FINDING A LINE

by

Ben Ashworth
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Fine Arts
Art and Visual Technology

Committee:

_____________________________ Director

_____________________________

_____________________________

_____________________________

_____________________________ Director of the School of Art

_____________________________ Dean, College of Visual and
Performing Arts

Date: ________________________ Spring Semester 2016
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
Finding a Line

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at George Mason University

by

Ben Ashworth
Bachelor of Arts
George Mason University, 1999

Director: Sue Wrbican, Professor
Department of Art and Visual Technology

Spring Semester 2016
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
DEDICATION

This is dedicated to anyone willing to simply begin, again.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Form as Content</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginnings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop in the Face of Adversity</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Form as Conduit</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Self Generating Forms</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding Form</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1 Skateboard</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2 Asphalt inclined plane to wall ride. (Photo by John Falls)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3 The Pond, an ever evolving self referential form at a private residence</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4 Green Skate Lab volunteer work party</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5 Green Skate Lab time lapse</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6 Green Skate Lab time lapse</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7 Green Skate Lab time lapse</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8 Green Skate Lab time lapse</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9 Fight Club time lapse</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10 Fight Club time lapse</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11 Fight Club Bowl detail, bricolage quick fix pre-party. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12 Jane Franklin Dance company dancers warm up before skate/dance research session. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13 Photo Week DC Fixation, David Alan Harvey exhibition with Fight Club Bowl in background</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14 Fight Club house band “The Points“ perform as skaters ride bowl in background. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15 Fight Club Brew Master takes a break from his duties. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16 Fight Club bowl as constant artifact evolving as I adapt to it. Build, skate, build, skate as a process that manifests unfolding form. (Photo by Shaun Gregoire)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17 Fight club bowl spills outside as shared territory for creative exchange. (Photo by Shaun Gregoire)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18 Hemphill Fine Arts talk as part of Workingman Collective Exhibition</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19 Bridge Spot shared territory fuels evolving space. (Photo by Tom Ashcraft)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20 Bridge Spot as alternate bridge</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21 Seed Bowl sprouts at GMU Sculpture Studio</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22 Blind Whino Ramp activated and fueled by South West D.C. ecosystem</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23 George Mason Seed Bowl and Blind Whino Ramp merge together and conform to the Kennedy Center façade. (Photo by Amanda Voisard)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 24 Welcome to the table</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

FINDING A LINE

Ben Ashworth, M.F.A.

George Mason University, 2016

Thesis Director: Sue Wrbican

This thesis examines the developing philosophy of practice behind my ongoing participatory public art project and MFA thesis festival FINDING A LINE, most recently exhibited September 4-13, 2015 at The Kennedy Center. FINDING A LINE develops through practice as research, best understood as a process, a constant cycling arc of tactile searching that manifests form. Specifically, this research harnesses collective creative agency to produce form as content, form as conduit, and when combined, self-generating forms. This paper explores how each form produced has its own unique attributes linking it to the next. I present them in the order they became apparent to me and unfolding as a process grounded in experience, as a constant arc of research always bringing me back to where I began, but with new perceptual ability.
CHAPTER 1: FORM AS CONTENT

Beginnings

My research began more than 25 years ago though I did not know it was research then. I only knew that I was becoming increasingly addicted to the side effects and affects of a simple device. This unassuming tool was increasingly opening my eyes, body, and mind to glimpses of an alternate reality. The device was a skateboard and the context was the city, specifically Richmond, VA. Figure 1

Figure 1 Skateboard
As a teenager, my friends and I would tell each other’s parents that we were staying over at one another’s houses then we would spend all night exploring the city far beyond its intended design. Our exploration hinged on reinterpreting space through the physics of movement. We explored rolling friction, sliding friction and trajectory learning to harness and exploit and defy gravity as it constantly pulled us to the center of the earth. ADA ramps amplified ollies, valet elevators became ski lifts, our paths dictated by harnessing gravity to load our boards with energy accelerating only to unload that energy into a sparking grind on a curb or to thrust you up an inclined plane then up a wall reaching an apex of weightlessness before crashing back to earth. Figure 2

Figure 2  Asphalt inclined plane to wall ride. (Photo by John Falls)
The metaphysical experience of harnessing energy from surrounding matter feeling the surrounding molecular bonds and how they resonate as asphalt, concrete, brick, glass, steel, marble, moving up through the urethane of your wheels, the bearings, the trucks and plywood of your deck and then to resonate self back out extending through mind to body to medium (skateboard) was revolutionary leaving one wondering how far our consciousness extends.

