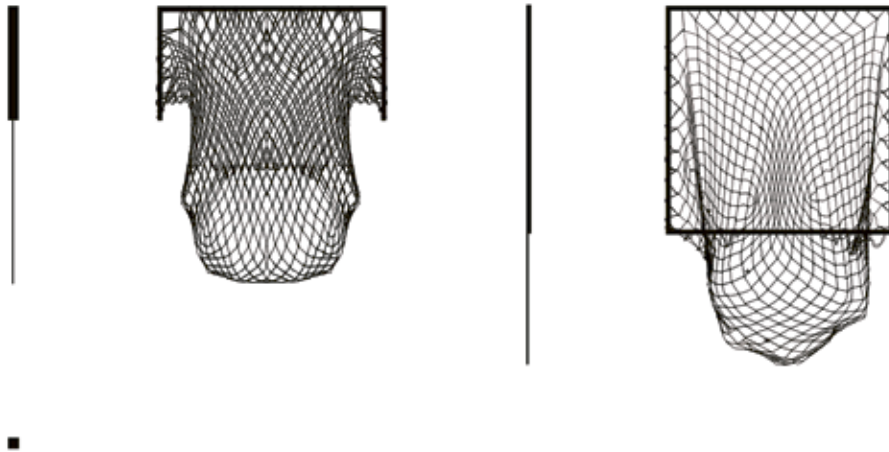


fig. 1-14
Technical drawing with [key](#)
for scale, made to produce the
framed net for *The Meeting*.

The Meeting

10



FIG. 25 - HALF-MESH KNOT
L TO R WEAVING

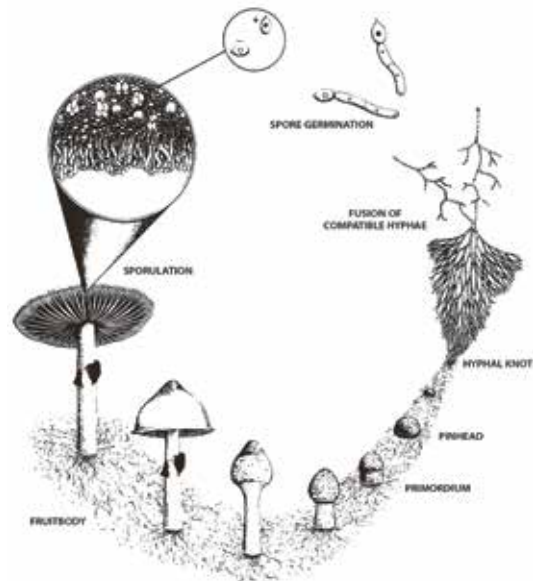
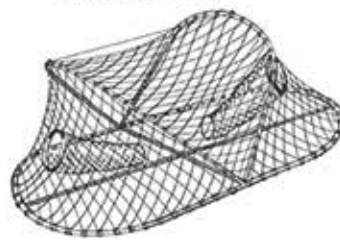
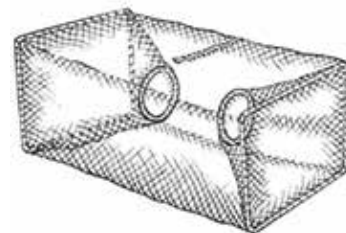


FIG. 15 - GAUGING MESH SIZE

funnel (opera house) trap



funnel trap



Inquiry

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Making

I want these objects to be created soup-to-nuts, by you, the artist. I don't want to take over the process by saying: "more of this, more of that." The purpose of art is for you all [artists] to do your thing without us mucking things up. This is not our area of expertise.

—Esteban Kelly, 2018

fig. 1-15
Collage of mushroom mycelium and nets found while doing research to determine the form that objects might take in *The Meeting*, and thinking about knots, capture, mending, and trapping. Images from P. Stamets, *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2005), and J. A. Krug, *Fishery Leaflet 241: Methods of Mending—New England* (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service), 6, 10.

I learned from *LISTEN*^{see chapter 6} that I wanted to continue my work on the role of objects in [facilitation](#), but this time, I wanted to be in charge of the quirky weirdness of form, and to find a project partner who would be open to trying out unexpected objects for [meetings](#), rather than determining the form of the objects together with non-arts partners. I knew Esteban Kelly, a founding member of Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA), a worker-owned cooperative devoted to "strengthening movements for social justice and a [solidarity economy](#)." Members of TradeSchool.coop^{see chapter 3} New York had hired AORTA to lead a training for our collective in 2011, and I remembered that Esteban used a lot of visual analogies and theater [games](#), and was open to unconventional [facilitation](#) techniques. He is based in Philadelphia, and is now the Director of the US Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#). I was excited about the potential for a collaborative project, and by the idea that he was already sharing conflict transformation techniques with worker-owners nationally.

Subject: Conflict transformation in Philly

July 29, 2018

Esteban,

I just found out that I got a fellowship to be in Philly a few times over the next year to make a project at Moore, and I'm wondering if you know a great intensive or coach for conflict transformation. I'm also interested in thinking/talking with you about how we might work together on something—I have been really into making objects that reflect groups' existing [facilitation](#) and [listening practices](#).

Let me know if anything comes to mind for conflict transformation.

In cooperation,
Caroline

July 30, 2018

Caroline,

Sure, I'd be happy to chat. Let me know more about what sort of coaching training you envision. I may have capacity to do that while you're around, or I might have ideas for referrals if I'm not a good fit.

I'm cc'ing Kevin to help us find a time to chat. I'm pretty available as of next week.

September 27, 2018

Hi Caroline,

Thanks for circling back! I'm just getting back to the office after a few weeks away. The back of the envelope budget range is:

at \$200/hr it would be:

\$1,600 for 4 or \$3,200 for 8 sessions

at \$250/hr it would be:

2,000 for 4 or \$4,000 for 8 sessions

I believe I mentioned our sliding scale in our previous call. It's similar to how AORTA's rates work. I'll defer to you to figure out what works best for your budget and appropriate scale-fit.

What I envision is imagination and critical speculation going together with a material process of transformation of the institutional art field: a process where both autonomy—as the subjective [power](#) of the encounter with an artwork—and heteronomy—as the process of erosion of art disciplinary borders into non-art and into the social dimension—are mobilized.

—Marco Baravalle, 2020

September 27, 2018

Esteban,

This is great news, and yes to going with your role at the US Federation of Worker Co-ops. As for sliding scale, I don't see the sliding scale for individuals. That said, my salary at the University

Institutional
Invitation

of Hartford is \$62k a year and the budget for **labor** to make these objects, materials, travel, food, contractors, marketing, and stipends like this is \$50k.

This makes me think that 8 sessions for \$4000 makes sense, but perhaps each “session” refers to one-on-one training and the fly on the wall time is unpaid, or that it’s \$150/hour for one-on-one training and \$50/hour to be a fly on the wall, which works out to the same. Does that make sense?

When do we start?

Looking forward to it,
Caroline

With Esteban on board, I knew I could begin researching and developing ideas for meeting spaces.

I began searching for a space to work with. Daniel Tucker, an artist and faculty member at Moore, suggested a number of possible partners. Patti also introduced me to a number of people with exhibition spaces and unconventional spaces, including Andrew Nurkin at the Free Library. When I spoke to Andrew, everything seemed to align.

October 29, 2018
Hi Caroline,

I’m also excited about collaborating on this. As I have shared our conversation with my colleagues, they have affirmed what an engaging opportunity this will be!

