

Conversation with
JOHN SPIAK,
Grand Central
Art Center

I is for

Institute

What's in a name? This is the question underlying our investigation into ICA: how it came to be, what it means now, and how we might imagine it in the future.

In a field so often defined by precarity, this project is grounded in a spirit of collegiality, a looking outward that aims to facilitate self-reflection. As such, we have engaged colleagues primarily from small- and mid-scale contemporary arts organizations to discuss their institutional histories and how they understand the stakes of their work. The *I is for Institute* website acts as a repository for these ongoing conversations, as well as archival material relating to ICA's history. We thank our many colleagues for their generosity, enthusiasm, and frankness. Their thinking has in turn energized our own.

— Alex Klein,
Dorothy & Stephen R. Weber
(CHE'60) Curator, Institute
of Contemporary Art,
University of Pennsylvania

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John Spiak is the Director and
Chief Curator at Grand Central
Art Center.

With Alex Klein

JOHN SPIAK

Grand Central Art Center developed as an economic booster for the city of Santa Ana. The downtown was going through a little slump in the mid-1990s. The building that we're in was abandoned at that point, boarded up. It was built in 1924 and was the original Grand Central Market for Orange County. A gentleman by the name of Don Cribb, who was a local activist and arts cheerleader, thought that the arts could bring economic development to the city of Santa Ana.

First, he lured over the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, which is in the building across the street from us, and then he met a gentleman from Cal State Fullerton named Mike McGee and they somehow convinced the city that this building should be an art center affiliated with the university. The city spent \$7.5 million to renovate the space, retrofit it, earthquake-proof it, and come up with the designs to make it into an art center based on the conversations with the campus and this arts advocate. Then, as soon as it was renovated, they turned over the keys to Cal State Fullerton for a lease through 2026 at \$1 a year.

ALEX KLEIN

Amazing.

JS

The building is 45,000 square feet, so we sublease. We sublease to a restaurant, to a cooking school, and a flamenco studio. Then we have 27 apartments upstairs that are set aside for MFA students or MA students from the College of the Arts: dance, theater, visual arts, and performing arts. Numerous apartments are also set aside for our visiting Artists-in-Residence program. Originally, there was one apartment. We've taken over a few more because, sadly, we don't have enough students demanding to live over here, which is really strange.

AK

That is strange. So, it's technically part of Cal State Fullerton?

JS

Yes, it's part of Cal State Fullerton.

AK

How much does the school dictate your program, or do you have complete autonomy in that respect?

JS

For the most part we currently have complete autonomy in the way we're programming the space. The College of the Arts gives us \$20,000 a year. That's it. My salary is paid by the provost's office. The structure of it is a little odd because all the revenue that's coming in for programming is self-generated from the institution, from the rents and the leases, and then on top of that, the fundraising efforts. Since my arrival, I haven't felt that there's been too much pressure from the university to do certain programming. We've been allowed to focus on what we feel could engage both the community locally as well as the campus community.

AK

That's great! Does the subleasing produce a sizable amount of income for you? Where does the rest of your money come from?

JS

Our operating budget is about \$350,000–\$365,000. It depends on if the apartments are full or not. That doesn't include my salary or the extra \$20,000.

AK

Obviously, you don't have to pay rent for your building, so can it go directly into your program?

JS

Yes, directly into our programming. I have enough to pay the salaries, to keep things moving forward, and do basic programming. Then, on top of

that, we raise funds. We have a lot of individual donors and we're on our second Warhol grant since I've been here. When I arrived, the institution was \$180,000 in debt, and had been in debt since 1999 when it was founded.

AK

Wow! When did you arrive?

JS

I arrived in 2011 and we got out of debt in about eight months.

AK

How were you able to make the transition?

JS

We decided that it wasn't responsible to ask for any gifts or any donations at that time until we had our books in the black. So, we just looked at where we could cut expenses, how we could do efficient exhibitions, where we were wasting money, things like off-site storage where we were storing catalogues. We were spending \$280 a month storing catalogues off-site, so we brought those back on-site.

