

# DEMAND MANAGEMENT

NET NORTH IN AMERICA the wealthiest 1% owns 34%, the top 10% owns over 71%, the bottom 40% owns far less than 1%.

2002-2006 INCOME CHANGE WEALTHIEST 10% = 95% INCOME GAIN. MID-LEVEL WORKERS = INCOME SHRINK 1%.

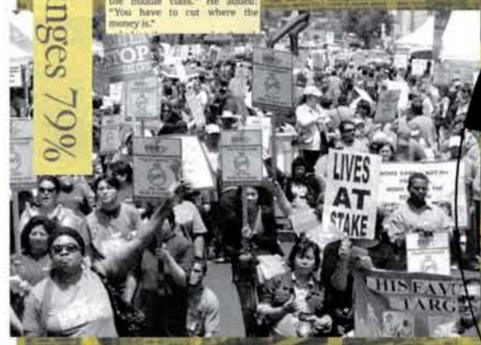
CERTAINLY THOSE WHO HAVE THE MEANS TO SPEND CAN PERFORM NO MORE USEFUL SERVICE UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THAN TO DO SO—AS ANY BUSINESS WISHING TO REMAIN IN BUSINESS CAN ATTEST. YET IN SPITE OF THE VAST NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHOSE LIVELIHOODS DEPEND ON INDUSTRIES THAT CATER TO THE AFFLUENT, MYOPIC DEMAGOGUES IN SEARCH OF SCAPEGOATS REFUSE TO LOOK PAST THEIR PRECONCEPTIONS TO RECOGNIZE A LUXURY'S ECONOMIC VALUE: NO NUMBER OF JOBS CAN JUSTIFY WHAT THEY DEEM TO BE A FRIVOLOUS EXPENDITURE. OF ALL THE VANITIES, PREJUDICE OF THIS SORT IS THE MOST PERNICIOUS—A LESSON SAVONAROLA LEARNED IN 1498 WHEN THE PEOPLE OF FLORENCE, WEARY OF THEIR DRAB OPPRESSION, PITCHED HIM ONTO THE PIAZZA'S PYRE.

—Editor, *Robb Report*, 05/01/03

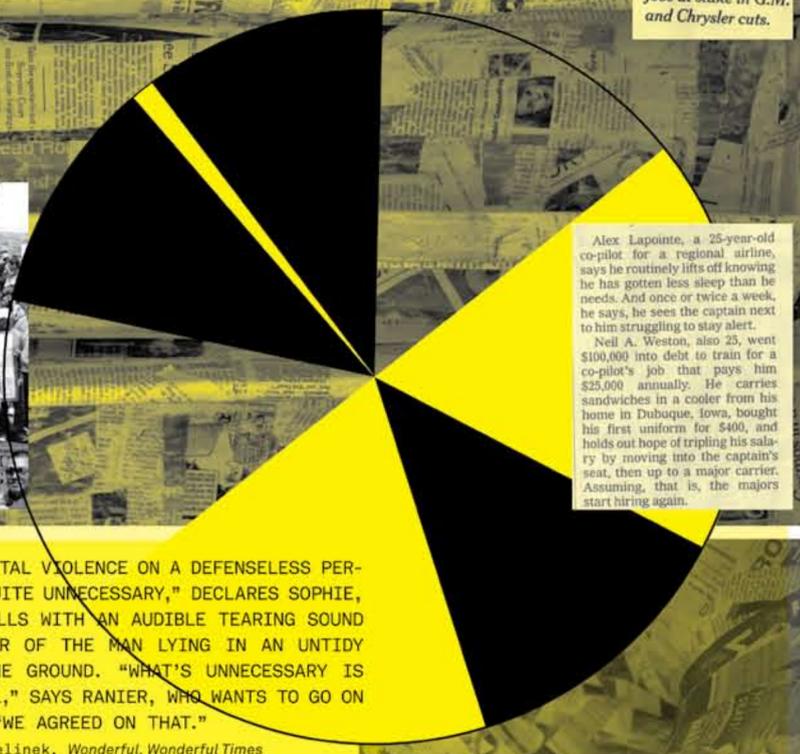
More than 100,000 jobs at stake in G.M. and Chrysler cuts.