I keep returning to the idea of a kind of **lending library** for objects and **practices** that facilitate deep group work, with the “check

Idea in Public

Experiment

out” point in our new Heim Center for Cultural and Civic Engagement. This could extend to an installation that functions as a kind of intentional space for this work, open to groups already in process (from community groups to groups of coworkers). I’m sure more ideas will spark as we continue to talk, but I like the link between your work and new ideas about the traditional “lending” role of the library. Specifically, how to see others in a group as experts/knowledge bearers and then enter a process that draws out that knowledge toward a shared goal.

Are we still on for you to visit the library on Nov. 16?

Thanks,
Andrew

I then began thinking about the meeting space itself, developing furniture for the space, with support from the Rose Art Museum.

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Invitation

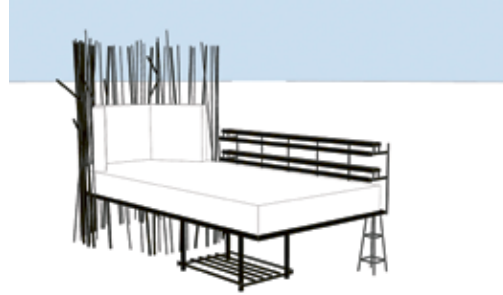


fig. 1-16
Research image of ceiling
tile taken by Caroline Woolard
in 2017.

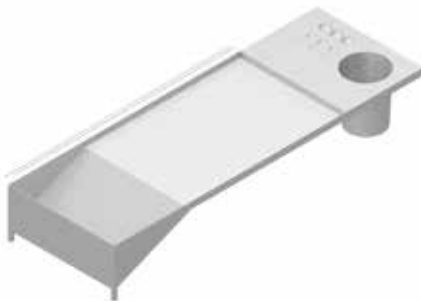
The Meeting

fig. 1-17

Renderings for *INDEX* at the Rose Art Museum playing with the idea of a thicket, of rolling spheres, and of paper pulp. The idea for the furniture is connected to paper waste. It looks like a typical day bed but it is a "tool" which is capable of making large paper pulp lounge objects (making itself).



Experiment



Institutional
Invitation

fig. 1-18
Technical drawings for the
Modular Daybed as well as the
idea of the daybed as thicket,
made in preparation to build
the object.

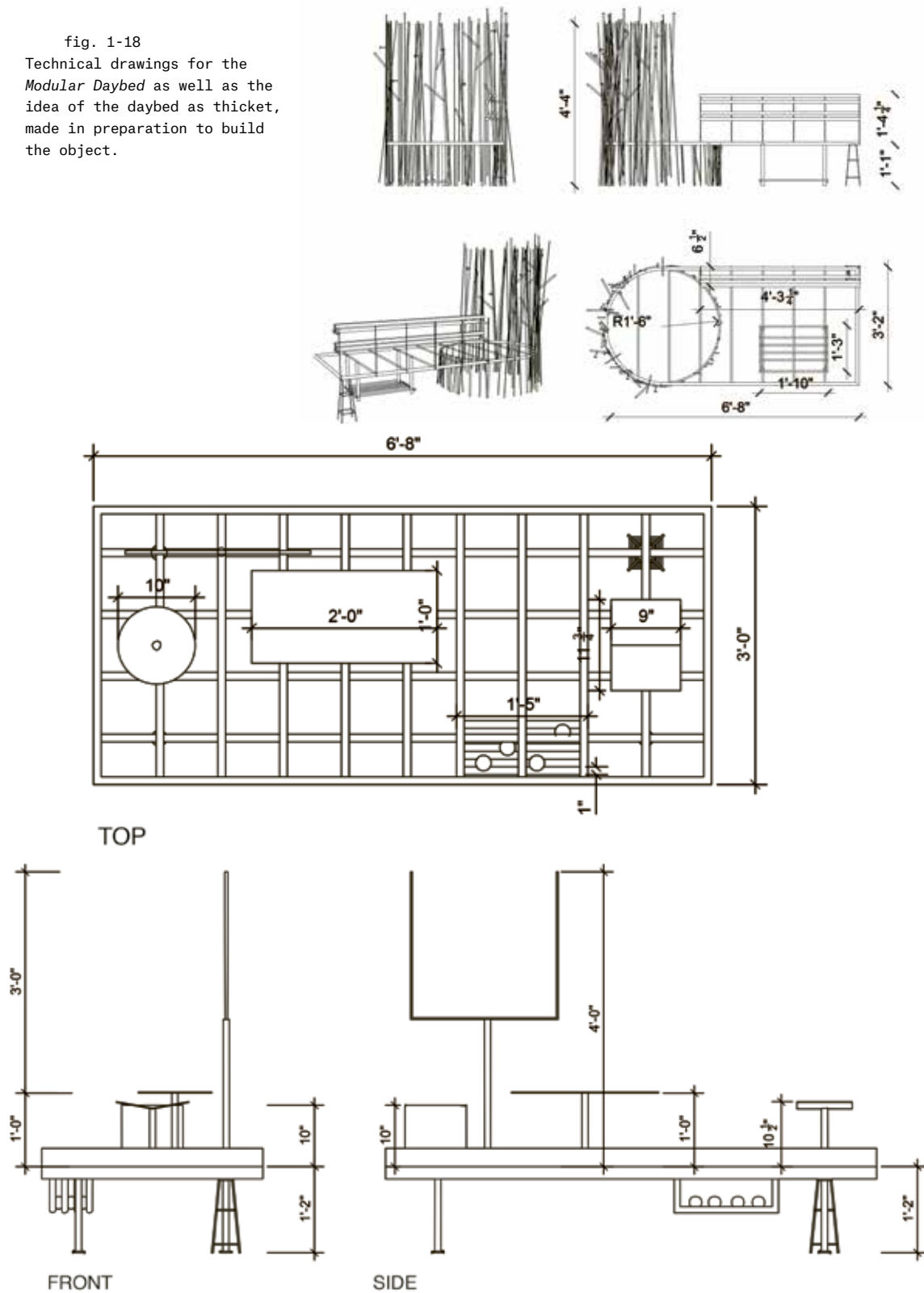
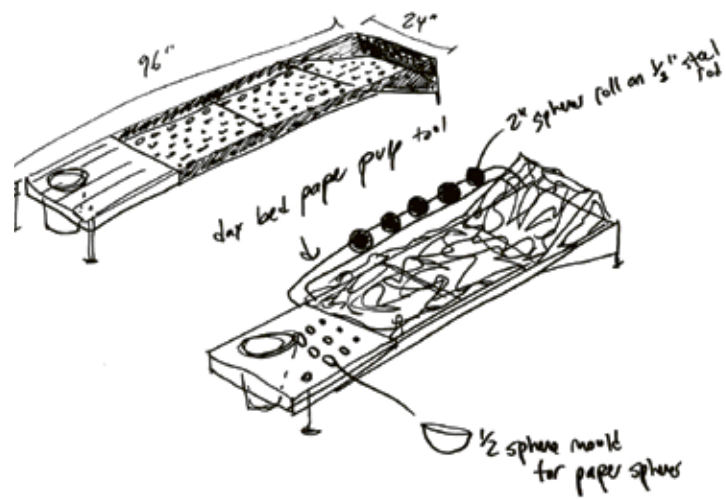
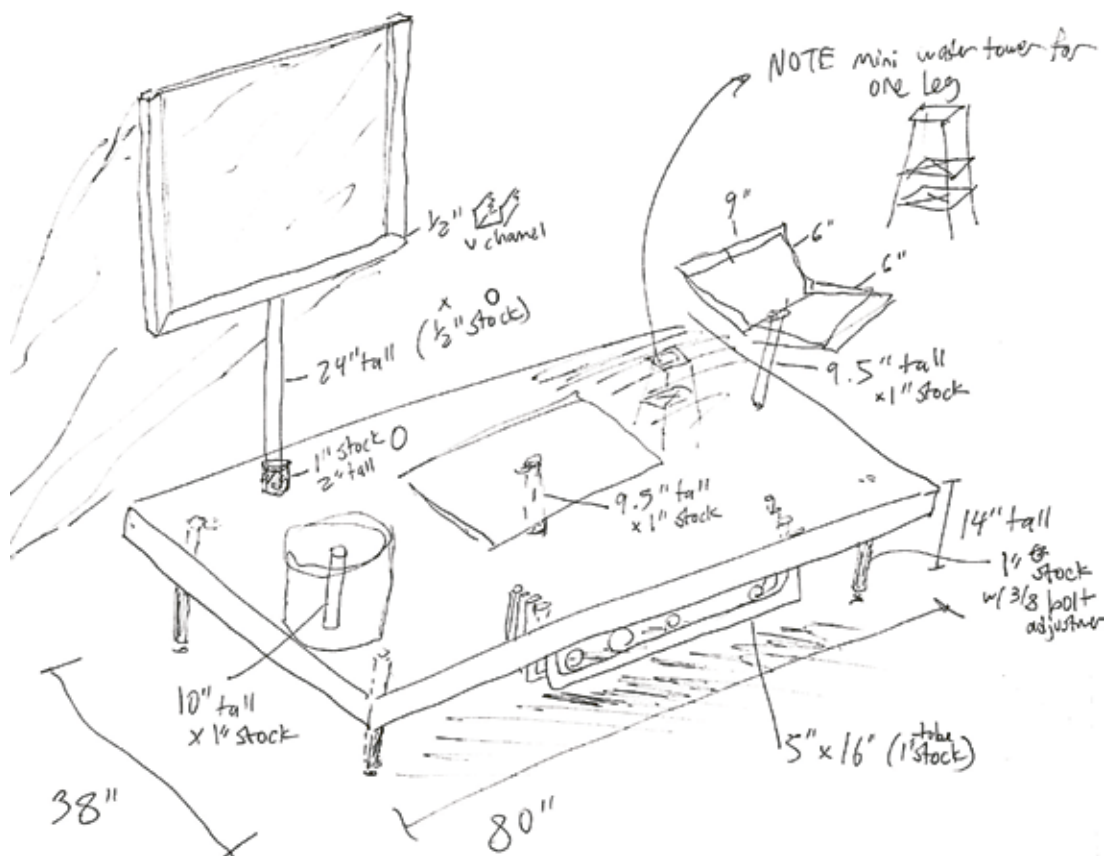


