

Exhibition Checklist (expanded)

Arturo Hernández Alcazar

No Trabajes Nunca: Renovación (transformación del cono y de la energía en sopa caliente) / Never Work: Renewal (transformation of knowledge into work, work into energy, and energy into hot soup), 2010 – 2012

Horn speakers, hammer, vinyl disc, copper disc, grill, envelope with drawings and documents, turntables, sound cables, amplifier, and base, dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Galeria MARSO

Exploring the dynamics of circulation and value reassignment, *No Trabajes Nunca (Never Work)* reveals the failed efforts of commercial, material, and energy transformation. The audio installation combines the sound of scrap merchants in Mexico City, who are retrieving valuable metal components from old electronics, with the aural residue of a disc made of recycled copper. Also included are documents and items that reveal labor, economic, and environmental, conditions surrounding copper mining, trading, and retrieval.

Ramón Miranda Beltrán

To Collapse Invisible Walls, 2014

Photo transfer on concrete and poster, 36 x 72 in.

Courtesy the artist and Walter Otero Contemporary Art

In *To Collapse Invisible Walls*, Ramón Miranda Beltrán uses a historical image of the Chicago Teacher Revolt of 1933 evoking current debates about the role of public education in a faltering economy. Chicago teachers deeply felt the impact of the Great Depression: hundreds were laid off and those that weren't often went weeks or months without pay, class sizes swelled, and facilities were inadequate—particularly in immigrant neighborhoods. In response, for four months thousands of teachers regularly stormed board of education and city council meetings. The actions of the Revolt of 1933 laid the foundations for the Chicago Teachers Union, which was established in 1937. Juxtaposed with this image is a poster of *La escuela del maestro Rafael Cordero (1890–92)* by Puerto Rican artist Francisco Oller.

Oller—a self-educated man—provided free schooling to children regardless of their race or class and is often referred to as the father of public education in Puerto Rico. In the wake of the 2012 Chicago Teacher’s Union strike and a 2014 teacher’s strike in Puerto Rico, *To Collapse Invisible Walls* urges us to consider how closely related these struggles are and their larger implications.

- [Ramón Miranda Beltrán website](#)

Melanie Gilligan

Self Capital, 2009

Video, 23:39 min. loop

Courtesy the artist

Introducing herself as the “global economy,” the actress in Melanie Gilligan’s multi-episode video, *Self Capital*, undergoes experimental therapy for post- traumatic stress after her recent meltdown. Playing every role—therapist and patient, customer and cashier—the actress personifies the capitalist system as she attempts to regain control. In this video, Gilligan continues her ongoing investigations into the 2008 financial crisis and its subjective dimensions. The artist maps the economy’s needs and desires onto the human body, thereby relating the implosion of the financial markets on a more personal, subjective level.

The Ladydrawers

Our Fashion Year, 2013-2014

Giclée prints, 20 x 40 in. each

Courtesy the artists

The Ladydrawers is a group of women, men, transgender, and non-binary gender writers and artists who create and publish comics on issues of economics, race, sexuality, and gender that impact culture. *Our Fashion Year* is an in-depth series of “comics journalism” and published monthly on the online journal *Truthout* reporting on gender and labor concerns throughout the global garment industry and international sex trade. The series explores circumstances at US retail outlets, Foreign Trade Zones, the

links between national policies and labor abuses, and the working conditions of women in closed factories. Further strips from the year-long series can be viewed at truth-out.org.

- [Ladydrawers Website](#)

Mary Lum

Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor, 2011

Paper bag fragments, paint, dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Carroll and Sons, Boston

Mary Lum has been collecting the paper bag fragments in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor* for more than 20 years. Stamped with the name of the individual that oversaw its production, each bag reminds us of the human element behind these industrially produced objects. Lum has stated: “I thought the names on the bags were especially charged, evoking both history and memory, as well as commenting on the relative anonymity of factory work.” The bold, abstract, painted wall on which the bags are placed evokes Russian Constructivist Alexander Rodchenko’s *Worker’s Club* (1925) and is Lum’s personal call for workers to unite. The artist includes a composite passage of excerpts from pre-existing texts that provides a fictionalized glimpse into the life of a worker—thereby connecting the installation to all workers in any trade.

Source material for text:

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle by Haruki Murakami
Libra by Don DeLillo
Revolutionary Road by Richard Yates
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith
Unravelling by Elizabeth Graver
Men at Work by Graham Greene

Yoshua Okón

Octopus, 2011

Video installation, 2 synchronized projections, 18:31 min. loop

Courtesy the artist

Filmed at a Los Angeles Home Depot, *Octopus* choreographs evocations of the Guatemalan civil war with actual combatants who fought in the 1990s either for the guerillas or the military. The former combatants are Mayan undocumented immigrant day laborers who use the parking lot as their base. They navigate through the big-box parking lot—where they work side-by-side in their struggle to find work—with a dexterity and stealth required of guerilla warfare. The title references the nickname Guatemalans use for The United Fruit Company (today known as Chiquita Banana), a US company headquartered in Guatemala and connected to the CIA-led coup and subsequent civil war whose ‘tentacles’ reached into both commerce and politics. In their home country, the men at the center of the video fought in a war manipulated by the US government and commercial interests. While in the US, they contend with similar forces in their struggle as undocumented, immigrant day laborers.

