



WRITINGS ON:
DON'T MIND
IF I DO

September 23–December 13, 2025 Gallery 400 University of Illinois Chicago





Finnegan Shannon is a creator of loopholes. Their work is mischievous, methodically chipping away at traditional museum practices. By framing institutional change as artwork, the pace of possibility quickens. With Shannon at the helm, *Don't mind if I do* is an experiment in more deeply collaborative exhibition-making, demonstrating how even temporary changes in power structures create pathways of access for visitors, artists, and staff.

Grounded in a longtime fantasy of the artist's—an idea of an exhibition setup that would lavishly meet their access needs—this project developed around a conveyor belt. Embraced for its efficiency and mechanized transport of goods (even sushi!), this equipment is reappropriated here as a vehicle for cultivating a more relaxed museum-going experience. The conveyor belt brings artwork to audience members, who are invited to sit on comfortable furniture and engage with a parade of objects through any combination of touch, sight, and sound.

Sharing the work of ten artists who have influenced Shannon's practice, *Don't mind if I do* blurs boundaries between public and private. It puts representations of everyday life that are usually tucked away at home on display. Plastic pill bottles scattered across nightstands share space with a tissue box cover that reminds us of moments of sickness and sadness. Sculptural snapshots of an intimate interspecies bond sit beside genderaffirming packers that feel most at home tucked inside our clothes. They signify illness, reveal systems of support, and are used in play.

Don't mind if I do destabilizes rigid ableist and exclusionary museum "best practices" like sparse seating, untouchable objects, dense wall labels, and guards who protect rather than invite engagement. It is a project built upon a framework of flexibility. By welcoming glitches, inviting informality and messiness, and unsettling the hierarchy of objects, Don't mind if I do prioritizes people over artwork and makes more room for us to show up as our full selves.

—Lauren Leving, Curator

Lauren Leving



Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo & Finnegan Shannon

Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo and Finnegan Shannon's chipboard mural We Hold Us envelops the gallery. It is a hug that grounds us in the here and now, read clockwise in rhythm with the movement of the conveyor belt and the hands of the mischievous Day Clocks bouncing off the walls.

With practices invested in the potency of language, Branfman-Verissimo and Shannon present us with a poem

that serves as a warm welcome / we want to meet you

that encourages rest / we sit & enjoy

that demonstrates an interconnectedness

between exhibitors & museum visitors

between the artists included in this project

between the conveyor belt & the humans who engage with it /

we links in a chain

The repeated use of "We" implicates us as audience members, decentering the individual and highlighting the power of the collective. The lived experiences of many fill the room, swaddled by this poem.

Here, Branfman-Verissimo and Shannon employ language that doesn't immediately come to mind when considering a museum environment, pushing back against dominant institutional narratives to make space for the stories that are often buried beneath them.

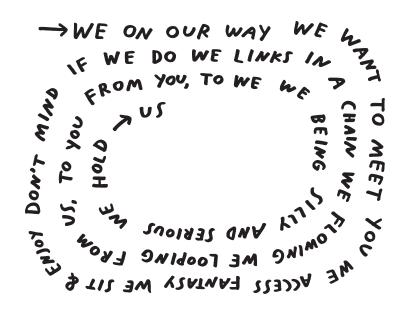






For example:

"Access Fantasy" is a frequent term in *Don't mind if I do*, one that embodies this project. At their best, museums inspire us to dream big. Yet, seldom do we experience access as *the* dream. Access as a buzzword, access as a box to check, access as a vehicle for funding support? Absolutely.



But access as the beating heart of a project? Rarely.

Consider why this is, especially when reflecting on the breadth of meanings the word "access" holds. This reflection quickly becomes a never-ending cascade of dominoes.

How does access as the pulse shift the development of a project?

"Sit" is a gesture to spend time, to get comfortable, to focus on what's in front of us rather than the bodies we inhabit. *Don't mind if I do* positions the needs of the audience at the forefront and eliminates the pressure of time from the experience.

"Silly" is usually the opposite of how a white cube gallery space is read. In many museums, we speak in hushed voices, take measured paces, and perform a learned rigidity that almost mocks history's most revered marble statues.

