
**Never
the Same:**
Conversations
About Art
Transforming
Politics
& Community
in Chicago
& Beyond

never-the-same.org

**Never
the Same:** Conversations About Art
Transforming Politics & Community
in Chicago & Beyond

Projects from the 2013 NTS Summer Seminar

NTS: An Archive and Oral History

The goal of this project is to document Chicago's rich art history and develop a language for discussing the impact of socially and politically engaged art practices that integrates consideration of external with internal transformation and effects.

The project was launched in the Fall of 2010 with a roundtable discussion about archiving Chicago art held at the Experimental Station. Throughout 2013 NTS will be expanded in terms of our ongoing efforts at archiving and interviewing, as well as through the development of public programs.

Contact:

neverthesamechicago@gmail.com

Co-Directors: Daniel Tucker
and Rebecca Zorach

Publication Editing: Emma
Saperstein and Daniel Tucker

Layout: Eric Triantafillou and
Emma Saperstein

Contributors: Emma Saperstein, Laura Sabransky, Sarah Mendelsohn, Sharmyn Cruz Rivera, Sydney Stoudmire, William Anthony Ruggiero, Victoria Leigh Thurmond, Haley Martin, Lesley Brown, Alda Akhsar Tchochiev, Joshua Kent, and Liliana Angulo Cortes.

Funding

This work is supported by a Mellon Residential Fellowship for Arts Practice & Scholarship at the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry at the University of Chicago.

graycenter
FOR ARTS AND INQUIRY



NTS Summer Seminar

In July of 2013, Never The Same led a free adult education seminar dealing with the themes of grassroots archiving and local art history. Over the course of the month, participants developed their own research projects while attending guest lectures, taking field trips, doing archival research and discussing the methodologies used in Never The Same's online oral history and ephemera archiving practices.

Activities for the seminar included visits with:

Chicago Artists' Archives (Chicago Public Library) with Bob Sloane and Tempestt Hazel (Sixty Inches From Center); Joan Flasch Artist's Book Collection with Kayla Anderson; Spontaneous Interventions exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center with Samantha Topol; Chicago Stories workshop with Audrey Petty and Paul Durica; Gallery tour of Africobra in Chicago at Logan Center with Rebecca Zorach; Personal archive unfurlings by Daniel Tucker and Dan Wang; attending the Printers Ball at Hubbard Street Lofts; NTS archive workshop with Skyla Hearn.

The seminar included readings on:

Archiving: East Art Map, Speak Memory symposium, Ben Alexander, Amelia Jones, Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd.

Localism: Lucy Lippard, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nato Thompson.

Interviewing: Jaber F. Gubrium & James A. Holstein.

Chicago Art: Department of Space and Land Reclamation, Dan S. Wang, Barbara Jones-Hogu, Jean Dubuffet.

The following pages document projects initiated and developed by participants throughout the course of the seminar.

The list below is a compilation of keywords generated in the seminar in response to the participant presentations and Never The Same's work more generally.

Participants included: Emma Saperstein, Laura Sabransky, Sarah Mendelsohn, Sharmyn Cruz Rivera, Sydney Stoudmire, William Anthony Ruggiero, Victoria Leigh Thurmond, Haley Martin, Lesley Brown, Alda Akhsar Tchochiev, Joshua Kent, and Liliana Angulo Cortes.

A-Zone

A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum

AACM

Accessible

Activation of Public

Activism

ACT-Up

Afro-Deco

Afrocentric

Alinskyite Community-Organization Model

American Gothic

Animal Charm

Anti-Gang Loitering Laws

Antibody Dance

Antiwar

Archive

Art & Life

Art Therapy

Ash Kyrie

Audio Recorded Tours

Axe Street Arena

Beauty

Beauty Industry

Belonging

Berserk

Black Age Movement

Black Age of Comics

Black Arts Guild

Black on Black Arts Center

Blaxploitation Films

Bridging Gaps

Bright Moments (Caton and Calvin Jones)

Ceasefire

Center for Urban Pedagogy

Charrette

Chicago

Chicago Defender

Chicago Mural Group

Chicago Public Art Group

Chicago Urban Ecology Action Group

Clinic Defense

Coalition for the Homeless

Collaborate

Collection

Collectives

Commitment Statement

Community

Concern

Contemporary

Continental Drift (Through the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor)

