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Moore Exhibit Highlights Activism's Beautiful Byproducts

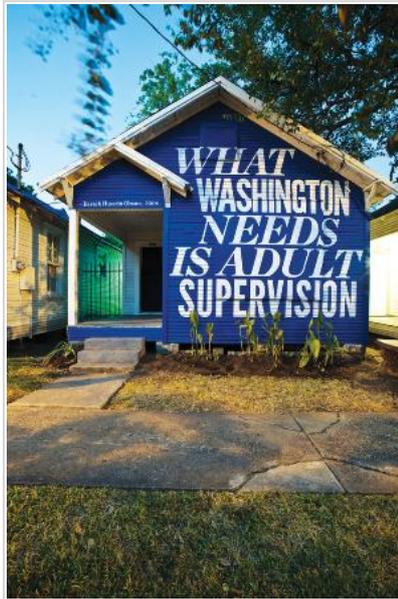
By Nicole Finkbiner

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While provocative works may routinely fill the galleries at Moore College of Art and Design, their latest undertaking, *Living As Form (The Nomadic Version)* is certainly more complex than most. Perhaps the easiest way to wrap your head around the unprecedented, traveling exhibition is to think of it as the sum of two interconnected, customizable parts.

The first part is an archive of 48 socially engaged projects produced over the last 20 years that blur the lines between art and everyday life. Originally selected by the New York-based nonprofit Creative Time in collaboration with Independent Curators International, Moore has culled 18 works from this archive, which are now on view inside the Paley Gallery in the form of photographs, posters and video footage, with several viewing stations set up throughout the gallery space. Despite varying practices and messages, at their core, all of the featured projects are profound examples of creative ingenuity and social activism—from Women on Waves, a nonprofit organization using a Dutch ship to provide abortions to women in countries where it's illegal, to Complaints Choir, a community art program that invites people to vent their various gripes, then sing about them in a choir of fellow complainers.



Say what? A shotgun-style house in Houston painted by artist/activist Rick Lowe.

One of the few literal fusions between visual art and social commentary is Project Row Houses, a nonprofit arts organization launched in 1993 after artist and activist Rick Lowe purchased 22 abandoned shotgun-style houses in Houston's Third Ward, one of the city's oldest African-American communities, and used them as his canvas. These collective works force the audience to consider and reimagine the role of art in everyday urban life and more specifically, how it can be used as a tool for empowering communities, exposing injustice and inspiring change.

The second, and much larger, faction of *Living As Form* comes via the various site-specific, socially engaged projects and events Moore has commissioned to essentially "activate" the show. This includes a series of informal conversations tackling an array of different themes relevant to the exhibition and *Impossible Buildings & Contested Futures*, a series of walking tours organized in partnership with Hidden City Philadelphia that explore Philly's social, historical, political and physical landscapes.

The exhibit's centerpiece project, *Local Instruction*, has been devised by experimental Philly-based arts organization The St. Claire and focuses on creating an open exchange of information, ideas and skills. In addition to a weekly show-and-tell style event led by local artists, curators and cultural producers, each week, the group will utilize the gallery window directly facing Logan Square as experiential, participatory learning space, where anyone is welcome to come and either teach or be taught. The lessons can literally be anything—a brownie recipe, a dance move, how to change a tire, origami, etc.—and at the end of the day, they will be documented in some fashion on Moore's walls.

When all is said and done, one of its site-specific art projects will be added to the *Living As Form* archive, hopefully contributing to a never-ending, border-crossing chain of creative, out-of-the-box social activism—and its beautiful byproducts.

Through March 16. Moore College of Art and Design, 20th & Ben Franklin Pkwy. 215.965.4027. thegalleriesatmoore.org



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