

In Practice: Literally means collapse

May 12–Aug 1, 2022

Marco Barrera, Violet Dennison, Enrique Garcia,
Ignacio Gatica, Cherisse Gray, Allen Hung-Lun
Chen, Jessica Kairé, Alan Martín Segal, Fred
Schmidt-Arenales, Stella Zhong, and Monsieur
Zohore

SculptureCenter

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In Practice: Literally means collapse is an exhibition of new works and artistic meditations that consider an expanded notion of the ruin that includes social traditions as much as physical infrastructure. From built environments and structures of circulation to protocols and belief systems that shape social and political subjects, infrastructures are in a constant generative friction with decay. Rituals of maintenance are designed and performed to prevent what is constructed from being subjectively ruined.

Diagnosing a contemporary obsession with ruins, artist and theorist Svetlana Boym wrote, “ ‘Ruin’ literally means ‘collapse’—but actually, ruins are more about remainders and reminders.”¹ Boym elaborated that as sites, they can trigger both potential nostalgias and imagined futures. Existing among ruins is existing among spaces of asynchrony—of histories and timescales collapsed.

The artists in the exhibition trace collapse through material and metaphor. Some artists in the exhibition examine the failures of cities and other containers of information, working with and against the anxieties of deterioration. Some remind us of the strategic disintegration and flattening of symbols and aesthetics. Others embrace the breaking down of space, time, language, and other familiar logics. *In Practice: Literally means collapse* is a series of overlapping studies into timescales of ruin and what doesn’t yet remain.

Allen Hung-Lun Chen sculpts an architectural detail from a Taiwanese temple as a meditation on the rituals of maintaining structures and tradition. Chen’s swallowtail-shaped roof ornament, referring to eaves found on temples in Taiwan and throughout East-Asia, is carved by hand using wood indigenous to the United States, where Chen is currently based. The eave sits on an aluminum-cast replica of a folding table, a structure commonly used in East Asia to place offerings, such as fruits and flowers, to spirits throughout the day. Through this offering of the eave, Chen gives some permanence to that traditionally transient and quotidian practice. Situated on the ground floor, the offering is made with the intention of creating a protective force around SculptureCenter’s façade.

Monsieur Zohore’s cascading immersive installation draws parallels between Catholic traditions and the contemporary aesthetics of late-capitalism. Zohore is inspired by an ancient and ongoing ceremony performed yearly at the Pantheon in Rome to celebrate the Pentecost, in which roses are released from the oculus of the building to symbolize the descent of the Holy Spirit. Zohore translocates this sensorial pageant into the confines of a manufactured money blowing machine—a fated encounter of two gimmicks. The machine sits within

its own excess, littered with a skirt of rose petals and cash. When it is entered and activated, a swirl of money and rose petals collides with Zohore’s voice seductively reciting Baptismal promises against a catchy string of sound. The track played within the machine is a hauntingly playful electronic interpretation of the 12th century chant *Veni Creator Spiritus*, set to a musical score by composer Joshua Coyne. Embracing “the glamor of evil,” *MZ.21 (Pentecost)* embodies the gamification of liturgy, exploring the automation and control that rituals of worship shape and the entwined relationship between the machinations of Catholicism and capitalism.

Through two distinct collections, **Marco Barrera** uses waterways as a subjective cursor to trace the industrialization and development of New York City. Fixed into a narrow hallway is a selection of safe doors collected by the artist. The doors, produced in the Rust Belt at the turn of the century, were originally installed within small businesses, warehouses, and homes around the Northeastern United States. On the inside of each door, paintings of flowing waterways were rendered by anonymous artists—meandering streams and picturesque sailboats accompanied reserves of cash that had been sequestered from circulation.

Installed on a steel shelf at the end of the hallway is Barrera’s incomplete archive of water, which visitors can sort through. Each bottle contains a distinct water sample that Barrera has extracted from various locations related to the development of New York City, from a faucet at Empire City Casino in Yonkers to run-off from a marble quarry in Vermont that provides material for the ornamentation of municipal buildings in Lower Manhattan. Accompanying this display is a book made by the artist that indexes the samples and sites through diaristic and historical notes. The publication includes an essay by the Canal Street Research Association that traces the distribution of wealth in NYC through the infinite circulation of currency and plumbing. Presented together, Barrera’s two installations shape a dislocated cartography of the urbanization of the city.

