



COMPLIMENTA(III)
Projects
As
They
Were
Proposed
2014

Michael Ashkin | Caitlin Blanchfield |
Workroom G | Christopher Breslin | Caroline
Byrne | Paul Chambers | Steven Chodoriwsky |
Melissa Constantine | Steven Cope |
Nathaniel de Large | Sarah Elliott | Merav Ezer
and Adi Shniderman | Davey Field | Kylie
Gilchrist | Matthew Greaves | Clara Chapin
Hess | Owen Hutchinson | Elizabeth Jaeger and
Eliza Rose | Anne Kunsemiller | Patrick Meagher
| Nicholas Monsour | Lauren Pellerano Gomez
| Daniella Polyak | Jesse Erin Posner | Morgan
Ritter | Katie Rotman | Michelle Shofet and
Chella Strong | David Smith | David Snyder |
Emily Steinfeld | Andrew Steinmetz | Megan
Stockton

Schedule

Saturday 12:00pm - 10:00pm

Sunday 1:00 - 5:00pm

Installed work open to visitors

Sunday 2:00 - 4:00pm

Paul Chambers work on view at The Waterburg Church

Performances, Workshops, Readings and Screenings:

Saturday

12:00 - 12:30pm - Melissa Constantine

Convocation

12:30 - 2:00pm - Jesse Erin Posner

Interactive Training on Power

2:00 - 3:00pm - LUNCH

3:30 - 4:30 - Eliza Rose and Elizabeth Jaeger

Moonwalk With Me

4:30 - 5:30 - Matthew Greaves

Libertas: Chimerica

4:30 - 6:00pm - Daniella Polyak

How to Practice Feminism in your Every Day Life

6:00 - 7:00pm - Davey Field

Nalcrest

8:00 - 9:00pm - DINNER

9:00 - 10:00pm - Readings: Megan Stockton, Owen

Hutchinson, Stephen Cope, Michael Ashkin

Sunday

11:00 - 12:00pm - Complimenta Conversation

1:00 - 2:00pm - Lauren Pellerano Gomez

Participatory Performance

2:00 - 3:00pm - Christopher Breslin

Ode to a Foot

3:00 - 5:00pm - Paul Chambers

(offsite) Open visit to Transorma Studio

3:00 - 4:00pm - Collaborative Communally Led Dance/Dancing/

Working/Workshop

5:00 - 7:00pm -

Clara Chapin Hess' show at station 923 open (offsite)

Michael Ashkin
Reading

“Long Branch”

Christopher Breslin
Sculpture/performance

Ode to a foot – Envisioned as a journey from points A to B, and what may take place before, during and after. “A” being the main yard, aka starting area, at The Manse. “B” being the clear, open ground next to the pond, reached by traveling through the woods.

I sculpted a foot when I started working with clay, the very first thing actually. I got plenty of comments on it, although nobody actually saw it in person. It starts with an object “the foot”, being introduced. Then, an explanation, “The audience will now move on to the pond together, with the object”. The performer/sculptor will be waiting at the pond beforehand, hurdy gurdy in hand, or in lap rather, gazing out onto the water. He will be playing. If the wind is blowing the right way, the drone of the bourdon strings will be heard at some point along the journey from points A to B. “The foot” will be returned to its sculptor. Then, the sound and the performance will continue until the performer stops playing. Whatever happens directly after, in consequence of the journey, may also be considered a result of the performance.

Caitlin Blanchfield
Workshop

My project investigates the Canamex Corridor—a high priority trade route stretching from Edmonton, Canada to Mexico City, Mexico—through interviews, photography, and short form narrative. Informed by a history of Pan American infrastructure, and the recent, if ridiculous, reaction to a hypothetical NAFTA superhighway, my research will document the spatial products of free trade tourist infrastructure and the social lives they engender. The final product will be a collective, critical travelogue in the form of a travel guide. It asks: What is the built landscape of the North American Free Trade Agreement? How does its infrastructure mobilize both economic and (pop)cultural capital? What is its history? And how, given the inflamed rhetoric over waning sovereignty, and neoliberalism’s faltering advance, does this tri-national roadway map onto the social landscape of the communities it crosses? A Free Trade Travel Guide, attempts to answer these questions and, with a little verve and wit, poke holes in prevailing narratives on tourism, global capitalism, and community agency.