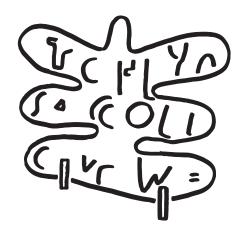
Not here! Be yourself.







Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo



Sit down and stay awhile. Look slowly, look closely. Trace your fingers along the rough edges of this set of cardboard cutouts and feel their strength, fragility, and their movements.

By obscuring text, playing with line breaks, and prioritizing the objects' forms over the cropping of letters, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo invites us to slow down and spend time with their work, examining each word to reveal the meaning of the phrase. Imagine the disparate elements of these artworks as pieces of a puzzle.

The process of slow consumption gives space for interpretation, encouraging us to situate ourselves within the story.

How can pacing change a narrative?

This slowness heightens awareness. We become more attentive to the world around us and the complexities of the collective.

Branfman-Verissimo's work is nourished by community, the speed of engagement as fodder.

The sharp points of *Winged Survival* serve as barbs of fortification, "... preserving and prioritizing Black and Brown, Queer, Trans, Gender Non-Confirming lived experiences, work, activism and opinions [to] re-imagine our role in the future." [1]







The scalloped sides of *To Fly as a Collective We*, *in Rooted Ritual* and *Intifada Fight* are reminiscent of butterflies, an ensemble of gossamer wings migrating in unison for confidence, protection, and warmth. Black text on a cornflower blue background, the sky on a cloudless day.

Does the ability to take flight provide escape or perspective?

An aerial view reveals the whole as greater than the sum of its parts. Cardboard cutouts, abstracted text, and matte acrylic paint cull the stories of many, layering moments of the past, present, and future.

When experienced alone, Winged Survival and To Fly as a Collective We, in Rooted Ritual are complete, finished artworks ready for display.

Yet, in *Don't mind if I do*, they become parts themselves, finding home on a conveyor belt interspersed with the contributions of many, individual participants in a never-before-told story.

[1] Branfman-Verissimo, Lukaza. "Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo." SEPTEMBER, septembergallery.com/exhibitions/lukaza-branfman-verissimo.







Pelenakeke Brown

Don't mind if I do is rich with ambient sound.

The whir of the conveyor belt motor—its rhythmic squeak as artworks round the northwest corner—coupled with the white noise of box fans is the stuff of ASMR daydreams.

The clink of Pelenakeke Brown's Sit with Me puzzles rattling in their matching cases stays with me after I leave the gallery. It is one of the most frequently-played songs on the exhibition soundtrack running through my mind.

With an artistic practice rooted in the Samoan concept of vā, a spatial and relational in-betweenness, Brown uses movement and mark-making to explore societal dualities and specifically, the intersections of disability and Sāmoan indigenous culture. She challenges our notions of performance and how we define the language of its discipline.

How does choreography exist when the physical body is absent? What behaves as a score?

Sit with Me serves as an answer to both.

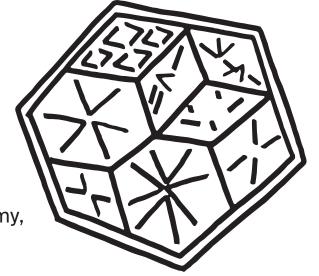
Activated by the human body without centering on it, the choreography of each puzzle is dependent on the hands of the visitor. I slide the pieces around their designated compartments. The plexiglass tiles glide







smoothly while the grain of the wooden shapes creates a stubborn friction, a clumsier dancer than its plastic peer. I pick them up one by one, mixing media before returning them home. A burnished Birchwood rhombus disrupts the gloss of a red plexi surface, temporarily displacing its crimson counterpart. Here, we are positioned as choreographers with autonomy, building and rebuilding the puzzle as improvisational performance.



The gestures of the pieces themselves are a dance with infinite iterations and the laser-cut symbols that adorn their surfaces make the score. Brown's musical lexicon—comprised of domino dots, dashes reminiscent of paved roads, and crescendo arrows lifted from sheet music—form a textural jazz, a musical arrangement that is continuously reconfigured in tandem with the artwork's choreography. Within *Sit with Me*, the artist releases us into a crossroads of creative practice, situating the texture of the puzzle as a stand-in for movement and the rattle of the tiles as musical composition, implicating visitor as choreographer, as composer, as conductor.