Violet Dennison’s work uses a knot system that encodes poems and writing into colorful large-scale installations she weaves from pneumatic tubing. Like a sigil, each knot made of black tubing holds an embedded message and prayer. The interlacing twists are formed through a computer program developed by Dennison and an engineer, which encrypts text by translating it into a binary language that serves as instructions for whether to weave a tube over or under. Produced through a series of repeated actions, the knots’ unique shapes hold information. Through another layer of repetition, these knots become patterns, further distancing the coded information from being accessed. The title, *Maniac Double*, is a reference to *DanceDanceRevolution*, a music video game which similarly directs

1. Svetlana Boym, “Ruinophilia,” in *The Off-Modern* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 43-47.

action through visual code. Dennison is interested in the optimization of communication between individuals and technologies, but also the exhaustion of legibility and symbolic power through flattened and ornamental forms.

In a series of site-specific sculptural installations, **Stella Zhong** builds models that contain speculative landscapes with playful interpretations of scale. Three multidimensional structures occupy the entry into SculptureCenter's arched corridor. Tucked under and over the smooth planes of each maquette are populations of diversely-shaped miniature units that sprawl in unseen corners. Similar to game pieces, Zhong engineers them to hold precise and unexpected roles. Glimpses of these pieces and their activities surface throughout the installation: a single filament stretches diagonally between two structures. Under the reflective plane of a third, entities in the familiar forms of pebbles and chips unite in mitochondrial patterns, building a tight system of entropy through tensile conduits. The units and the structures that contain them suggest a planetary organization, yet they resist conventions of gravity or time, existing as dimensions untethered from conventional logic.

In a video and sound installation, **Alan Martín Segal** explores the arbitrary forms of systems and protocols in Buenos Aires, meditating on its physical and social infrastructures. Segal's video draws from a series of texts, including the artist's own writing and personal correspondences, and a short story by Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, "La cabeza de Goliat"—a microscopic analysis of social norms and customs in Buenos Aires. In *Incomplete Disappearances*, Segal combines quotidian shots of the city with repetitive re-enactments of mundane gestures that begin to verge on the uncanny. This accumulation of small gestures and interactions is viewed through a suspended sheet of glass, casting an oblique distance to contemplate the haunting presence of colonial fantasies and ideologies embedded in urban routine.

In *Folding monument (Christopher Columbus Statue, Columbus Triangle, Queens, New York)*, **Jessica Kairé** expands from her ongoing practice of creating "folding monuments," in which she translates historic monuments into soft, interactive sculptures that are collectively activated as allegories for the construction of history in public space. In previous works that employ this method, Kairé created fabric replicas of monuments that commemorate contentious moments and political figures in Guatemala. For this iteration, Kairé interprets the vandalized plinth that holds the statue of Christopher Columbus, in Astoria, Queens—one of five Columbus statues that are fixed in each borough in the city. Installed in a collapsed state, the sculpture requires action by pulling ties to animate it—which visitors are invited to do in collaboration. In inviting this collective act, Kairé gestures to the participation required to challenge shared histories.

Enrique Garcia uses photography and bricolage to examine public plazas in Mexico, from making visible the legacies of colonial design to collecting moments of quotidian movement and deterioration. In this series, Garcia mounts images he has made at La Antigua in Veracruz, an early failed Spanish settlement where Hernan Cortes's alleged house still stands overgrown with roots and vines; Pátzcuaro, Michoacán where, in the 16th century, a Catholic bishop designed the plaza and new masterplan for the city; and Zocaló in Mexico City, where the Spanish built over the existing and ceremonial space of the Aztec. Each location is examined at a macro level through photography as a conduit to urban life, and on a pedestrian level by incorporating residual objects found in situ. The ambiguous objects, from earrings to rusted pipes and other worn metals, bear the traces of unknown individuals and routines. In each framed work, Garcia reveals the asynchronous layers of history in public spaces.