C. Penney profit plunges 79%

"Government doesn't provide services to rich people," Mike Genest, the state's finance director, said on a conference call with reporters on Friday. "It doesn't even really provide services to the middle class." He added: "You have to cut where the money is."



PHOTOGRAPH: Mark Bolton / Agence-France Presse - Getty Images, *The New York Times*, 06/31/09



Alex Lapointe, a 25-year-old co-pilot for a regional airline, says he routinely lifts off knowing he has gotten less sleep than he needs. And once or twice a week, he says, he sees the captain next to him struggling to stay alert.

Neil A. Weston, also 25, went \$100,000 into debt to train for a co-pilot's job that pays him \$25,000 annually. He carries sandwiches in a cooler from his home in Dubuque, Iowa, bought his first uniform for \$400, and holds out hope of tripling his salary by moving into the captain's seat, then up to a major carrier. Assuming, that is, the majors start hiring again.

"THAT'S BRUTAL VIOLENCE ON A DEFENSELESS PERSON, AND QUITE UNNECESSARY," DECLARES SOPHIE, AND SHE PULLS WITH AN AUDIBLE TEARING SOUND AT THE HAIR OF THE MAN LYING IN AN UNTIDY HEAP ON THE GROUND. "WHAT'S UNNECESSARY IS BEST OF ALL," SAYS RANIER, WHO WANTS TO GO ON FIGHTING. "WE AGREED ON THAT."

—Elfriede Jelinek, *Wonderful, Wonderful Times*

PHOTOGRAPH: Corothena Lange, Kern County, CA, 1936

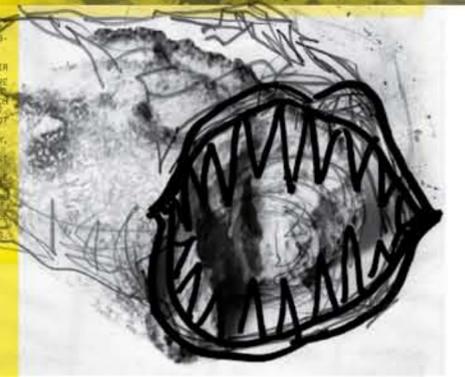


RECENTLY, ONE OF OUR EDITORS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE REST OF THE STAFF AN ARTICLE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST THAT NEATLY ENCAPSULATES A MEDIA PHENOMENON WE HAVE OBSERVED OF LATE WITH INCREASING DISMAY: THE DEHUMANIZATION OF THE WEALTHY AND THE INDURITIES THAT GATES TO THEM.

"IN OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT," ACHENBACH SAYS, "LUXURY HAS BECOME ALMOST A SCENE."

WE DISAGREE... THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA, IN THEIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST WEALTH AND ITS EXPENDITURE HAVE FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THE WAYS IN WHICH LUXURY INDUSTRIES HAVE ENRICHED SOCIETY, NOT ONLY ECONOMICALLY, BUT ALSO INTELLECTUALLY, TECHNOLOGICALLY, AND CULTURALLY. FOR OUR 2010 ANNUAL BEST OF THE BEST ISSUE, WE INVITED THE HEADS OF SIX LEADING LUXURY BRANDS TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS THEIR THOUGHTS ON HOW LUXURY PLAYS IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES.

—The Editors, *Robb Report*, 05/09



**LIVE SIMPLY SO THAT OTHERS MAY SIMPLY LIVE.**

—Dunpersticker

DESIGN: Jessica Fleischmann / etill room WITH Olga Koumoundourou

THE EXTRAORDINARY TRANSFER OF WEALTH THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE FROM ORDINARY HOUSEHOLDS TO THE SUPER-RICH HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY ANOTHER TRANSFER: BORROWING MONEY FROM FUTURE PROSPERITY TO PAY FOR CURRENT CONSUMPTION.