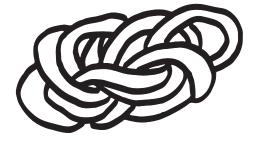












Something shiny glints in my periphery, catching the light from the overhead tracks. I move closely, snatching it before it rounds the conveyor's corner. Black metal, smooth and cool to the touch. Weighty but not overly dense.

Another passes: shades of purple. And another: turquoise. And the final: pink & lavender.

I continue to clutch the work in my palm.

After all, black is my favorite color.

Is this cliché for a curator?

It goes with everything!

I think the artist would approve of my decision, a fashion designer accepting my taste, though they have more of a neon presence.

The aluminum resting in my hand is a *Black Chainmaille Packer* by Sky Cubacub, artist and creator of Rebirth Garments, a line of gender non-confirming wearables and accessories for queer and trans disabled folks of all ages and sizes. This work, as with the entirety of the Rebirth Garments collection, is an unrestrained demonstration of bodily autonomy, empowering the wearer to exist as a human in the world on their own terms.







Used by queer, trans, xenogender, and non-binary people to create the appearance of a penis or bulge, packers have the potential to minimize gender dysphoria. These objects of gender-affirming care are often made of foam, fabric, or silicone. However, Cubacub's packers are made of chainmaille, a mesh armor that has been worn for hundreds of years, historically as a military defense mechanism. Within their work, the artist honors chainmaille's origins as a protector, though intentionally distancing the material from legacies of violence and reappropriating it as a bold statement of self-determination and Radical Visibility. Cubacub outlines this approach in their recommendations zine *Radical Visibility: A QueerCrip Dress Reform Movement Manifesto*, writing:

If you do wear or want to wear **Prosthetics**, wearing ones **not based on realism**. Think of Paralympian runner Aimee Mullins' jellyfish and cheetah legs, or Viktoria Modesta's geometric spike peg leg. I am interested in the idea of completely subverting this by wearing colorful sculptures in a variety of materials as packers (which create a bulge in your pants, typically worn by trans masculine folx). I wear a metamaille (chainmaille out of chainmaille) packer I made in my boxer briefs and long johns, where it can still be seen through a sheer packer pocket. Some gender non-conforming people—I am one of them—aren't necessarily interested in being, becoming, or "passing" as a man; I want to be my own gender that isn't based in the binary or biology. Why can't my gender be a shape, texture, or something else entirely? [1]

Not instantly recognizable by all visitors to *Don't mind if I do* (not everything is for everyone and that is ok!), Cubacub's packers serve as a dog whistle for queer communities, an act of open arms that puts the poetics of Branfman-Verissimo and Shannon's *We Hold Us* mural, "we links in a chain," into practice.

[1] Cubacub, Sky. *Radical Visibility: A QueerCrip Dress Reform Movement Manifesto*, April 22, 2015, abridged and updated October 2019, https://rebirthgarments.com/radical-visibility-zine.



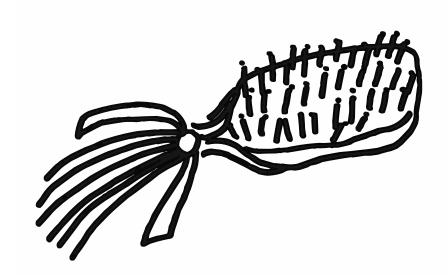




Ariella Granados

I am delighted when a photo of Ariella Granados' *Mind of Its Own* arrives in my inbox. A hairbrush made of hair! What more could someone ask for? I am a lover of all things odd, fascinated by the unnerving feeling when art and the bodily intersect. And judging by the sadly now-dormant *Hair Club* blog (also written by Chicago-based arts workers!), it's apparent that I'm not the only one.

With the bristles as the face, Granados' purple paddle brush dons a brown wig, silky and smooth (chemically straightened like the crispy strands of an early-2000s adolescence or is it natural?) and cinched into a ponytail with a white satin bow. Stray strands escape the bow, lightly weaving into the face's bristles like my waves in the wind.