fig. 1-19

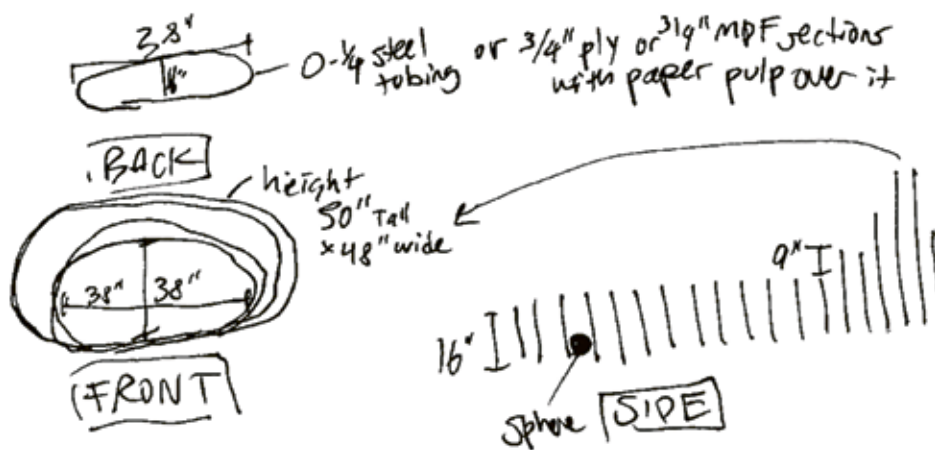
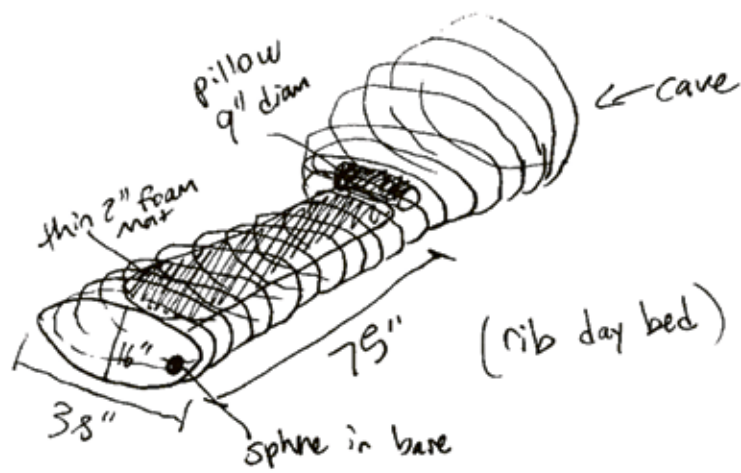
Every project begins with quick sketches, which turn into technical drawings, then renderings, then built tests and prototypes, and finally, the finished object.



Experiment



Institutional
Invitation



Managing

This project began in an unconventional way. I was in the grocery store when I saw an email from Patti Phillips on my phone. It was the middle of the summer, and the message seemed to be that I was in the running for a huge a fellowship that I had not applied for. It was too good to be true. I showed it to my partner, asking her if it was spam.

Subject: Letter for Caroline Woolard
July 11, 2018

Dear Caroline,

Kindly see the attached letter from Moore College of Art & Design. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Phillips
Academic Dean

Experience

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Invitation

June 11, 2018

Dear Caroline Woolard,

Moore College of Art & Design has announced a fellowship to support and advance its historical mission and 21st century vision to educate women to be creative leaders, agents, and entrepreneurs. The College is delighted to inaugurate a new and unique fellowship that adds value to the academic experience and research community by making significant connections within the College, as well as the creative and civic life of Philadelphia. Jane Zimmerman Walentas graduated from Moore in 1966 and, with her husband David, has endowed this fellowship. The Jane & David Walentas Endowed Distinguished Fellowship supports an ongoing commitment to confirm and perpetuate the highest values of Moore College of Art & Design and represent the remarkable vision and generosity of the donors.

The Walentas Endowed Distinguished Fellowship is a term appointment of distinction for an artist, designer, scholar, curator, thinker, and/or innovator who embodies creative and visionary leadership, seeks to inspire Moore students, and create opportunities for collaboration between academic programs, the Galleries, and other areas of the College. The Walentas Fellow will

participate in a “customized” residency at Moore for one-to two-years and is expected to be a passionate contributor to the creative and intellectual life of the College and city. The Fellowship is both responsive to Moore’s priorities, new alliances, emerging opportunities, and other cultural developments, while being highly flexible to meet the expectations and schedule of a Fellow. The distinguished appointment may include a combination of teaching and workshops, interdisciplinary or discipline-based research, creative projects and programs, and other special projects and initiatives developed through collaborations with Moore faculty, students, and external partners. As part of the appointment, the Fellow will give a major presentation—the Walentas Distinguished Public Lecture.