—Linda Bilmes and Joseph Stiglitz, "The \$10 Trillion Hangover: Paying the Price for Eight Years of Bush," *Harpers Magazine*, 01/09

THE ULTIMATE END OF HUMAN ACTS IS EUDAIMONIA, HAPPINESS IN THE SENSE OF LIVING WELL, WHICH ALL [PEOPLE] DESIRE; ALL ACTS ARE BUT DIFFERENT MEANS CHOSEN TO ARRIVE AT IT.

—Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*

# DEMAND MANAGEMENT

## Clara Kim

Your new installation at REDCAT comes from your research on the distribution of wealth in the U.S. and the disparity of money and access. Can you talk about the motivations of this project in light of the current recessionary climate and the mortgage crisis that has plagued every bracket of our society and class?

## Olga Koumoundouros

DEMAND MANAGEMENT came from an article in HARPER'S MAGAZINE with loads of statistics and pie charts titled "The \$10 trillion hangover." One of the charts showed that the top 1% had 34% of the total national income. And how the bottom 50% of American workers saw their share of national income decline to 12.5%. Meanwhile between 2002 and 2006, the top 1% of households saw more than 75% of the gains in income. Half of our entire nation's population had consistently declined in net worth, while 1% kept increasing! It blew my mind. These statistics were batted around periodicals and the internet with different numbers and varying sources but all pointed in the same direction. I was pissed off at the extremity of the blatant imbalance. Is this the way the democratic meritocracy of the American Dream manifests? What does it say about how we take care of our workforce? We don't. How do we address basic needs, food and shelter in our culture? Is it a human right?

Everyone "getting a piece of the pie" has always been a part of the idea of the American Dream and was actually feasible to some extent in the post World War II economic boom. I was raised on the romance and belief in the struggle to obtain that piece of pie. Class and mobility are so closely linked to economic access in the U.S. We don't have royalty here.

I had been thinking about economic distribution since the sculpture 0's & 1's: PARITY. That was 2006 and focused on the neo-gilded age and the out of control wrongness of that time's decadence. However, I never imagined that we would experience a recession of the enormity that we are experiencing now. It is so telling that we would go belly up exploiting people's desire for a single family home. On one hand we are given the message that home ownership is "Our God Given Right," with the simultaneous cultural message "debt is the American way."



Olga Koumoundouros, 0's & 1's: PARITY (2006), Kevlar, foam beads, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist.

No wonder people made the choices they made, but the real culprit is a financial system run amok with no conscience and no oversight. If the moneyed and powerful top dogs are shuffling papers and robbing Peter to pay Paul, why wouldn't the every day person give it a try; get themselves a mortgage, and juggle to get their tiny piece of pie? Why are they held to a greater standard of responsibility than the CEOs?

## Clara Kim

It was Thorstein Veblen in THE THEORY OF CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION, who during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the Industrial Revolution, wrote about the emergence of a leisure class in the U.S., who used their enormous accumulation of wealth in order to manifest social and political power. This was the time of the Rockefellers, the Carnegies. In a way, nothing has changed. The desire to preserve and maintain power through wealth plays out to this day. Though we are no longer a nation that manufacturers products or develops industries but one in which liquid assets are exchanged (hence, the subprime mortgage loans). Money is made through increasingly complex economic systems (in our age of hedge funds and investments banking) which begs the question of who has access and at who's expense. The fear of socialist models and/or the love of money have silenced a radical reassessment of these deeply entrenched systems.

## Olga Koumoundouros

What's the process in the work for these hedge fund folks? A reconsideration of these amorphous processes, intangible exchanges that are so bloated in compensation is a back-drop to this work. This is why working with such base objects and simple materials was so satisfying.

