Singing in Unison: Artists Need to Create On the Same Scale That Society Has the Capacity to Destroy

A series of shows presented by Rail Curatorial Projects
Curated by Phong H. Bui and Cal McKeever

Having witnessed two ruptures—the pandemic and the ongoing crisis of our social and political condition, implemented in part by those who deploy technology and social media to create chaos and anxiety for self-serving purposes—we at the Brooklyn Rail responded by swiftly launching our New Social Environment (NSE) daily Zoom lunchtime conversation series. The NSE has now completed over 560 episodes and has reached a viewership of more than two million since the first program aired on March 17, 2020. It cultivates thoughtful discussions on pertinent topics in the arts, humanities, and sciences and values the amplification of “social intimacy”—in contrast to “social distancing”—through culture. The NSE, like the Rail itself, is freely available to all and aspires to help heal our social and political ills through the arts and the humanities.

As an extension of this important communal action, we now feel a great sense of urgency to create a large exhibition that will unfold over a period of several months and will bring together many different kinds of practices, styles, and voices. As we slowly emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, this timely exhibition is a celebration of hope for the future, in a similar spirit to our critically praised, monumental exhibition Come Together: Surviving Sandy in 2013. The unifying idea behind this wide-ranging and broadly inclusive exhibition is suggested by its title: Singing in Unison: Artists Need to Create on the Same Scale That Society Has the Capacity to Destroy.

This exhibition is inspired by an underlying philosophy that runs through American history and advocates for “the art of joining” as a social and cultural process that can mediate the disequilibrium within American politics and culture. Spread across eleven venues, the exhibition will combine works of art made by artists who were formally trained alongside works by artists who were self-taught, including works
by incarcerated artists and artists who struggle with mental illness. Among the participating artists, many urgent themes and topics, such as gender, ethnicity, and the limits of knowledge, will be prominently featured.

As an integral part of the Rail’s curatorial vision, which emphasizes cross-pollination of the arts and humanities, there will also be a good deal of public programing, including panel discussions with artists, historians, and curators; readings of poetry and fiction; film screenings; music and dance performances; along with cooking performances led by Rirkrit Tiravanija and Tomas Vu, which will be organized in each location throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Each iteration of the exhibition will be dedicated to one of our recently deceased friends, as a tribute and form of living memory to that friend’s lasting contributions.

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On View | Part 1

**Art Cake**
214 40th Street
Brooklyn, New York
May 25–June 25, 2022
*In loving memory of Peter Lamborn Wilson (1945–2022)*

*Featuring works by:*

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On View | Part 2

**Scully Tomasko Foundation**
447 West 17th Street
New York, New York
May 28–September 1, 2022
In loving memory of Lawrence Weiner (1942–2021)

Featuring works by:

On View | Part 3

Below Grand
53 Orchard Street
New York, New York
May 29–July 2, 2022

In loving memory of Constance Lewallen (1939–2022)

Featuring works by:

Part 4

Ricco/Maresca
529 W 20th Street
New York, New York
June 23–September 10, 2022

In loving memory of Etel Adnan (1925–2021)
Featuring works by:

Part 5

TOTAH
183 Stanton Street
New York, New York
June 28–August 12, 2022
In loving memory of Dan Graham (1942–2022)

Featuring works by:

Dates for Industry City, Miguel Abreau, Vito Schnabel Gallery, Sperone Westwater, and Pioneer Works will be released soon.