Recently, a panel including Moore President Cecelia Fitzgibbon, the donor Jane Walentas, two faculty members, and the Academic Dean convened to review prospective Walentas Fellows. The list of potential Fellows was developed through nominations from the Moore community, as well as the College’s extended community of cultural leaders and supporters. The panel reviewed all nominations and developed a prioritized short list. We

The Meeting

are delighted to let you know that you are one of the leading nominees to be the first Walentas Endowed Distinguished Fellow.

At this time, we invite you to confirm your interest to explore this opportunity with us—and your potential engagement in a process that includes submission of materials on your work, participation in a remote or on-campus interview to explore ways you may choose to focus and shape the Fellowship, and an openness and excitement to help launch the first successful and generative chapter of the Walentas Endowed Distinguished Fellowship at Moore—and in Philadelphia. The Walentas Fellowship will provide remuneration for whatever form the residency may take, as well as support for related expenses for travel, materials, and other requirements of the Fellowship.

Kindly contact Patricia Phillips (see information below) indicating your interest and willingness to explore and participate in this review process at Moore.

Sincerely,

Cecelia Fitzgibbon, President
Patricia C. Phillips, Chief Academic Officer/Academic Dean

Experience

Institutional
Invitation

I immediately wrote back, sending Patti questions, ideas, and suggestions.

June 11, 2018

Dear Patricia Phillips,

What an honor. I would love to submit my materials for review. One important note: I now have a full time, tenure-track job at the University of Hartford, so to participate in this opportunity during the academic year, I would need my Dean's approval and I would need to be bought out of full time teaching commitment (\$62,000 a year). Alternatively, we could schedule the residency in the summer, if possible, though I doubt that is ideal for the mission of the program.

Please let me know if you'd like to speak on the phone. I'm available in PST as I'm at a residency in Seattle.

Best wishes,
Caroline Woolard

Patti explained that I did not need to be in Philadelphia full time for this Fellowship. We scheduled a call, and I sent her this email after we spoke in person about her vision for the inaugural Fellowship.

June 19, 2018

Patti,

I am so excited by the possibility of this Fellowship at Moore. As I mentioned, I teach Mondays-Wednesdays in Hartford, so I could do something once a month on a Thursday-Friday, or a long weekend (Friday-Sunday), and/or I could do a week-long intensive. I am certain we can make it work.

Managing

The Meeting

As I said, I started making objects for *meetings* because I want the physical environment of the meeting itself to be as wildly imaginative as the conversations that occur in those spaces. Recently, I have focused on furniture-clocks-objects for an intimate and alternative time. I have found that by bringing gatherings, like my *Capitoline Wolf tables* and my *Water Clock* timekeeping devices see chapter 7, I make tangible the slow temporality of community-building; people sense the care that has gone into the *facilitation practices* I bring to group work.

For more information about my recent work, please see: <https://brooklynrail.org/2018/02/art/The-Art-of-Institutional-Possibility-CAROLINE-WOOLARD-with-Thyrza-Nichols-Goodeve>

and

<https://art21.org/artist/caroline-woolard/>

Best wishes,
Caroline

PS: Here are some ideas to begin a dialogue:

(1) Study Center for Group Work see chapter 2

The Study Center for Group Work is an open access library of collaborative methods. The Center focuses on collaborative methods that have been recommended by artists. These methods often embrace the unknown, encouraging people to listen deeply enough to be transformed.

More info: <http://studycollaboration.com/>
Also this short video: <https://vimeo.com/223191451>
And also: <https://vimeo.com/198242353>
(this was the day after the election, so the tone is a bit somber)

The first iteration of the Center was run at Cooper Union in 2016-2017. It then moved to the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center (2018) and is now being piloted at the Glasgow School of Art (2018-2019). It would be a great thrill to bring this to Moore.

(2) Countermeasures: **Water** Clocks

Water clocks (or **clepsydrae**) work like this: one large vessel is made, and filled with **water**. On the **water**'s surface, a smaller vessel is placed. The smaller vessel is made with a small hole at the bottom that allows the **water** to flow in. One interval has passed when the bowl sinks to the bottom of the larger bowl.

Time-keeping devices are always time-producing devices. Rather than understanding time as neatly divisible, linear, and disciplinary—the project of modernization—this project begins with the premise that certain **practices** and sculptural objects can offer an experience of an alternative and intimate time, a time which is specifically marked by our social engagement with one another.

More info: <http://carolinewoolard.com/project/amulet/>

(3) **Website** as Exhibition

What is unusual about my approach to cultural production is that I create multi-year initiatives with open-source Web 2.0 technology while also hand-building objects in immersive installations. In the past decade, I have created discrete sculptural objects while also building four service organizations with digital technology: (1) OurGoods.org, software that facilitates non-monetary exchanges

between artists, (2) TradeSchool.coop, a program for peer learning in thirty cities globally, (3) BFAMFAPhD.com, an [advocacy](#) platform for cultural equity, (4) and the New York City Real Estate Investment Cooperative, to democratically finance affordable space.

I would love to create a [website](#) for [peer-to-peer](#) review of student work, across institutions, and ideally, across counties, so that Moore supports a kind of technology for the [commons](#), to cultural exchange for artists and emerging artists. We could determine the shape this would take, at Moore.

More info: creativecommons.org/2016/08/23/caroline-woolard/

After a few emails and two phone calls, I got this email from Patti, announcing that I had received the Fellowship. I was overjoyed. It seemed unreal.

July 9, 2018
Hi Caroline,

Please accept my apologies for not getting back to you sooner. President Fitzgibbon has been away and we finally have been able to discuss "next steps." We would be delighted to have you as the inaugural Walentas Endowed Fellow. (We have been in conversation with one other person, but we think the timing/potential content is better for the next iteration of this initiative.)

The next step is for you and I to begin to bring some shape—with respect to focus/content and temporal frame/availability/commitment—to what this fellowship can become. As you know there is no precedent for this at Moore (but certainly good examples at other schools and organizations), so we will imagine this into existence. Caroline, let's begin with some phone calls, and I also am happy to visit with you in New York—and/or invite you to Moore to meet with

Commitment

Institutional
Invitation

Cecelia (president), faculty, etc. I know that you have had significant experience creating programs, so I am wildly enthusiastic to begin the conversation, hear your ideas, and also answer your questions and provide relevant background and context.

I am flying to California on Wednesday and return Tuesday morning, July 17. It is possible that I may have some time to talk on Thursday, July 12. Or we can wait until I am back in Philadelphia. Where are you and what is your availability?

Best wishes,
Patti

I had learned from my *Capitoline Wolves*^{see chapter 7} project at Cornell to be careful about the budget, so I explained to Patti that I wanted a very clear separation between the artist fee, the partner fee, and the production budget for making objects. I asked for this almost immediately, but it was not until after I had visited Moore and met with the faculty and staff that I wrote again to find out about the scope of the project.

Managing

August 23, 2018
Patti,

I am inspired to dream after this first visit to Moore. This week is busy, as I am about to open <https://www.pratt.edu/events/event/13873/> on Tuesday and <https://knockdown.center/event/carried-on-both-sides-encounter-three/> on Thursday. Would you, Jane, and Cecelia be able to join me for a private tour of my show at the Knockdown Center on Saturday, October 27th from 2-4 p.m.? See the invitation attached, and please share it with them as well. Send my thanks! After this week, I move to CT and will take a week or two to settle in, and can begin to make a plan for this big project, and have regular phone calls with you, starting in late September, I imagine.