Costs and Benefits

■

Counter-Globalization Movement
Counter Productive Industries
Creative Resistance
Cubism
Cultural Buildings
Cultural Poverty
Culture in Action
Daley Dynasty
Democracy Now!
Design
Desire
Dialogue
Disillusioned in 90's
Displacement
Distributors
DIY (infoshops, Riot Grrrl, Punk)
Don't Feel Safe
Dues to Be Paid
Dynasty
Eastern Europe
Economic Transition
Engagement
Environmental Justice
Egyptian Cobras
FALN
FBI
Festac
Fifth Column
Foreclosure
Form
Foto Encontrada
Freedom
Friends of the Parks
Future Primitive (and Other Essays)
Gentrification
Geographies
Global Medical Relief Fund
Going Natural
Goldenrod
Haha
Hair
Historic North Pullman Organization
History
Holistic Health
Human Perception
Identity
Images Representing Truth
Immediate Needs
Immigration Forums
Impact
Indymedia
Information Dissemination
Informed and Passionate
Infrastructure
International
Interventions
Interviews
Iraq Veterans Against the War
IWW
Kartemquin
Kitsch
Landscape

Leisure
Liberation of Guinea-Bissau
Library
Lives
Living Documentation
Local
Mapping
Marwen Foundation
Mass Incarceration
Materials
Meatpacking
Memories
Mineral Extraction Sites in the U.S.
Minority Communities
National Boricua Human Rights Network
National Museum of Mexican Art
National Veterans Art Museum (NVAM)
NEA
Neoliberalism / Gentrification
New Arts Space
No Empathy
NOG: "Nubian of Greatness" Comic Book
Occident
Operation PUSH
Oral Histories
Overlaps of Information
Painting
Passing Through
Peacock
Peoples' Global Action
Performance
Photography
Pink Bloque
Place
Pop Culture
PRCC: Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Protect
Protests in Quebec City against the Free Trade of the Americas Act
Publicity
Puerto Rico
Queer Nation
Randolph Street Gallery & Archive
Red Coach Lettuce Boycott
Redlining
Relocation
Representations
Repression
Resonance
Restrictions
Riot Grrrl
Rythmism
Sculpture Chicago
SDS
Seed Library
SNCC
Social Practice
Sound Art
Sound in the City
South Side Community Art Center
Squatting
Street Vendors

Structural Adjustment
Sullivan Galleries
Suppression
Survey
Tactical Media
The Bakery
The Butcher Shop
The Hairy Who
The Kitchen
The Rope
The Studio Museum
The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893
Tribe 8
Tumblr
Tute Bianche Aka White Overalls
Ultra Red
Variety
Video
Wall of Respect
Wall of Love
Warrior Writer's Project
WJ Studios
Women
Work
World Trade Organization (WTO) (see also: International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue (TABD), or the World Economic Forum

Seminar Documentation (July, 2013):



Liliana Angulo

Liliana Angulo graduated from the National University, Bogotá, Colombia. In 2010 she received a Fulbright Grant to pursue a Master's in Fine Arts at UIC. In her work she explores intersections of African-descent culture with issues of gender, language, power relations and racial politics.

negricolas.blogspot.com



Remember Eugene Williams / Justice for Trayvon!

A memorial project by Liliana Angulo Cortés.

Poster intervention: July 27th 2013.

(Fragment)

"It was four o'clock Sunday afternoon, July 27, when I was a seventeen-years-old Negro boy, I was swimming offshore at the foot of Twenty-ninth Street. This beach was not one of the publicly maintained and supervised for bathing, but it was much used. Although it flanks an area thickly inhabited by Negroes, it was used by both races, access being had by crossing the railway tracks which skirt the lake shore. The part near Twenty-seventh Street had by tacit understanding come to be considered as reserved for Negroes, while the whites used the part near Twenty-ninth Street. Walking is not easy along the shore, and each one had kept pretty much to its own part, observing, moreover, an imaginary boundary extending into the water.

I had entered the water at the part used by Negroes, swam and drifted into the part used by the whites. Immediately before I appeared there, white men, women and children had been bathing in the vicinity and were on the beach in considerable numbers. Four Negroes walked through the group into the water. White men summarily ordered them off. The Negroes left, and the white people resume their sport. But not long before the Negroes were back, coming from the north with others of my race. Then began a series of attacks and retreats, counter attacks and stone-throwing. Women and children who could not escape hid behind d'bris and rocks. The stone-throwing continued first one side gaining the advantage, then the other.