As with much of Granados' work, *Mind of Its Own* draws on the artist's lived experiences and critiques portrayals of perfection in the media to blur boundaries between fiction and truth. By embracing the absurd, Granados enters a lineage of artists who employ hair as surrealist sculptural material.







Nick Cave's punny *Hair Brush* (1999) lives in the MCA's collection, every so often making a welcome appearance. The 1993 sculpture *Jardin Public* by Mona Hatoum engages with wordplay, linking 'public' and 'pubic' in a humorous gesture that critiques the performance of femininity. And let's not forget Robert Gober whose *Short Haired Cheese* (1992-3) was the first to validate my interest in discomfort.

Granados brings us even closer to the space where bodily output becomes art, allowing *Don't mind if I do's* visitors to tangibly engage with this unease. We mimic the act of brushing, smoothing down *Mind of Its Own's* hair, pausing with the work's title – is there actually a brain behind the bristles?







Felicia Griffin

A flurry of softness glides by on the conveyor belt, yarn rainbows interspersed with other amulets of comfort. Felicia Griffin's *Pom-Poms* yearn to be held, to be passed amongst friends.

Each squeeze is a breath that grounds me.

Griffin highlights coziness as an act of resistance, reinforcing the values of *Don't mind if I do* and prioritizing visitor experience over the artwork on display. With the fluff of spun wool, she gently pushes against conventions of art history that shroud the work in a veil of seriousness, instead creating pieces that embody delight and underscore the importance of play.

Griffin's Pom-Poms are downy bursts of glee.

Drawing upon legacies of Abstract Expressionism, it is almost as if the artist's soft sculptures are gestures plucked directly from the late-career canvases of Joan Mitchell or Robert Colescott.* Employing yarn as brushstroke and conveyor belt as messenger, Griffin uses mark-making to communicate with the world. Her *Pom-Poms* are capsules of joy that invite questions about object as a keeper of movement, energy, memory, and emotion.











*I write this in the midst of preparing for an upcoming move and it's not lost on me that the frenetic unpacking of boxes to locate my *Robert Colescott: Troubled Goods* catalog matches the vigor of his brushstrokes in the last decade of his life, like the unruly twists of yarn loosening from Griffin's *Pom-Poms* as they are lovingly examined by eager hands visiting *Don't mind if I do*.

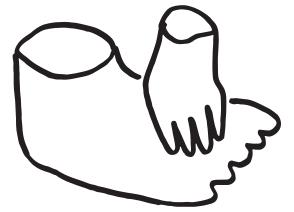






Emilie L. Gossiaux

In peeling back the layers of Emilie Gossiaux's work, I am floating between reality and an imaginary other-world* that allows for shape-shifting and unsettles Western understandings of interspecies relationships.



I am untethered, yet safely swaddled in an emotional anti-gravity, absent of the stomach-in-throat feeling of free-falling.

Influenced by her close bond with her (now retired) guide dog, London and embracing the malleability of greenware (unfired ceramic), Gossiaux creates sculptures that depict feelings of kinship. She follows the lead of her bodymind, eschewing anatomical replication, instead, "drawing inspiration from dreams, memories, and non-visual sensory perceptions."

For the purposes of *Don't mind if I do*, the artist's ceramic sculptures have been recreated in plastic. Lighter in weight and shatter-proof, the material, almost impossible to decompose and with a lifespan that will far exceed our own, preserves Emilie and London Gossiaux's relationship. A wobbly *Red Dog Kong* inspired by London's most prized possession, freshly 3d-printed and absent of sticky, peanut buttery residue, illustrates the intrinsic enmeshment of nourishment and love—a future fossil that encapsulates the intangible.

Silly snapshots share close quarters in the exhibition, traveling together on the conveyor belt. A single sculptural entity, *Dog Paw on Foot*, reveals a moment of stumbling—

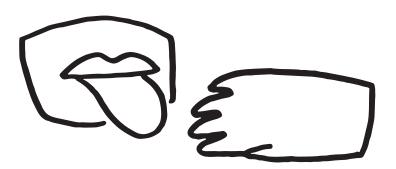
or is it a hand-holding moment of intimacy?