## Ryan Inouye

As much as your practice is invested in the medium of sculpture—given your interest in and exploration of materials and forms—your work seems to undermine its own object-ness and insistence on a stable or centered reading. When I saw THE WRECK OF THE HOPE, AFTER CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH (2009)—a work in which thick layers of plaster encrusted a makeshift wagon made of wood—I was struck by how you gave purpose to all that material without it feeling fetishistic or frivolous. Here was Friedrich's shipwreck. Even when the scale is large, the works feel more searching than assertive. In TOWN MEETING; AFTER ACCONCI (2003), you constructed a monumental size structure that spelled the word "TERROR" when viewed from above, but you also built an inhabitable interior that challenged an experience of the work as a mono-



Olga Koumoundouros, TOWN MEETING; AFTER ACCONCI (2003), wood recycled from demolished high rise buildings, ladders, laminated benches, approximately 72x96x29 in. Installation view, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena. Courtesy the artist.

lithic object. There's a consideration of the individual in your practice that is also explored in your project at REDCAT.

## Olga Koumoundouros

Process informs my concerns. So in DEMAND MANAGEMENT, the fact that I used a process that is ubiquitous and had no mystery was important. I cared about the fact that I used a disposable material that functions as a record of dominant culture. It doesn't represent most of us, but it swirls around all our heads. The process of tearing up each piece of newspaper and layering it on, dipping it into a homemade sauce, a record of the draping, enshrouding, embalming, dripping, over dipping, under saturating is all there. But this



Olga Koumoundouros, THE WRECK OF THE HOPE; AFTER CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH (2008), mixed media sculpture, approximately 43x70x27 in. Installation view, Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Courtesy Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo Robert Wedemeyer.

process is in relief to the history of sculpture, in relief to the understanding of craft, and forms a tension with the laws of physics. I question the vernacular embedded in "the best way to build something." I question the assumptions made in deciding what is the best way to make something stand up. There are many ways to solve a problem and this is culturally inscribed. Now behind that I make damned sure that it does stand well, but go all the way up to that point where it is interrogated. So the indeterminacy you speak of is perhaps in these points found in the making.

But it also is in the theater of these works. I have no problem with making work that is formed and enlivened when in direct relation to the human body in space. So what the viewer brings linguistically, culturally, socially and somatically resolves the work. The scale permits projecting oneself in relation to the form. And this would change as the viewer's position and subjectivity

changes, within themselves, as well as in the space at large. This shifting is an exciting space to inhabit for me and reflects more closely how I experience things.

## Ryan Inouye

I'm interested in this idea of "the best way to build something," because it seems so invested in the peculiar project of democracy in this country. This way of thinking also brings into relief the discursive and structural reproduction of certain inequalities, which repeatedly fail to examine or address broader concepts of citizenship, of participation. Can you talk about the ways in which you address these questions of legibility and illegibility in the installation, and in particular, the papier-mâché forms of domestic furnishings and appliances?

## Olga Koumoundouros

I am glad you brought up this point. It is so linked to my concerns about power positions in American culture at large in my overall practice. This is why I took on a conversation with architecture early on while still in school. Architecture, which is so linked to how people live, and function are simultaneously alienating to the very ones it is supposed to shelter and nurture. This is where inserting the body in space becomes so political to me as so many structures are not designed with basic needs and function in mind. Whose body is this space for, whose residue, whose mark or trace? How many different bodies are there, how many ways to traverse a space within a day? There are so many idiosyncratic patterns, habits, markers, cultural rituals that don't fit in these standardized arrangements of space. Innovative ways around that forced arrangement are often invisible or worse yet, pathologized. The accommodations we make daily to make a space work for us is very interesting.

Then there is hegemonic ideology that is replicated not only in the design of structures but in the assembly of space, access to basic needs, as well as its production (diminishing rates of affordable housing in spite of increasing need). Think about when perspectival drawing came about. That was only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and it has now embedded itself as a rendering of truth. Yet if you really think about it, this approach is only one way of ordering visual information. This comes up with acknowledging that there are different ways to solve a problem. In building structure there is a cultured and gendered language that throws insult when the choices make use of different avenues. I am often asked about my fabrication technique, and the comment is that it is poorly made. But the fact is everything is very strong, load bearing

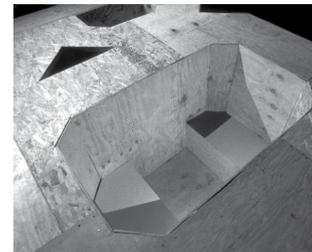
when needed. I just move my body differently when working; I make different choices in attachment—i.e. all the things look different when finished. But I insist on that mark. I ask, different than what? Poorly fabricated compared to what standard?