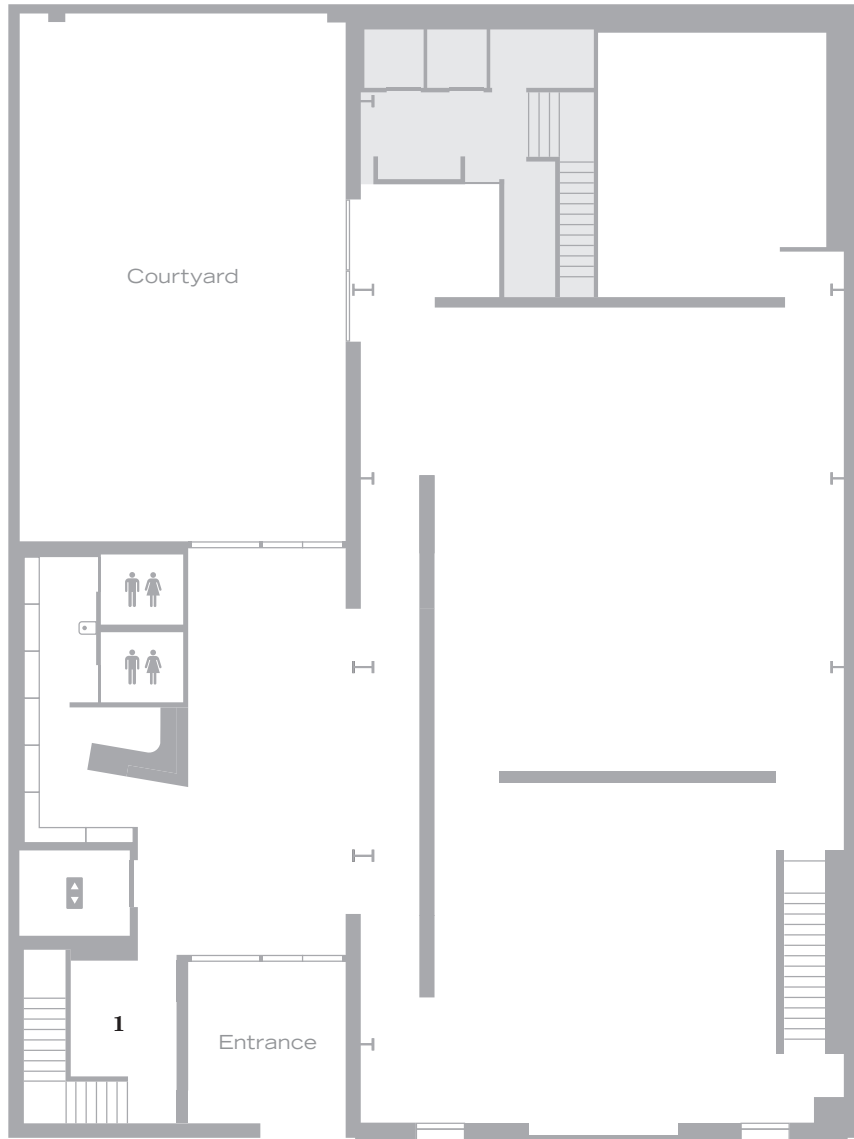
Ignacio Gatica presents a collection of political souvenir watches to narrate the legacy of U.S. intervention and neoliberalism in Latin America. In 2019, the United States transferred a large batch of declassified CIA files to Argentina in what was the largest government-to-government transfer of declassified documentation to date. Fragments of the archives are elaborated by Gatica's research and writing and are printed on concrete plinths with a mechanical handwriting machine. Sitting at wrist-level on plinths are watches acquired by Gatica from different states and organizations throughout the Americas. Each watch has been modified by the artist to tick endlessly at a specific time that coincides with an event chronicled in the CIA documents. On the wall is a text borrowed from Carlos Soto Roman, a Chilean poet who has contributed a poem loosely based on the biography of one CIA agent. The total accumulation of towering watches and writing represent a network of overlapping political and social histories and the machinic and monolithic nature of U.S. intervention.

