



400 South Peoria Street (MC 034)  
Chicago, IL 60607  
312-996-6114  
[gallery400.uic.edu](http://gallery400.uic.edu)

Gallery hours:  
Tuesday-Friday 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Saturday 12:00-5:00 p.m.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Denny Mwaura, Assistant Director, [dmwaura@uic.edu](mailto:dmwaura@uic.edu), [gallery400@uic.edu](mailto:gallery400@uic.edu)

## ***Learning Together: Art Education and Community***

**September 5–March 15, 2025**



Keith Haring with Chicago Public School students, Chicago, 1989. Courtesy Irving Zucker.

**Artists and organizations:** Paulina Camacho and Nicole Marroquin, Margaret Burroughs, Casa Aztlan, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, Chicago Public Art Group, Community TV Network, Diana Solis, Arthur Dixon Elementary School, Faheem Majeed, Gallery 37, Jordan Knecht, Keith Haring, Little Black Pearl, Pros Arts Studio (Lionel Bottari, Douglas Grew, Jean Parisi, Elvia Rodriguez Ochoa), Spiral Workshop, Stockyard Institute, Yollocalli Arts Reach, among others.

Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois Chicago is pleased to announce *Learning Together: Art, Education, Community*, a major exhibition centering the progressive art pedagogy of a diverse group of Chicago artist educators from the mid-1960s through the 2010s. Over the last century, Chicago has led the nation in progressive arts education for K-12 students, as teachers and their students linked art education to movements for social justice, access, and self-determination. In the first broad telling of this history, this exhibition explores art education as a conduit for activism and community-building through 20th and 21st-century artworks, projects co-created by students and educators, lesson plans, historical ephemera, and images of public artworks in situ in and around K-12 schools.

*Learning Together* emerged from *Pandemic Lessons: What Just Happened?!*, a 2020 program series that brought together artists and educators to examine pivots, creative solutions, challenges, and failures they experienced and developed during the COVID-19 crisis. These conversations revealed wide-ranging connections and unique pedagogical practices of educators working across Chicago's diverse neighborhoods. Culminating three years of research, *Learning Together* presents unique projects highlighting how arts pedagogy has fostered creativity and imagination, autonomy, cultural heritage, and organizing across Chicago Public Schools (CPS), alternative school networks, and community organizations. The extensive research process is reflected in an oral history repository with over 35 interviews with actors in the field, including artist educators and contemporary artists active across the 1970s to the present.

Among them is Chatham's Dixon Elementary School, whose Afro-centric art collection donated by alums, students, and artists across the country celebrates cultural and historical contributions by African Americans in the fields of art, literature, and sports. Another is Pilsen-based Pros Arts Studio, an organization that, since 1978, has led innovative initiatives, including the first Dia de los Muertos and Fiesta del Sol Parades, puppet shows, arts integration in CPS, and *Kids on TV*, a television program that promoted reading and taught digital media production to youth on Chicago's Community TV Network. A new commission by teaching artist Jordan Knecht intends to connect the historical perspectives of community-based projects with the daily experiences of classroom teachers in the city. Numerous other inventive arts education practices are also included, from the museological to the participatory, from arts integration to professional development programs.

Accompanying the exhibition is a free takeaway brochure and a teaching toolkit produced by UIC's Department of Art Education students and available to arts educators and the public for free throughout the exhibition. Following the exhibition in spring 2025, UIC Gallery 400 will publish a 70-page exhibition catalogue with excerpts of the oral histories, documentation of the exhibition, projects, and essays by renowned art educators Olivia Gude and Jorge Lucero, among others.

In conjunction with *Learning Together* is *Art Powers*, a new public art commission by Englewood Arts Collective co-founders Tonika Johnson and Joe "Cujo" Nelson. On view on Gallery 400's north-facing windows on Van Buren, the project reflects the role of art education programs

such as Gallery 37, an organization that empowered Chicago's youth in wide-ranging art experiences in tents on a vacant lot in the Loop during the 1990s, on the artists creative and personal lives.

*Learning Together: Art Education and Community* is part of Art Design Chicago, a citywide collaboration initiated by the Terra Foundation for American Art that highlights the city's artistic heritage and creative communities.

The exhibition is presented in partnership with UIC's Jane Addams Hull-House Museum and its exhibition [Radical Craft: Arts Education at Hull-House, 1889-1935](#), which highlights craft's centrality to the settlement house's groundbreaking work in art education at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

### **Related Programs:**

#### ***Learning Together* Opening Reception**

Thursday, September 5, 2024

6-8:00 p.m.

UIC Gallery 400

#### **Threads, Legacies, & Networks: Intergenerational Panel on the History of Art Education in Chicago + Social Hour**

Thursday, October 3, 2024

5-6:30 p.m.

UIC Gallery 400 Lecture Room

#### ***Learning Together* Virtual Tour**

Co-presented with the UIC Disability Cultural Center

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

12–1:00 p.m. CT

#### **Writing a History of Art Education in Chicago**

Saturday, December 14, 2024

12–3:00 p.m.

UIC Gallery 400 Lecture Room

#### **In conversation: Nicole Marroquin and Malika Jackson on Student Agency**

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

5–6:30 p.m.

[Virtual via Zoom](#)

Visit [UIC Gallery 400](#) for full details.

### **Tours:**

Gallery staff regularly offer exhibition tours. Schedule a tour that meets your group's specific interests via our [website](#), 312-996-6114 or [gallery400@uic.edu](mailto:gallery400@uic.edu).

~~

*Learning Together: Art Education and Community* is funded by the Terra Foundation for American Art. Additional support is provided by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the School of Art & Art History; and the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts, University of Illinois Chicago.

~~

Founded in 1983, UIC Gallery 400 is one of the nation's most vibrant university galleries, showcasing work at the leading edge of contemporary art, architecture, and design. The Gallery's program of exhibitions, lectures, film and video screenings, and performances features interdisciplinary and experimental practices. Operating within the School of Art and Art History in the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), Gallery 400 endeavors to make the arts and its practitioners accessible to a broad spectrum of the public and to cultivate a variety of cultural and intellectual perspectives. Gallery 400 is recognized for its support of the creation of new work, the diversity of its programs and participants, and the development of experimental models for multidisciplinary exhibitions.

##