During install we discussed the round room and how it is attractive, perhaps alluring, but doesn't fit standardized building materials that facilitate ease in fabrication. We began to talk about the supposed "waste" of space, and I remember you mentioned that rectilinear rooms have wasted space

too. The process of building is set up to fit the norms of the building industry and not its function—i.e. all the off-gassing drywall, formaldehyde in FEMA trailers or pressboard linked to increases in asthma in American population. This is also evident in the fact that a 2"x4" is not really 2"x4" (which it initially was) but now is more like 1 1/2"x3 1/2". It was a conscious decision in the 1960s by the lumber industry to carve off a bit of dimension and to still label it a 2"x4". I have a very good friend that became a professional carpenter.

In order to do well, she would do upper body weight training after a full day's work so that she could be just as good as the guys on the job in overhead hammering. She worked herself up the union and now is one of the few female construction superintendents in California. She makes her money building well standardized structures, but at home, she builds the most ecological, low impact, idiosyncratic and quirky structures. So she takes the money and runs.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY REDCAT GALLERY DIRECTOR AND CURATOR CLARA KIM AND CURATORIAL ASSISTANT RYAN INOUYE.



Olga Koumoundouros, TOWN MEETING; AFTER ACCONCI (2003), wood recycled from demolished high rise buildings, ladders, laminated benches, approximately 72x96x29 in., detail, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena. Courtesy the artist.

# OLGA KOUMOUNDOUROS

BORN IN NEW YORK, LIVES AND WORKS IN LOS ANGELES

## EDUCATION

M.F.A., California Institute for the Arts, Valencia, 2001  
California State University, Long Beach, 1997-9  
School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1995-7  
B.A., University of Vermont, Burlington, 1990

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2008  
THE UNREPOSED, Adamski Gallery for Contemporary Art, Berlin  
GREAT EXPECTATIONS AND THE WRECK OF THE HOPE, Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles  
2007  
A ROOF UPENDED, Open Satellite, Bellevue, Washington  
2006  
THIEVES AND VINEGAR, Adamski Gallery for Contemporary Art, Aachen  
2005  
MORE YELLOW WALLPAPER, Mullin Gallery, Occidental College, Los Angeles  
2004  
DESIGNATED HITTERS AT THE SPIDER HOLE, Adamski Gallery for Contemporary Art, Aachen  
2002  
#9, OLGA KOUMOUNDOUROS & RODNEY McMILLIAN, Unit #9, 5301 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2009  
LA 2019: CULTS, COLLECTIVES & COCOONING, 18" Street Arts, Santa Monica  
2008  
THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING, Glendale College Art Gallery, Glendale  
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN, Creative Time, Park Avenue Armory, New York  
NEWS FROM A MIME'S THUD, collaboration with Rodney McMillian, Creative Time, New York and Blanton Museum of Art, Austin  
2007  
OHIO, William E. Gahlberg Gallery, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn  
INFORMAL ARCHITECTURES: SPACE AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE, Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre, Banff  
TOUCHED: ARTISTS AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena  
THE SECRETARIAT, Aftermodern, San Francisco  
PHILOSOPHY OF TIME TRAVEL: Edgar Arceneaux, Vincent Galen Johnson, Olga Koumoundouros, Rodney McMillian and Matthew Sloly; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York  
ON A PORCH: RODNEY McMILLIAN AND OLGA KOUMOUNDOUROS, LAXART, Los Angeles  
2006  
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: Olga Koumoundouros and Pia Ronicke, Glassell School of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
AFFAIR, Tart, San Francisco

A FRONT PORCH: CONCURRENT AND NOT OPPOSING, collaboration with Rodney McMillian, The Suburban, Chicago