Cherisse Gray assembles a site-responsive installation that re-routes conventions of architecture and ornament. Gray distills symbols of bureaucratic tradition, reconfiguring them to underscore the simultaneity between hostile and accommodating design. The built environment Gray has constructed is composed of four elements, each holding the distinct absence of a specific inhabitant or subject. A spiral steel staircase leads into a structure made of drop ceiling tile. Within and withheld, red lights glow and an oscillating fan points directly at a poinsettia plant—traces of cheap, standardized building materials are refashioned into a droning home for a mouse. Faced across is an imitation of a bench seat for one from a faux-brutalist building in the Philippines that was commissioned by the Marcos regime. This awkward and antisocial design is intervened by the artist and transformed into a heated seat for a visitor to enjoy. On the ground, a

carpeted red stage frames a moment for an ambiguous and organically shaped lamp, carefully sculpted by the artist. The final element is the diffused light of the space, which joins the independent elements into one spatialized encounter. The myth of a universal utility of objects and systems breaks down in Gray's installation.

Fred Schmidt-Arenales presents his latest film, *Committee of Six*, an enactment of a series of closed-door meetings at the University of Chicago in 1955 between university officials and community organizers. The archival meeting minutes—which are activated by the performers as a script—reveal plans and strategies for displacing Black communities and limiting racial integration. Departing from the confines of the script through off-script and off-set conversations, the film follows the group of six performers as they play the different members of the meeting. The actors' interpretations of the dialogue are interlaced with their present-day reflections on contemporary policies and ideologies. Overlaps and continuities between past and present are brought to light through the relational dynamics between actors serving as a proxy for those of the original meeting members. Through this complex activation of archival documents, the film points to the cyclical nature and consequence of urban renewal.