At Complimenta, I’d like to collaborate on creative design tactics for my booklet. I think a critical mass of artists can help me to think through experimental and original visual strategies for bookmaking. While the travel and research will happen in September, I’d love to leave knowing the framework into which my findings will fit and Complimenta could be a really great place to workshop some options. I would also like to begin to think this project through rhetorically, and put into practice experimental forms of writing that will comprise the text. Over the weekend I will begin a series of erasure poems culled and cobbled from promotional literature for the Canamex Corridor and the logistics company Yusen.

Paul Chambers
Studio visit

Open visit to Transorma Studio, aka the Waterburg Church, the house and studio of the late artist Paul Chambers. The estate of Paul Chambers proposes an open visit on Sunday to visit the remarkable and bucolic space and to view some of Chambers' work.

Steven Chodoriwsky
Vicarious participation

In lieu of physical attendance, which is all but an impossibility this year, I would like to attempt an act of vicarious participation from a remote location. This will require being simultaneously engaged in activity during the duration of all public events at The Manse in Enfield over the course of the weekend. To be engaged with Complimenta "in some capacity," albeit obliquely and without bodily presence, is in part a way to contribute to my role on the editorial team for the projected Complimenta(iii) publication, which is invested in exploring notions of documentary practice and catalogue-building. In practical terms, my vicarious participation will entail setting up in a space, or vicarage, in a location outside of my own home, from which I will busy myself with the business of a "vicarious documentation" of the event as it progresses. To assist in this documentation — and to ensure a meaningful link to Complimenta's intentions of fostering a spirit of participation, site-specificity, and community — I would like to rely on the following types of received ideas and information from the host-event, where applicable and feasible: from the press release, from artist biographies and project descriptions, from the schedule of events, from any text, voice, or image reports from participants on-site, and from any of my previous experiences, impressions, and memories at The Manse derived from the previous Complimenta. Over the course of the work's duration (coterminous with Complimenta(iii)) and with the ideas and information at my disposal, I will work to fashion a series of documentary episodes by way of text and illustrations.

Caroline Byrne
Installation

I would be interested in making an installation in one of the rooms in the barn- lately I have been taking pictures of Stewart Park, the lake and my walk there, putting them on Facebook- thinking of possibly putting them all together in some sort of hyper real version of the experience- emphasizing the similarities differences in light/ color at different days/times. For Complimenta I would do something more appropriate for that space/event. Possibly the walk up the road could play into it. There would also be a sculptural element- a combination of natural curiosities, handmade objects, and found objects possibly conjoined strangely.

Or, I would be interested in going back to the same tree and doing something similar to the project I did last year. Maybe (these are all ideas we had last year that would be fun to build on) making a ground cover as part of the installation that is a welcoming place to sit and look up, some sort of interesting effects with lighting and or mirrors.

Clara Chapin Hess
Surprise

Everything is very practical.

Steven Cope
Reading

Melissa Constantine
Convocation

I will deliver a convocation speech at 12:00 noon on Saturday, at the start of open hours for COMPLIMENTA(III). The speech is intended to call the group together to reflect on the privilege, precarity, and particularity of our being able to congregate freely together at COMPLIMENTA(III), and asks, What do we do together? What can we do here together, as one or several bodies?

Sarah Elliott
Installation/Hang-out

I would like to make a project called "Facts". I will designate a number of hours each day to go to a working place, where I will focus mainly on making lists on poster sized pieces of paper. The lists will be of ideas for things that I could "do with my life" with varying degrees of plausibility:

FORM A LESBIAN SEPARATIST COMMUNITY
LISTEN TO NEIL YOUNG FOREVER

Besides that the lists will include comments and thoughts about various things, and maybe a drawing. Besides that anyone is invited to come hang out and talk to me. Maybe I will hang posters around when I am finished with them, maybe not.

The project takes its name from "Feelings Are Facts", the memoir of Yvonne Rainer.

Merav Ezer and Adi Shniderman
Performance and installation

During Complimenta III, we would like to focus on producing two projects. The first project is a series of photographs highlighting the relationship between man and the environment. By re-positioning domestic objects in the environment, and implementing man made articles, the work aims to act as a language, commenting on social and cultural matters. These images will be part of a future printed magazine and during Complimenta III the final images will be projected on the wall during public visiting hours. The second project "Public Notes" is a series of outdoor site-specific performances of ephemeral drawings, made from white desert sand (natural shredded white stones). The piece aims to communicate and engage with the public both visually and conceptually. Encompassing the space in which it is on view, the work offers sporadic moments of intimacy and belonging in which an open dialogue with passersby is encouraged. Once the drawings are completed, the public is invited to "visit" by physically entering, stepping in or passing through the marked silhouettes.

