Educator Guide

Cal Cullen, Amanda Curreri and Lindsey Whittle
Archive as Action
February 8- June 16, 2019
Welcome!

Dear Educators,

We are delighted to have you join us at the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) for Archive as Action, on view from February 8- June 16, 2019. This exhibition features work from Calcagno Cullen, Amanda Curreri, and Lindsey Whittle, who are all contemporary artists working and educating within the Cincinnati community. All three of the artists have work that focuses on community and creating connections between materials, others and the work we can create through collaboration. These artists all invite you to explore (often tactualy!) their works with an open mind and capacity to discover the new connections you might make with them, strangers, yourself, and history. Many of the works use materials that recall a history—textiles like jeans with social history for instance—and objects that relate to our communication with one another.

We and the artists invite you to explore, create, immerse yourselves, and discover what histories and connections live within these works.

This educator guide provides the framework to prepare you and your students to visit and view the exhibition. Information about the exhibition and artwork will give you some background on the work. Some lesson and discussion suggestions are included as well, which introduce and explore some of the key themes and ideas of the exhibition.

We look forward to introducing you to the artwork.

Enjoy your visit!
About the Artist: Cal Cullen

- Miami University, Ohio (BFA, University of Cincinnati (MFA)
- Worked in education at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- Moved back to Cincinnati and founded the community arts center, Wavepool
- Co-founded The Welcome Project, an organization that empowers marginalized and at risk refugees and immigrants by providing affordable housing, jobs, education and skills training,
- Serves as a docent at the CAC

About Cullen's Work

Cullen works with people and community as her medium. Her work focuses on creating connections between people and experiences. She weaves together the personal and private by creating artwork through stories, daily life and experiences between artist, artwork, and audience. Her work allows the audience to explore their community, themselves, and the lives of strangers through an archive of materials that recall our daily lives.

About Wave Pool

As an artist and passionate member of community, Cullen founded the community arts center Wavepool. Wavepool’s mission statement is “Pairing communities’ knowledge of their needs with artists’ sense of possibility.” This mission focuses on values of service, listening, community, experimentation, and optimism. The center offers community programs such as “Art Space is Your Space” which gives artists who have shown they have produced community centered work a space to work and live for 2-6 weeks. Wavepool also offers a “Curatorial Residency which gives aspiring local curators a 6-week exhibition with budget and support from Wavepool. The arts center also has online forums, changing gallery exhibitions, performance spaces, offers employment for local refugee and immigrant women and sponsorships for local artworks, for example The CAC’s past featured exhibition, “Swing House.”

Quotes

“There's something about providing a welcoming space to people that is very valuable,”
-Cal Cullen

“I get this question all the time: ‘What kind of work do you make?’ … “It gets more and more complex, and the more and more complex it gets the more people are like, ‘I don’t understand it so I’m not interested.’ To make a space to show that work and to have it be really accessible, to present it in a way where people find it fun and engaging, is kind of what we want to do so that we can grow a bigger audience for contemporary art in Cincinnati.”
-Cal Cullen
About the Artist: Amanda Curreri

- Born in 1977 in Boston, MA
- Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Art at the University of Cincinnati
- MFA from California College of the Arts, a BFA from The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and a BA from Tufts University in Sociology and Peace & Justice Studies
- Curreri co-directs Special Collections Press, an artist’s press in collaboration with DAAP library at The University of Cincinnati.
- Select exhibitions:
  - Asian Art Museum in San Francisco
  - Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco
  - Ortega y Gasset Projects in New York
  - Rochester Art Center in Minnesota
  - Oakland Museum of California (2019)
- Curreri has received:
  - Traveling Scholars Fellowship from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2017)
  - Summerfair Aid for Individual Artists Grant (2017)
  - SF Guardian Goldie Award (2010)

About Curreri’s Work

Curreri’s work focuses primarily on social issues surrounding identity, class structure and labor, feminism, race, and LGBTQ+ identity and equality. Much of the inspiration for Curreri’s work comes from her fellowship travels to Japan and Mexico, learning about textile production. The cloth used in much of Curreri’s work acts as a form of archive—formerly garments and functional items that have been transformed into art as a second life. She also touches on archive in her work by recalling feminist and labor histories.

