



ART DESIGN SOUND INTERNET SCIENCE

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FABRING

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**Caroline Woolard** is an artist very interested in communitarian work, solidarity economy movement and conceptual art. More than an artist she's a cultural producer whose interdisciplinary work facilitates social imagination at the intersection of art, urbanism, and political economy.

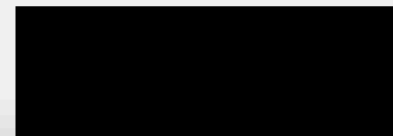
**REIC** (Real Estate Investment Cooperative) is one of the biggest project she's been involved in since last year in New York. After a period of intensive self-education in past and present alternative real estate models, **Woolard and 350 people joined together** the aim of making real estate and land permanently affordable for communities with low income, a sense of civic life but often getting displaced. **Through REIC they are working to pool money to secure**

## SEARCH

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## MEDIA PARTNER



life but often getting displaced. Through REIC they are working to pool money to secure land for local, cultural and cooperative uses.

Some years ago she also funded *OurGoods*, an online barter network for artists, designers, and cultural producers to barter skills, spaces, and objects. Members of *OurGoods* organize creative projects listing what they can share and what they need, and *OurGoods* matches barter partners allowing them to making projects almost without cash. In a way *OurGoods* is a new model for valuing creative work because it supports the creation of strong working relationships of mutual respect without the medium of cash.



Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

Last June we invited her at **WeMake** makerspace for **Maker In Residence** program and spent 10 days with us working on the big cnc router. She worked on a couple of artistic projects. The first is an evolution of her open source rocking chair *Queer Rocker*. She's been exploring a selection of joints taken from the **50 joints project** and optimized for our machine. The first iteration of the chair was done in New York and used a strap to keep the pieces of the chair together but it moved too much becoming unstable. Using the joints made the chair stronger even without nails, screws or glue because it's pressed fit together.

The second *DIY Ruin* is a set of stools which can be stacked together to form a life-size Roman column. The column can also be tipped on its side and used as a bench. The furniture takes its shape from smugglers who took ancient columns away in sections.

We had great conversations during the days we spent together and this interview is just a piece we can share with "Digicult" readers.

N O N E

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piece we can share with "Digicult" readers.



Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

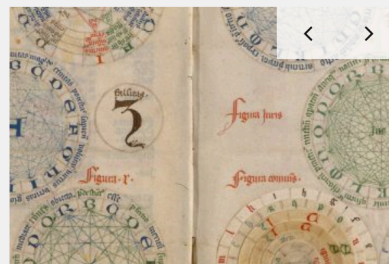
**Zoe Romano:** You've been advocating for permanently affordable space in New York City, banding together with artists and non-artists alike to build a real estate investment cooperative. How important is creating spaces of freedom at the core of a global power city like NYC?

**Caroline Woolard:** **Nina Simone** said that freedom is a new way of seeing, or living without fear. Very few people feel free; feel the power of their ability to take action. Members of the NYC Real Estate Investment Cooperative are creating spaces for hope and healing because, as **David Harvey** wrote: "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city."

When we make these spaces in NYC, we demonstrate that another way of doing business is possible. We resist the assumption that this global city is *only* a center of cut-throat competition by drawing on the legacies of community land trusts, credit unions, and **solidarity economies** in NYC. The New York City Real Estate Cooperative (<http://nycreic.com>) is a democratic financial organization that exists to secure permanently affordable space for civic, small business, and cultural use.

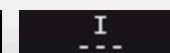
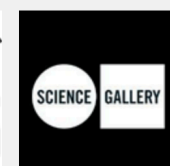
Over 350 New Yorkers have gathered together to take the obvious next step in equitable community development by combining cooperative principles, permanent preservation, and traditional real estate investment aimed at serving sectors that have been left behind. Inspired partially by the **Cooper Square Committee's** success in using a community land trust to