Tongue and Paw triggers notions of a sloppy kiss. But here, the tongue—translucent pink, grainy, and slightly flexible—belongs to the human, while the paw acts as a stand-in for the hand. Confusing our perceptions of interspecies connectivity, Gossiaux (Emilie, not London) proposes interdependency as a generative coexistence that takes the place of hierarchies that position human as owner, as leader, as caretaker.



* This phrase is taken from the name of the artist's 2023 solo exhibition, *Other-Worlding*, at the Queens Museum.

September 2, 2025: I am adapting this text, originally written for the exhibition at moCa Cleveland, for UIC Gallery 400's presentation of *Don't mind if I do*. Yesterday, Emilie informed me of London's passing. London was the best companion to Emily and Kirby, the sweetest friend and most dedicated collaborator. This zine is dedicated to her memory.







Joselia Rebekah Hughes

I'm traveling while writing this. My prescription bottle rattles in my bag. I haven't yet splurged on a weekly pill organizer so a single canister contains my entire inventory for this trip, small so as to not take up space, to be as discreet as possible.

My lone vial is the opposite of the rainbow of containers in Joselia Rebekah Hughes's *Verbena's Apothecary*. A trio of 60-dram bottles in orange, green, and blue bring illness into the public space. It is rare to experience the size of these canisters here. I've only ever seen them in my home, in my hands.

I am struck by this and can't help but consider the correlation between scale and

the frequency of treatment.

the degree of debility.

the cost of feeling temporarily "ok." (What does ok even mean?) the joy from finally getting the insurance company to approve a bulk prescription order sent directly to my home.

the time spent:

on the phone with the doctor's office, scouring the calendar for an appointment that doesn't disrupt an entire day but that is also less than six months away.

enraged.

the power of the medical industrial complex in informing the ways that we are forced to navigate the world.

concealment.

In the role of prescriber, Hughes uses these pill bottles as an invitation to wear sickness as a badge of honor, to exist as our full selves outside of the domestic sphere. Through their vibrant hues and the novelty of the oversized scale, play and illness occupy the same space; it is imperative that they are not situated in opposition.









Hughes, a writer who understands the potency of language, builds upon this relationship, her text priming us to be vulnerable when engaging with *Verbena's Apothecary*. "I may not be *there* but, rest assured, we are here together," she writes in a letter to *Don't mind if I do's* guests. And later on, "Forget your initials, especially legally, if need be," is either deadly serious or sidesplittingly silly, depending on who you are. A label adhered to the emerald container by Prescribing Writer Oracle Claudia recommends that the Embodied Subject in Need, "Read[s] inattention as a reclamation of energy from an attention economy." I feel this deep in my bones.

Hughes's vials are filled with trinkets, paper and pencils for sharing secrets, and candy. A bite-sized Tootsie Roll like the ones my mom hides in the vegetable crisper (shhh, don't tell my dad) spills out from a bottle alongside a slip of paper with a visitor's note referring to this artwork as, "an amazing adventure!" This chewy remedy, sweetness with a hint of nostalgia, is a pleasant substitute for the chalky tablets that I have come to expect.







Jeff Kasper



My fingers follow the raised texture of the words etched onto Jeff Kasper's compact, things remembered [I look fabulous but I am in a lot of pain]. I click the clasp, contemplating my personal relationship with this phrase. The compact pops open and I am left only with myself, a blank stare into its pocket-sized mirror.

Kasper is an expert at bringing the private into the public sphere, this object of domesticity being a prime example.

What does it mean to be confronted with oneself, an often-vulnerable experience occurring within the context of a museum?

Though *Don't mind if I do* rejects the traditional format of an exhibition, it still showcases works of art—(semi)precious objects we have been taught to revere, valued for their aesthetic quality and provenance.

The compact is tiny, easily concealed as I steady it in my palm and delicately make a fist around it. And yet, its power is infinite, especially when paired with this engraving.

What issues do the words, "I look fabulous but I am in a lot of pain" raise, specifically when grounded in a contemporary art framework?