Quotes

“I love that the value is located in the exchange between people and people’s agreement to step up into the space of the work. Grassroots activism has a role in this as much as models of conceptual art.”

-Amanda Curreri

“...Right, and I try to build the conversation into the space of the work by making works that ask people to come back to the gallery again for an additional level of experience. I’m asking for something from people, but also giving a lot if they’re compelled to step up and take the time to come back.”

-Amanda Curreri
About the Artist: Lindsey Whittle

- BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (2007)
- MDES from the School of the Art Institute Chicago (2014)
- Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program in Gifu, Japan (2008-2009)
- Artbin Director for Kiki Magazine (2012-2015)
- Art Director/Costume Director for Yellowhaus and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (2016)
- Co-runs PIQUE gallery with Annie Brown, an airbnb where visitors can view and even stay with the art
- Currently an adjunct professor at Art Academy of Cincinnati

About Whittle’s Work

Whittle’s work, much like Cullen’s, focuses on interaction. Whittle creates wearable artwork that utilizes the everyday in her and the viewers’ everyday life. Whittle invites her audience into her artwork mainly through her creation of wearable art. By wearing her pieces to do everyday tasks, she involves the public in her performance. Her work also explores connections among materials, creating workable and buildable materials for her audiences to explore and discover their own connections. Whittle breaks the “normal” attitude towards art and art materials, and creates new connections, thereby, making cultural norms themselves the archive of her work.

Quotes

“We’re exposing people who aren’t artists to a different kind of art than they’re used to, and they really got into it.”

- Lindsey Whittle

”’If it doesn't make the world more awesome, don't do it.’ - Kid President”

- Lindsey Whittle
Themes

Archive—how all three artists derive and revere various archives in their works. All three artists in this show work with materials and ideas that connect to either a past experience or time that structures their thinking about a contemporary circumstance.

Collaboration— all three value collaboration in varying ways. The works in this show all reference the artists’ value in collaboration. Cal’s work offers to the community an opportunity to be a part of the experience of the work itself. Lindsey similarly offers up her work for the involvement of the viewer through performance and becoming a part of the work. Amanda uses her work more as a close introspection between herself, students, the ideas and discussion of issues, and the history of her materials.

Social Justice—all three work toward social justice issues: Amanda by addressing race, gender and sexuality, and class; Cal by working with refugees and immigrants, acknowledging and placing value on work; Lindsey by breaking social norms. The issue of social justice is significant to each of these artists’ practices in different ways and overall illustrates the importance and the significance of involving art practice into communities as a way of connecting, disrupting, and discussing the issues and environments we face.

Redefining Art—all push for the expansion of art definitions by offering art that is not a painting or sculpture. All three artists use materials and practices that derive themselves from everyday objects and experiences. The use of textiles, many having a former function or life as garments, as well as the use of old phones and typewriters accentuates the importance that these three artists find in their choice of archival materials and those reminiscent of lives and experiences.
PREVISIT DISCUSSIONS

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

In 1939, Betty Pollak Rauh, Peggy Frank Crawford and Rita Rentschler Cushman took the advice of Edward M.M. Warburg, the founding father of the American Ballet and a founder of the Museum of Modern Art. He suggested that rather than stress about finding non-existent art jobs in New York, “Why not starting something in Cincinnati? Plenty of room there. If you decide to try, come and see me and I’ll help you.”