## LATEST POST



### "DIA-LOGOS": RAMON LLULL AND THE ARS COMBINATORIA

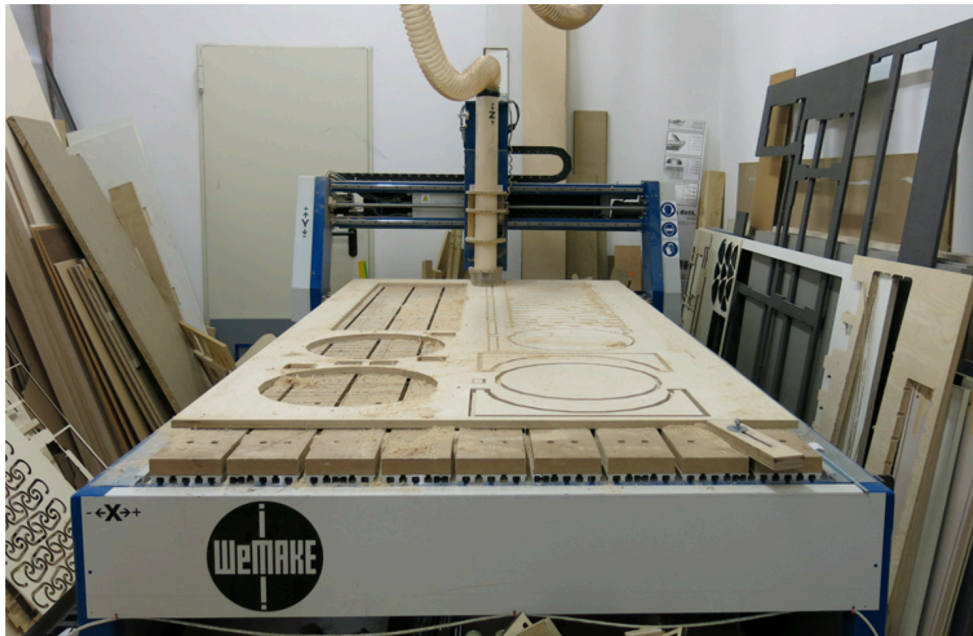
## FRIENDS



partially by the **Cooper Square Committee's** success in using a community land trust to establish permanently affordable low income housing and commercial space, and by **New Communities Inc.**, the first land trust in the United States.

The NYC REIC seeks to leverage relatively small investments (as low as \$10) made by a large group of people to secure permanently affordable space for civic, small business, and cultural use. It aims to make long-term, stabilizing, and transformative investments in real estate for the benefit of member-owners and their communities.

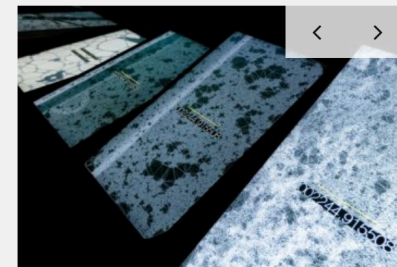
Artists and makers will benefit from the NYC REIC and other land trusts, but not because they are set aside as a special interest group from other low income people who share their needs. By building a cooperative, we are educating, empowering and shaping a powerful group of New Yorkers, including artists, who say: Development without displacement is possible. You can read more about this on our blog: <http://nycreic.com/blog>



Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

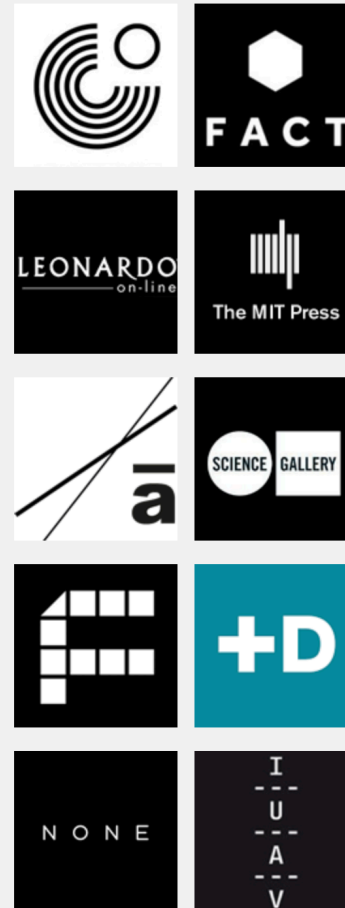
**Zoe Romano:** You see the Commons as shared resources that are managed by and for the people who use those resources. How is digital fabrication becoming part of your work and why is important for the development of the Commons?

