



## **Chloë Bass: The Book of Everyday Instruction**

April 21 - June 17, 2018

Organized by Alexis Wilkinson, Knockdown Center Director of Exhibitions and Live Art

### **Public Programs**

Friday, May 25, 7:00 pm: Couples Counseling for Artists and Institutions Workshop

Sunday, June 3, 5:00pm: A Field Guide to Spatial Intimacy Workshop

Thursday, June 14, 7:00pm: Protect and Preserve Lecture Performance + Closing Party

Knockdown Center presents *Chloë Bass: The Book of Everyday Instruction*, an eight-chapter investigation into one-on-one social interaction, exploring an expanded understanding of pairing. On view for the first time in its entirety, the exhibition includes all eight major projects ("chapters") developed by Bass between January 2015 and January 2018 that constitute *The Book of Everyday Instruction* as well as interventions created in response to Knockdown Center's public spaces. A book, published by The Operating System, and designed and edited by Lynne Desilva-Johnson, will be released following the exhibition.

For the past seven years, Chloë Bass has studied the modes and scales of intimacy, using quotidian interactions as a measure for tracing social relationships; fostering and observing everyday interpersonal situations is the basis of her creative practice. Bass conducts experiences such as games, movement exercises, and public dialogues that serve as subtle and unconventional social experiments. Each chapter in *The Book of Everyday Instruction* asks a central question, such as "How do we know when we're really together?" "How do we build a place through shared labor over time?" and "How do we share love between individuals and institutions?" Presented sequentially, Bass' inquiries increase in scale and scope - from an initial investigation of the intimacy between herself and a stranger, to studying the relationships between individuals and safe spaces, institutions, and cities.

Within Knockdown Center's galleries, Bass shares echoes, archival documents, and interpretations of the experiences that comprised the iterations of each chapter's public life. Outside the gallery, Bass embeds her work in our surroundings, creating discrete sites that can be encountered in unexpected ways. Both modes prompt thoughtful considerations of how we interact with one another and our environment in daily life, reminding us that everyday habits shape the world, a world that, as Bass insists, we make together.

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*The Book of Everyday Instruction* is the second phase in a long-term research project on intimacy. In the first phase, *The Bureau of Self-Recognition* (2011 - 2013), Bass worked at the scale of the individual, investigating self-recognition. In January 2018, Bass embarked on the third phase of the project, *Obligation To Others Holds Me In My Place*, studying relationships at the scale of the family. The first stages of this new project currently appear on Analog, a digital residency hosted by Recess.

**Chapter One: *you+me together*** investigates time spent in pairs. In photographs, text, and collected ephemera, Bass documents sixteen experiences that she shared with residents of Cleveland, OH - experiences that each resident would normally have engaged in with a regular partner.

**Chapter Two: *Things I've seen people do lately*** examines the pair-relation in voyeurism, a situation where only one party is aware that a relationship exists. The works constituting this chapter combine the artist's textual observations of others, as well as images from publicly accessible live-stream surveillance footage, viewable on a lightbox or through a peephole.

**Chapter Three: *We walk the world two by two*** memorializes two-person exchanges between community members in Greensboro, NC. After interviewing four pairs of participants, Bass worked with them to cast and install plaques along South Elm Street, historicizing the ongoing, everyday labor that creates a place over time. On view are rubbings made from the permanently installed plaques along with an interactive map featuring audio excerpts from the interviews that catalyzed the project.

**Chapter Four: *It's amazing we don't have more fights*** appropriates the sociological discipline of proxemics – the study of how people arrange themselves in space – to investigate the creation of stories articulated through the proximities of bodies. The chapter is comprised of an educational workbook offering exercises, information, and writing prompts, videos of stories that measure a distance, and an installation of “proximity verbs” with corresponding personal anecdotes. The work continues in Knockdown Center's restrooms and patio with custom toilet paper, stall-wall and mirror text, and measures of social distances.

**Chapter Five: *Protect & Preserve*** is a booklet of postcards made in St. Louis, MO depicting participants in self-declared safe spaces. Reconsidering “safety” as the intimate relationship between a person and their city, Bass met with twenty-two St. Louis residents at places they felt safe, photographed them there, and discussed questions such as, “Where do you feel safe?,” “If you could talk to someone else about being safe, who would it be? And how would you talk about it?”

**Chapter Six: *What is shared, what is offered*** interrogates amorous relationships between individuals and institutions. Four photographs of spices, with spice jars on-hand for smelling, depict four archetypal phases of love and relation. The chapter also includes a customized table setting at Knockdown Center's bar.

**Chapter Seven: *Subject to change without notice*** implements *City Palette*, a smart-phone application created by the artist in partnership with designer Taylor Sneed that visualizes subjective experiences of public space, asking how we interpret and understand change through color. Flags incorporating color palettes generated in the app will be flown on Knockdown Center's flagpole as a part of the *Temporary Allegiance* program.

**Chapter Eight: *Complete upon arrival*** concludes *The Book of Everyday Instruction*. Reflecting on the various relationships between the artist and her audience, the chapter returns to the role of the self within the pair. Figures essential to the realization of her work – the student, the writer, the artist, and the curator – were photographed in custom garments, also on display. Artist-designed mints are also available for audience consumption.

## **About Chloë Bass**

Chloë Bass is a multiform conceptual artist working in performance, situation, conversation, publication, and installation. Her work uses daily life as a site of deep research to address scales of intimacy: where patterns hold and break as group sizes expand. She began her work with a focus on the individual (*The Bureau of Self-Recognition*, 2011 – 2013), has recently concluded a study of pairs (*The Book of Everyday Instruction*, 2015 – 2017), and will continue to scale up gradually until she's working at the scale of the metropolis. Chloë has held numerous fellowships and residencies; 2017's included Triangle Art Association, the Center for Book Arts, and Antenna's Spillways Fellowship. She is currently the Recess Analog artist in residence. Her projects have appeared nationally and internationally, including recent exhibits at the Kitchen, the Brooklyn Museum, CUE Art Foundation, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space, The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, the James Gallery, and elsewhere. Her forthcoming book will be published by the Operating System in May 2018. Writing has also appeared on Hyperallergic, Arts.Black, and the Walker Reader among others. She is an Assistant Professor of Art at Queens College, CUNY. [chloebass.com](http://chloebass.com); [paletteapp.city](http://paletteapp.city); [recessanalog.org](http://recessanalog.org)

Knockdown Center gallery hours are Thursday and Friday from 5 PM to 9 PM, Saturday and Sunday from 2 PM to 8 PM. Knockdown Center is located at 52-19 Flushing Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378.

## **About Knockdown Center**

Featuring programming of diverse formats and media, Knockdown Center aims to create a radically cross-disciplinary environment. The particularity of our architectural environment and history leads us to gravitate toward projects that demonstrate a sensitive reactivity to site and environment.

## **Press Inquiries**

Christina Daniels, Marketing Manager, Exhibitions and Live Art  
[christina@knockdowncenter.com](mailto:christina@knockdowncenter.com)