



# OoS 2021 Blog

On 4x4 public performances with Chicago Park District

# Open Flow Public Performances, August, 2021



Image of Weaving Cocoons; Colliding Monarchs by Helen Lee and Sungjae Lee

Four public performances by Wannapa Pimtong-Eubanks, Helen Lee & collaborators, DeMarcus Purham and Catherine Schwalbe in four parks in Chicago, USA, August 2021 curated by Jeremy Pauly, ieke Trinks, Martine Viale and Carron Little

This program is supported by Chicago Park District, and is a Nights Out in the Park program. We want to give a special thanks to Angeliqe Grandone for being our very special park liaison and Amaris Alanis Ribeiro & Ryan Vance for their support at North Park Village Nature Center on Saturday August 7, 2021.

Out of Site presents Open Flow  
Text by Carron Little

The importance of presenting work that is scaled down, intimate and the antithesis of spectacle is an important ethos in our working philosophy. Creating public performance that has the potential to alter, to shift perception is public performance technique we employ to create interpersonal connection. In a world where we are bombarded by spectacle images, the big news story be it fake or real, the drama, the noise, all of this has the potential to decenter our bodies, uproot us from focusing on what is important, and distract us from the real. The real communication with family and friends and a sense of the real presence of people. The necessity to walk, stretch and connect with our bodies and be with nature is so vital. On Saturday August 7, 2021 in the woods of

North Park Village Nature Center the artist, Wannapa Pimtong-Eubanks invited the public to take a walk into the woods. Did the public know what to expect? Were they connected to one of the artists? Did they connect through our social media? It was a surprise for most of the public who entered the nature reserve that day. To enter into the safety of this gentle space facilitated by the artists and the incredible Out of Site team created a unique experience for those willing to jump in and take the risk to fully participate and embrace the embodied exercises and breathing techniques Wannapa offered inspired by her butoh training.

After experiencing the meditative space with Wannapa stewards guided the audience to the collaborative performance created by Helen Lee and Sungjae Lee. They devised a one to one performance and had planted different stations/experiences in a circular route through the woodland. Out of Site was guiding two audiences through these experiences, the public in real life and an observing audience through a live stream. We asked if someone would be willing to be live streamed while participating in the one to one experience. A young person around the age of 12 immediately raised their hand and was guided along this walk in the woods. The shift in scale from the group experience to the one to one performance shifted the dynamics for the participating public and the observing public. This intimate experience created for this young person became something unique. A socially distanced cardboard tube was used to communicate with each member of the public participating in this piece. The willingness of this young person to take a risk and totally entrust Helen as she guided them through an array of micro experiences. At one moment we observed milkweed being blown into the air from the higher path to a lower path, at another moment she wrapped the young person slowly and gently in a blanket on the ground, and after some time they slowly emerged. The performance passed over a bridge that Helen and Sungjae had transformed into a memorial space for Aiyana Mo'Nay Stanley-Jones, Marcellis Stinnette, Asia Jynaé Harmason-Foster, Vincent Chin, Lindani Myeni, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Hyun Jung Grant, Vicha Ratanapakdee. The stories of the tragic deaths was something that was communicated through music and song in the walk. The recent massacre of Asian women in Georgia, and the ongoing violence towards black and brown people in the USA was drawn from to facilitate a point of reflection on the world we are creating for young people to grow up in. This performance will alter and transform as Helen Lee collaborates with different performers to memorialize the lives of these eight people we have lost. Next week it moves to Marquette Park, to the site of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial with Cristal Sabbagh.

The conversation about race relations in the USA and how the impact of systemic racism on black bodies continued with a durational public artwork by DeMarcus Purham entitled Artist in a Box. This work inspired a profound exchange with a member of the random public who had been observing the work all day. She spoke with our documenter, Mads Campbell to share her thoughts and offer a profound interpretation of the work. She said this is about: "acknowledgement, acknowledgement with our past" –discussing further how the blood, sweat and labor of slaves had built the majestic buildings in Chicago. That here he was documenting that image in the restricted context of the box. The work spoke so deeply to this member of the public who had observed the artist at work all day. To listen to the conversation please click on this link.

At a time when we are emerging out of our pandemic cocoons it is vital that we continue to do the important work to 'acknowledge our past' and question the extreme forms of violence that is perpetrated towards innocent USA civilians, and children. To acknowledge that the systemic racist violence in US cities that is a very particular experience that is localized to the context of cities like Chicago and Minneapolis. And to acknowledge, that this militarized violence is a particular form of violence that people living in other parts of the world are not subjected to. The question of why does the US torture its own people has to be asked? A deep reckoning of how we tackle state violence, and the ongoing targeting of black and brown communities is vital as we exit out of the cocoon realities. How can we, collectively be a force for good to reimagine what peace can be for our children and our communities? These performances are a pause for us to consider the ways and means we can move forward in peace collectively.

Tags: #openflow #publicperformance #helenlee #demarcuspurham #wannapapimtongeubanks, #performanceart