

# WORKING ALTERNATIVES

Breaking Bread  
Art Broadcasting  
Collective Action

October 27, 2012 - January 13, 2013



Co-curated by **Mackenzie Schneider, Jess Wilcox and Terri C Smith.**

Artists included: Paul Branca, Chris Burden, Philip Corner, Jaime Davidovich, Tim Davis & Lisa Sanditz, ESP TV, Group Material, Geoffrey Hendricks & Brian Buczak, Ann Hirsch, Alison Knowles, Tom Marioni, PAD/D archive materials, Legacy Russell, Chris Sollars, and Jerome Waag.

A list of participating collectives is posted in the archive room.

Cover photo: Detail of Tom Marioni, *The Museum of Conceptual Art* at the San Francisco Museum of Art, 1979, *Free Beer Installation*

## *Working Alternatives*

### Introduction

The exhibition, *Working Alternatives: Breaking Bread, Art Broadcasting, and Collective Action*, is a reflection of the spirit and strategies that influenced Franklin Street Works' mission during its formation and that guide the organization's programming today. With this group exhibition, curators Mackenzie Schneider, Terri C Smith, and Jess Wilcox explore three threads of alternative art platforms and production: conviviality and food as components in alternative art space programming and art production (Wilcox); artists using media such as radio, television, and newspapers as alternative venues for presenting work (Schneider); and artist collectives presented in a constantly growing archive that features weekly changing exhibitions of gathered materials (Smith). In addition to historical examples, *Working Alternatives* includes original artworks by contemporary artists that reflect and expand on the show's themes. *Working Alternatives'* artists include: Paul Branca, Jaime Davidovich, Tim Davis & Lisa Sandit, ESP TV, Group Material, Geoffrey Hendricks & Brian Buczak, Ann Hirsch, Alison Knowles, Tom Marioni, Anna Ostoya, Legacy Russell, Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag. Franklin Street Works is also excited to collaborate on several off-site artworks, including the live radio broadcast of an Ann Hirsch performance on WPKN, Bridgeport, and collages by Anna Ostoya in the *Stamford Advocate* via several ads during the show's run.

In the upstairs gallery next to Franklin Street Works' café, curator Jess Wilcox presents projects that involve gathering and communing with food and beverages. This "Breaking Bread" theme imagines the kitchen table as an alternative space, presenting contemporary participatory, culinary art projects in juxtaposition with several 1970's food art projects. According to Wilcox, "This thread of the show traces conviviality as a key

characteristic that emerged from and continues to be central to alternative art practices. These artists use food's dual nature as something that both equalizes and distinguishes as means to explore ideas of collaboration, collectivity, individuality, and community. Food unites us as humans in need of sustenance, but also divides and marks us culturally and politically." Paul Branca, Alison Knowles, Tom Marioni, Legacy Russell, Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag take on these ideas through works that incorporate food and drink with performance, sculpture, publications, and interactive installations. In connection with the "Breaking Bread" theme, the café will feature a slideshow of photographs from Tim Davis and Lisa Sanditz's *Edible Sculpture Party* (2007 – present), an annual art/food gathering in upstate New York.

The "Art Broadcasting" segment of the exhibition is curated by Mackenzie Schneider and takes a look at artists that have used media as a way to distribute their work. Local newspapers, radio, and cable access have served as alternative spaces in and of themselves, allowing for the exhibition of work that offers alternative perspectives from the regularly scheduled programming. Beginning with a brief history from the 1970's to today and then leading to works commissioned by emerging artists, the exhibition will explore media as an unexpected venue for art. Historic examples in the exhibition include videos by Chris Burden, cable access broadcasts produced by Jaime Davidovich, and *New York Times* newspaper inserts by Group Material. The contemporary segment of "Art Broadcasting" will include three artworks placed into the Fairfield County region via newspaper, radio, and television. Brooklyn performance artist Ann Hirsch explores the contemporary portrayal of women in the media by inserting herself into popular culture through reality TV shows, Twitter and YouTube. For this exhibition Hirsch will perform on public radio for the first time thanks to Bridgeport, Connecticut's, independent radio station, WPKN. For the television component, a video shoot featuring ESP TV

will take place at Franklin Street Works. ESP TV will tape an installment of their nomadic showcase of contemporary and experimental art presenting music, performance, and video art in front of a live audience. Bringing print media into the mix, works by Anna Ostoya will be carried in the *Stamford Advocate*. Ostoya will create collages to be printed in the newspaper using elements from the newspaper itself, simultaneously responding to and inserting herself into the local context.