“Cathartic release” does not come close to describing the tearing muscle under strain, constantly rebuilding evolving for the task at hand, the white pain of maxed out nerve endings and necessary willingness to always get back up. What began with glimpses of an alternate reality coalesced into a clear vision of action as a process for re-imagining oneself merging with surrounding matter. This new way of knowing merged practice and experience as an unfolding self-referential production of space unique to the aesthetic of the individual exploiting varied surrounding contexts. The expanded conception of self not only extended into the inanimate surrounding environment but also into the surrounding pack of skaters navigating as a flock in an improvised dance with one another, pedestrians, cars, bicyclists, wildlife, all in a synchronized and collective state of flow.

Named by Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, the concept of flow describes “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer
sake of doing it.” (Csikszentmihaly 4). This perfectly describes a skater’s willingness to navigate dangerous city traffic, to trespass, to be chased by police and sustain constant injuries.

Csikszentmihaly writes further, “Following a flow experience, the organization of the self is more complex than it had been before. It is by becoming increasingly complex that the self might be said to grow. Complexity is the result of two broad psychological processes: differentiation and integration. Differentiation implies a movement toward uniqueness, toward separating oneself from others. Integration refers to its opposite: a union with other people, with ideas and entities beyond the self. A complex self is one that succeeds in combining these opposite tendencies.” (Csikszentmihaly 41) As we skated, we flowed, becoming what we were doing extending ourselves beyond our bodies. We each were exhibiting our own unique style but also while merging with one another and further into the entity of the physical city around us. As we explored in a collective state of flow we were invigorated with creative agency transcending fixed conceptions of the self and the space of the city.

At the time, I had no conception of how this could be the foundation for my studio and eventual public practice. Even though I was only 16, I had discovered that wherever I was, was my studio. It was simply a matter of perceptual ability. Tactile knowing allowed me to see and feel beyond sign and signifier, to redefine space by engaging it, rather than being defined by its intended design and corresponding rules.
Only after reading Iain Borden’s, *Skateboarding, Space and the City, Architecture and the Body*, was I able to understand the potential of this way of knowing and the creative agency inherent in skateboarding, but also to understand it as a form of critique. Borden writes, “What does it mean to adopt, take over, colonize, emulate, repeat, work within, work against, reimagine, retemporalize, reject, edit and recompose the spaces of the city and its architecture? How can differential space be sought in the land and epoch of the commodified, the abstract, the homogenized, the reductive and the powerful? (Borden 267) We didn’t know what it meant to recompose the spaces of the city, but we were flowing and doing it regardless. Not only was our conception of self and space of the city transformed but also the time. We were traveling outside of other’s conception of time. There was no rush hour, 9-5, then rush hour again, only right now and the generative potential of play. The world was ours. We were each our own cycling universe of desire resonating form out overlapping with one another and surrounding matter. Unfortunately, and fortunately, as I will explain, not everyone shared our expanding vision.

**Develop in the Face of Adversity**

3a.m. call from the Richmond Police,

“Mrs Ashworth?”

“Yes?”

“Do you know where your son Benjamin is?”

“Yes officer he’s staying at a friends house.”
“No, he’s in the Westside of Richmond and under arrest for breaking and entering [to skateboard]”

“Oh.”