**Caroline Woolard:** I make **art** and **infrastructures** for the commons. My method enjoins objects to their contexts of circulation. I build sculptures for barter only *and I also* create international barter networks that continue to grow; I fabricate model Shaker housing *and I also* convene organizers of community land trusts. Barter networks, community land trusts, and open source software are all part of the commons. If the commons is the ways in which



## WHERE THE LAWS OF NATURE BLURS: AN INTERVIEW WITH RYOICHI KUROKAWA.

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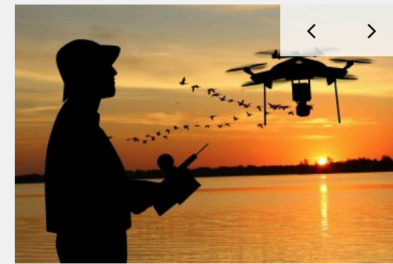
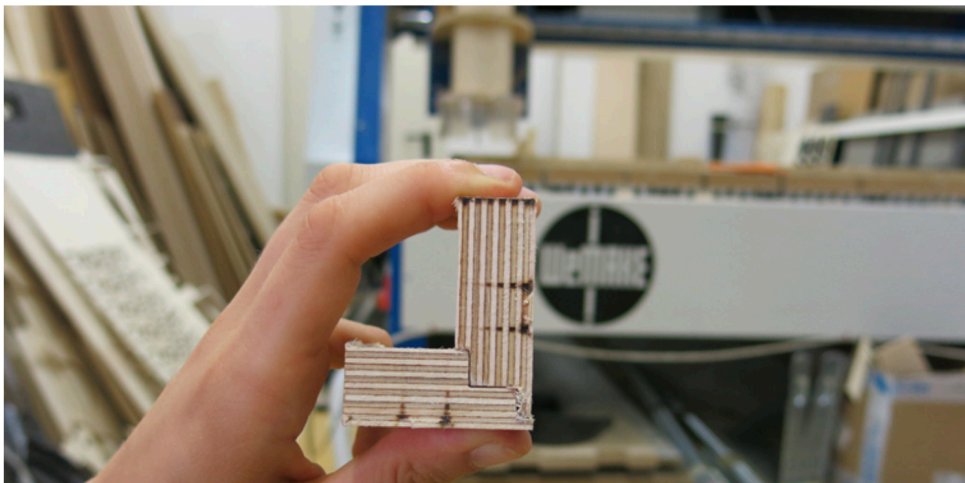
and open source software are all part of the commons. If the commons is the ways in which people share and manage resources together, then the commons is a political, economic concept.

Historically, commons have been enclosed upon by state governance and by privatization<sup>1</sup>. Today, the commons are enclosed upon by neoliberalism, what cultural theorist **Leigh Claire La Berge** describes as: “The private capture of public wealth”. It is my hope that my art and design work can support existing commoning practices like the gifting, lending, borrowing, and sharing of land, labor, and capital. While artists who represent commoning in paintings or photographs *might* provide necessary space for reflection about the commons, in my work I employ one of two strategies: 1) co-creating living spaces for commoning, or 2) making objects and artworks for existing commons-based organizations.

I use digital fabrication because I am interested in projects which reveal the conditions of their own production; projects which desire to be made and remade. I am interested in “Free art” and “Free design,” as in FLOSS, meaning: “Art that respects viewers’ freedom and community. Roughly, viewers have the freedom to use, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the art. With these freedoms, the viewers (both individually and collectively) control the art and what it does for them.” See my [Free Libre Open Source Systems and Art manifesto](#), for more information on this.

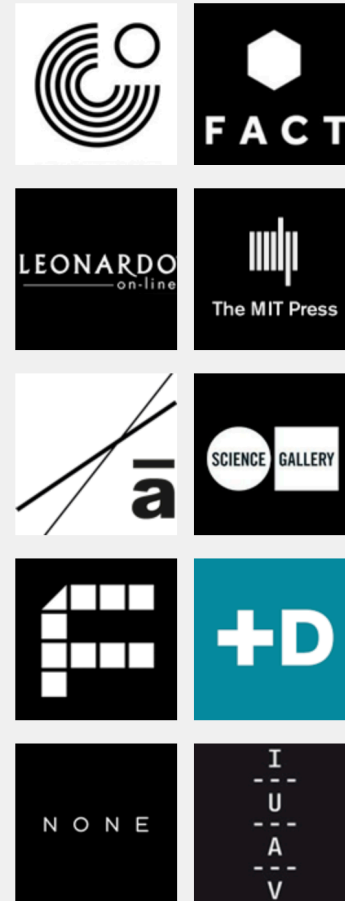
Digital fabrication also allows people who have felt unwelcome in traditional fabrication shops to be involved in prototyping, production, and innovation. When I was in school, for example, I was saw no women fabricators in positions of power.