I had remained in the water during the fracas; found a railroad tie and clung to it, stones meanwhile frequently striking the water near me. A white boy of about the same age swam towards me. As the white boy neared, I let go of the tie, took a few strokes, and went down. The coroner's jury rendered a verdict that I had drowned because fear of stone-throwing kept me from shore. My body showed no stone bruises but rumor had it that I had actually been hit by one of the stones and drowned as a result.

The rioting broke out on Sunday July 27th, when I swam across an invisible line which whites had "drawn" in Lake Michigan to separate the swimming areas. A white youngster stoned me, I drowned."

Lesley Brown

Lesley Brown is a Midwest native whose interest in the visual arts includes documentary film, photography and portraiture. Prior to this undertaking she worked with a team of social scientists to conduct research focused on African Americans and education, which led to the presentation and publication of two papers. She continues to participate in research projects such as these and plans to apply to a graduate program in art next year. The Family Matters photo study will be her first photography project.



Family Matters

In an effort to protect their cultural community, African Americans consciously choose what information they share with outsiders. This is especially true of issues that may be perceived as hindrances, obstacles, constraints or hardships. The kind of protective, self-advocacy practiced in African American communities prevents other cultural groups from becoming more aware of the issues that directly impact the lives of most African Americans living in the United States.

This self-imposed social practice (along with existing social structures) cordons African Americans off from other communities and does not allow them to fully participate in American society or customs. By not sharing their way of life, African Americans also prevent groups outside of their community from sharing in the complex nature of values, uncertainty, lack, strength, togetherness, profound understanding and humanity that widely exists in African American households and communities across the country.

In this respect, African Americans are like any other individuals of a larger cultural group – the influence these issues have over the way African Americans lead their lives varies by place, perspective (or interpretation) and even gender. To register these lives in the form of a narrative, I will produce a photo study that focuses on African American women to exemplify the enterprises they involve themselves with and give an account of what concerns them most in the twenty-first century. This approach aspires to provide access and generate a larger discussion to fully consider the existing constraints, within which African American women continue to sustain their lives.

Joshua Kent

Joshua Kent lives and works in a Catholic Worker community in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. Mr. Kent's visual and performance practice explores "aesthetics of poverty" and adjacent expressions of poetics and longing found therein.

ethanwhite.tumblr.com



I've no wish to share my thoughts, without some part of me entering you

I've no wish to share my thoughts, is an ephemeral reading, a performative lecture, and an invitation to dinner.

How do you construct a poem, whose only trace is itself?

Three micro-lectures will be delivered on the themes of: time, invisibility, and resources.

Integration as well as rejection to internal, as well as collective structures will be strived for.

I cannot tell you the color of the sky that day, but I can show you the shape of a robin's egg.

An attempt at a winnowing

Haley Martin

Haley Martin is a Chicago-based interdisciplinary artist that uses experimental documentary, graphic design, and performance as a means of social and political inquiry. She works to promote public engagement and bridge disconnects between disparate elements in her work. She is interested in developing forms of communication between otherwise disengaged communities, and in alternative forms of historical preservation and tourism. Haley has shown mostly in Chicago, participating in events at Mess Hall, Happy Dog Gallery, and Kartemquin Films. She currently works as an AV specialist and as postproduction support for local documentary companies.