The Meeting

To get the ball rolling on this Fellowship, I keep wondering: What is the scale of this project? I'd really like to get clear about [labor](#)/materials/stipend/in-kind budget soon, so that I can be realistic in my dreaming, and also think strategically about partners who can also bring some funding and in-kind [gifts](#) like spaces/venues for this endeavor.

(1) Is it possible to work with an undergraduate or graduate assistant? Could this be an internship or other work-study position? I would love to do this, starting in the spring, and continuing into the fall and spring of 2019/2020, to have assistance with research, follow up with faculty/staff/partners, and on-the-ground connections to groups.

(2) Can you give me a budget break down, so I know when and how I will be paid a stipend, how you will disburse funds (do I give you receipts?), and whether travel/hotel/hospitality/marketing are covered, or in a separate budget? In my experiences with MoMA, Cooper Union, Cornell, and the CAC in Ohio, 1/3 of the budget went to hotel/travel/marketing, so this makes a big difference. I would prefer to be reimbursed by you for materials and [labor](#), or for you to purchase them directly.

(3) Can you tell me which departments/areas of Moore might be able to supplement the budget/assistantships, so I can know whether they are covering things like fees, partner stipends, communications design work, video, photography, meals, travel, etc, or if this is coming out of the \$50k?

Once I know this, I can think about an appropriate and equitable scale for my dreams.

Sending thanks and gratitude,
Caroline

Inquiry

Institutional
Invitation

September 7, 2018

Hi Caroline,

Thank you for your patience. The conclusion of the summer and opening of the new school year has been [labor](#) intensive but good (four staff and faculty searches to complete, opening of the renovated library, etc.) I will respond to your questions below as fully as I can. This will get us started and then, as you suggest, we should schedule phone calls and/or other [meetings](#). And we also should think about when you might want to make another trip to Moore and Philadelphia—and what would be your priorities regarding an itinerary of conversations, [meetings](#), etc.

What is the scale of this project?

Caroline, you are the first so we will be dreaming and precedent-setting together. We imagine this as a two-year experience/fellowship. The unfolding, timing, length and frequency of visits is something that will be developed based on your proposed project/work, ideas, thoughts on cadence and timing and, of course, your availability. The Walentas Endowment provides \$25,000 annually—a total of \$50,000. I do believe that a significant part of this has to be secured for your artist fee/honorarium with the remaining resources dedicated to expenses (project-related, your travel, housing and other costs while in Philadelphia, etc.) Once we get a little further into this process, I would be happy (with your guidance) to draft a working and revisable budget that we can work with ... I also believe that what you may propose to do may interest or attract other resources/partners (Mural Arts? Jacque's Liu's office? Free Library? Barnes?)

Managing

The Meeting

(1) Is it possible to work with an undergraduate or graduate assistant?

I think it will be wonderful to engage student interns or assistants. I am confident that we can identify 1-2 students for spring 2019. And all BFA students are required to do a summer internship between the junior and senior year. I am sure there would be students who would be thrilled to do their summer 2019 internship with you. And for our next admission cycle for the MFA/MA—and as we are doing financial aid offers—we can build 1-2 graduate assistantships into your project for 2019-2020. And I am currently working with a second year MFA student who will have some available hours on her annual assistantship to work with you.

(2) Can you give me a budget break down, so I know when and how I will be paid a stipend, how you will disburse funds (do I give you receipts?)

Caroline, I expect that I will need to check in with our Business Office to develop some scenarios for how we will release money to you. But I did imagine that your fees/[compensation](#) should be a significant part of the overall budget of \$50,000. And then we should begin to get a sense of what other expenses would be (# of trips to Philadelphia for the duration of the Fellowship, materials and other project expenses, etc.) I think that if I can begin to draft a budget with you, this will be illuminating and also begin to bring both a temporal and physical shape and realistic scope to your proposed project—or whatever it becomes.

(3) Can you tell me which departments/areas of Moore might be able to supplement the

budget/assistantships, so I can know whether they are covering things like fees, partner stipends, communications design work, video, photography, meals, travel, etc, or if this is coming out of the \$50k?

Any student interns or assistants will be covered by the college through financial aid, graduate assistantships, etc. All students will be compensated and be given clear “contracts” regarding their scope of work, estimated hours to be worked, hourly wages, etc. We have a great new Executive Director of Marketing and Communication (Nicole Steinberg) who will be delighted (and I am sure) to support communications, etc. We will seek to be imaginative and resourceful in our use of existing budgets and available funds at the college.

Once I know this, I can think about an appropriate and equitable scale for my dreams.

Shall we schedule a phone call in the next few weeks? I generally am around and happy to work with your availability.

I am excited about working with you, Caroline—and doing all that I can to support your ideas and vision. By the way, I recently had dinner with Mierle Laderman Ukeles in New York. She said that you had wondered if she had nominated you for the Walentas Fellow. She did not. Actually, I did. In our “call” we invited Moore faculty and staff to make nominations/recommendations—and I exercised my opportunity to participate. Of course, I was delighted by the outcome of the panel’s deliberations and decision.

Managing

The Meeting

Not sure why my computer inexplicably keeps changing the font. Sorry for this.

All best,
Patti

Soon after this, I created a Google spreadsheet of the budget and Patti's assistant helped to add expenses to keep track of what was being spent on production versus my artists fee. Because the Fellowship was new, and because we needed to confirm the various partnerships were in place, including with the U.S. Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#) and the Free Library of Philadelphia, it took awhile for the Fellowship to be official. Although I worked intensively from August 2018 on, it wasn't until seven months later, in February 2019, that the Fellowship was announced to the public, and it took until March 2019 for my consulting agreement to be finalized. It is important to note that the scope of work described here was supported fully by Patti Philips, who helped translate my proposals and ideas into a form that the Business Office at Moore would accept.

Inquiry

Institutional
Invitation

CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT

This consulting services agreement ("Agreement") is made and entered into on March 1, 2019 between Moore College of Art & Design, "College" and Caroline Woolard, "Consultant," and is effective retroactive to March 1, 2019.

Background/Scope:

The College is engaging the Consultant to serve as the inaugural Jane & David Walentas Fellow. During this engagement, the Consultant will collaborate with members of the College community and selected artists, cultural and other community organizations in the Philadelphia area. During this collaboration, the Consultant will work with members of the Moore community to bring art process and art objects into spaces, circumstances, [meetings](#), and other quotidian settings and passages. The Consultant will make, with support of Moore studio technicians, who shall perform such work during their regular work time for the College, [beautiful](#) objects for [facilitation](#) settings, [meetings](#), and other group settings.

These objects will be displayed first at Moore, and then shall be loaned to and become a central part of the Free Library of Philadelphia's new Public Engagement space where they can be used on site and/or borrowed for use by community organizations and artist-led workshops

to enhance collaboration among community and art institutions while animating the library and its new community engagement space as a center for contemporary art.

Other [key collaborators](#) include the United States Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#); Maya Pindyck, Director of the Margaret Minik Writers Studio; Joanna Jenkins, Associate Dean of Graduate, Professional, and Continuing Education; Ashley York, Head Studio Technician; and Nicole Steinberg, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, as well as a number of College faculty members.

Timeline:

March 2019—Launch of public programming and [events](#)

Summer 2019—Planning of objects, engagement, and additional public programs

Fall 2019—Project development, fabrication of art objects, publicity of programs

Spring 2020—Exhibition opening and ongoing [events](#)

Term:

This consulting agreement will begin on March 1, 2019 and end on April 30, 2020.