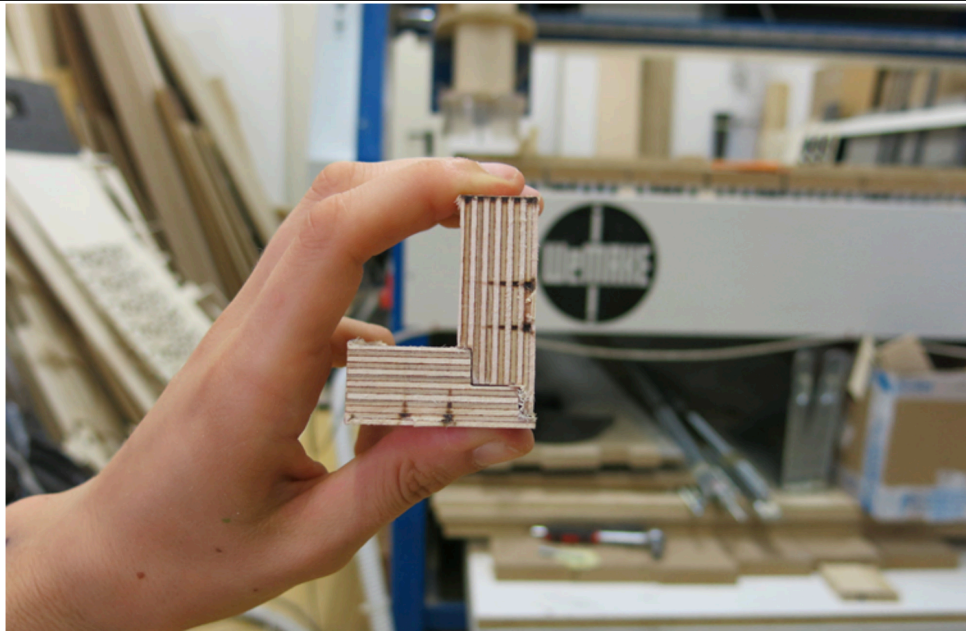
There were no full time female faculty in the sculpture department and there was only one female technician in the sculpture shop. When I go to a place like **WeMake.cc**, however, women are leading the field. I worked with **Zoe Romano** and **Ozden Kose**, and their gender identity did not stand out. Every person on this earth came out of a woman. What would it mean to imagine and create spaces for digital reproduction that are inherently feminist?



## THE AMAZING TECHNOLOGY BEHIND DRONE RACING

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Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

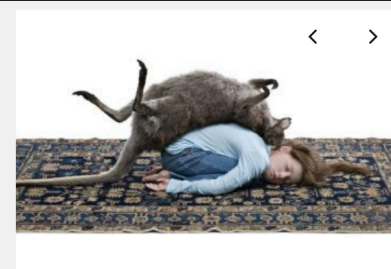
**Zoe Romano:** Makerspace and fablab are often becoming key spaces in the city to foster a spirit of cooperation and empowerment around science, technology, robotics and design. Especially when the start-up rhetoric is not overwhelming. How's the situation in NYC?

**Caroline Woolard:** I don't know the maker space community in NYC that well. I was a Fellow at Eyebeam in 2014, and the community there is very strong, but the laser cutter and 3D printer are only accessible to **Eyebeam** Fellows and Residents. For membership-based maker spaces, I know that **Alpha1Labs** and **NYCResistor** have been around for a while, and that we now have **NEW LAB**, but I have only been to these spaces once or twice. I wish I knew of a space like WeMake.cc in New York City!