For the “collective action” component of *Working Alternatives* Franklin Street Works’ team put out a call for materials from artist collectives working today as an informal exploration of that landscape. There are relatively recent examples of exhibitions and projects that overlap in some ways with this archive/alternative space concept, consequently, curator and FSW Creative Director, Terri C Smith, sees this project as one addition to a layered, ongoing investigation – as one exploratory moment that reflects the pulse of creative collective action today. Materials will be presented in an open archive that visitors can explore as part of an immersive installation that includes changing, weekly exhibitions drawn from the archive’s materials. This section of the exhibition was inspired, in part, by Gregory Sholette’s book *Dark Matter* and PAD/D (Political Art Documentation/Distribution). PAD/D was an activist art group whose stated purpose was, “To provide artists with an organized relationship to society, to demonstrate the political effectiveness of image making, and to provide a framework within which progressive artists can discuss and develop alternatives to the mainstream art system.” The installation will, consequently, also include reproductions of documents from the PAD/D archive (MOMA library) and Sholette’s online archive as an informative, historical backdrop for the contemporary materials collected by Franklin Street Works.

## Checklist

Paul Branca  
*Social Still Life I*, 2012  
Oil on canvas  
Courtesy of the artist and Scaramouche gallery

Paul Branca  
*Social Still Life II*, 2012  
Oil on canvas  
Courtesy of the artist Scaramouche gallery

Chris Burden  
*The TV Commercials 1972-1977, 1973-77/2000*  
3:46 minutes  
Color, sound  
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

Philip Corner  
*The Identical Lunch*  
Nova Broadcast Press, 1973  
Courtesy of Alison Knowles

Jaime Davidovich  
*Outreach*, 1977  
28:00 minutes  
Color, sound  
Courtesy of the artist

Jaime Davidovich  
*The Live! Show*, June 25, 1982  
15:32 minutes  
Color, sound  
Courtesy of the artist

Jaime Davidovich  
*The Live! Show*, April 29, 1983  
27:00 minutes  
Color, sound  
Courtesy of the artist

Jaime Davidovich  
*The Gap*, 1984  
14:00 minutes  
Color, sound  
Courtesy of the artist

Tim Davis and Lisa Sanditz  
*Edible Sculpture Party*, 2007 - 2012  
Tivoli and Annandale-on-Hudson, NY  
Courtesy of the artists

ESP TV

*Episodes 1 – 15, 2011-1012*

Various lengths, rotated weekly

Color, sound

Courtesy of the artists

Group Material

*Inserts: Advertising Supplement to the New York Times*

1988

Offset-printed, black and white

Purchased from Specific Object, New York

Geoffrey Hendricks and Brian Buczak

*Identical Lunch for Alison, 1977*

Mixed media Fluxus box

Courtesy of Alison Knowles

Ann Hirsch

*Annie on the Bar, 2010*

Digital print

Courtesy of the artist

Alison Knowles

Post card for *Bread and Water* at Emily Harvey Gallery, 1992

Card stock

Courtesy of the artist



Alison Knowles

Flyer for *The Bean Garden* at Galerie Marika Malacorda,  
1981

Card stock

Courtesy of the artist

Alison Knowles

Documentation of *Blind Lunch* and *How to Make a Salad*  
performances at Gallery Beacker, 1975

Photographic contact sheet

Courtesy of the artist

Alison Knowles

Documentation of *Bean Gardens*, 1975

Photo by Peter Moore

Courtesy of Alison Knowles

Alison Knowles

Documentation of Exploring Great New York Council's  
Proposal for *Identical Lunch*, n.d.