2005  
THING: NEW SCULPTURES FROM LOS ANGELES, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

2004  
NEW BALANCE FRONTIER, Soap Factory, Minneapolis  
POSTER PROJECT, Copenhagen

2003  
RENT-A-BENCH, Kunstmuseet Trapholt, Kolding  
WORKS ON PAPER, Adamski Gallery for Contemporary Art, Aachen  
SCULPTURE INVITATIONAL, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena

2002  
SCHINDLER HOUSE REENACTMENT, MAK Center for Art & Architecture, Los Angeles  
RENT-A-BENCH, site-specific installation, Los Angeles  
ALL YOU CAN EAT: GENEROUS HELPINGS OF FOOD, VIDEO AND KARAOKE, c-level, Los Angeles

2001  
ARS MORALIS, Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, Barbara Claassen-Schmal, Bremen

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bach, Ashley. "Bellevue getting arts influx." THE SEATTLE TIMES, August 30, 2007.  
Compton, Ann. "Philosophy of Time Travel at the Studio Museum." ART IN AMERICA (October 2007): 202.  
Elaine, James, Aimee Chang and Christopher Miles. THING: NEW SCULPTURES FROM LOS ANGELES. Exhibition catalogue. Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, 2005.  
Goodbody, Bridget. "Riffing on Modernism: Through the Roof, Brancusi!" THE NEW YORK TIMES, April 20, 2007.  
"Goings on About Town: Art." THE NEW YORKER. April 25–June 26, 2007.  
Grant, Adriana. "Upended Roof Speaks To, and About, Its Condo-Filled Neighborhood." SEATTLE WEEKLY, September 19, 2007.  
Graves, Jen. "Suburban Shacks and High-Rises: A Brave New Contemporary Art Project in Bellevue." THE STRANGER, August 1, 2007.  
\_\_\_\_\_. "The Other Half: A Crack House and a Luxury Tower Walk into a Room." THE STRANGER, September 5, 2007.  
Kiendl, Anthony. INFORMAL ARCHITECTURES: SPACE AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE, The Banff Centre. Exhibition catalogue. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2008.  
Kim, Christine. PHILOSOPHY OF TIME TRAVEL. Exhibition catalogue. New York: The Studio Museum in Harlem, 2007.  
Knight, Christopher. "Critic's Preview." LOS ANGELES TIMES, June 12, 2008.  
\_\_\_\_\_. "The Next Big 'Thing' in L.A." LOS ANGELES TIMES, February 9, 2005.  
Machida, Nico. "Koumoundouros: New Sculpture." ArtSlant. http://www.artslant.com/la/articles/show/1325  
Myers, Holly. "Empty Lot, Blank Canvas." LOS ANGELES TIMES, Aug 14, 2003.  
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Pence, Elizabeth. "A Roof Upended." ArtUS (January-February 2008): 62.

Rochette, Anne and Wade Saunders. "Place Matters: Los Angeles Sculptures Today." ART IN AMERICA (November 2007): 182.

Schmelzer, Paul. "Making Another World Possible." ADBUSTERS MAGAZINE, January-February 2005.

Schmerler, Sarah. "Tour de Force." TIME OUT: NEW YORK, February 22–28, 2005.

## GRANTS, AWARDS, RESIDENCIES

2009  
Grant, The Durfee Foundation

2007  
Residency, OPEN SATELLITE, Bellevue  
2005  
Grant, Visual Arts, Creative Capital Foundation

2000  
Residency, Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach  
Grant, Center for Land Use Interpretation, Culver City

## OLGA KOUMOUNDOUROS DEMAND MANAGEMENT JUNE 26 - AUGUST 23, 2009

This exhibition is made possible with the support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and John Rubeli. Additional support provided by The Durfee Foundation and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Free gallery admission underwritten by generous support from Ovation TV. The Standard is the official hotel of REDCAT.

## VISUAL AND SONIC PERFORMANCE SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 3PM

Featuring collaboration with Corey Fogel and joined by lots of people to form an immersive performance environment in REDCAT gallery and lounge.



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Gallery hours: noon–6pm or intermission, closed Mondays  
Always free