Needless to say, not everyone shared my enthusiasm for this new ability to reinterpret time and space. Constant conflict with business owners, security guards, police, pedestrians, and the general public inspired me and like minded artists/skaters to begin building skate-able forms on private property, on secluded public property, or to subtly modify urban infrastructure to make them more user friendly. Each build was informed by the cumulative experiences of riding different terrain leading up to it.
After riding what we had built, we would evaluate what works, what didn’t, then revise and refine. This do-it-yourself engineering approach made for unique evolving self referential form based not only on the experience of the builders, the available materials at hand, but also on the unique skating styles of the skaters, a community bricolage project of sorts. One form may be ideal for the lines of movement of one skater but maybe not for another. Cumulative experience injected into refining forms for movement
through them became the name of the game. We were connecting in a process that forced us to develop individually to adapt to the collective and hybrid forms we had realized. Figure 3 Figure 4 Figure 5 Figure 6 Figure 7 Figure 8

Figure 4 Green Skate Lab volunteer work party.
Figure 5 Green Skate Lab time lapse.
Figure 6 Green Skate Lab time lapse.
Figure 7 Green Skate Lab time lapse.
Figure 8 Green Skate Lab time lapse.
CHAPTER 2 FORM AS CONDUIT

My interest at this stage of research began to shift from designing an ideal form for my own lines of movement through it to embracing other’s ideal forms. I wanted a cumulative and unfolding structure to exist as a space for all to be challenged and to develop under strain. Development under the strain of unfamiliar terrain, but more importantly under the strain of compromise was my mantra. In 2004, I and others expanded this concept to embrace artists of other media into the conversation. We established a private recreational and creative space for skateboarders, musicians, and artists that individually we could not afford, but collectively we could. Our mission embodied and honored the experiential nature of “re-creation” to the fullest. We had monthly rent parties that were part band session, art exhibition, performance space, barbecue, dance party, skate session, but existing always as research space showcasing the evolving site specific, site relational, and skate-able sculpture evolving at the core of the complex. Figure 9 Figure 10 Figure 11 The sculpture was site specific in that its dimensions conformed to the existing architecture of the space. The sculpture was also site relational as its development was relative to the steady flow of participants engaging the space. A symbiotic ecosystem of participants, including skaters, builders, musicians, multi media artists, dancers, photographers, audience members, fed off of each other’s
energy over the next six years to inform this shared territory. Figure 12 Figure 13 Figure 14 Figure 15 Figure 16 Figure 17
Figure 9 Fight Club time lapse.
Figure 10 Fight Club time lapse.
Our collective conversations resonated through our respective mediums producing new forms unfolding in moments of synergy and serendipity. We did not know what we were doing but we were making decisions regardless. A trumpet player would improvise to a skater while the skater responded to the player while a dance company warmed up to feel out the space. All could not help but be aware of one another, to cross-pollinate, and come away changed.

For example, after engaging the curvilinear concave and convex surfaces of the evolving bowl structure, Jane Franklin Dance company would go on to produce works within the context of local urban infrastructure, specifically concrete drainage ditches and empty pools. The space originally had no name as we had no certificate of occupancy and feared law enforcement. Those in the know began calling it Fight Club due to the raw character of the physical space and that participants often left bruised, needing stitches, or needing broken bones set. Undeterred, participants would always return to be part of the conversation. Fight Club’s biggest asset was the shared territory where each participant was out of their comfort zone and forced to be present, to improvise with artists of varied media, to move beyond what they knew in an interdisciplinary dance channeled through their respective medium. No strings attached, just people as conduit passing energy back and forth. This energy exchange not only fueled the evolving structure at the core of the space but also generated an undeniable vitality and gravitational field attracting invitations to produce this concept and philosophy of practice within new contexts. Just
as a seed grows to maturity then produces more seeds to be dispersed, Fight Club was reaching the end of its life cycle and seeds reflective of the diversity of characters that had come to the table were being sown.

Figure 11  Fight Club Bowl detail, bricolage quick fix pre-party. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)
Figure 12 Jane Franklin Dance company dancers warm up before skate/dance research session. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)

Figure 13 Photo Week DC Fixation, David Alan Harvey exhibition with Fight Club Bowl in background.
Figure 14  Fight Club house band “The Points“ perform as skaters ride bowl in background. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)
Figure 15 Fight Club Brew Master takes a break from his duties. (Photo by Anthony Smallwood)
Figure 16  Fight Club bowl as constant artifact evolving as I adapt to it. Build, skate, build, skate as a process that manifests unfolding form. (Photo by Shaun Gregoire)
Figure 17 Fight club bowl spills outside as shared territory for creative exchange. (Photo by Shaun Gregoire)
CHAPTER 3 SELF GENERATING FORMS