Three sheaths of paper

Courtesy of the artist

Alison Knowles  
*Journal of the Identical Lunch*  
Nova Broadcast Press, 1971  
Courtesy of the artist

Alison Knowles  
*What did you Bring?*, 1967  
Booklet  
Courtesy of the artist

Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag  
*Melt the Pot*, 2005  
Video on DVD, 35:40 minutes  
Courtesy of the artists

Tom Marioni  
Photo Documentation of Past Installations  
Reproduced for *Working Alternatives* exhibition, 2012  
Inkjet prints on paper  
Courtesy of the artist

1. The Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA) 1970-1984, San Francisco. First floor Breens the saloon of MOCA.

2. The Museum of Conceptual Art at the San Francisco Museum of Art, 1979. *Free Beer* installation.

3. *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form*

*of Art* 1970, Oakland Museum California

4. *Cafe Wednesday*, 1992, San Francisco

5. The Society of Independent Artists 2009, San Francisco

6. Contemporary Arts Center Cincinnati Ohio, 2006

7. Hammer Museum Los Angeles, California, 2011

8. Café Society, 1979, Breens Cafe, San Francisco

9. Credit Card

10. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2010

11. *Beer Drinking Sonata* (for 13 Players) 2011, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

Tom Marioni

*The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art*, 1973-ongoing

Functioning beer bar; site-specific installation at Franklin Street Works

Courtesy of the artist

PAD/D (Political Art Documentation/Distribution) archive materials, 1979 – 1988

Various printed materials

Courtesy of MOMA Library archive

Legacy Russell

*Petits Fours / La Petite Mort: Edible Effigies For The Modern Mourner*, 2011

Photo Documentation reproduced for *Working Alternatives*, 2012

Courtesy of the artist

Legacy Russell

Documentation from *Petits Fours / La Petite Mort: Edible Effigies For The Modern Mourner*, 2011

Cakes, photographs, serving tray, name cards, and candles

Courtesy of the artist

Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag

*Voting Booth Assembly*, 2006

Wood tables, shelves, jars, salt, curtain

Courtesy of the artists

Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag

*Vespuccini Primaries Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2006

Ink on paper

Courtesy of the artists

Jerome Waag  
*Preamble of the American Constitution, 2006*  
Durum flour and water  
Courtesy of the artist

Open Archive  
Various materials in files for audiences to peruse  
Weekly changing exhibition from the archive materials

In the café:  
Tim Davis and Lisa Sanditz  
Edible Sculpture Party, 2007 - present

## **Breaking Bread**, Jess Wilcox

The “*Breaking Bread*” thread of *Working Alternatives* traces conviviality as a key characteristic that emerged from and continues to be central to alternative art practices of the 1970s. The exhibition presents iconic food art performances by Alison Knowles and Tom Marioni alongside contemporary participatory culinary projects by Paul Branca, Legacy Russell, Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag. These artists all imagine the dining table as an alternative space. They use food’s dual nature as something that both equalizes and distinguishes as means to explore ideas of collaboration, collectivity, individuality, and community. Food unites us as humans in need of sustenance, but also divides by marking us culturally and politically.

Paul Branca’s *Social Still Life I* and *II* register not only his vision of a table spread with vittles, but that of thirteen others: Grayson Cox, T.M. Davy, David Horvitz, Jenny Jaskey, Tracy Molis, Sophy Naess, Pat Palermo, Emily Roz, Carmelle Safdie, Emet Sosna, Wendy Vogel, Jess Wilcox, and Lisa Hayes Williams. The artist invited his collaborators to the studio for a potluck, serving them a canvas painted with a table in the ground and a white clothed table set up to display the food. The guests painted by observation while consuming and conversing. Here Branca dismantles the predominating contemporary idea of painting as an isolated studio medium by invoking Courbet’s *Burial of Ornans* and Picabia *L’oeil cacodylate* as important collaborative precedents.