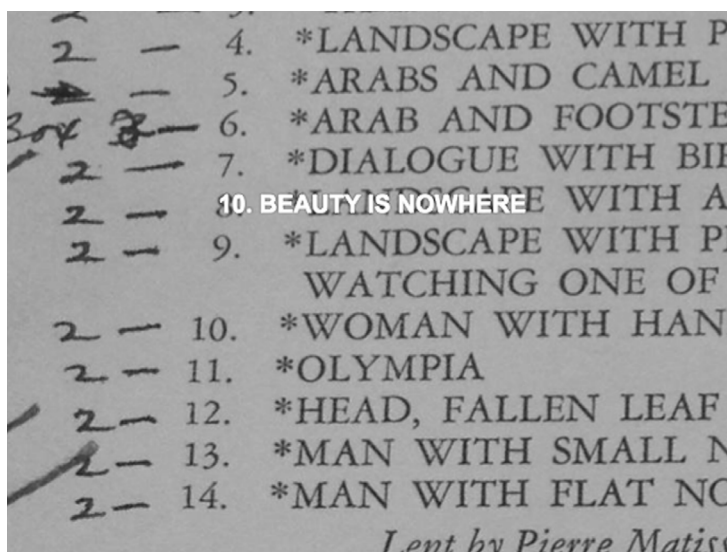
American Gothic at its Roots is a research project that will culminate in an audio podcast on the topic of the ideal of the Agrarian farmer, as depicted in Grant Wood's American Gothic. A central question will be how it exists and is critiqued in today's changing agricultural landscape. During the time of the American Gothic painting, the Midwest obtained the status of being the "heartland of the cultural imaginary." This podcast will investigate what it means to return to the "American Heartland" as a tourist, weaving together interviews from local residents and visitors.

Like many of the people passing through Eldon, I am someone with family roots in the Midwest who visits Iowa to see my grandparents. I'm curious about visiting the site of the American Gothic painting as a tourist myself, and creating a dialogue between a younger, more nomadic, generation and the long-time residents that care for this site. I feel that there is potential for this site to encourage people to think critically about the image and foster a regionalism outside of tourism. I am hoping from this audio project to construct an alternative narrative to what has long been preserved historically about the American Gothic. This image both ignores and conceals populations, such as women and black farmers. During World War II, the image of the "hardworking agrarian farmer," as depicted in Wood's painting, became a poster image for propaganda used to shape social values. The nostalgia for the rural came at a high point of industrialization, when agriculture was changing tremendously and cities started relying on new economies. Again, today, recent trends in farming circulate the same imagery of rural nostalgia, presenting the multi-generational white family farm again as another such "ideal" being used to push agriculture towards more sustainable and localized practices.

A question that I ask myself is, "When I pose in front of the American Gothic House as a tourist, am I participating in the allure of rural nostalgia that is based on a false ideal of what a farmer looks like?"

Sarah Mendelsohn

Sarah Mendelsohn is an artist living in Chicago. She currently works at the Smart Museum of Art, and teaches through the arts mentorship program Ag47. She graduated from the University of Chicago in 2012 with a BA in Visual Art and Anthropology.



Positions

The French painter Jean Dubuffet delivered his talk Anti-cultural Positions at the Arts Club of Chicago on December 20, 1951, on the occasion of a new exhibition of his paintings—his first in the Midwest. In this talk Dubuffet outlined his critique of Western civilization broadly, advocating for a more liberated way of looking at the world: one that might allow us to risk identifying with anything we see. His ideas charmed local collectors and made a big impression on younger artists then living in Chicago, including George Cohen, Leon Golub, and Claes Oldenburg. Though periodically acknowledged as a seminal moment in Chicago art history, the content of Dubuffet's talk has been largely written off for the artist's apparent Orientalism. In a project developed during the Never the Same Seminar, I adapted his language, presenting Dubuffet's images alongside my own. I consider his poetics, however problematic from a contemporary perspective, as a framework for understanding impulses in art-making in the racialized landscape of Chicago. The handouts available at the Never-the-Same exhibition extend this thinking further. Painting is a position of literacy.

Sharmyn Cruz Rivera

Sharmyn Cruz Rivera holds a BA in Art History and Modern Languages from the University of Puerto Rico and a MA in Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Originally from Puerto Rico, in 2006 she began curating art shows focused on emerging artists and organizing talks and conferences about arts administration, art criticism and curatorship. From 2010 to 2012, Sharmyn was a writer for the online publication The Fractal, a multidirectional project that departs from the cultural commentary, review and critique of art. In the last three years, she has directed her curatorial practice and research towards sound art, specifically its integration into the contemporary art vein and exhibition space.

soundmarking.tumblr.com

Socially Engaged Sound Art

This project revisits different artistic manifestations that have taken place in Chicago's neighborhoods, zones or vicinities in which sound has been used as an essential component in order to acoustically map "contested spaces and histories" or directly engage in the organization and analyses of political and social struggles. The task is to look closely into how artists have introduced or subtracted sound from different urban landscapes, highlighting specific issues in the city in efforts to activate social awareness. Gaining awareness through the act of listening and inducing collective consciousness with sound can be a political gesture, a social manifestation, and an inevitable act of engaging with the world. I have begun this research by starting a blog where images are presented with accompanying information as a way to accumulate and circulate socially engaged sound art in Chicago and elsewhere.