Expanding Form

In the summer of 2011 I was invited to give a talk about my work at Hemphill Fine Arts in Washington DC. Figure 18 I shared documentation of numerous skate-able sculptural forms I had worked on individually and collectively leading up to Fight Club and then discussed my new and shifting interest in my work as conduit for energy exchange. While I was still interested in ideal forms for movement through them, I was more interested in how forms function relative to their context and how they evolve as they are engaged. The human and community component was now foregrounded and producing self-generating forms through empathy and reciprocity. I often joke about having to put my ego aside to let a collection of participants drive projects, but this simple and critical decision allows all participants to exercise creative autonomy, take ownership of the projects, and see their collective decisions reflected in artifacts produced. At Hemphill Fine Arts, I discussed my playful concept of “skate-able putt-putt” where by subtle DIY concrete modifications to urban infrastructure could make the gradient of Washington DC much more user friendly for skateboarders. One audience member and curator, Laura Roulette was intrigued by the concept and asked if I could adapt it for an upcoming 2012 DC Public Art Initiative called 5x5. I immediately said
“YES!”, little did my audience know, unsanctioned modifications were already under way, as they are in many cities, and hidden in plain site.

Figure 18 Hemphill Fine Arts talk as part of Workingman Collective Exhibition.

When I needed a break and space from the intensity of Fight Club, I was quietly working away and sowing seeds with a likeminded group of graffiti artists and skateboarders under the 695 over pass at the edge of Garfield Park in SE Washington,
DC. Skaters simply called the space “Bridge Spot”. Bridge Spot was at once a no man’s land to some and an everyman’s space to others. We began by simply cleaning the site and making subtle modifications with wooden ramps to ride up onto support beams for the bridge above. Other skaters took initiative and responded by building more skate-able features until a makeshift skate park would take form. On any given day we would alternate between building then skating during a basketball game, a mural painting session, or a video shoot for a local hip hop group using all of it as a backdrop. The ephemeral nature of Bridge Spot allowed it to be a recreational space, studio space, and public park all at once. It was also a shortcut between the more affluent Capital Hill neighborhood and less affluent neighborhood that was divided by the train tracks that ran under the site. On a DC map the highway above is defined and the space beneath is not. The lack of definition made fertile ground for Bridge Spot to exist as, what a friend referred to as a “temporary autonomous zone” that constantly morphed and changed. Later I realized he was referring to Hakim Bey’s ideas of “temporary spaces that elude formal structures of control.” (Gray, 47) Whoever engaged it allowed it to be whatever they wanted, but as a shared territory. The diverse high/low socioeconomic mash up of street artists, skateboarders, musicians, photographers, and general public that had to traverse the site continuously provided unique opportunities for crosspollination between artists of different mediums and for stereotypes and conceptions of “the other” to be challenged. As participants on an equal playing field of creative control, we were forced to be empathetic to one another’s perspectives, to cooperate, and become what we were collectively doing. Our collective creative agency and stewardship was embraced by
locals from both sides of the tracks and then further formalized and sanctioned when curator Laura Roulette invited me, photographer John Falls, and Workingman Collective to participate in the DC Arts Commission 5x5 Temporary Public Art Initiative in 2012. While I initially titled the project “Finding A Line” to reference how skateboarders navigate and improvise with the living city around them. I also wanted Bridge Spot to evolve as a living blueprint where we build, skate, build, skate as a cycle which developed a curvilinear space dictated by lines of movement conforming to the site.