I consider the following:

- The overlaps and tensions of "museum-quality work" and Western beauty standards. As the distance between them shrinks, do our definitions of what we deem "aesthetically-pleasing" follow suit?
- Expectations non-disabled individuals place on disabled people and people living with chronic pain to perform (in)visible disability.
- An uncomfortably close relationship between eugenics and plastic surgery.
- Circular patterns of the human condition:
 Concealment of physical and emotional pain has the potential to lead to internal destruction which then necessitates a rising from the ashes

The onus is on us to glue the shards of shattered mirror back together.

(I can't help but think of Kristallnacht.)

Unpacking these ideas and adding to the list is at the discretion of the reader. Take care of yourself; it can get dark in here.







Jeff Kasper

One evening, as the museum was closing, I took a set of Jeff Kasper's wrestling embrace cards off of the conveyor belt, tucked them in my bag, and brought them home to play—a privilege, I realize, only bestowed upon a handful of people.

wrestling embrace is not a game exactly, but instead, is a set of relational and interactive prompts employing the language of play to foster intimacy alongside accompanying tools to create healthy boundaries between players—a magnifying glass to get closer; sand timers to hold the moment so we, as players, can let ourselves go; and a bell to snap us back to life, back to reality.

I brought this deck of cards home so that my partner (hi, Nathan!) and I could experience the work together. And while, as I mentioned before, I understand that most museum-goers do not have the ability to temporarily borrow a work of art, the privilege of spending time, digging deep, and being alone together still exists within the walls of *Don't mind if I do*.

These white gallery walls are a cradle, holding us as we let our guard down.

Lift the deck off of the conveyor belt and bring it to a favorite chair. Get comfy with a friend, a partner, a stranger.

Place your belongings down on a side table and feel the preconceptions of appropriate museum behavior dissipate as *wrestling embrace* is unboxed, altogether vanishing as soon as the first card is dealt and instructions of the space between players are read:

Embrace or hold a close distance.

This deck contains multitudes. Mimicking the environment of Don't







mind if I do, Nathan and I sat on our couch, carefully following Kasper's instructions as we engaged with the cards. As we played, the artist's consideration for each detail quickly became apparent. The elements—from the direct yet gentle language of the prompts to the weight of the paper and the rounded edges of the cards—are all essential in shaping a holistic experience that serves both as a work of art and a vehicle to cultivate closeness.

One card, in particular, spoke to me. The feeling of being seen fluttered through my body.

Back to the above distance.

Embrace or hold a close distance.

Read to your partner something that is meaningful to you in this moment, this could be something that you personally wrote or read, or you may return to a text that you found significant earlier in the day. If you do not have this resource easily accessible, recall what you remember out loud. Ask your partner something to the effect of, "Would you mind listening to this?" and make sure to mention, "It would mean a lot to me."

These instructions mirror a regular ritual in Nathan's and my relationship, one we had done earlier in the day as I sat at our kitchen island reading a text from this set of vignettes while he brewed his favorite coffee.

For me, the process of sharing my writing with another person, my language extending beyond a word doc on my laptop, is the apex of intimacy. The weight of this vulnerability only truly sets in after understanding it through the lens of *wrestling embrace*.

I knew I had found my person when it became clear that he is my forever first-round reader.









I've been writing these vignettes over the past few months, spending time peeling back the layers of each artist's practice, unlearning the embodied guilt as I watch my self-enforced deadlines whiz past, and deepening my appreciation for the act of sitting.

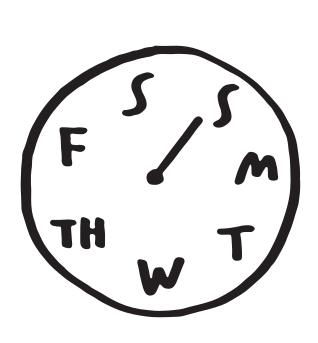
These texts have been written from inside the exhibition at MoCa Cleveland, while sitting on my favorite reclining sofa at the back of the gallery—the perfect perch to watch the conveyor belt's rotations.

from an old blue couch inside of a new apartment.

from airport terminals and airplane seats.

peppered with middle-of-the-night notes I've jotted down while lying in bed.

Finnegan Shannon's text is the last I have to finish, and I've been drawing it out, savoring the process because it's always bitter-sweet to write yourself into an ending.