Alison Knowles’ *Identical Lunch* (1969) is a habitual daily meal—a tuna fish sandwich on wheat toast with butter and lettuce, no mayo, and a cup of soup or glass of buttermilk—turned into performance. By naming her regular order at Riss Diner as the “score” for an event, she highlights the subtle varieties in each lunch—food temperature, texture, taste, diner ambience, interactions with servers, and company—

as resolutely non-identical. *Journal of the Identical Lunch* consists of diaristic accounts, stylized narratives, playful meditations, and documentation of friends' experiences performing the score. This piece is one of many -- including *Bread and Water* and *Bean Gardens* represented here -- in which Knowles uses food to explore the senses of touch, taste, smell, and sound, employing the metaphor of art as nourishment. *Identical Lunch* fosters conviviality not only through dining with company, but also for the new iterations that it prompts others to initiate, as evidenced by Geoffrey Hendricks and Brian Buzcak's Flux box sculpture *Identical Lunch for Alison*.

Tom Marioni's *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art* is an ongoing performance first staged in 1970 in the Oakland Museum of California. Setting the scene for the art of conversation, Marioni provides a bar, a table and chairs, jazz music, warm California yellow light, and Pacifico beer. Over time the piece evolved into the *Café Society*, hosted at his studio on Wednesdays, in which friends were invited to bartend and hold court on discussion of art. For Marioni, the piece follows a similar structure as jazz, the repetition allows for improvisation and embellishment in each performance.

For Legacy Russell's interactive performance *Petits Fours / La Petite Mort: Edible Effigies For the Modern Mourner*, the artist offered visitors cakes bearing the names of people who lost their lives in the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. Taking place on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011, as part of *Return, Remember: Rethinking Memorial*, in which ten artists, each representing one year since the event, created "memorial stations" that re-imagined traditional forms of commemoration. The artist randomly selected 700 names of those who died to print on the raspberry and almond cake as well as on the cards which she handed out, thereby

reflecting the unpredictable nature of the deaths. The act of consumption, aligned with remembering here, brings into awareness each participant's body and the fragility of life.

Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag's *Melt the Pot: The Flavor of Democracy* (2005) was an event that attempted to create and cook a democratic recipe. "The People" (the dinner party guests) brought ingredients that were submitted for potential inclusion, debated on, and voted on whether to become part of the final dish. Meanwhile, the "MEdia" took opinion polls, incited a mini-revolution, and captured the resulting video. An extension of the project, *The Voting Booth Assembly* (2006), consists of two tables "detoured" into a voting booth, in which the public is invited to vote—with a grain of salt—for recipe ingredients in mason jars. The project provides a platform for participants to talk about voting politics in a congenial atmosphere—which was especially pertinent in 2005—and in abstract, non-partisan terms.



## **Art Broadcasting, Mackenzie Schneider**

This thread of the exhibition explores artists that have used media as a means of distribution of their work. Local newspapers, radio and cable access have served as alternative spaces in and of themselves allowing for the exhibition of work that offers alternative perspectives from the regularly scheduled programming. Beginning with a brief history from the 70's to today and leading to works commissioned by emerging artists, the exhibition will explore different approaches to the theme.

Chris Burden was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1946. He moved to the California in 1965 and obtained a B.F.A at Pomona College, Claremont, California in 1969 and later a M.F.A at the University of California in 1971. From 1973-1977, Burden purchased commercial time on broadcast television and produced four television commercials that were aired like typical "ads". At times abstract and sometimes more straightforwardly satirical, Burden's commercials sought to break the trance that mainstream television programs and ads had brought over viewers.

In 1976 organizations such as the Kitchen, Global Village and Anthology Film Archives joined together to form "Cable SoHo" in an attempt to create a space for all of the wide variety of video art being made in that area at the time. In its early days, cable television held the promise for television to be a medium created both for and by the people. From this, the Artist Television Network was formed, broadcasting regular weekly telecasts of programs composed of original, innovative works by visual and performing artists on Manhattan Cable from 1978-1983. Jaime Davidovich was a key figure in this movement, producing "The Live! Show", a television variety show of the avant-garde and other works exploring the emerging media of both media art and cable television.

Group Material was an artist's collaborative that produced works addressing a wide variety of social, political and artistic issues. In 1988 they produced "Inserts," an advertising supplement to *The New York Times*. Contributing artists included Mike Glier, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Hans Haacke, Jenny Holzer, Louise Lawler, Nancy Lin, Richard Prince, Nancy Spero and Carrie Mae Weems. Placed within 90,000 copies of the newspaper, "Inserts" brought these artworks and issues to a new audience outside of the exhibition space and into living rooms all over New York City.