By August of that year, Peggy Frank Crawford, Betty Pollack and Rita Rentschler raised $5000 (about $93,000 today) and created the Modern Art Society (MAS). For almost a year their “office” consisted of a letter file and a portable typewriter set up in one or another living room. Within a few years, the MAS had exhibited Renoir, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Beckman, Klee and many more in the lower levels of the Cincinnati Art Museum. In 1952, the MAS changed their name to the Contemporary Arts Center and in 1964 they earned a space of their own in downtown, Cincinnati. In 2003, the CAC moved into the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art designed by architect Zaha Hadid. The NY Times called the structure, “the best new building since the Cold War.”

The Contemporary Arts Center is a non-collecting institution, meaning there is no permanent collection. All exhibitions are borrowed from artists, collectors and other art galleries and institutions. We strive to create exhibitions that allow visitors to “open their minds” to the arts, and to the dialogue that can be had when viewing contemporary art. We believe that art and the creative process belong to all people and that contemporary artists are an important part of how we see and interact with our world today.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

Visitor admission and school tours are free at the Contemporary Arts Center.

- We require that there must be a chaperone for every 5 students under the age of 18 for self-guided groups. For docent-led tours, the required ratio is 1 to 10 for student through grade 5 and 1 to 15 for students grades 6-12.
- No backpacks, coats or lunches are permitted in the galleries, but personal belongings may be stored in the large bins or lockers we have available. Instructors may keep any emergency bags and purses with them.
- Currently photography is permitted in all areas of the museum. The CAC encourages you to post photos to various social media sites using @CincyCAC and #CincyCAC.
- Pens are not permitted in the gallery spaces. Pencils are available for use at the front desk.
- Walk throughout all galleries–no running, climbing, or roughhousing. If visiting with students under 18 please provide guidance and supervision.
ABOUT ARCHIVE AS ACTION

Defining art

- What is your definition of art? How broad is it?
- The artists in this show push the boundaries of what we consider artwork and how we present it and interact with it both as artists and as audience members

Collaboration

- How do you work with others?
- What is collaboration? What areas do we collaborate with others in our lives?
- At the heart of it, this is a group show, where the artists are showing their work together and all representing a common idea and theme within the realm of “Archive as Action,” and artists using their work not just to show, but to speak to and act with their audience in a personal and direct way.

Archive—Contemporary

- What is an archive?
- What place do archives have in contemporary culture? Art?
- The artists in this show all use materials and methods that call back to something, whether it be the textile they use to create comment on some contemporary issue (Curreri) or the methods they have of interacting with their audience in real time (Cullen and Whittle).

Action artwork

- How can artwork be active? (literally and through ideas and methods)
- Is this artwork or is this something else?
- Especially in Whittle and Cullen’s work, there is a sense of action, the artists use materials and methods to interact with their audience in such a way that creates a truly personal experience through artwork; how else can we do this with art?

LESSON PLAN IDEAS

Beginning to Intermediate
ALT PRESENTATION
The artists in this show all break the norms of presentation. Have students present their art work in an alternative capacity (i.e. displaying photographs on the windows with light shining through, hanging paintings or sculptural works from the ceiling, floating instead of anchored, etc.) Explore how this presents the work differently to the viewer and how other presentations may communicate different interactions. This lesson can be adapted for different groups and levels easily.

Beginning to Advanced
SECOND LIFE
This lesson focuses on students thinking about an object in a new way. All the artists in this show use materials and create connections with their work, adapting the materials from archival to contemporary and meaningful in new ways. Have students create something new from something “old” that represents an aspect of contemporary life or social issues that they care about. This is an exercise that can be easily adapted to all age groups and skill levels. Beginning students can use selected materials to create something that they find more significant, while more advanced students
can think more critically about how to change the object, referencing both its cultural and social history and the new life they decide to give the material.

**Intermediate to Advanced**

**SEWN TOGETHER**

Have students create a textile work that fuses together ideas of community-building and social contemporary issues they may be passionate about, or which might affect them. How do these different ideas work together to create a final work that says something about the community or issues represented? How might the textile be used in everyday life?