I reflect on what it means to watch something come to life, a phrase that suggests a magical animacy, a frenetic swirling of joy, suspended disbelief, and glitter (but please, only metaphorical glitter, never the in-gallery glitter that heightens the anxiety of museum registrars across the world). Guided by Finnegan Shannon, bringing *Don't mind if I do* into fruition was a collective effort, a hand-holding leap into the unknown (*How does one even begin to build a conveyor belt?*) that proved trust and friendship as integral in project development (*Deepest gratitude to Peter Reese for the research and now, conveyor belt expertise; to the artists, the majority of whom I did not know before this project and who I now call friends; to Nathan Florsheim and Ryan Serafin, whose storage unit was filled to the brim with a shocking number of seats plucked from the Northeast Ohio Habitat for Humanity ReStores).*

Shannon's creative practice effortlessly unites the conceptual, the social, and the aesthetic, blurring delineations between craft, exhibition, and readymade to cultivate an environment that makes us feel at ease. This project began with a conveyor belt and extended outward, the belt serving as one of the links in the chain that Shannon and Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo reference in *We Hold Us*. Or, perhaps it is the physical manifestation of the loophole to which I refer in *Don't mind if I do's* introductory text.

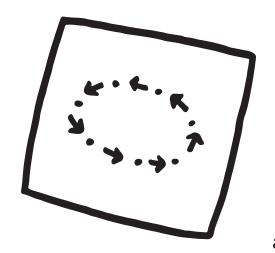
As with many of Shannon's architectural interventions, the conveyor belt, entitled *My access fantasy*, is painted a bright blue in reference to the International Symbol of Access. It is the resting spot for a rainbow of plastic pucks that transports artwork instead of plates of sushi, nourishing our creativity instead of our bellies. As with Joselia Rebekah Hughes' *Verbena's Apothecary* and Sky Cubacub's chainmaille packers, Shannon's *House that I modified to be stair-free and planted lavender in the garden for us* brings the personal into the public sphere; this tissue box cover











gestures to the importance of domestic mundanity, revealing a home life in which the ritual of craft, sickness, and sadness share space. The embroidered pillows and blankets of Softness for Don't mind if I do and Warmth for Don't mind if I do respectively are scattered across the secondhand furniture in Variety/Comfort/Variety of Comforts, serving as an invitation to linger, their coziness in conversation with Felicia Griffin's Pom-Poms, which, in this exhibition/home, transform into the plushies of my childhood.

Slow Spin's day clocks draw upon the bouncing ball technique of singalongs to punctuate We Hold Us, reminding me only of the day and granting permission to lose track of time as I peruse the pages of My Favorite Book. This readymade object, a selection of snapshots by conceptual artist Felix Gonzalez Torres, honors his legacy. Similar to Emilie Gossiaux's 3d-printed memories that document her relationship with London, Gonzalez-Torres preserves an ephemeral intimacy, allowing us an insider perspective of his life. His openness and candor have inspired a generation. He is one of Shannon's favorite artists and one of mine, too. His history, his work as motivation, have carried us through to today.

The order of the artwork on the conveyor belt is ever-changing as visitors-turned-participants shift the layout, akin to the improvisational quality of Pelenakeke Brown's Sit with Me puzzles. Today, My Favorite Book passes by quickly after Extra play for Don't mind if I do—decks of playing cards that, as with Jeff Kasper's wrestling embrace, promote play as an essential component of



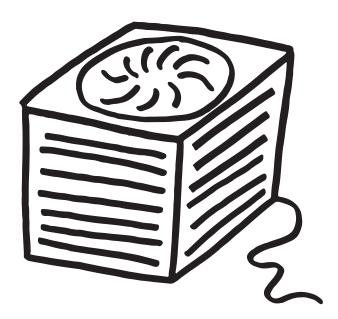




audience engagement. Description for Don't mind if I do follows; the calm of Finnegan Shannon's voice fills the headphone speakers, offering a sound-based experience of the works on display.