Figure 19 Bridge Spot shared territory fuels evolving space. (Photo by Tom Ashcraft)
Once underway, I realized that the space was becoming far more than a skate park. It existed as a vibrant social space that morphed as it was engaged. The more I relinquished control and paid attention to how participants utilized the space the better I knew what to build next. We built ADA ramps that were stroller, skateboard, and wheelchair friendly. We added handrails to stairs for pedestrian traffic but also for skateboarders to grind and slide down. Riding surfaces became multifunctional as canvases for muralists and graffiti artists, as backdrops for photographers, videographers, b-boys, and b-girls, dog walkers, sliding boards for local kids, movie projection surfaces in the evenings, satellite studio spaces for local arts institutions, and for many, simply as a resting place to sit and soak it all up. Bridge Spot still lives on despite a massive railway expansion project that has eliminated half the site. The intended design of the defined bridge continues to carry the steady groaning procession of congested commuter traffic above, but is now redefined and functions as an alternate type of bridge providing shade on sunny days, shelter on rainy days, and social space for a diverse population and their hybrid artifacts being produced below. Figure 19 Figure 20
In 2014 I was asked to further refine and develop a version of Fight Club and the 5x5 Finding A Line project with Garth Ross and Jason Moran for the Kennedy Center. Garth and I had met at Fight Club while he was working on a 48 Hour Film Festival project years before. The Fight Club space functioned as his set and our members his cast for an afternoon. At the time, I thought he was just another eccentric artist, skateboarder, musician and filmmaker. Little did I know, Garth was also vice president for community engagement at the Kennedy Center. I discovered this years later when he approached me about developing a Skateboarding, Music, and Media Festival for the Kennedy Center context.

I was initially hesitant as skateboarders had a history of being kicked off of the Kennedy Center grounds, myself included, for skateboarding. To embrace them all of a sudden could be viewed disingenuous by my community if handled improperly. We would have to gain each other’s trust for a project of this nature to be authentic and honestly exist at the Kennedy Center. I agreed to develop the concept but only on an equal playing field of creative control during the 2 years leading up to the festival. My reputation was on the line, and I did not want in any way to superficially represent or exploit anyone. This had to be real and reflective of the characters that make up the fabric of DC’s skate culture. The musicians, builders, skaters, graffiti heads, photographers, videographers, barbecue specialists, brewers, what have you, we are a unique, diverse, vibrant, but protective subculture. To represent that diversity and proceed with presence we held a series of community creative ecosystem meetings. Each gathering was part design meeting, part skate session, part build session, and social event
developing while gathering participants as producers of the festival who would eventually land on the grounds of the center for the culminating events. We met with local art activists, skate activists, citizens, skate shops and creative non-profits to establish relationships where mutually beneficial relationships would push the project forward.

As our meetings progressed the artifacts and programming produced was always reflective of the participants that came to the table. Drawing off of this process, part of the structure took form at George Mason University, part of it took form at the arts club Blind Whino in DC, and part of it took form at the Kennedy Center, but always growing with the unique input of the participants of those contexts. Everyone was a part of the design, programming and management of the evolving festival. This process produced a project that was undeniably inclusive as all who showed up for the ongoing event were simultaneously the audience and participants generating the evolving festival. Even today, Finding A Line is incubating at Gallaudet University until it lands back at the Kennedy Center in May 2017. Spring is here and the project is starting to sprout again drawing off of a new and vital surrounding ecosystem. Figure 21 Figure 22 Figure 23
Figure 21 Seed Bowl sprouts at GMU Sculpture Studio.

Figure 22 Blind Whino Ramp activated and fueled by South West D.C. ecosystem.
Conclusion

My ongoing research and process of exploration has once again brought me back to where I began but with new knowledge gathered in practice and in shared experience. Within these constant feedback loops of overlapping research, the participant’s collective tactile expression resonates as refracted waves colliding and connecting our thinking through our bodies and further into the material world through the media we develop. The emerging forms produced through this process are what drives the ongoing
FINDING A LINE project and are also what I believe binds participants to one another through collective creative agency. Any participant willing to engage has no choice but to be present, to be out of their comfort zone, to improvise, and to expand. By setting up situations to tap into collective creative agency, conceptions of the self expand to produce new forms reflecting the diversity of participants that come to the table. This simple ability to continually manifest and reimagine ourselves in the world is what I ultimately hope to communicate. Welcome to the table. Figure 24