**Intermediate to Advanced**

**WELCOMING SPACES**

The works the artists present are all welcoming the audience to interact and become a part of the exhibition. Have students discuss how they might create the same kind of spaces. What other community-based works can they think of that achieve the same kind of interaction between the work and the audience? How could students create an atmosphere within the classroom or their own personal spaces that invites guests to interact with and become a part of the space?
Archive as Action: Calcagno Cullen, Amanda Curreri, Lindsey Whittle

History is routinely placed in, and reduced to the past, but rarely does it live comfortably behind us. As access to information expands in the digital age, and prior events float in an indefinite present, the notion of the archive as a fixed absolute slides to that of malleable clay. Extending the “Open Archive” theme of the most recent FotoFocus Biennial, this exhibition convenes a trio of Cincinnati-based artists who re-animate historical materials through a performative and participatory lens. Calcagno Cullen orchestrates a fundamentally shared practice in which the production of objects is placed in service to the gathering of community. As an artist, curator, organizer, entrepreneur and executive director, she has turned the operation of an organization into an exploratory art practice. The legacies of radical queer and feminist causes, as well as blue collar labor movements, endure as the touchstones of Amanda Curreri, even as they remain partial and unresolved. As muses that live in a perpetual state of becoming, these campaigns are manifest in an inventory of remnants that she collages into humble, human assemblage. Lindsey Whittle draws upon a similarly eclectic landscape of pop culture fodder to construct an expansive language of embryonic shapes that underpins her playfully transgressive practice. Like open code with endless application, this amorphous alphabet plays out across dress patterns, welded forms, interlocking acrylis, hook & loop clothing, and room-sized installations that are activated via the bodies and dialects of her many collaborators. In each of these environments you, the audience, are nudged from passive observation to gathering agency, as our voices and stories circulate across a series of workshops, gatherings, performances, and actions.

Archive as Action: Calcagno Cullen, Amanda Curreri, Lindsey Whittle is curated by Steven Matijcio and is on view until June 16, 2019. This exhibition is generously supported by 1919 Investment Council and Artswave Corporate Sponsor.
Amanda Curreri: Double Vision

“Double Vision is a large-scale installation, remixing modern temple architectures with an active production and pedagogical space. Textiles, banners, and rope-making engage dialogue around labor and value, identity and freedom, and emergent possibilities. Teaching and making art in the current political climate has deeply impacted this body of new work.” - Amanda Curreri

Curreri’s connection to collaboration is found in the work with her students in many pieces, like Rope Walk and Lullabies are for Children, as well as her respect for teachers of Mexican and Japanese textile techniques that she utilizes in many works in the exhibition. Works such as Gestures, Over and Over, Homo-Hime, and Revolt, She said, illustrate the importance she places on using archival textiles in order to discuss histories and current discussions within the realm of feminist, queer, and labor issues, emphasizing her attention to these social justice issues.

Gestures (Proteggere, Rubare*), 2018
Hand-dyed and hand-printed fabrics with indigo, madder, soot/soya dyes and acrylic on various fabrics such as used table cloths, vintage Japanese linen, and cotton kimono fabric; vintage Japanese silk, Japanese denim (new), American denim (new), deconstructed denim jeans pocket, screen print on paper, digital print on fabric, recycled American flag cut-offs, and thread, Wire/ferrules, dowel painted with sumi/india ink
96 x 48 inches (two-sided)
Lullabies are for Children, 2019
Ropewalk bobbins and sumi ink stained shelves
210 x 60 inches

Rope Walk, 2018-2019
Worktables, Ropewalk Crew, participatory rope making
Participatory and multi-stage artwork

Jury Box, 2010
Screen print and acrylic on two stretched canvases
54 x 156 inches each panel

Signals, 2019
Digital print on satin paper
33 x 23 inches (framed)
Over and Over, 2019
Used jeans, thread, coins and rope
228 x 22 inches