We just became more efficient. We didn't lay off any employees. We actually were able to retain all of our employees, not furlough them, not cut their wages or salaries in any way, shape, or form. It was very much about finding ways that we were wasting money and making it more efficient and then figuring out ways that we might generate a little bit more income.

AK

How many directors were there before you?

JS

There were two hired and one interim.

AK

You were in Arizona before, correct?

JS

Yes.

AK

I'm curious, what was the

incentive of coming to a place that was in financial peril?

JS

This institution is about 10 minutes from where I grew up, so this is home for me. I was at Arizona State University in 1999 when this place was finding itself, and the second show that was in this space was a show I curated at Arizona State University that traveled here, it was titled Sig-alert. I was given a hardhat tour of the space beforehand. Anytime I was home visiting my parents, I could come and visit the space, so I knew the space firsthand and I saw the potential for the space with the residency program and with the apartments.

My wife is from L.A. and she's also a curator, so when our son was born, we decided we wanted to be back in Southern California and see what we could do out here. We started applying for positions and we said that the first person that gets one that looks like it might be able to sustain us, we'll jump ship. After 17 years, it seemed like it was time to give somebody else an opportunity out in Arizona.

AK

Can you talk a little bit about the context of Santa Ana? It's a city that is close to L.A., but isn't in L.A. It is drawing on different communities and relationships. Where does Grand Central fit into the ecology of Southern California?

JS

Santa Ana is the fifth largest city in California, so it's a sizable city and it has an early history. It's one of the first cities developed in Orange County. It's 88.9 percent self-identified as Hispanic-Latino right now, so it's an interesting hub within Orange County that's very Democratic instead of conservative Republican like most of Orange County. It is 35 miles south of L.A. so we have this joke that it takes about 40 minutes to get to L.A. from Santa Ana, but it takes about an hour and a half to get to Santa Ana from L.A.—people in Los Angeles perceive it as so much farther away.

AK

We have a similar joke with Philadelphia and New York.

JS

It's that mindset that we're so far away, but we're really not. That allows us to do some things that maybe the L.A. institutions aren't allowed to do. This comes from my approach in Arizona as well. We were close enough to Southern California to be able to engage quickly, but far enough away that people weren't paying as much attention as they should be. So, there we just decided that we could work with artists and allow them to take huge risks.

We could allow the risk of artists that were presenting exhibitions for the first time in an institution, or artists that were stuck in a career path where the gallery was demanding that they do a certain thing and museums were always inviting them to do those certain things. We could say, "Do what you really want to do." We could allow them to really take a risk and if that risk failed, it disappears. We're in Arizona. If we choose and the artist chooses not to publicize it out there, it's not going to get the notoriety.

If it's an amazing project, we can get it out there and we can market it and we can say that existed and they can run with that and change their career trajectory. Here in Santa Ana, it's the same thing. We're able to do some things that they can't do in L.A. We don't have the pressures of audience, attendance, or critical press. A lot of museums up there need that. They're also fighting for tons of the same funders. We're kind of one of the only things in Orange County, besides the Orange County Museum of Art, that's doing contemporary-based programming that is working directly with artists in the development of new projects.

So, it's got its plusses and we can get writers down from L.A. at times. Then again, we're fighting to get in the L.A. Times because there are hundreds of venues in L.A. and there's only us down here that's trying to get the same attention. It's allowed us to go places with artists and just experiment and take time with artists and pop some things on that people aren't expecting. We're trying to reclaim that and we're trying to get into a greater discourse right now.

AK

What does a typical season look like for you? How many exhibitions do you have a year? Is it regularized throughout every season or is it a work in progress?

JS

It changes, but I would say typically we do about 12 exhibitions in multiple spaces. We usually leave our shows up for three months, so four spaces, three shows rotating through. Then, we have anywhere from 18 to 20 artists in

residence at times, some more permanent, some visiting.

AK
Wow!

JS

Right now, I think we have nine artists on-site.

AK
Are any of them students?

JS

None of those are students. That's in addition to the students that are also working here, which currently we have 24 students.