**Zoe Romano:** During the presentation of your latest work *DIY Ruin* which you designed and produced at WeMake you said that it uses the aesthetic of the Roman empire to question fantasies of control and power in the "maker movement" globally. What's your thought about the maker movement and its relation with control and power?

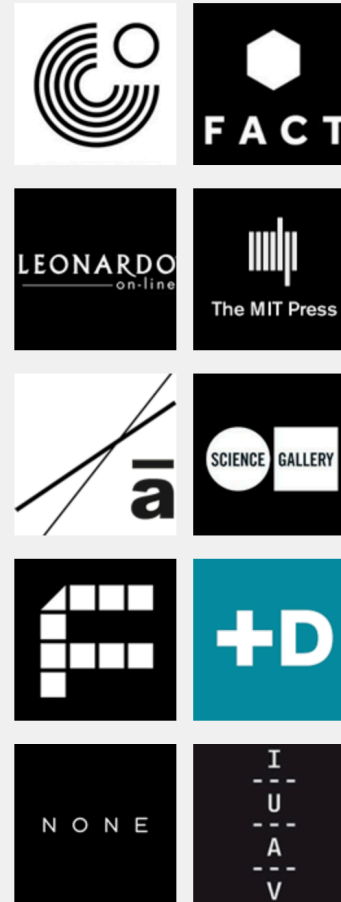
**Caroline Woolard:** When I use a CNC router, I alter my experience of fabrication from that of a hands-on craftsman to that of an administrator or manager. Where I used to work with the table saw and drill press all day; now I watch the robot cut my wood all day. I increase my skill with a keyboard, mouse, and computer, rather than with hand tools. I find satisfaction in overseeing the robot, but I lose the satisfaction of muscle memory that comes from knowing a material by hand.

I see myself standing, arms crossed, like any manager might, rather than altering my idea in response to the material, or the experience of crafting an object. The arms-crossed, standing,

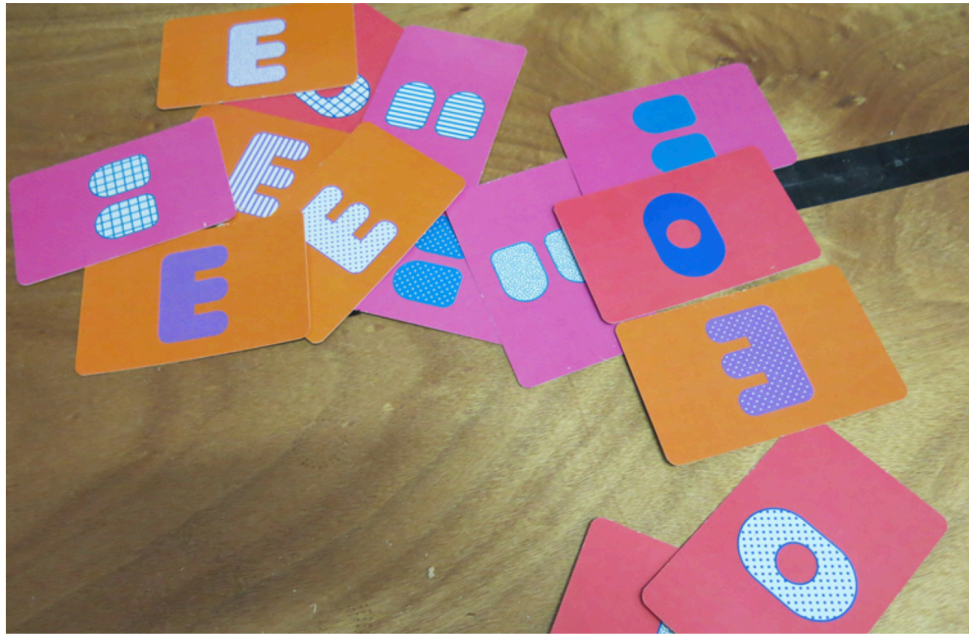


"PATRICIA PICCININI:  
CURIOUS AFFECTION" OPENS  
AT GOMA

## FRIENDS



response to the material, or the experience of crafting an object. The arms-crossed, standing, managerial posture is similar to that of employees and faculty at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**, whose funding for Fab Labs leads them to write that a maker space is: “Entirely about the community, and the social engineering around the community.”