Ann Hirsch is a performance artist based in Brooklyn, New York, who explores the nature of the exhibitionism and solipsism that our culture of reality television and social media generates. Inserting herself into popular culture through reality TV shows, Twitter, YouTube and other mainstream media, this exhibition presents Hirsch on public radio for the first time on WPKN, presenting an adaptation of a performance that reflects on her experience on the reality television show 'Frank the Entertainer and the Basement Affair'. The poster on display in the gallery is an image she created for her "slutty Myspace" in lieu of her persona, "Annie".

ESP TV is a nomadic showcase of contemporary and experimental art presenting music, performance, and video art on Manhattan Cable Access Channel 4. Filmed in front of a live audience at a variety of locations ranging from living rooms in Brooklyn, to alternative spaces around the globe, ESP TV will film an episode at Franklin Street Works presenting artists from the local area as well as New York at large to be aired on both Manhattan and Fairfield Cable Access. Please stay tuned for airdates and times.

New York based artist Anna Ostoya takes material from a variety of sources to form an artistic practice that is grounded

in the history of conceptual art. Her multi-media practice includes collage, painting, sculpture and sound. Previous projects have dealt with the subjects of violence and war, avant-garde histories, and the contemporary information glut. Often setting a ritualistic groundwork for her production, for this exhibition she will produce a monthly collage in the *Stamford Advocate* using elements from the newspaper itself, responding to and inserting herself into the local context. Newspapers will be placed in the gallery as they are released.

## **Collective Action,** Terri C Smith

The open archive began with a call for materials, asking socially engaged artist collectives to send documents that represent their actions and activities. Building this open, temporary archive is an ongoing process and, as of the exhibition opening, the archive is only just beginning. The hope is that Franklin Street Works will collect additional digital and hard copy documents – photos, videos, brochures, press releases, etc. – from artist collectives in the United States during the run of *Working Alternatives*. By January 13, when the show ends, the archive will, ideally, be substantial, and will present valuable perspectives on the “who, what, when, where, and why” of artist collectives working today.

This project was inspired, in part, by the book *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* by Gregory Sholette (Pluto Press, London, 2011). In *Dark Matter*, Sholette posits in his concise, thoughtful text that lesser-seen artists form the connective “dark matter” of the art world. Sholette writes in his introduction, “Collectively, the amateur and the failed artist represent a vast flat field upon which a privileged few stand out in relief,” adding, “What can be said of the creative dark matter in general, therefore is that either by choice or circumstance it displays a degree of autonomy from the critical and economic structures of the art world by moving instead in-between its meshes. It is an antagonistic force simultaneously inside and outside, like a void within an archive that is itself a kind of void.” (p. 3, 4) Sholette was also a founding member of PAD/D (Public Art Documentation/Distribution), leading Smith to the MOMA archive where she researched materials from politically engaged artists that PAD/D amassed between 1979 and 1988. Reproductions from MoMA’s PAD/D archive as well as PAD/D newspapers from Sholette’s online archive are included in the “Collective Action” installation.

This process of gathering materials involved the Franklin Street Works team and our research intern contacting more than 90 collectives in October, 2012, and asking them to submit a sampling of digital and/or paper documents. Franklin Street Works will continue to approach socially and politically engaged artist collectives throughout the show, gathering additional documentation for the archive. The hope is that word of mouth will also lead us to collectives that are emerging or are off the grid. Sources in our search for collectives include correspondence with Gregory Sholette, information found in his book *Dark Matter*, and word of mouth via individual artists and curators. Online resources were also helpful in the research and include sites such as Left Matrix (<http://www.leftmatrix.com/>), Groups and Spaces (<http://groupsandspace.net/>), and ArtSpaces Archives Project (<http://as-ap.org/>). Additionally, more than 50 Colleges and Universities with MFA programs were informed of the call for materials via email in the hopes of connecting with emerging collectives across U.S. campuses.

Special thanks for our Media Sponsors  
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And thank you to **Euro Custom Wood Working** for the construction of Chris Sollars and Jerome Waag's voting booth made of tables, *Voting Booth Assembly*, 2006.



# FRANKLIN STREET WORKS

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