AK
You mentioned that the whole space is 45,000 square feet. How much exhibition space do you have?

JS

Not as much as I would like to, and not as good of a space as I would like. We have a main gallery that's around 2,000 square feet. We have a project gallery that's approximately 1,500 square feet, and then we have what we call the Education Gallery. It was kind of a store space when I arrived. They were doing gallery sales out of it. We divided that up into a video project space that's probably about 400 square feet and then a storefront project space where we're letting artists-in-residence explore and that's probably another 800 square feet. So, 5,000 square feet of exhibition space.

AK
Do the artists who are in residence have to produce something during their residency or is it open-ended?

JS

It's very open-ended. The way the residency program works is we invite artists who we believe in and trust. We invite them for a site visit first. We say, "Come here. Be here. Make sure the apartment is okay with you; that our staff's okay; that the situation's okay." Then, once they approve it and say "Okay, this is a place I could work with," then they're an artist-in-residence. We don't want

a project. We don't want a proposal. We just want to work with the artists in whatever way that unfolds. There's no timelines for the residencies, so the residencies are open-ended. Paul Ramirez-Jonas has been coming back for five years on his terms when it works for him, because he teaches, and he has other life commitments and exhibitions. So, he'll pop in when it make sense. Sometimes he spends three weeks, sometimes he spends four days, and projects then develop that way. Cognate Collective is a young collective from Southern California. They've been in residence now, living on-site, for over five years. Some are shorter. Carmen Papalia came out and he had this three-week project that got realized quickly, through Skyping and long-distance conversations, plus some location rehearsals, so that's what he did. We're still in conversations about potentially bringing him back.

AK

Amazing! What kind of support do you give an artist when they are in residence?

JS

So, they get an apartment, they get a storefront studio space, they get an honorarium, project financial support. As the project develops, we talk about project support, what material support they might need, what that might be. A good example is Lisa Bielawa, who's a composer and also a performance artist. I thought it was going to be a three-week or three-month project based on some of the things she had done in the past. We kept bringing her out and nothing felt right. She just wasn't feeling it. So, we just started throwing stuff at her that we thought might inform what she was thinking about. So, we turned her onto Arrested Development because she's in Orange County, Grand Central Art Center is in the heart of Orange County. I don't know if you know that TV show?

AK

Yes, of course.

JS

It's very much about this place. We were like, "You just need to know that this is what Orange County is." She doesn't watch any TV and she got totally hooked. Through that, there's one episode where the brother Buster decides to escape his family and gets in the trunk of a car and he thinks he's going to Mexico, but really, he ends up in Santa Ana and everybody is speaking Spanish and he's super happy. He thinks he's in Mexico. Buster is just wandering around the streets of Santa Ana, but he thinks he's in Mexico.

Lisa comes running down and she has this conversation with me. She

goes, “I love this show. It’s got this high intellect to it, but it’s also got this mainstream appeal (and the way the guests come in and out of it). She goes, “I wrote this opera 20 years ago and we could never get it produced because it has those elements. It’s just crazy step changes, time travel, all this stuff. She says, “But I think it would work as a TV show.” So, then we went there with her and we started trying to figure out who our contacts were that we might be able to partner with on the project.

We were talking with Ovation at the time, but they didn’t seem to get it, then we connected with Juan Devis at KCETLink Media Group. We asked if we could meet with him and he said yes, and at that first meeting he was in 100%, amazing trust! That ended up being a five-year project that was a serial broadcast opera that we did — Kronos Quartet was in the pilot and we had 150 girls from the San Francisco Girls Chorus. We filmed it at locations such as The Yost Theater here in Santa Ana, on Alcatraz, and at the Garrison Institute in New York. So, you just never know where it’s going to go, but if you truly believe in the process and truly believe in the artist that you’ve invited, you go there with the artist.

AK

That’s amazing. So, the residency can really result in you helping an artist fundraise and produce the project that they want to work on.

JS

Yes, that’s what we are. We’re here as an institution just to listen to the artist and connect them with those resources to realize the project in the way they envision it.