Nathaniel de Large
Urinal

Matthew Greaves

Lecture-performance/travelogue of the replicas of the Statue of Liberty.

“Bartholdi became obsessed with a kind of monumentality that bears a connection to his assumptions about the Orient. He admired the gravity, majesty and silent immobility of the colossus, as he admired the perceived stasis of Egypt and the thoughtless, immobile Fellaheen people said to be destined for extinction. His ideas about timeless sculpture and timeless primitivism were insipidly imperialist, that is to say: of the time. After returning to Europe he presented work at the Paris Fair under the incredible pseudonym Amilcar Hasenfratz.”

Kylie Gilcrist

Documentation

Davey Field

Film

“Nalcrest” The blue light of the cable news program illuminates the wrinkles on Boomer’s face. Boomer is crooning Elvis to Cheech & Chong, his baby chihuahuas. He smiles tenderly at his dogs, caressing and kissing them. He calls Chong a “drunk broad” while threatening Cheech with his taser.

Boomer’s story is the story of countless Baby Boomers who returned from Vietnam with PTSD and few job prospects. ‘You can always get a job at the post office,’ was and still is a mantra of the American working class. As part of the Veterans Preference Act--a 70 year-old US federal law--vets have been funneled into Post Office positions upon returning from the service. Currently, 235,985 veterans work in the post office. That’s 31% of the entire USPS workforce. Of these vets, nearly a third are disabled. Now that these USPS Boomers are retiring en masse, where can they afford to live on a modest fixed income?

Some, like Boomer, have made their way to Nalcrest, a retirement community owned and managed by the National Association of Letter Carriers Union (NALC), and home to hundreds of retired letter carriers. Nalcrest is a union subsidized over-55 age-restricted community for dues paying members of the NALC. In 2014, the all-rental property celebrated its 50th anniversary and is currently the last remaining retirement community in the US owned and managed by a labor union.

After months of filing paperwork for service animals back-and-forth with the NALC bureaucracy, Boomer finally has his dogs at Nalcrest. He’s adopted them as his grandchildren, and in between feeding them bites of hot dogs dipped in marijuana crumbs, Boomer thanks them for saving his life. Because the dogs have a simple need for affection, one that Boomer can easily meet, they make him feel needed in a way that he does not feel in his community.

Anne Kunsemiller
Installation

The wider reception of the piñata anymore is all but gluttonous, and I'd like to bring it back to its roots. I will place a number of piñatas on the property of the manse, at a height implicitly challenging to Complimenta participants. The blindfold, the stick, the disorientation is all provided for each piñata, but takes the individual's self-imposed challenge to be activated. The idea of busting open a container to reveal the treats inside gets down to the real struggle with the human condition; its not just the Mexican piñata. Temptation and evil are real balking material, and the 'container filled with treats' is some multicultural trope of the children's' game. When a piñata is broken open the treats or if it's a trap, the trap is revealed and the remainder burnt for good luck.

Owen Hutchinson
Reading

"Bogen In a Tree" Sound through the branches.
Smaller sounds like twigs of big trees.

Eliza Rose and Elizabeth Jaeger
Performance|Installation

"Moonwalk With Me" Man's first steps on the moon were a test. At 10:56:20 PM on July 20 1969, Neil Armstrong hoisted his body weight onto a surface with little knowledge of its texture or firmness. The silver plane could have been sticky and viscid, fine and precarious, or spongy and buoyant. It could have been hard and unforgiving. It could have swallowed him whole.

Armstrong describes the sensorial results of his test: "The surface is fine and powdery. I can pick it up loosely with my toe. It does adhere in fine layers like powdered charcoal to the sole and sides of my boots. I only go in a small fraction of an inch, maybe an eighth of an inch. But I can see the footprints of my boots in the treads in the fine sandy particles." His steps, Armstrong reports, were small. With him, he reports, leapt all of mankind. For nineteen minutes the astronaut walked alone on the virgin plane in the company of mankind.