BIOGRAPHY

The art community will tell you Ben Ashworth is an accomplished visual artist, educator, designer, builder and skateboarder. His friends will tell you he’s a lunatic who skates too fast and works too hard. Either way, his work exists at the collision of art, skateboarding, community and play, and speaks largely for itself. His projects blur the lines and definitions of activism and art, and tend to draw the surrounding communities in to participate. For instance, he teamed up with Washington, D.C. based Green Skate Laboratory to organize and build a skate park for Langdon Recreation Center constructed from more than 3,000 reclaimed tires by an all-volunteer labor team (including neighborhood kids). He’s also one of the founding members of the now legendary DC Fight Club, an underground skate park/gallery/creative space. In 2012, he was selected to produce the first version of Finding A Line for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanity’s temporary public art initiative, 5x5. Finding a Line has now been embraced by the Kennedy Center as an ongoing participatory project that lands on its grounds annually.

Ben is a 2016 MFA graduate of George Mason University, Fairfax, VA and in 1999 earned his Bachelor of Arts from George Mason University as well. He currently works a 9 to 5 as George Mason University’s Sculpture Studio Manager, is a core member of Workingman Collective, a DC based artist collective formed in 2005, and a lifetime member of East Coast Round Wall, a loose coalition of artists, activists, educators, surfers, skaters and builders.
Ben Ashworth
http://gmsculpture.wordpress.com/faculty/ben-ashworth/

4400 University Dr
Fairfax, VA 22030
T: (571) 265-7200   E: bashwort@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

2016    MFA, Sculpture, George Mason University
1999    BA, Studio Art, George Mason University

EXHIBITIONS, PUBLIC WORKS, ENGAGEMENTS, AND COMMISSIONS

2014 - Ongoing    Kennedy Center Community Project, Washington, DC, artist Ben Ashworth and Kennedy Center Advisor for Jazz Jason Moran explore Aesthetic Parallels between Skateboarding and Jazz.

2014    Collaborative Partner for Daylight Saving/ a 25-hour bilingual, roving, online broadcast exploring the policies and poetics that regulate public time, economy, and communication. The broadcast streamed from a truck roving the capitals geometries, stopped at a variety of sites while hosting sound, music, dialogue, and language experiments. DC’s Green Skate Lab was our selected site. Topics and experiments revolved around Sun Rah, time machines, skateboarding, and jazz. Selected by Artist Augustina Woodgate for DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities temporary public art project 5x5.

2014    “Exchanged III”, group exhibition, Brentwood Arts Exchange, Brentwood, MD May - April

2013    “Exchanged II”, group exhibition, Artwork Gallery, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA

2011 – Ongoing Finding a Line, Washington DC, artist Ben Ashworth with Workingman Collective public art project that takes the improvisational act at the core of skateboarding – finding a line through physical space – and applies it to the process of transforming a community space. Selected by curator Laura Roulet for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities' temporary public art project 5x5.

NOTE: Finding a Line is a TED City 2.0 award finalist.

2004 – Ongoing Green Skate Lab, Construction Foreman for public recreational skate park collaborative design + build project emphasizing recycling, physics, and environmental science. Multiple semester project with professional, student, and community labor, Langston Recreation Center, Washington D.C.

2004 – 2010 FCDC, Principal partner for private recreational and creative space for skateboarding, arts, music, documentation and construction. After two years of increasing popularity and a wildly destructive party, a media campaign was organized to proclaim the “death” of FCDC. Meanwhile, operations continued with emphasis on more low-key celebrations, social experiments, and exhibitions.

SELECTED EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS AND ENGAGEMENT


Container Space Student/faculty design build project resulting in the adaptive reuse of a 20’ shipping container as an off-the-grid programmed exhibition and experimental resource. This project was aligned with
the goals of the University commitment of creating a zero carbon footprint and sustainability action/awareness. Construction 2007 – 2010, ongoing programming, containerspace.blogspot.com/

**East Coast Sculpture Exchange**
An on-going visiting faculty/student exchange program for the production of an on-campus artwork and coordinated with student involvement University of Georgia, Athens, GA, and James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Initiated 2007

**Green Skate Lab**
Foreman and student coordinator for Public recreational skate park, collaborative design + build project emphasizing recycling, physics and environmental science. Multiple semester project with professional, student, and community labor, Langston Recreation Center, Washington D.C. 2004-07