AK

Is the residency program something that people can apply to or is it only by invitation?

JS

It’s invitation-only because we have to trust those artists. If they’re working with community, we can’t have them coming here and mess up our community. There are students that live upstairs. We need to trust these people 100 percent, especially when you work in community-engaged practices because somebody can come here and mess up a community instantly, especially in the neighborhood that’s going through issues of gentrification and redevelopment. It’s difficult.

AK

Right. You touched on so many things there. I'm curious to learn about how you see your responsibility to the student community. For example, is your engagement with the MFA program a mandate from the university or is it something that really is core to your interest as a director and chief curator?

JS

That is core to my interest as a director and chief curator. At Arizona State, we just worked so intensely with the student artists in their studios, with the faculty members, and engaged in projects. I sat on numerous MFA committees and was being recognized at half-time of football games for my engagement with the students. Here, sadly, it's been very difficult to get the faculty and students to engage with our resource as an institution. We have the students that live upstairs, they have been getting better at engaging with the artists-in-residence that we have, but that engagement is still very minimal. It's really strange. It's like pulling teeth. We have worked really hard to engage with faculty, keeping them informed of artists-in-residence we have coming, exhibitions, and other programs. We offer to bring our artists-in-residence to campus to speak to classes and are always open to having classes visit. The faculty really doesn't bring their students down here and they don't really engage that much with our programming. There are a few that we've been engaged with and who have recently had an artist-in-residence speak to their class, but it has been almost two years since a faculty member brought their class to Grand Central Art Center. Other faculty from our region and beyond bring classes on a regular bases such as Fullerton College, Golden West College, UC Irvine, Otis. We have recently had visits and a tour of Grand Central Art Center with classes from Cranbrook, Carnegie Mellon, Portland State University, and Arizona State University.

At the start of every semester, I send a list of every single artist-in-residence that's coming over the entire year, everybody that I know to that date that's coming and when their dates are, and say these artists are coming. I can bring them up to campus. They'll be here. They can engage. We get no response.

AK

Interesting.

JS

Free arts lectures at your classes — it's crazy. We've been trying for two years to have a class taught here. One of the faculty members is interested and she's great, but for some reason approval for that class to happen keeps getting blocked. The class would be a seminar class and every week we would hold it in a different space of Grand Central Art Center — a gallery, a studio, in an apartment — so the students could start thinking about spaces in different ways. And we can have a guest visiting artist-in-residence here every week, or we can bring somebody down from L.A. for the day, pay the honorariums. It costs them nothing and it just drives me nuts.

AK

That's strange.

JS

As I mentioned previously, we were winning awards at ASU for student engagement. This is what I love doing and I know how we can help the students because the students and the interns we've had working here, our employees, have all gone off to do amazing things. We have three students now that are at school, or recently graduated, from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. We have one that just got accepted to Cranbrook. We have one that went to Hunter. So, we're positioning the people that have engaged with us in strong ways, but the art department for some reason hasn't been as open to that engagement. We are currently working on an MFA/BFA exhibition that is being guest curated, so we are hoping that we create a positive experience and opportunity for both students and faculty to engage further with Grand Central Art Center.

AK

On the flipside, you have a tremendous amount of autonomy, which so many people would kill for, and resources from an institution that are pouring in without a mandate that you have to do something specific.

JS

Exactly.

AK

I'm curious, what with all of these residents and all the things that

you're doing, producing TV shows and all this stuff, what is your staff size and are there other curators that are working with you?

JS

Today, right now, my staff is myself and an associate director who does the budgeting, the accounting, and manages the apartments. I have a gallery associate, and I have a curatorial assistant. That's it. That's our staff right now. We have just offered a position to a new preparator. Our preparator left a little while ago so we're just bringing on a new preparator. But normally, that's our staff size, five people.

AK

Do your exhibitions require registrarial work or are they mostly commissions that are coming out of the residency program?