To the extent that Armstrong's experience was collective and that enrollment in these test steps tallies at all of mankind, the task of narrating and assessing the soil tests falls to us all. Otherwise, the experiment is to be discarded for lack of data.

At Complimenta, we will sit on the site of the footbath, and ask willing participants to narrate the experience they had on the moon. I will provide a broadsheet detailing Armstrong's original moonwalk that participants can read and use at their discretion. I will ask that each moonwalker use Armstrong's walk as a coded, analogical ghost plot for a recent experience of their own that has so far resisted narrativization and analysis. This can be an experience of physical-pain, of hypermanic self-love, of ecstasy, terror, or grief. Moonwalkers can physically explore the surface of Elizabeth Jaeger's footbath if it helps them restore and articulate the latent muscle memory we all have of walking on the moon.

Lauren Pellerano Gomez
Performance

Durational participatory performance piece. Site-specific, research based, confounding audience/viewer/performer/facilitator/moderator dynamic.

Daniella Polyak
Workshop

How to Practice Feminism in your Every Day Life: A Two-Part Workshop. The first part will be a talk followed by a Q&A. I will discuss what I mean by feminism and feminist activism. I will draw from my own experiences of living in a world where systemic gender-based oppression exists and I will speak about why and how I am committed to feminist activism. In our culture it is often difficult to see how systemic gender-based oppression operates and how it intersects with other forms of oppression. I believe that in order for a person to oppose patriarchy and the gender binary norm they must confront how they have internalized these forms of gender-based oppression, how gender-based oppression affects their interpersonal relationships, and how it is institutionalized in our culture. My hope is to make visible aspects of gender-based oppression through specific examples drawn from media content, laws and policies, cultural norms, people's access to resources, and my own personal experience. I will offer some practical feminist strategies: how to call someone out with compassion, how to question a person's assumptions about gender, how to notice and oppose negative messages in the media, how to listen to people's diverse struggles, how to combat sexist entitlement as a cis-man, how to confront norms about "health" and body size, how to change your own attitudes and work on yourself in order to affect change in the world. The second part will be a facilitated discussion on the same topic.

Nicholas Monsour

Installation

You...remain

A pay phone rings in the forest. It rings whether or not you are there. If you pick up, you hear someone speaking in an extinct language. If you try to dial a number, you cannot connect. There is a phonebook. It contains all known extinct alphabets. There is also a model of the installation, which can be exhibited elsewhere. It is possible that there will be multiples of the phonebook for sale.

Morgan Ritter
Sculpture

A heavy beaded tablet hovers on a tree as if shifting between a question mark in a world of statements and a statement in a precarious world of question marks. Its dimensions are 5" x 9" and it can be fixed onto tree surface with 3" nails anchoring down the tabs protruding from the beaded tablet. It is composed of tiny glass seed beads attached to linen backing, and will be backed again by a durable, leather like material to increase outdoor friendliness. It should be checked on every so often because it is very valuable to me.

It reads " A GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD WAS HERE" in a childish yet foreboding handwritten script. Nailed to a tree near a rock, a pond, and a pile of industrial waste, it electrifies the Complimenta landscape with an aggressive and hopeful suspicion about the inherent tension between new materiality and the sensitive mind.

Katie Rotman
Sculpture

"Push & Pull" uses reductive materials to highlight playful tensions and relationships created by weight, pull, balance and gravity. The ground acts as a weight, balancing the wood in space and pulling the sculpture into a triangular form. The audience is invited to build their own miniature Push & Pull structures, with simple wood and string provided, as the installed sculpture represents just one iteration of a larger exploration of space and form.

Jesse Erin Posner
Workshop

Interactive Training on Power + experiments in development An investigation of power. What is it, what types, what forms. In practice, how is it built and what are its tools. Part conversation, reflection, live action, argument, implementation. The session will introduce fundamental theories based on community organizing (social power), witchery (sacred power) and art (creative power). With this theoretical framework, the training will expand to concrete practice and experiments in its creation. We all deal with power constantly, as it acts upon, with, or against us. But do we know what it IS? Is the subject too dirty? To use it, want it, hate it, harness it or even deal with it begs an attempt at understanding. This training is for anyone looking to give the amorphous beast a shape.