Termination:

This agreement can be terminated by the College at any time, in its sole discretion, with 30 days notice to the Consultant.

Compensation:

Consultant will receive a total of \$22,512 paid in 14 monthly installments of \$1,608 beginning on March 1, 2019 through April 1, 2020.

Independent Contractor Status:

The Consultant is an independent contractor and the College will not withhold taxes from fees paid. Consultant is responsible for payment of all federal, state, and local taxes, including any withholding taxes.

Intellectual Property:

The Consultant will own all artwork created by Consultant in connection with this Agreement, and at the expiration of the term of the Agreement she may take or retain physical possession of such artwork, or donate it to the College or to such other person or organization, including the Free Library of Philadelphia, as she deems appropriate.

By signing this Agreement, Consultant agrees that the College may, both during and after the term of the Agreement, take photographs

of any artwork, and may reproduce images of any artwork or written materials created in connection with this Agreement, including but not limited to:

- in publicity and/or publications in conjunction with this Agreement;
- in promoting the College in any media (including but not limited to, print, catalogs, websites, and social media)
- for educational use.

The College, in its sole discretion, may choose at any time not to display a particular art object on College property, or may remove any art object from display on College property, and such action shall not constitute a breach of the Agreement.

Miscellaneous:

No changes or additions to this agreement shall be effective unless approved in writing by both parties.

Applicable Law:

This agreement shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be binding upon the party signing, and all of which together shall constitute a single Agreement.

In consideration of the foregoing,
and intending to be legally
bound, the parties have executed
this agreement on the date set
forth above.

Signed by
Caroline Woolard

Managing

The Meeting

Around this time, I began training for a 120 mile circumnavigation of Mont-Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe.

Within a few months of accepting this Fellowship, five big commissions came my way from other institutions. In October, 2018, I had an invitation from curator Alison Burstein to do a project at Tenthaus in Oslo. At the same time, an invitation came from Daniel Eisenberg and Ellen Rothenberg to do a project for a group show about [labor](#) which included Mierle Laderman Ukeles, at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In December 2018, after a few months of conversation and proposals, a formal invitation came from Macushla Catherine Robinson and Anna Harsanyi to do a project that would coincide with a centennial exhibition at the New School. Six months after these first round of invitations came in, in March 2019, I got an invitation from Caitlin Rubin at the Rose Art Museum to be a Perlmutter Resident artist and the inaugural INDEX artist for “a new initiative at the museum, housed in the Lee Gallery, bi-annual projects by INDEX artists will produce site-responsive and participatory platforms and programs.” I was excited, but overwhelmed.

One reason I was overwhelmed is that I had decided to enroll in an unusual, low-residency, free MFA program, and I knew that I would be traveling to Bennington, VT once a week. I was one of two MFA candidates in the first cohort of the MFA in Public Action program, created and directed by Robert Ransick, which is “specifically geared to professionals working in the arts, including visual and performing artists and leaders, who are making significant contributions to the field of socially and civically engaged creative [practice](#).” I was starting my second year in a tenure-track job, teaching three courses per semester at the University of Hartford, and one course per quarter at Bennington, as part of the work required for the MFA program. In addition to this, I was working to finish *Making and Being*, a book for arts educators, co-authored by Susan Jahoda. See Chapter 5 on BFAMFAPhD for more about this book, which was a priority. A lot was going on.

I knew that I could not make five different projects in one summer; I had learned from at Exchange Café ^{see chapter 4} at MoMA and from *LISTEN* ^{see chapter 6} at the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati that working this way would overwhelm me and result in projects that were not fully developed. I had also been learning from my partner, Leigh Claire La Berge,

who works daily toward one book that is finished every three–seven years. Without taking on other big projects, she showed me the daily patience of sitting with one idea, and letting it build and deepen, over years. In one of our discussions at Bennington, I asked my friend Aaron Landsman, a playwright who I recruited to join the MFA cohort with me, what to do. Should I cancel the other projects or could I combine them, somehow? Aaron told me that in the performing arts, singular plays and dance works would be shown multiple times, with something called a “rolling premiere,” which would be produced by all of the theaters that supported the showings of the work in progress. I loved this idea. This thrilled me. Why couldn’t I do this in the visual arts?

I decided to make a rolling premiere for the project I was developing at Moore. I would show it as it evolved, and adapt it to each location: at The Galleries at Moore, at Tenthaus in Oslo, at the Sullivan Galleries at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, at the Anna Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery at the New School, and at the Rose Art Museum. I would make one video, and bring objects for [facilitation](#) to local groups to adapt and improve, based upon their contexts, groups, and conditions. With each site, I would work with a local [facilitator](#). For example, in Chicago, I knew Jessica Cook-Qurayshi, the Director of the [Labor](#) Education Center at DePaul University was interested in working with objects to facilitate dialogue. She used the objects I made in workshops about [labor](#) negotiations for union members. At the Rose Art Museum, curator Caitlin Rubin put me in touch with Don Greenstein of the University Ombuds. Don continues to use the objects I have made, both in workshops at the Rose Art Museum, and in his office, outside of an art setting.

The Meeting

Mediating

To ensure that the concept of the rolling premiere was understood, I created text that I sent to the curators at each site, for the wall labels, and I included it in the video that I directed for the project.

This project would not be possible without the [labors](#) of Jessica Cook-Qurayshi, Director of the DePaul University [Labor](#) Education Center; Esteban Kelly, Director of the U.S. Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#); Zaq Landsberg; Alex Mallis and Cori Spencer of Meerkat Media film cooperative; Susan Jahoda and members of BFAMFAPhD; Ecovative; and Firefly Finishes. This project is part of a rolling premiere with commissions from Moore College of Art & Design, Brandeis University, Tenthaus, Bennington College, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the New School.

In addition to this, for the exhibition in Oslo, I brought in The Study Center for Group Work ^{see chapter 2}, and used part of that budget to create a booklet that showcased my work as simply one of many objects for groups.

I also made 3D-printed versions of *The Meeting [Game](#)*, and a [facilitation](#) guide, in dialogue with curator Caitlin Rubin, to share *The Meeting [Game](#)* widely in arts and non-arts contexts. Working with The Free Library of Philadelphia, I will continue this work.

RULES OF *THE MEETING [GAME](#)*

Two or more people can play at a time. To start, each player needs at least one of each kind of ball. For example: 1 small ball, 2-5 big balls, and 2-5 medium balls. Each person starts with one of each kind of ball, and these instructions.

- Only one person can speak at a time.
- In order to speak, you must roll a ball to someone else at the table.

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- Roll a small ball to introduce a new topic, a big ball to respond, and a medium ball to make connections.
- The person receiving a rolling ball does not need to respond.
- You may redistribute your balls at any time, without speaking.
- The [game](#) is over when the group says it is.

This [game](#) is inspired by [Threeing](#), a collaborative [practice](#) that was developed by the video-artist Paul Ryan between 1971 and the end of his life, in 2013. [Threeing](#) is “a voluntary [practice](#) in which three people take turns playing three different roles: initiator, respondent, and mediator.” See [chapter 2](#)



fig. 1-20
The Meeting [Game](#) in progress,
 tested in 2018 at The Free Library
 by the MFA Studio Art and MFA
 Community [Practice](#) students at
 Moore, thanks to Graduate
 Director, Daniel Tucker. Photo
 by Nicole Steinberg.



fig. 1-21

The Meeting Game in progress,
tested in 2019 at the Rose Art
Museum by Abigail Satinsky
Curator, Tufts University Art
Galleries, artist Anthony
Romero, and their child, Kahlo.
Photo by Mel Taing as part of
INDEX, curated by Caitlin Rubin.