**Cubicle Ten**
Co-organized / curated student exhibition in Baltimore, MD, Schools participating: GMU, Corcoran College of Art, University of Maryland, Maryland Institute College of Art, Virginia Commonwealth University. 2004

**Earl House Project**
Co-organized the production and exhibition of student site-specific artwork in and on the grounds of a university owned farmhouse slated for demolition. George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 2004

**Developer**
Co-organized exhibition of George Mason University sculpture students in four thousand square foot vacant retail space in downtown Washington D.C., December 2003

**Cottonwood House**
Secured vacant house for creation of temporary artwork production/exhibition, McLean, VA Fall 2001

**Andros Island**
Collaborative project partnership between George Mason University and the College of the Bahamas, Nassau, Art Project and the community of Staniard Creek, Andros Island, Bahamas. Using the Bahamas Environmental Research Center, a field station in Staniard Creek as our base, projects engaged artists, local citizens, students, and environmental researchers in the production of public artwork,
community interventions, and work that resonated with local eco-systems. Stainard Creek, Andros Island, Bahamas, 1998-2001

**Resource Workshop**

Assisted and co-organized four-day site specific sculpture workshop that included private tours of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Falling Water, Kentuck Knob, and the creation of temporary artworks on 300 acre farm, Garret County, MD, April 1998 -1999 - 2000

**AWARDS/GRANTS**

- **2011**
  - 5x5, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities' temporary public art project grant, 25K.
  - NOTE: Finding a Line is a TED City 2.0 award finalist
- **2010**
  - Thomas W. Iszard III Distinguished Alumni Award, George Mason University, College of Visual and Performing Arts
- **2004**
  - Tony Hawk Foundation Grant, 14K
  - Project Learning Tree Grant, 6K

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- **2014-Present**
  - Arts Consultant/ Festival Curator, The Kennedy Center
- **1996 - Present**
  - Sculpture Studio Manager, George Mason University, School of Art
- **1994 - 2004**
  - Gallery Assistant, George Mason University, School of Art
- **2000 - Present**
  - Environmental Health and Safety Liaison, George Mason University, School of Art

**FABRICATOR EXPERIENCE (Selected)**

- **2011**
  - Prospects and Provisions, Workingman Collective Exhibition, Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, DC
2003 – 2005  Memorial, University Park, MD, Fabricator + collaborative assistant, w/ Tom Ashcraft, Public environmental artwork dedicated to five community members lost on September 11, 2001

2007  Table to Chair; Floyd VA, Fabricator + assistant, w/ Tom Ashcraft, Permanent environmental art work and site development, featuring 2 hemlock benches, 50’ l. x 16”w x 16” – 30” h, Ongoing landscaping design and development

1998-2003  Roundabout, Mt Rainer, MD, Fabricator + assistant, w/ Tom Ashcraft and David Chung, Streetscape design and fabrication: Two 16’ h glass tile mosaic sculptures, three bus shelters, 200 linear ft. of cast bas-relief, brick surface design of sidewalk areas. State Highway Administration, MD Dept. of Transportation

1998  Mural, PS 24, Brooklyn, NYC Percent for Art, hand cut mosaic tile, 100’ w x 8’ h, Fabricator + assistant, w/ David Chung

1997  “U STREET SOUND”, The Reeves Center, 14th & U Street, NW, DC, five story tall centerpiece of the Grand Entrance, Fabricator + assistant w/ Walter Kravitz

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rudi Greenberg, “The Kennedy Center has a temporary outdoor skate park, and anyone can use it.” Washington Post Express, September 3, 2015.


REFERENCES

Tom Ashcraft, Endowed Professor, MFA Director, School of Art and Design, Cullowhee, NC
Phone, (828) 227-3877 Email: tdashcraft@email.wcu.edu

Suzanne Carbonneau, Professor, School of Art, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
Phone, (202) 256-7832 Email: scarbonn@gmu.edu

47
Peter Winant, Director, School of Art, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
Phone, (703) 993-8385 Email: pwinant@gmu.edu