David Smith
Sound piece

I propose to have a sound piece entitled “I Compliment You” installed at a phone number - which is hosted by a phone number gallery - called 323 projects in Los Angeles. Tucker, the curator, is very interested in hosting the piece from August 29 – September 1.

A free-standing sign, or perhaps flyers posted around (whichever you prefer) that instructs viewers/listeners to call the number and hear the piece would be installed in an open outdoor area on the Complimenta grounds (supplied by me - although I will not be able to attend due to a family reunion).

The several-minute-long piece consists of a backing track of music that I have made that is reminiscent of hold music - and I will clearly and earnestly, slowly and methodically be reading a list of somewhat generic compliments directed to the listener. I will attempt to be as positive and caring as possible, and will leave gaps between the compliments to allow the listener to contemplate, receive, or reject them.

David Snyder
Video

I want to use the opportunity of this iteration of Complimenta to extend a kind of free-associative logorrhea that I've been developing. I'm hoping to do simultaneous visual/verbal “exploration” of the forested acreage at the site, crafting an intricate yet completely inaccurate and distinctly uninformative “walking tour” video of the woods. I'm interested in trying to play with the idea of nature videography or nature narration as a starting point – thinking about the kinds of themes that run through common descriptions of nature: references to beauty, mystery, vastness, precarity, balance, etc.

I'd like to veer away from these, instead privileging under-emphasized aspects of the natural world: monotony, clumsiness, dirtiness, messiness, etc. I foresee the project ending up as a single-channel video, perhaps made for outdoor display? I would think that it would be no more than 15 minutes, maximum. I anticipate being able to shoot it over the course of three or four days, spending the majority of that time (perhaps 8 – 10 hours per day) wandering alone in the woods.

Michelle Shofet and Chella Strong
Installation

Our project engages with an ongoing discourse within the fields of landscape architecture and ecological urbanism. One voice views native plants and their application as the ultimate panacea. The other voice in the debate challenges the concept of native plants, since humans have altered the land and climate so far beyond any “native” state that the use of native plants, whether for decorative or performative (i.e. restoration or remediation) purposes is often impractical. We propose to unpack the tendency toward blind reverence of native plants by identifying plants native to Upstate New York in the area of The Manse and creating a series of shrines, altars and celebratory situations for individual plants and the habitats in which they thrive. Through this act, we seek to celebrate the life of the native, volunteer botanical while simultaneously calling attention to the fragility a plant's native status. We'll use both materials found on site and materials brought in--a combination of natural and synthetic materials. We'll draw from the rich tradition/history of altars and mini-monuments. We'll consider the comfort and fashion of these plants, and what will look best on them, we will coddle them and make them feel special. By using the traditional language of monumentalizing to celebrate something as culturally mundane as a weed, we hope to highlight the absurdity of this concept of nativity, while simultaneously bringing attention to the life of a single volunteer plant.

Andrew Steinmetz
Raku kiln

I propose to build a Raku kiln on the property and either make myself or make collaboratively with participants of COMPLIMENTA a series of sculptural and/or functional objects to be fired in the kiln. The firing itself will be a spectacle, perhaps somewhat ritualized, as Raku firing involves taking the work from the kiln while it is still molten hot and putting it in a container of combustible material, finishing the work in a show of fire and smoke.

Megan Stockton
Installation

Shimming

“to enjoy error
and to learn
from the juxtaposition of *what is* and *what is not* the case.
there is a Chinese proverb that says,
Brush cannot write two characters with the same stroke.
And yet “

-Anne Carson

the wooden shim. a tapered or wedged piece of material. used to fill gaps or spaces between objects. perhaps, to shim up a tree, to grow towards - to level up, to lean. to take care. and then, to shim up a word - with? between the said and the heard: a space to fill. a new posture, shoulders back, stand up straight. little abysses. to mean. precision as goal and the nelson shim company. a quick fix, a long history. a word bank, a crossword, a clue, an old cup of coffee. this and that. scenes from domestic life. and yet -

Emily Steinfeld
Bridge

Workroom G

Posters

Complimenta's acreage will be posted with customized POSTED signs. Below the "POSTED" header will be listed select phrases from Vladimir Mayakovsky's 1915 poem "A Cloud in Trousers." The signs will remain affixed beyond duration of Complimenta III and may or may not

specifically demarcate the land.

Patrick Meagher

Print

"Compost Calendar, and Early Autumn" (inkjet on canvas), 2012-2014