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In addition to a video artwork I created with Alex Mallis, that explains *The Meeting Game* in an obscure manner, I made an informational video with Don Greenstein, an “Ombuds” person at Brandeis University who I worked with at the Rose Art Museum. According to the Brandeis [website](#), the Ombuds are “a confidential, independent, impartial, and informal resource for all members of the Brandeis community including undergraduates and graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni.” Don worked with me as a [facilitator](#), using the objects I created, from October through April, and he asked me if he could present our work together at a conference for meditators and Ombuds people. I am always excited when a project in the arts finds advocates who take initiative to share the work in non-arts contexts. In preparation for his presentation, he wrote about his experiences with *The Meeting Game*.

Strange Objects on the Table
Don Greenstein, 2020

As a mediator, conflict resolver, [facilitator](#), trainer, and person who cares about people, I’m always seeking ways to engage with participants, empowering them to find options and outcomes that work for them. Recently, I spent some time experiencing Caroline Woolard’s *Meeting Game*, with various sized [spheres](#) on a felt covered ping pong table. I have always had flowers, things (stones, feathers, shells, etc.) on my round [mediation](#) table in my office. When I was asked to participate in her recent presentation at the Rose Art Museum, I was happy to participate, and look at what value unique objects bring to difficult conversations.

I facilitated 4 different conversations with the objects she made and participated in another 3. What I personally experienced and observed was that people enjoy holding something in their hands when having difficult conversations. I listen more intently while moving a sphere (or other object) through my hand, while [listening](#) or speaking. I did ask a

few people about their experiences of picking something up off the Ombuds table, that are placed there for people to hold or play with during any given session. Sometimes people even ask to take something with them when they leave the process. I was told that it is a distraction that helps with positive or a relaxed mindful communicative process.

I have a sense that some people feel they can put the negative or positive energy into an object and remove it from their own psyche. I have never had anyone complain about these objects or use them in an inappropriate manner. I do find at times some people ask why I have them on the table. No one asked while sitting at Caroline's *Meeting Game* table. There may be a difference in facilitating in an art museum as opposed to an Ombuds or Mediators office! Whatever the case, I have personally observed and experienced that having unique objects in a CR process adds value.

I look forward to collaborating more with Caroline as I believe her interest in how art and conflict resolution interact has great value to the work I care deeply about. I find that even having a pen and paper on the table, people frequently doodle on paper. I see this as another manner of helping an individual focus and listen at a deeper level. I think Caroline's work is useful to conflict resolvers and people who are in conflict. I can see many ways to use her artistic work in conflict resolution processes, facilitated *meetings*, and even in one-on-one coaching situations. I too as a *facilitator*, mediator or ombuds frequently hold or touch something with my hands, feet, or arms. It's a manner of helping me listen attentively to a difficult discussion being presented to me and others.

As with every project, I wanted a public program to be associated with objects for groups, to shift discourse about

what is possible in the arts, and to tie in artists from The Study Center for Group Work ^{see chapter 2}. I proposed that the Free Library of Philadelphia run a conference about the role of objects in groups. The Free Library was excited about this, but unsure about funding. I decided to apply for a Guggenheim for this, and asked Stephanie Bursese at Haverford if she would support the project, as she had been enthusiastic about my work at Moore, and had invited me to propose a project for the Philadelphia Area Creative Collaboratives Program that she Directs at Haverford College. I found out that I did not get the Guggenheim in early April, a few weeks after the COVID-19 pandemic spread and nearly every school and art space had closed and turned to online forms of gathering.

Now, in May 2020, I am adapting both the *The Meeting Game* and the day-long convening of artists and facilitators, which I am calling *The Gathering*, to online contexts for groups, as COVID-19 has upended two assumptions that I had made: (1) that participants would be able to gather in an enclosed space, and (2) that participants would be comfortable touching objects. I am now experimenting with objects for homes and public spaces as well as online platforms for gathering, including virtual reality platforms.

At the Free Library, for example, patrons will now be able to receive objects by mail, or to pick up *The Meeting Game* with curbside pick up, as no one can enter the library at this time. In addition to this game, which can be used by patrons at home and then cleaned by library staff, I am developing a new series of objects that can be 3D-printed at local maker spaces and taken home to keep, and an audio guide for public gatherings in parks about ways to transform conflict in groups. The audio guide will be produced at a high level to allow people to learn at their own pace.

In addition to this, Don Greenstein, the “Ombuds” person at Brandeis University is now training facilitators nationally to bring *The Meeting Game* to Zoom and other online communication platforms as part of the International Ombudsman conference. Esteban Kelly and I are adapting our facilitation process to Zoom by mailing materials to participants in advance (when budgets allow) or inviting workshop participants to work with the materials and objects that already exist around them.

The Meeting

September 16, 2019

A Guggenheim Fellowship will support the development and completion of *The Gathering*, a [research-based](#) sculptural installation and a two-day conference about conflict transformation in self-organized groups. This project will be presented in Philadelphia, PA (fall 2021) in partnership with Haverford College and the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship, in Bennington, VT (winter 2021) at the Center for the Advancement of Public Action, and in Santa Ana, CA at Grand Central Arts Center (spring 2022). *The Gathering* will be the subject of the documentary series *New York Close Up*, a digital film series produced by Art21.

The Gathering is an immersive installation of sculpture and a two-day conference in an abandoned office building. Visitors will approach sculptures, placed in the banal physicality of everyday offices, that evoke the human body through its absence. In the past, I have worked with electrical [outlets](#), clocks, and meeting [tables](#) because they intimate the [power](#) dynamics of [meetings](#). In a recent installation, a tongue hangs from the ceiling. Enormous [glass](#) levels are pulled by [gravity](#) over wooden knobs. A deflated object is plugged into a box the size of a ceiling tile, always charging. An hourglass never runs out of time. This array of

sculptural objects, as well as a series of videos and a [game](#) placed on a boardroom table, reflect upon the unavoidable antagonisms of working together.

The Gathering will deepen my [practice](#) through a large-scale installation and two-day conference with members of worker-owned businesses, artists, and people interested in economic justice and the arts who activate the installation. This project takes “the meeting” itself—the gathering of people for a formal purpose—as a site for artistic and social intervention. Most people will spend over a quarter of their lives at work. For office workers, a large portion of this time will occur in [meetings](#). [Facilitation](#)—the skillful guiding of the meeting process—is a [key](#) part of running self-organized groups and worker-owned businesses, because these are [horizontal organizations](#) that share [power](#) and require that members attend [meetings](#) in order to make decisions together.

Rather than trying to “solve” conflict in groups, I have been learning to see interpersonal conflict as an opportunity to transform relationships, groups, and to consider the systems that make antagonism inevitable. This approach to conflict is called conflict transformation, rather than conflict resolution, and is often used by members of

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worker-owned businesses. I have been learning from these groups and making objects in response to them, and am now ready to bring these groups together in a public conference.

A central component of *The Gathering* is an installation of handmade nets that hang from square ceiling grids. My interest in nets comes from a formal experiment with the metaphor of the colonial net, a tool that traps, and holds, in my use of it, a *mush-room* bust of a head. Cascading from the ceiling and hung on the wall, these nets I have been developing “catch” sculptures and make reference to both the fishing nets of colonial Philadelphia and to the minimalist, conceptual works of the artists Eva Hesse and Jiro Takamatsu. I want the project to hold this *tension*.