I Belong to a Closed Group with No Name, 2018
Recycled flag nylon, leather, cotton with soot/soya printing and rice-paste resist, sequins, button, rope, thread, inkle weaving, vintage Japanese braid, acrylic and dye-remover screen printing on cotton, and canvas
72 x 48 inches

Revolt, She Said, 2017
Recycled flag material, thread, grommets, and rope
96 x 68 inches
**Qui Vive (Be Alert!), Red, 2016**
Vintage garment, acrylic, thread, cotton batting, and powder-coated aluminum frame
24 ½ x 30 ½ inches

**NO/ON, 2016**
Hand-dyed and printed cotton, thread
55 x 46 inches

**Homo-Hime, 2018**
Hand-dyed and hand-printed fabrics with indigo, madder, soot/soya, acrylic on various fabrics such as used table cloths, vintage Japanese ikat kimono fabric, cotton kimono fabric; vintage Japanese silk, Japanese denim (new), deconstructed denim jeans, dog toy eyes, digital print on fabric, and thread
72 x 48 inches (two-sided)
Cal Cullen: Nothing Happens on your Own

“This work is rooted in my deep belief that public art institutions should be places of creative commons, and in my persistent optimism that in bringing people together, we can bridge the deep divides in our society. The space created for this exhibition is an attempt to make visual my work as a creative organizer, and to claim this sort of fertile administration as my art practice. More importantly, this space is intended to upend the status quo of most gallery spaces by placing people at the forefront and objects as secondary, simple props to stimulate conversation. This project is an endeavor to foster exchanges that may lead to connection, understanding, and hopefully real transformation.”

Cal Cullen

Cal Cullen’s work is very interactive. The work in this show is meant to be explored and encountered; they involve the audience not only in viewing, but in making the work. Many of the pieces rely on the audience’s contribution to the stories she is “archiving” through her work. This is similar to the mission of Cullen’s Wavepool, which is heavily oriented in the community and creating connections through its members. Explore, engage, and discover with Cullen’s works as you connect with the artist, and with strangers, from those beside you to those in New York City (New York City Letters).

Office of Working for the Visibility of Organization and Engagement, 2019
Adhesive vinyl, assembled furniture with found and donated chairs, evolving collection of books we are reading/we should be reading, land line phone, typewriter, paper, pens, Wi-Fi

“This space is for working, meeting, bullshittin, planning, eating, making, sketching, reading, and thinking. Throughout the life of this space we will host events that get us looking at our own selves and the present state, meeting each other and listening better, and looking forward to envision a better future and making plans to make it a reality. Sit down, grab a pencil, grab a book. This is your space. You make this happen.”

-Cal Cullen
Desiderate, 2013
Two typewriters, one sheet of scroll paper, red and black ink

Telephone Heart Audio, 2010 – 2011
Wall-mounted rotary phones
Active Archive, 2011
Prompts distributed in newspapers, on telephone poles, and via postcards throughout the run of the exhibition, collected responses in three steel master card file cabinets and in cassette tape form via a voicemail recorder.
Happiness Calculator, 2009
Printing calculator, handouts on shelf

Happiness Worksheet:

According to my personal data, your happiness can be determined by following the equation. Once all of the figures are calculated, add up the totals plus the amount at the end for your concluding decimal. This represents the percentage that you are currently happy. Note that only factors that proved to be the most relevant to my happiness are included.

Time Outside (in minutes) ______ = ____% (if 100 min. = 100%) x -0.002 = __________

Relationship/Love Life (out of 100%) ____ x 0.459046 = __________

Motivation (out of 100%) ____ x 0.083018 = __________

Health (out of 100%) ____ x 0.306298 = __________

Hunger (out of 100%) ____ x -0.13038 = __________

Hung-over (out of 100%) ____ x -0.13038 = __________

Food Quality (out of 100%) ____ x 0.027269 = __________

Vegetables (in servings) ____ = ____% (if 4 servings = 100%) x -0.001073 = __________