Works in the Exhibition



Ground Floor Plan

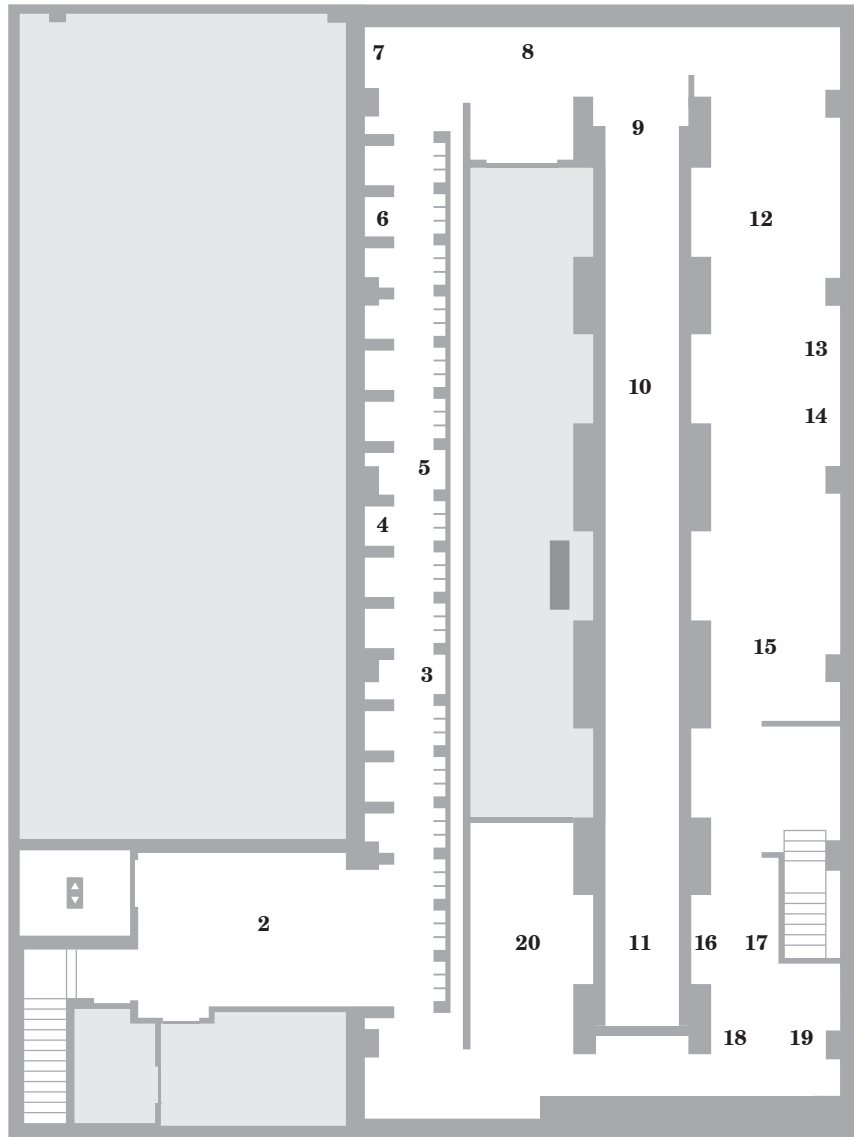
Ground Floor

Allen Hung-Lun Chen

- 1 *Offering IV (an eave for SculptureCenter)*, 2022
Black walnut, cast aluminum, leather,
ratchet-straps
60 × 72 × 36 inches
(152 × 184 × 91 cm)

Exhibition continues on the Lower Level

Works in the Exhibition



Lower Level Plan

Lower Level

Monsieur Zohore

in collaboration with Joshua Coyne

- 2** *MZ.21 (Pentecost)*, 2017–2022
Installation
90 × 32 × 48 inches (229 × 81 × 122 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Half Gallery, New York

Special thanks to Joseph W. Kay and 6/4 Studios

Marco Barrera

Reservoirs, 2022

- 3** *Untitled (Two Cows Drinking Water)*
Steel safe door, gold leaf, oil paint, varnish
17 ½ × 14 × 8 inches
(44.5 × 35.6 × 20.3 cm)

- 4** *Untitled (Another house with inscriptions. N. Ciesmere, Herman, W. Schott, G. Yost...)*
Steel safe door, gold leaf, oil paint, varnish
56 × 37 × 9 inches (142 × 94 × 23 cm)

- 5** *Untitled (Tree on River Bank)*
Steel safe door, gold leaf, oil paint, varnish
19 × 15 × 6 inches
(48.3 × 38.1 × 15.2 cm)

- 6** *Untitled (Fishing)*
Steel safe door, gold leaf, oil paint, varnish
18 × 15 ½ × 8 inches
(45.7 × 39.4 × 20.3 cm)

Marco Barrera

- 7** *Drawing a line backwards*, 2022
(Partial archive of New York City water)
Glass jars, steel Tri-Boro Shelving unit, book
Dimensions variable

Drawing a line backwards is edited by and includes an essay by Canal Street Research Association.

Violet Dennison

- 8** *Maniac Double*, 2022
Polyurethane tubing, aluminum, vinyl, copper and steel hardware, rhinestones, urethane with pigment
74 × 105 inches (188 × 267 cm)

Stella Zhong

- 9** *Spontaneous Unmixing of Static and 1/3s Is Never Observed (Fig.1)*, 2022
String, various clays, paper, stainless steel mesh, oil paint, Aqua-Resin, plaster, sand, epoxy, paint, concrete, wood
19 × 120 × 22 inches
(48.3 × 305 × 55.9 cm)

- 10** *Spontaneous Unmixing of Static and 1/3s Is Never Observed (Fig.2)*, 2022
String, various clays, paper, stainless steel mesh, sand, epoxy, paint, plaster, concrete, wood
Dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Chapter NY

Alan Martín Segal

- 11** *Incomplete Disappearances*, 2022
Video installation
Dimensions variable

Jessica Kairé

- 12** *Folding monument (Christopher Columbus Statue, Columbus Triangle, Queens, New York)*, 2022
Upcycled cotton canvas, thread, cotton webbing, metal sliders, plywood shelf, photograph
105 × 57 × 52 inches (267 × 145 × 132 cm) when activated
Courtesy the artist and Proyectos Ultravioleta, Guatemala City

Visitors are invited to activate the work. To do so, position one person at each hanging strap and pull gently. Please ask the front desk for assistance if you need additional help.