- [Yoshua Okón website](#)

Pocket Guide to Hell

“Hunger” Banner, from the 1915 Parade of the Unemployed reenactment, March 6, 2011

Fabricator: Michelle Faust

Poster from the 1915 Parade of the Unemployed reenactment, March 6, 2011

Designer: Lauren Meranda

Poster, from the Battle of the Halsted Viaduct reenactment, May 2, 2010

Designer: Alana Bailey

Poster, from the Haymarket reenactment, April 30, 2011

Designer: Zach Dodson

Photographs, from the Haymarket reenactment, April 30, 2011

Photographer: Yoni Goldstein and Paul J. Durica

1886 police costume worn by Pete Crowley, from the Haymarket reenactment, April 30, 2011

Fabricators: Michelle Faust and Kenneth Morrison

Handbill, from the Haymarket reenactment, April 30, 2011

Designer: April Sheridan, Center for Book and Paper Arts, Columbia College

Various costume accessories, from the Haymarket reenactment, April 30, 2011

Fabricators: Michelle Faust and Kenneth Morrison

Believing that looking to the past enables a new understanding of our current moment, Pocket Guide to Hell stages reenactments and hosts guerilla-walking tours that focus on aspects of Chicago labor history and social justice. On view here are ephemera from past Pocket Guide to Hell reenactments of specific moments in Chicago's labor history—the Haymarket Affair, the Battle of the Halsted Viaduct, and the Parade of the Unemployed.

The Haymarket Affair, which took place on May 4, 1886, began as a peaceful rally supporting workers striking for an eight-hour workday. As the police attempted to disperse the crowd, a bomb was thrown by an unknown person, which sparked gunfire, killing seven police officers and at least four civilians. Following the incident, eight accused anarchists were convicted of conspiracy; seven of whom were sentenced to death.

On July 26, 1877 roughly 10,000 blue-collar workers from Bridgeport and Pilsen left their streetcars, ships, trains, and factories and clashed with police, federal troops, and state militia at the Halsted Street Viaduct (at 16th Street). The event was part of The Great Upheaval of 1877, which began in Baltimore as a railroad strike against wage cuts, then spread across the nation. Thirty workers died at The Battle of the Viaduct, 100 were wounded, and at least thirteen police officers were injured.

In January 1915, about 1,500 Chicagoans gathered at Hull House to discuss increasingly high levels of unemployment and hunger. Spontaneously, the group voted to march to City Hall to demand food relief

and public works projects. The impromptu Parade of the Unemployed began traveling North on Halsted, reaching Madison before police broke up the event. Although arrests were made, marchers won in court where the rights to assemble peacefully and to petition the government were affirmed.

More information on these events and other important events in Illinois labor history are available at illinoislaborhistory.org.

- [Pocket Guide to Hell website](#)

Ward Shelley

Work, Spend, Forget (Dissected Frog Polemic), 2013

Acrylic and toner on mylar, 34 1/4 x 75 in.

Courtesy the artist and Pierogi Gallery

- [Ward Shelley website](#)

Karina Skvirsky

Gioconda, 2009

Video, 7:40 min. loop

Courtesy the artist

Blurring the lines between documentary and fiction, Karina Aguilera Skvirsky's *Gioconda* focuses on the situation of immigrants that often make up large swaths of service and invisible labor in the United States. With the use of soundtracks from Hollywood "border films" and evocative stop-action shots, Skvirsky focuses on *Gioconda*, a hotel worker and recent immigrant, in order to explore the condition of immigrants that are forced to work long hours in menial jobs.

- [Karina Skvirsky website](#)

Pilvi Takala

The Trainee, 2008

Video, 13:52 min. loop

Courtesy the artist and Carlos/Ishikawa London

As part of a month-long performance, the artist worked as trainee “Johanna Takala” in the marketing department of Helsinki-based global consulting company, Deloitte. The resulting video documents this performance in which Takala enacts a string of peculiar behaviors—such as sitting still doing “brain work” at her desk and remaining on an elevator during an entire workday. The reactions of her colleagues reveal their discomfort with Takala’s refusal to conform to the norms of the corporate workplace. Takala’s intervention explores ideas behind corporate culture and expectations of productivity in the workplace.

- [Pilvi Takala website](#)

Andrew Norman Wilson

A Picturesque Tour along the Rivers Ganges and Jumna, in India- frontispiece, June 2014

Inkjet print on rag paper, painted frame, aluminum composite material, 8 x 10 in.

Mother Goose's Melody, or Sonnets for the Cradle, in Two Parts: Part I Contains the Most Celebrated Songs and Lullabies of the Good Old Nurses, Calculated to Amuse Children and to Excite Them to Sleep, 2014

Ink-jet print on rag paper, painted frame, aluminum composite material, 8 x 10 in.

Mother Goose's Melody, or Sonnets for the Cradle, in Two Parts: Part II Those of that Sweet Songster and Nurse of Wit and Humour, Master William Shakespeare, 2014

Ink-jet print on rag paper, painted frame, aluminum composite material, 8 x 10 in.

Museum Metallicum Autoris- 35, June 2014

Inkjet print on rag paper, painted frame, aluminum composite material, 8 x 10 in.

Courtesy the artist

Andrew Norman Wilson's *ScanOps* series exposes the hidden people and processes behind Google Books. The artist collects irregularities from Google Books— for example, images that reveal software distortions or the hand of the Google employee responsible for the scanning. Amusing though the images may be when stumbled across online, they reveal the work

of a legion of invisible laborers, many of whom are treated quite differently than other Google employees, as documented in Wilson's *Workers Leaving the Googleplex* (2009–11), not included in this exhibition, but viewable at vimeo.com/15852288. However, the photographs act as a document not just of the marginalized populations and their labor, but everything else that that has colluded to create these glitches— cameras, software, books, capital, and all the other “equipment” within the Google factory.

- [Andrew Norman Wilson website](#)