Phys. Contact w/ Others(in minutes) ____ = ____% (if 180 min. = 100%) x 0.032455= __________

Social Time (in minutes) ____ = ____% (if 240 min = 100%) x 0.002868 = __________

Drunk-ness (out of 100%) ____ x 0.037679 = __________

Fatigue/Tiredness (out of 100%) ____ x -0.04442 = __________

Sun Outside (out of 100%) ____ x -0.00102 = __________

Sun Exposure (in minutes) ____ = ____% (if 180 min. = 100%) x 0.00484 = __________

Play (in minutes) ____ = ____% (if 120 min. = 100%) x 0.019377 = __________

+ 0.110486

Total:

Conclusion: You are _________ % Happy
OK, 2014
Wall-mounted typewriter, paper, ink

So Where Do We Go? Dreams That Are Unlikely But Possible, 2019
Payphone with recorder

New York City Letters, 2008 – 2015
Book
Day by Day, 2016-2017
Book, Collaboration with Tommy King

Per Rimanere, 2012 Book
“It seems appropriate that Archive as Action is a 3 person show. As a child, my dad told me the Hindu parable about the 3 blind people that approach an elephant. One grabs the tail and thinks it’s a snake; one grabs the leg and thinks it’s a tree and one grabs the ear and thinks it’s a bird. Individually these people don’t really understand what an elephant is, but all together they are starting to get to the bottom of something. This story has been a consistent foundation for me as an artist. I believe that collaboration is actually the primary medium I work in. The more minds I am able to work with, the greater my understanding of the world around me. What a privilege to be paired with minds such as Cal and Amanda! The other chief model I work in, is connection. In a time when we are more connected to devices than to each other, it is important to bring individuals together, connect people to my work, and connect myself to other artists. “ – Lindsey Whittle

Whittle’s constantly changing experiences are focused on connection and collaboration. Her work is meant to offer spaces and materials for people to become a part of the experience they are viewing. Her works range from creating wearable art, visitors giving the work action—whether through wearing or building—to creating connections through materials and images. Whittle works to break the norms of what we consider to be strictly art, experience, and functionality/action.

Wearable Projects: Paper, Tyvek, Neoprene

Ceiling Images
Interlocking Acrylic

Hoop and Loop Work
Welded Shape

Windows in the Lobby Atrium

• Use of digital collage of works, then transformed into prints for textiles or in this case, window clings
• Create a stained glass effect
• Incorporated images from both Cal and Amanda’s works

Post-Visit Reflection

• Have students think about what they experienced with each artist’s work? What did they discover?
• Thinking about collaboration:
  o Was putting all these artists’ works together productive? What would have changed if they were separate? What do you feel putting them together represents for the exhibition and the work itself?
• Which works spoke to you the most in terms of personal experience or histories? How did all three artists successfully create connections with the viewer?
• What other kinds of artworks can you think of that create connections between individuals and community?
• Why is creating connection and interaction between individuals important? Between art and individuals?
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE ARTISTS

CAL CULLEN


http://www.wavepoolgallery.org/

AMANDA CURRERI

http://amandacurreri.com/

https://www.newamericanpaintings.com/artists/amanda-curreri

https://wsimag.com/art/43137-amanda-curreri

LINDSEY WHITTLE

http://www.sparklezilla.com/lindsey-m-whittle

https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindsey-whittle-3218411a

LEARNING STANDARDS
Common Core Standards
http://www.corestandards.org/

Ohio Common Core Links
http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Learning- Standards
http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Fine-Arts/Fine-Arts-Standards

Kentucky Common Core Links
https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Pages/default.aspx
https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Documents/Kentucky_Academic_Standards_Arts_and_Humanities.pdf

Indiana Standards Links
https://www.doe.in.gov/standards
https://www.doe.in.gov/standards/fine-arts-dance-music-theatre-visual-arts

Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change
http://www.animatingdemocracy.org/aesthetic-perspectives