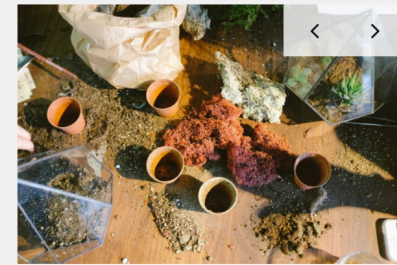


Caroline Woolard - Supply Chain Art and Design

What does it mean that The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA): “An **agency** of the **U.S. Department of Defense** responsible for the development of **emerging technologies** for use by the military,” is a key funder for MIT projects, and for Fab Labs? I am wary of the ways in which the innovation through distributed networks will be utilized by military efforts. I am wary of the ways in which the so-called maker movement exports technology, rather than importing it from China or India or Nairobi. I think Western makers can learn a lot from the **Ghana Think Tank**, which is critically “developing the first world.”

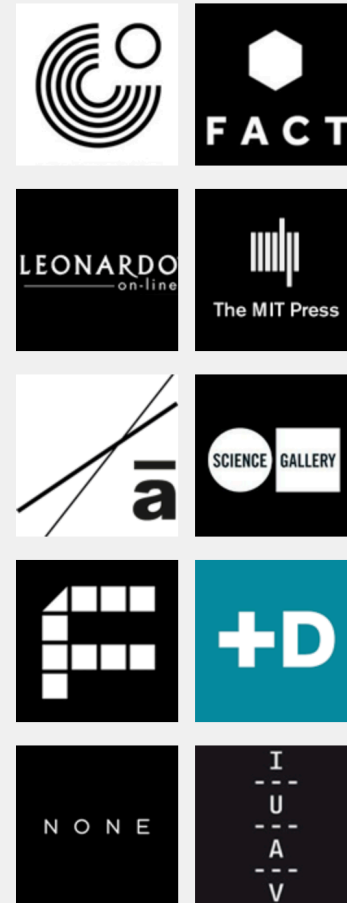
To bring this discomfort around empire and control into the projects I make with CNC routers, I draw on the North American adoption of classical motifs in the organization of social life and of social space on campus. The columns I make mimic the Ionic columns used in buildings education, justice, and government in the United States, particularly the columns of the White House. I want to connect the violence of empire of the United States to the violence of the Roman empire. The founding myth of the Roman empire relies upon the rape of the Sabine women. The founding of the United States relies upon the destruction of indigenous life and the enslavement of thousands of people.

*Capitoline Wolves* is an installation made for conversations about fantasies of Founding Brothers. Five tables have been placed in a pentagonal formation under the grand dome of



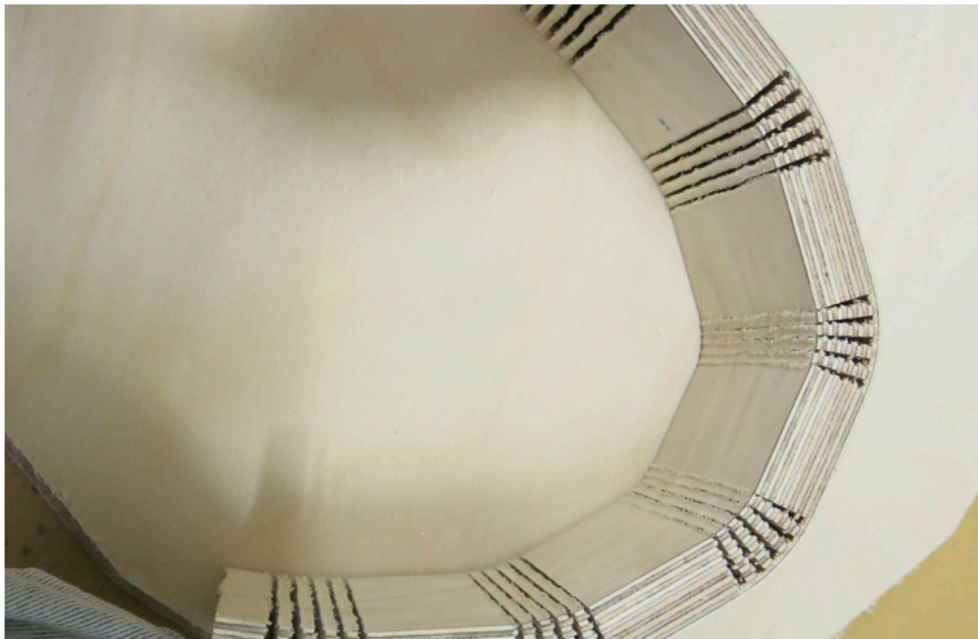
#### 4 CLEVER SOLUTIONS FOR SMARTER GARDENING

