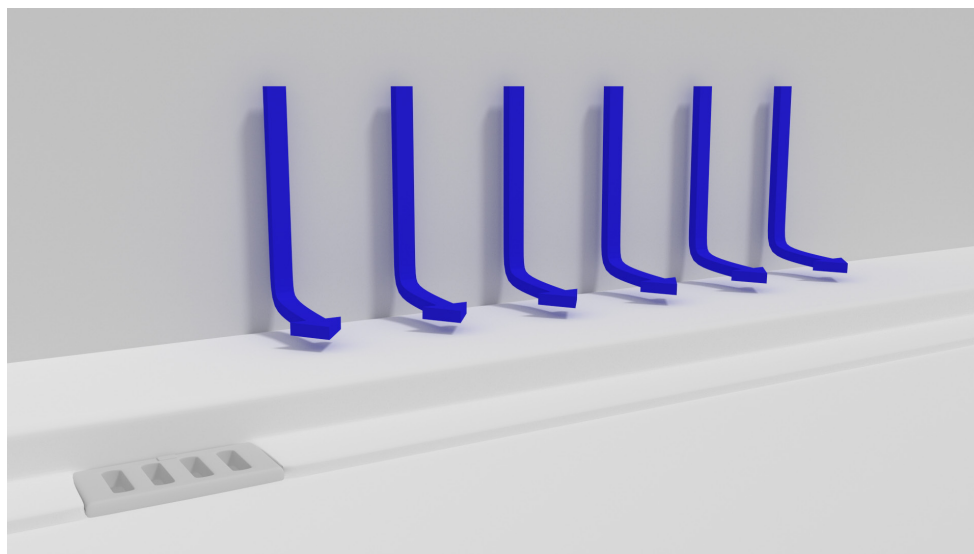




For Immediate Release

*Treatment: A Plan for Rain*  
A project by Nicholas O'Brien

May 6 - June 17, 2018  
Opening Reception: Sunday, May 6, 5:00-7:00pm



Treatment: *Prologue*, Digital Video, 3:30, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

Knockdown Center presents ***Treatment: A Plan for Rain***, a project by artist **Nicholas O'Brien** that examines the NYC Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) stormwater collection program by focusing on soil biodiversity, maintenance, bureaucratic transparency, and its impact on city dwellers. Through a series of animations and sculptures, O'Brien interrogates the use of Systems Engineering principles, a design methodology that breaks down complex engineering projects into compartmentalized quantifiable metrics, as applied to city planning. Initially used to design aerospace vehicles, this process, while effective in creating functional models on paper, often ignores the human element when undertaking large-scale urban infrastructure projects. The exhibition will be **on view May 6 – June 17, 2018**, with an **opening reception Sunday, May 6th, 5:00-7:00pm**.

Using sparse, reduced imagery, O'Brien's animated simulations use the visual language of design documents published by the DEP and other Systems Engineering schematics, emulating current designs while offering alternatives. Each of the five video chapters focus on a different aspect of the stormwater collection program and its effects, and include audio from interviews with experts across relevant fields as well as DEP officials. In addition to O'Brien's informative animations, a new series of sculptures reconfigure the city's current bioswale inlet/outlet design – the curbside architectural systems designed to prevent flooding via sidewalk planters that absorb water runoff. Removed from the street and altered, the sculptural imitations of bioswale architecture consider aesthetic implications of engineered

design. O'Brien collects and burns garbage from neglected bioswale sites, creating ashes that he uses to coat the concrete sculptures as a material gesture to address the thorny issue of bioswale maintenance.

*Treatment: A Plan for Rain* aims to clarify complicated and often opaque urban plans and their relationship to climate justice by creating access points that illuminate the intentions behind green infrastructure in impacted communities. Knockdown Center resides within the floodplains around Newton Creek, a prominent waterway connecting Brooklyn and Queens to the East River; related public programming will provide opportunities for the community directly impacted by DEP's stormwater collection plan to learn more and engage in conversation.

**Nicholas O'Brien** is a net-based artist, curator, and writer researching Games, Digital Art, and Network Culture. His work has exhibited in Mexico City, Berlin, London, Dublin, Italy, Prague, as well as throughout the US. As a past recipient of a Turbulence.org Commission funded by the NEA his work has also appeared or featured in ARTINFO, The Brooklyn Rail, DIS magazine, Frieze d/e, The Atlantic, and The New York Times. He currently lives in Brooklyn and is Assistant Professor in 3D Design and Game Development at Stevens Institute of Technology.

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. Visit our website, or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### **Press Inquiries:**

Tara Plath, Marketing and Communications Manager

[tara@knockdowncenter.com](mailto:tara@knockdowncenter.com)

718.489.6285