William Ruggiero

William Ruggiero is an art historian and critic with two centers of interest: Latin American art, and current trends in socially engaged art practice. William has been involved in community teaching, programming, and civic engagement, developing different curricula in China as well as in the United States. Curatorial projects are of particular interest to him, as he considers his fields of focus to demand more scholarly and curatorial exploration. His academic work on Venezuelan architect Domingo

Ivarez is the first substantial critical conversation about the Venezuelan architect and urbanist of the sixties. From his research and projects, he centers on the way in which the urban sphere is made, and the modes through which artists engage with it. He currently dedicates his time to researching as a curatorial assistant for Sullivan Galleries on an upcoming exhibition in 2014 that will focus on Chicago social practice. William recently graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with an MA in Modern Art History, Theory, and Criticism.

I am currently researching the depths of the Randolph Gallery Street Archive. The Randolph Street Gallery, alive from 1979 to 1998, was a contemporary art space that focused on performance art, as well as socially engaged and activist projects. My research intends to unearth (from 300 archival boxes) some socially and politically inclined projects carried out by the gallery. From building shelters for the homeless to teaching the community about electoral politics, some of the projects administered by the gallery reveal a large social bent. The Never the Same seminar and archive provided me with some great cross-references and a view of what the Chicago cultural scene may have resembled in the past. The purpose of my is two-fold. Firstly, it is to be integrated into an upcoming exhibition about Chicago and social practice curated by Mary Jane Jacob at the Sullivan Galleries at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Secondly, the research will aid in organizing some of the Randolph Street Gallery Archive (housed at SAIC) in order to strengthen it as a public resource.

Laura Sabransky

Laura Sabransky's advocacy for a more just, humane and sustainable world has been as volunteer – serving on boards, organizing/working events & grassroots activism campaigns, participating in demonstrations, and writing to influence change. Her nonprofit work includes volunteer management & education, event planning, fundraising and communications. Her degrees are in Psychology and Interior Design.

activistsdiary.com

In May, the management of one of Chicago's remaining daily newspapers – the Chicago Sun Times – eliminated its photography department, laying off all 28 full-time photojournalists, including a Pulitzer Prize-winning 35-year veteran.

The work of these and many other photojournalists in our country today stands on the shoulders of the social documentary photographers of the early 20th century. When photojournalists – especially in a major urban environment – are discarded wholesale, the tradition of photographers exposing social conditions and influence reforms, is devalued.

It's important to now explore the connection between early 20th Century major social reforms, such as laws addressing child labor, socio-economic inequities, corporate exploitation, and the photography of the idealistic, determined crusaders who paved the way for social change.

An exhibit exploring how photographers during the Gilded Age and Great Depression helped citizens build a better society will appear at "Let's Get Working: Chicago Celebrates Studs Terkel," May 9-11, 2104.

Emma Saperstein

Emma Saperstein is an artist living and working in Chicago. Her practice of performance, exchange and social practice in the past has been deeply engaged in developing a symbology of grief and grieving with a focus on Central Asian culture, where she spent the first 16 years of her life. Recently, her practice has been engaging a personal and localized study of her experience in Chicago. Emma is a graduate of Wheaton College and the New York Center for Art and Media Studies. She slings, sells and eats cheese for her bread and butter and assists in running an artist's work space with her fellow cheesemongers.

emmasaperstein.com



The Fulton Market project investigates the meatpacking district on Fulton Market, in the West Loop of Chicago, where little to no recorded history, written or oral, exists. As Chicago widens west and the meatpackers start to migrate and disperse throughout the city, the story of what lived and died here has begun to fade.

Beginning with a series of interviews with “Irish Dave,” the engineer of 50 years for the cooling units in the warehouses that line Fulton street, the project continues to take form. My hope is to interview more of those who have built their lives on this street, and continue to inquire after what has taken place here.

