

CURATORS: MARK CLINTBERG AND ERANDY VERGARA-VARGAS

ARTISTS: HELEN REED AND HANNAH JICKLING, NICOLE LATTUCA, KLINTBERG & NEMEROFSKY, DEAN BALDWIN, HEBA Y. AMIN, ZOHAR KFIR, JEFF KULAK AND CHARLIE WILLIAMS, CYNTHIA HAMMOND, CAMILLE BÉDARD, SHAUNA JANSSEN, ROGER LATOUR AND ITAI PELEG.



IN CIRCULATION is an interdisciplinary journal based in the Department of Art History & Communication Studies at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. The journal is an annual graduate journal, published electronically in the Fall of each year. Each issue will address both historical and contemporary realities. <http://incirculation.ca>



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StudioXX  
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Founded in 1996, Montreal-based Studio XX is a bilingual feminist artist-run centre for technological exploration, creation and critique. Studio XX's mandate focuses on enabling the creative actions and perspectives of women at the forefront of contemporary technological landscapes and the development of a digital democracy that values autonomy and collaboration. Studio XX supports the creation and dissemination of independent media art.



Nicole Lattuca, Fogo Island Decentralized Academy (2014). Photo: Tag Team Studio. Courtesy of the artist.

CONTINGENT: ONLY IF PARTICIPATION OCCURS

### EXHIBITION

December 11 to 19th, 2014

Free Entrance

Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 5pm

Saturday, Sunday, Monday 12pm – 5pm

### OPENING + IN CIRCULATION LAUNCH

Thursday, December 11, 5PM

Free Entrance

### WIRED WOMEN SALON #105

Curators + Artists Presentations

Thursday, December 11, 7 to 9pm

Suggested donation \$5\*

Studio XX, 4001 Berri (corner Duluth) space 201, Montreal  
[www.studioxx.org](http://www.studioxx.org)

\*Donations contribute to the general activities of Studio XX.

Why participate? Who can participate and who cannot? Who sets the rules of participation? What is the role and what are the limits of technologies and platforms for contemporary forms of collaboration? What strategies and forms of collaboration are deployed to draw attention to or trouble conventions of faith, gender, intimacy, beauty, and knowledge?

This exhibition gathers together eight projects which are contingent upon the participation of different agents, and that each respond to one of the questions above. Some of these emerged as a response to a problem of a local community, while others invited participation in specific art and educational projects. Overall, they question the assumption that participatory strategies are inherently positive, and that they enable horizontal and democratic decision-making processes in the public realm.

These projects reveal the limits faced by some agents who wish to document or intervene in social injustices. But far from preventing participation, these works reveal the need for a nuanced understanding of what participation is. Participation is contingent upon the action, organization, and gathering of people, but also contingent upon public policies, laws, and social constructs. Rather than assuming that participation is good in itself, they reveal the tensions at the centre of negotiations with others, and the still-fixed conventions that make people claim positions when participating. Decisions to participate are directed by personal desires that are constructed from social situations. This exhibition turns a critical eye to participation and invites gallery visitors to consider participation as contingent on a vast array of circumstances.



Over the course of several months, **Helen Reed and Hannah Jickling** worked closely with a group of primary school children in downtown Toronto to create a series of chocolates designed by the students, and then used in a barter economy to trade and bargain for labour, goods, and services within the school. **Nicole Lattuca** collaborated with secondary students in Newfoundland to build a mobile schoolhouse – designed to be used for a range of educational programs including architectural workshops for island youth – which was then “launched,” or moved as a whole unit, using traditional practices specific to Newfoundland. **Klintberg & Nemerofsky’s** project offers a single, wrapped flower to the last guest to leave the gallery each day of the exhibition, proposing a gift economy regulated by visitors. **Dean Baldwin’s** installation is a social setting active on the night of the exhibition opening; vessels and debris from the project remain on display as an index of the actions of ingestion and conversation that took place in the gallery.

Other projects reflect the aim to respond to different social conflicts. **Heba Y. Amin’s** video includes footage the artist recorded of uncompleted and abandoned buildings that stand as markers of government corruption. This material is juxtaposed with voice messages by Egyptians who used the platform *Speak2Tweet* when Egyptian authorities shut down the country’s Internet access in 2011. **Zohar Kfir’s** interactive piece offers intimate and disturbing video footage shot by Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza from The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. **Jeff Kulak and Charlie Williams’** iPhone and iPad App *Cuddlr* incites physical contact with people nearby who want to cuddle, to hold hands, to touch strangers without the pressure to start a longer-term personal and/or intimate relationship. *Possible* is a collaborative intervention on a protected urban landscape in Montreal called Le Champ des possibles (the Field of Possibilities) by **Cynthia Hammond, Camille Bédard, Shauna Janssen, Roger Latour, and Itai Peleg**. In October 2014 the Canadian-Pacific Railway Company bulldozed a section of this field; this art project responds to this situation by inviting gallery visitors to take a seedling home and care for it over the winter. In spring 2015, the final phase of the project will take the form of a group planting event in the razed lot to help restore the lost flora and its associated fauna.

This exhibition results from an open call for artworks, as well as invited and commissioned projects. All eight projects are born from contingency, from a series of complex events and situations that could not necessarily be predicted; they result from frustration, from pain, from struggle, from hope, from the desire to respond to social injustices and to incite supposedly frivolous actions – such as crafting chocolates, fostering seedlings, displaying flowers, and serving drinks – that reveal some tensions involved in participation.

The methods, practices, and models gathered in this exhibition result from different junctures that incite more than one person to take action, to participate. They are contingent in the sense that they all invite participation, but also in that they only fully come into existence through participation. These types of participation, however, are accented by economic, historic, and social problems that set the rules of participation.

This exhibition is part of the special issue “To Participate: Global and Spatial Perspectives” of *In Circulation*, an interdisciplinary journal based in the Department of Art History & Communication Studies at McGill University in Montreal.