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Brothers. Five tables have been placed in a pentagonal formation under the grand dome of Sibley Hall at Cornell University. Each table resembles the she-wolf that raised Romulus and Remus; the cherry-wood table has bent hind legs of steel, distended udders of stoneware, and a hanging mirror for a face. The she-wolves' breasts have been filled with water from Ithaca's gorges.

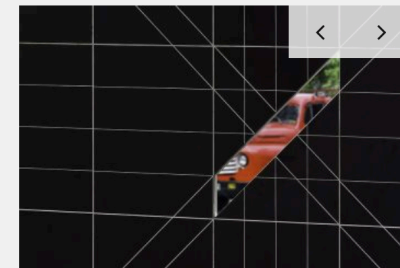
Throughout the installation, a delicate bowl with a single hole is placed in a breast, sinking to the bottom to mark the duration of conversations. Surrounding the tables are stools which can be stacked together to form a life-size Roman column. The column can also be tipped on its side and used as a bench. This sculptural furniture, called *DIY Ruin*, takes its shape from smugglers who took ancient columns away in sections. The she-wolf tables and column sections form a fifteen-foot diameter installation that welcomes dialog about power.



Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

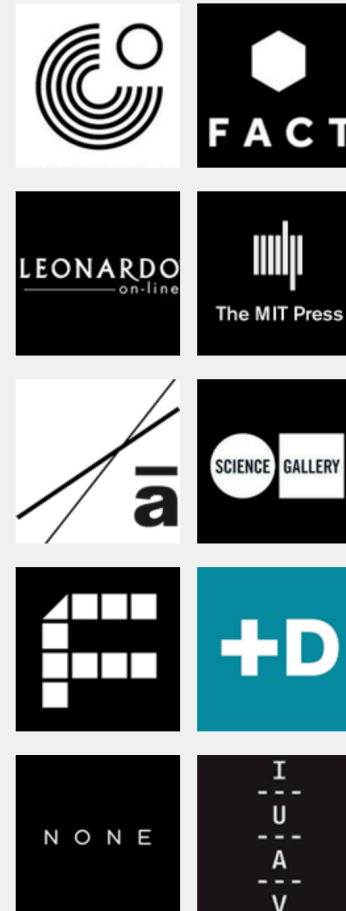
**Zoe Romano:** When you make objects you always keep a connection with their economic and social lives. How does your work as an artist deal with the business of art collectors and galleries?

**Caroline Woolard:** At this time, I have had the privilege of working on commission from non-profit spaces. I have been commissioned by **MoMA, the Queens Museum, Cornell University, Cooper Union, Williams College**, and other universities and non-profit spaces which fund the research and development that I do. I see non-profit galleries and museums as the launching spaces for long-term organizations, but they are often very slow and incapable of bending their rules.



