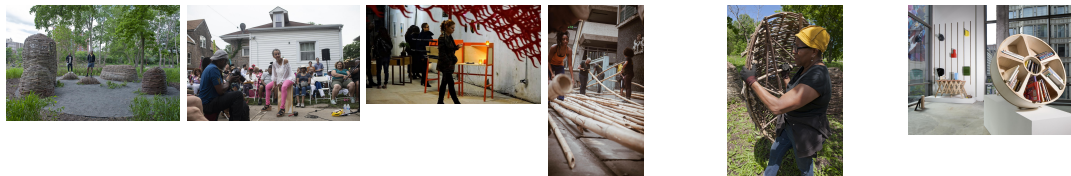


Exhibitions

COMMONS ARTIST PROJECT: BLKHAUS STUDIOS

Nov 12, 2019–Mar 1, 2020

The Commons
Second Floor, East Side



Documentation of blkHaUS studios, *Sounding Bronzeville*, 2016–present. Site-specific installation, Burnham Wildlife Corridor, Chicago
Photo © Sandra Steinbrecher

Human beings are natural collectors, be it of souvenirs found on vacations, heirlooms passed down from grandparents, or birthday cards received over the years. The items we hold on to reflect our social, cultural, and personal values. Likewise, museums tell stories by presenting all kinds of collected objects, which reflect the way they prioritize different social and cultural values.

In this Commons Artist Project, Folayemi Wilson and Norman Teague's Chicago-based, socially focused design studio blkHaUS studios asks if understanding the stories of personal collections can transform the priorities of

museums in forming their collections.

Historically, collections in contemporary art museums have preserved and revealed specific art historical lineages. These stories, however, are ultimately influenced by the social and political context in which museums collect. Over the last few years, some have deaccessioned works—a practice of collection care where some objects are routinely removed from their collections—with the specific intent to make room for works by artists whose ideas and art have been left out of the established canon, especially artists of color.

Over the course of the exhibition, blkHaUS brings together Chicago community members and local museums. Through thoughtfully constructed interactive experiences they collate and assess patterns of collecting, inviting audiences to share their personal objects and narratives around their modular artwork the *Petal Table*, focusing on key questions regarding collecting, archives, and museum practice. *The Commons Table* is structured as an open research model including four rotating exhibitions and five dinner discussions on topics related to collecting, community, and institutional practice. Each exhibition of *The Commons Collection* is preceded by a conversation that focuses on a question posed by blkHaUS studios. Events take place at sites throughout Chicago and are facilitated by community members whose work is related to these topics. At the end of the project, the artists share their findings with representatives from the MCA and other local museums to provide tools for museums to better reflect the communities with which they share space.

Exhibitions in the Commons

COMMODIFICATION OF MODERNISM

Exhibition Dates: Nov 12–Dec 8

This convening and exhibition consider how the potential for market value changes the ways we collect. What is it about modernism that has caught the imagination of design aficionados and collectors and elevated its aesthetic to elite, enduring status?

NATURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CITIES

Exhibition Dates: Dec 10–Jan 12

This convening and exhibition consider how nature and the built environment coexist and whether natural forms might inform how we value designed objects. Are there ways that nature can help inform how we design twenty-first-century cities for twenty-first-century challenges?

DISABILITY AND PERSPECTIVE

Exhibition Dates: Jan 14–Feb 9

This convening and exhibition consider how embracing a wider variety of perspectives and physical lived experiences might change our value structures for designed objects. How can we critique social constructions of disability and normalize bodily and sensory differences?

RADICAL FUTURES

Exhibition Dates: Feb 11–Mar 1

This convening and exhibition consider how young people might reimagine collecting with their generation's concerns at the forefront. What questions or issues are important to Chicago's young people around art and design within institutional, social, and urban spaces?

Conversations on Collecting

Due to the nature of the convenings and sites, events are limited to a small number of active participants. We welcome members of the public to join the conversation: pre-registration is required by emailing inquiries to