Enrique Garcia

13 *Navel (Zócalo)*, 2022
Dye-sublimation prints on aluminum,
metal parts, earring, wire, cedar frame
36 × 38 inches (91.4 × 96.5 cm)

14 *Radiance (Vasco de Quiroga)*, 2022
Dye-sublimation prints on aluminum,
acrylic, metal pipe, ebonized oak frame
41 ¼ × 34 inches (105 × 86.4 cm)

This project was supported, in part, by
a Foundation for Contemporary Arts
Emergency Grant.

Ignacio Gatica

15 *Terce*, 2022
Cement, collected watches, metallic
holders, CNC printed text
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Galeria
Patricia Ready, Santiago, Chile

Text research and transcription by
Cristalina Parra. Poem by Carlos Soto
Roman.

Cherisse Gray

Locum Tenens, 2022
Mouse house, actor and stage, diffusion
frame, heated bench

16 *understudy centre-stage*, 2021–22
Papier-mâché, wire, Magic Sculpt, drain
tray, wool carpet, drywall, steel tape
32 × 94 × 21 inches
(81.3 × 239 × 53.3 cm)

17 *warmest regards*, 2022
Immaterial
Dimensions relative

18 *temperate disagreement*, 2022
Plywood, rabbit guard, mortar, light
bulbs
23 ½ × 55 × 24 inches
(59.7 × 140 × 61 cm)

19 *3 Proofs of Residency*, 2022
Drop ceiling tile, aluminum angle,
predator flashlight, LED light, red
tape, steel spiral staircase, electric
fan, landscaping fabric
36 × 72 × 24 inches
(91.4 × 183 × 61 cm)

Fred Schmidt-Arenales

20 *Committee of Six*, 2022
Single channel projection, chairs,
carpet
Dimensions variable

Directed and edited by
Fred Schmidt-Arenales

Producer: Ellenor Riley-Condit
Cinematography: Mike Gibisser,
Paige Taul, Fred Schmidt-Arenales
Color Correction: Ben Neufeld
Sound Recordist: Jason Culver
Sound Mixer: Philip Rabalais
Costume Designer: Rea Brown

Cast:
Yohance Lacour, Monique Horton,
Guadalupe Mendia, Lance Baker,
Cecilia Resende Santos, Ellenor Riley-
Condit, Lauren Miller

Special Thanks:
Mickey Aloisio, Michaela Bathhrick,
Laure Bourgault, Diane Burnham,
Bryan Castro, Ryan Hawk,
Maggie Jenson, KAM Isaiah Israel
Congregation, Chelsea Knight, Mary
Leclere, Scott Nelson, Nick Raffle,
Jagdeep Raina, Sophia Rhee, Netta
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Williams, Akeema-Zane

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All works courtesy the artist, unless
otherwise noted

**Lydia Ourahmane:
Tassili**
May 12–Aug 1, 2022

About In Practice

SculptureCenter's In Practice open call program supports emerging artists and curators in creating new work for exhibition at SculptureCenter. Since 2003, In Practice has provided more than 200 artists with the essential resources of space, funding, time, curatorial support, and administrative guidance to help turn their ideas into reality.

Exemplifying the spirit of SculptureCenter's mission, In Practice supports innovative artwork, fosters experimentation, and introduces audiences to underrecognized practices and new ideas. The program offers participants the opportunity to develop and present work in what is often their first institutional exhibition in New York City.

Previous In Practice participants include Korakrit Arunanondchai, Fia Backström, A.K. Burns, Crystal Z Campbell, Aleksandra Domanović, Brendan Fernandes, Raque Ford, Jules Gimbrone, Samara Golden, Ellen Harvey, Madeline Hollander, Elizabeth Jaeger, Meredith James, Baseera Khan, Simone Leigh, Molly Lowe, Justin Matherly, Essex Olivares, Virginia Overton, Marlo Pascual, Sean Rasket, Rachel Rose, Xaviera Simmons, Josh Smith, Valerie Snobeck, Agathe Snow, Kenneth Tam, Marianne Vitale, and WangShui, among many others.

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