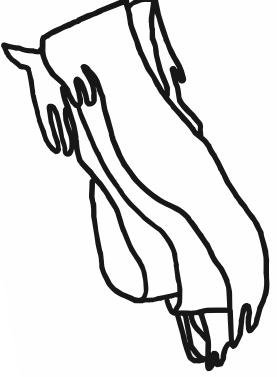
Nearby, the three DIY air purifiers, also known as Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes, of *Air for Don't mind if I do* clean the gallery's air. They are crowned with blue box fans that emit a white noise, which, coupled with the conveyor belt's low hum, serve as the exhibition soundtrack, though it is easily drowned out using the lime green ear plugs Shannon provides in *Wow I wish the conveyor motor didn't make a sound*. In prioritizing the visitor experience, the artist has truly thought of everything.

Don't mind if I do is considerate and patient. Here, accessibility is the artwork, is the exhibition, is the heart of this project, not merely an institutional afterthought. This project reveals exciting possibilities for museum futures and cracks the door ajar, hinting at a world in which I want to exist.



Sandie Yi

Oh, what if the sea felt like this? Soft and warm and cozy, instead of the unknown prickles of cold that prevent me from grazing my toes against even the shallowest parts of the ocean floor. I unroll Sandi Yi's Kelp Help, made in collaboration with Sins Invalid, running the strip of olive felt between my fingers. Measuring six-feet long and cut to resemble Yi's two-finger hands, the kelp was, "produced by crip hands during the pandemic. You can use it to measure social distance. You can wrap it around your body. You can dance with it and sing to it. You can turn it into a bracelet, a necklace, a crown, or a sling, or cut the kelp into shapes that make you feel home." [1] While I love each of these options, today I've chosen to weave my fingers between Yi's, as if we are holding hands. The matted wool, slightly rough and a bit fuzzy, calms me.









"Kelp is proof that homes can die like people do." [2] Of the sea and of the body, *Kelp Help* reminds us that we are nature, blurring any boundaries that suggest separation. Overfishing, climate change, and marine pollution are destroying kelp forests, which are considered some of the most diverse and productive ecosystems in the ocean. An amulet of coexistence, this malleable sculpture highlights the nourishing power of kelp and serves as an important indication of our eco-complicity. To protect the earth is to protect ourselves.

[1] "Kelp Help by Sandie Yi and Sins Invalid," Disability Cultural Center, University of Illinois Chicago. Accessed September 18, 2025. https://dcc.uic.edu/space/dcc-lounge/.
[2] Ibid.







agustine zegers

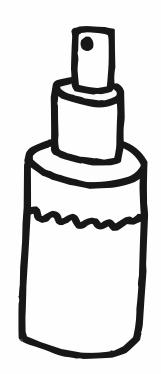
I delicately tear open the brown padded envelope agustine zegers sent me in advance of *Don't mind if I do's* opening at UIC Gallery 400 and pull out the tiny glass vial of liquid, rolling it between my hands. I spray the fragrance into the air and a little onto my wrist like perfume, closing my eyes as the scent wafts up my nostrils. Inhaling and exhaling over and over, I try to identify the aroma. With notes of green apple and Clorox, it's herbicidal and plasticky, stirring memories of the freshly melted polyethylene off-gas from the Mold-A-Rama animals of a childhood spent at Brookfield Zoo.

Teetering on the border between toxicity and clarity, this scent perfectly encapsulates the "noxious pleasure" zegers speaks of when discussing their practice. "Herbaceous and spicy," my boyfriend remarks as he walks past the olfactory cloud. The scent is pungent but not overwhelming—just what zegers and I discussed in a studio visit a few months ago. Potent enough to linger in the air but light so that it doesn't activate one of my frequent migraines. I keep revisiting the fragrance on my wrist; it's simultaneously enticing and repellent, with an acridity that embodies the title of zegers' solo show, *A toxin beckons, but it also threatens*.*









^{*} The title of zegers' solo exhibition *A toxin threatens, but it also beckons* is borrowed from theorist Mel Y. Chen's essay, "Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Affections."







Don't mind if I do is organized by artist Finnegan Shannon with curator Lauren Leving.



This zine is an artwork in this show!

Writings on: Don't mind if I do 2023–ongoing
Zine
Made by Tom Poole, Finnegan
Shannon, and Lauren Leving.

Design by Tom Poole.

Illustrations by Finnegan Shannon.
Writings by Lauren Leving.

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