**MICHAEL SNOW AT THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM BILBAO**

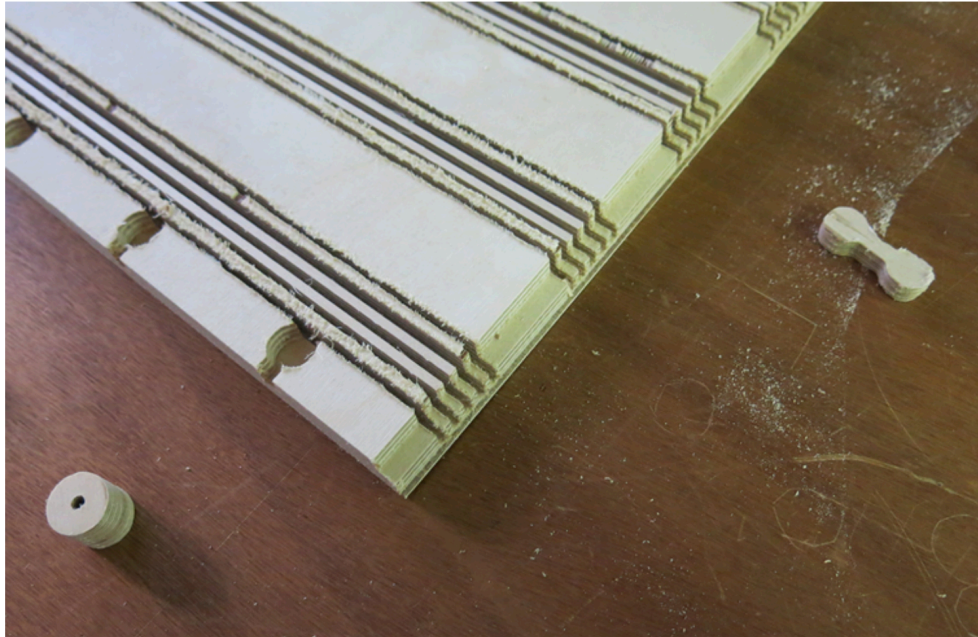
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For example, most of these spaces are not open after work, and often charge a fee for entry, so very few working class people can access them. I often choose to work in spaces that are not seen as Art spaces (the street, DIY spaces, maker spaces, community spaces) because these spaces allow for long term projects with a deep engagement with local neighbors and community members.

The objects I make cannot be disentangled from their economic and social lives. My *Work Dress* is available for barter only. My *Statements* increase in price according to student loan rates. *Artists Report Back* is made by **BFAMFAPhD**, a group which you could contribute to. I understand art as mode of inquiry that expands beyond exhibition and toward life cycle; from display to production, consumption, and surplus allocation.

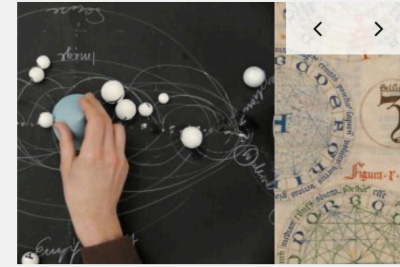
I begin each project with an invitation. I facilitate an experience. A group gathers. I share and develop leadership. The project becomes a group effort, and the objects multiply. The objects are known in the group and shown much later.



Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

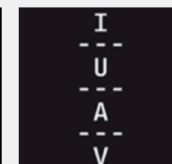
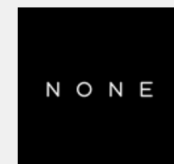
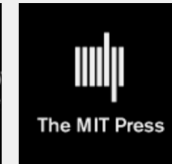
I create installations and social spaces for encounters with fantasies of cooperation. Police barricades become beds. Money is erased in public. A clock ticks for ninety-nine years. Public seats attach to stop sign posts. Cafe visitors use local currency. Office ceilings hold covert messages. Ten thousand students attend classes by paying teachers with barter items. Statements about arts graduates are read on museum plaques. My work is research-based and site-specific. I alter objects to call forth new norms, roles, and rules. A street corner, a community space, a museum, an office, or a school become sites for collective reimagining.

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Caroline Woolard - Maker in Residence

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To make this shift from object to group, I concern myself with duration and political economy. When I source materials, invite joint-work, share or deny decision-making power, and shape future markets for each work, a community of practice emerges. Experience becomes a criterion of knowledge. To the conventional labels of Title, Author(s), Materials, Dimensions, Date, and Provenance, I add Duration, forms of Property, Labor, Transactions, Enterprise, and Finance. Objects become materializations of collective debate; entry points for encounters with fantasies of cooperation.

#### Notes:

[1] Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York : London: Autonomedia ; Pluto, 2003. (pp: 11-17; 38-42; 141-145; Chapter 4 "The Great Witch Hunt in Europe," pp, 163-219 <http://bookzz.org/dl/1317367/3c696f>

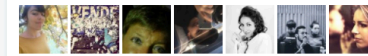
<http://carolinewoolard.com/>

<http://wemake.cc/>

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**"MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF MY WORK IS UNBUILT": MOSHE SAFDIE IN NEW TIME-SPACE-EXISTENCE VIDEO**

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