Touching on issues of districting, the food industry, labor, the blue collar and, well, meatpacking, the Fulton market project will develop into a series of seasonal zines including: interviews with those who have been on this street for 50 years, and with those who have been here for 3 years, a mapping of the various businesses on Fulton Market, and an exploration of a secret former “board of trade” that is on the street.

Sydney Stoudmire

Sydney Stoudmire is an independent curator and photographer based in Chicago, IL. She is a graduate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Art History, with a concentration in Photography and Contemporary Art. In her curatorial practice, she infuses elements of pop culture with contemporary art to appeal to a broader audience. As a historian and photographer, she explores the ways traditional discourses have shaped perceptions sexuality, gender, and race.

[sydneystoudmire.
weebly.com](http://sydneystoudmire.weebly.com)

My objective for the Never the Same Seminar was to explore the evolution of marketing towards African American women through print hair advertisements. Using Johnson Publishing archives, I identified recurring phrases and imagery from magazines between the 1930s through 2000s to map the fluctuation of language. My findings were that, no matter what service, style or product is being promoted, the marketing to black women is built around a desire to fight the reversion of black hair to its natural state.

As an extension of my research for the Never the Same Seminar, I have begun collaborating with Colombian artists Liliana Angulo. Fusing both of our interest in Black hair culture, we are working together to create interactive temporary exhibitions that reflect on traditional hair braiding practices. As part of Faheem Majeed's "Shacks and Shanties" installation initiative, Liliana and I created a performance piece which critiques the multi-billion dollar African American beauty industry. We also collaboratively produced installations for the NTS exhibition, and will be hosting a public event that showcases the cultural tradition of hair braiding.

Our collective research and projects are contributions to the ongoing conversation around Black hair culture, tradition, and politics.

Alda Tchochiev

Alda Tchochiev is a scholar and curator based in Chicago. She was classically trained as a ballet dancer and holds her B.F.A in Painting from the University of Washington, Seattle. Having curated numerous exhibitions and cultural festivals, Alda returned to school to pursue a Dual M.A. in Arts Administration and Art History from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She served as the Director of Discourse for the 2012 Rapid Pulse International Performance Festival. Her interests include discursive and socially engaged art, and the contemporary art of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/73059802@N00/6812174908/>

My research essay for the Never the Same seminar examines a work of performance art by the Estonian collective, Non Grata. The performance entitled Force Majeure staged the participatory mob destruction of an automobile as part of the Rapid Pulse International Performance Festival in 2012. The essay analyzes Non Grata's riotous gesture as a way of thinking about acts of crowd destruction and their potential for group healing through the lens of psychoanalytic theory. I draw from the D.W. Winnicott's concepts of "controlled nonsense" and play as well as Elias Canetti's writings on the mob negotiation of social hierarchies. The essay explores parallels to the momentary release from contractual obligations implied by the legal 'force majeure' clause.

Victoria Thurmond

Victoria Thurmond is a Chicago based human being. She is the Garden Manager for the Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization as well as a founder of Pueblo Semilla, a Pilsen based seed library. Victoria is part of the Collective Cleaners, an arts collective, and has previously worked with the Southside Hub of Production and Creative Reuse. Both her personal work and collaborative work has taken place at the Mary Zepeda Native Garden, Casa Michoacan, Mess Hall, the Southside Hub of Production, 6018 North, the Jane Addams Hull House, and the Museum of Contemporary Art.



Welcome to Pueblo Semilla, a Pilsen seed library.

The goal of the seed library is to give out seeds, as well as educate folks on how to save and store seeds from their own crops so that the circle of exchange may continue.

This is not a simple issue. Good local seed is rare as the industrial agriculture system has resulted in patented and genetically modified seeds. A seed is best when it is grown out and saved for generations in an area that it can acclimate to.

In a local sense, this is not a simple issue either. When our soil is too toxic to grow in, we begin to talk about seeds and good food as a human right.

The neighborhood is also changing quickly due to the onset of new development and raising prices, but the exchange of seeds is a non-monetary one that suggests that everyone has a right to healthy food.

We had the idea to make the seed library a mobile one, so that the library to move with its people. The mobile nature of the library makes it possible for residents to access it on a personal basis with specific needs.

Seeds act as a tool for dissemination of the issues that are present in the current environment of Pilsen. By connecting those who are already talking about these issues and actively working on solutions, we can grow the local knowledge and expand.

pueblosemilla@gmail.com