I have started making square *walnut* frames that *mirror* the shape and scale of ubiquitous ceiling tiles, suspended overhead in meeting spaces as “dropped” or “false” ceilings. The false ceiling is a surface that hides the infrastructure installed above it—air diffusers, smoke detectors, sprinklers, CCTV cameras, and neon lights—from the room below. In everyday speech, the ceiling acts as a metaphor for a limit which cannot be *trusted*. Think of a “*glass ceiling*” or a “*debt ceiling*.” The square frames hold net sculptures that fit perfectly in everyday office ceilings and can be installed in a gallery, an office, or

transported by meeting *facilitators*. The work reaches beyond this apparent limit.

The Gathering follows on the heels of two years of material experimentation with *glass*-blowing, net-making, *mycelium*-growing, and research about worker-owned businesses with members of the United States Federation of *Worker Cooperatives* (USFWC). As the inaugural Walentas Endowed Fellow at Moore College of Art & Design (2018-2020), and as the Ruth Ann and Nathan Perlmutter Artist-in-Residence at the Rose Art Museum (2019-2020), I have had time to develop ideas that have taken me to *The Gathering*. I am ready to create a project on a large scale.

With a Guggenheim Fellowship, I will be able to continue this work with Esteban Kelly, Director of the USFWC, learning conflict transformation techniques that inform the sculptures and videos that I will make. At Haverford College, I will work with confirmed partners Craig Borowiak, Associate Professor of Political Science, and the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship to develop public programs around unconventional meeting *practices* with sculptural objects and to convene artists, organizers, and activists, as well as campus communities. I will also work with Stephanie Bursese, Philadelphia Area Creative Collaboratives Program Manager, to

premiere *The Gathering*, a public project, in 2020-2021. Stephanie and Craig have been following my work at Moore College, and have invited me to create this project at Haverford.

The Fellowship will also allow me to travel to the Center for the Advancement of Public Action in Bennington, VT (2021), where Director Susan Sgorbati will support a convening focused on conflict transformation in the arts, and then to Grand Central Arts Center, and in Santa Ana, CA at Grand Central Arts Center, where Director John Spiak will support a residency to work in [glass](#) at California State University at Fullerton and an exhibition and premiere of *The Gathering* (2022). I will also continue my work with [mycelium](#), a [mushroom](#) material, and my work with colonial landing nets and net-making. Rose Art Museum curator Caitlin Rubin writes that my use of [mycelium](#) "might be read as a material metaphor for Woolard's approach to public [practice](#)—a [practice](#) in which she seeks, through meaningful collaboration, to activate and ally latent and often disparate energies into generative form." It is my hope that I can continue to deepen my studio-based sculptural techniques in an approach to art-making that emphasizes participation and dialogue.

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I sent a draft of my Guggenheim application to Stephanie Bursese, Program Manager of the Philadelphia Area Creative Collaboratives (PACC) at Haverford, as she had attended my lecture at Moore and expressed interest in working together. Stephanie moved quickly to support a version of *The Gathering* at Haverford, bringing together two faculty members (Shannan Hayes and Craig Borowiak), Esteban Kelly, and me, to run a series of workshops both at Haverford and in a community space in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Area Creative Collaboratives seed grant provides \$500 for each faculty member, \$3,000 for the artist, and \$3,000 for the partner organization (Esteban), and \$3,000 for food, transportation, space rentals, and materials. Stephanie invited us all to edit the description of the project in a shared Google document. Here is the way we decided to describe the initiative and the first of three workshops:

Through Conflict

What **skills**—emotional and organizational—help us work together to achieve progressive social change? How might we create bonds of **trust** amidst interpersonal conflict, while still allowing space for difference and autonomy? How might the pressures generated by austerity and economic crisis generate either new openness to change or greater rigidity and closure? How can interpersonal conflict in groups be transformed into an opportunity for greater communication, new perspectives, and enhanced collective capacity? What does it actually take to create the kinds of spaces that allow people to make mistakes and come back again? And how might **aesthetic** objects aid us through such difficult dynamics, interrupting pre-given scripts and opening new, collaborative visions? ‘Through Conflict: Collective Capacity amidst Capitalist Crisis’ brings together the work of artist Caroline Woolard, leading community-oriented transformative justice educator Esteban Kelly from the United States Federation of **Worker Cooperatives**, and faculty members Shannan Hayes and Craig Borowiak, teaching Haverford

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College courses on [political economy](#) and affect theory, in a semester-long investigation into the above questions.

Workshop, Saturday, March 7th, 1-4 p.m.

In recent years, communities have garnered breathtaking momentum in building a movement for new frameworks of justice. Transformative Justice builds on the intentions of restorative justice and seeks a more fundamental change in mitigating alarming trends of the prison industrial complex and adequately addressing perpetrators and survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner abuse, and other forms of [violence](#). Esteban Kelly of the US Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#) (USFWC) and AORTA Co-op (Anti Oppression Resource & Training Alliance) will guide a workshop where we will explore why we use transformative justice [practice](#), stories of how these [practices](#) have been used in the past, and concrete [tools](#) we can use in our own communities.

I also sent a draft of my Guggenheim application to my partner's friend, Lara Cohen, who is an Associate Professor of English Literature at Swarthmore. I asked Lara if she would want to bring this event to Swarthmore, as the location is relatively close to Esteban Kelly's home, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and to Haverford College. Lara said yes, and went ahead and applied for funding from William J. Cooper Foundation and Promise Fund Grant at Swarthmore without even telling me. This grant earmarked \$4000 for my honorarium, \$2500 for Esteban Kelly, budgeted \$1000 for travel, lodging, and meals, and allocated \$2000 for materials. To write the grant on her own, Lara looked through texts that I sent her, and wrote:

Organized by New York-based sculptor and installation artist Caroline Woolard, *The Gathering* is a series of workshops that explores how material objects can interrupt the unavoidable

antagonisms of working together. In the first workshop, Woolard will lead participants in a discussion about the role that object-making can play in collaboration, interpersonal conflict, and collective capacity. In the next workshop, participants will respond in material form to the methods they discussed by creating sculptural objects for use in group communication. Finally, Woolard, in collaboration with Esteban Kelly, Director of the US Federation of Worker Co-ops, will train all interested members of the community on how to use the objects created in the workshop in order to enable embodied, somatic, and [haptic](#) knowledge that does not emerge in purely verbal [facilitation](#) methods.

I think that both of these opportunities for support—at Haverford and at Swarthmore—arose because I wrote to people to see if they could adapt *The Gathering* to their contexts and because my idea was articulated clearly in the text that I wrote for my Guggenheim application. The Philadelphia Area Creative Collaboratives group decided to write a text that emphasized the [skills](#) required for progressive social change because we were offering free workshops about transformative justice to activists and organizers in Philadelphia who we knew personally, and who might not be able to attend these workshops elsewhere. Lara Cohen at Swarthmore opted to focus on [haptic](#) knowledge in group work, as the William J. Cooper Foundation and Promise Fund Grant is intended for students at Haverford who might be new to organizing or [activism](#). Both grants enabled me to take funding from [elite](#) academic institutions and to channel them into the [solidarity economy](#), supporting the work of The United States Federation of [Worker Cooperatives](#) and the training of Philadelphia-based activists and organizers, in addition to students at those colleges.