JS

Not out of the residency program per se because there's no concrete demands out of the residency program—you don't have to create an exhibition. Most of the time, we're working with the artist directly and creating works on site. We never really borrow works from collections, and mostly they're solo shows just because of our limitations right now. It just makes sense to work directly with an artist and create a show in that way. I haven't had time to think in a curatorial way like I used to at ASU, to create really good thematic group shows and get out and see studios, which I miss. I think more about the overall institution as my curating, how each individual exhibition, and perhaps artists-in-residence, dialogue and engage with one another to present a concept that follows with our audience and communities.

AK

You have all of these artists that are in residence, and then you have all the artists that you are working with in the exhibition program, but there isn't a whole jury of people that you need to run this by or be in dialogue with.

It's really you and the people that you want to work with out in the world. Is that correct?

JS

Pretty much, and talking with my team too, if there are people that they want to work with. We always offer it up if they want to work with somebody. There's not a hierarchy per se, but it has to be relevant to what we're doing and in alignment with our programming.

AK

Do you have a mission statement, or is there a mission that you reformulated when you got there? It sounds like the institution has changed dramatically from what you inherited to where it is now.

JS

There was a mission statement and it was pretty good. We just made a few adjustments to kind of include community engaged practices. The current statement is now: "GCAC is dedicated to the open exploration of contemporary art and visual culture: locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally through socially-engaged collaborations among artists, students, and the community."

AK

And what would you say is the ethos of the institution?

JS

Well, it's very open and democratic and for me, it's really thinking about community, doing exhibitions that are relevant topics to what's going on around us. That could be in the city, in the region, in the country, exhibitions that express what we all collectively have in common. Currently, we have an exhibition about borders, but it's about dreaming. What does it mean to dream? What does it mean to look forward? What does it mean to have desires and quests? We all have those. It could be framed around a certain topic, but let's have those conversations that are greater.

We've had exhibitions about trauma of place. It was an artist from Bosnia who had to leave during the war and saw some crazy stuff. Her dad stayed there. We connected her with a forensics investigator locally because

that's what she was interested in thinking about. What she wanted to do was learn to be a forensic artist so she could go back to Bosnia and interview women that were raped during the war. When she was interviewing them and they were talking, she would be listening to them and through their descriptions, drawing the perpetrators of these rapes, these crimes.

I said, "That's great, let's introduce you to our forensics investigator who's also a photographer." Through their conversations, he took her on a ride, and she started talking about this house that her family had, and how they were forced out and had to sign it over to the rebels. It was traumatic for her whole family. He told her look, "That's great, but that's on the other side of the world. Why do you still worry about that? I drive around this city every day and I have to see these places of trauma that I'm first on site for. Here is the intersection where a van flipped over, and 18 people were ejected and we were finding bodies in bushes and on roofs. When I first started working here, I had meltdowns at home and my therapist said do something." So she asked him, "What do you do artistically or what do you do creatively as an outlet?" He said, "I photograph." So, he goes back to those locations and photographs them in the morning, perfect light, and reclaims those places. So, he then pulls out these little, tiny Polaroids and shows them to her. She comes in my office just like foaming at the mouth, like, "Oh my God, look at what he showed me."

They started having this conversation and they created a whole exhibition about trauma of place that included her recording stories, her talking with her parents about this house, and how we all have traumas of place. What seems like very exclusive—I mean what do Bosnia and Santa Ana have in common?—is this sense of violence, gang warfare, all these kinds of things going on. We all have those moments where we have a trauma of place, someplace where a relative passed away, or we had a bad break-up, or we saw a car accident. So, we were able to have these more entry-level conversations with people as this exhibition occurred.

AK

I'm curious, because you've mentioned community engagement a few times, if you could talk a little bit about how that figures into the program and what that means to you.

JS

When I was at Arizona State, we were looking at artists that were working in socially-engaged practices, mostly in Latin America at the time. We were looking at Brazil and Argentina. The director and I decided we were going to look at those artists like people did with video art at one point: how do we

bring that into the institution and have a conversation in a respectful way? We wanted to see how these artists might work once they work in institutions.

We started a series in 2005 called Social Studies, where we invited artists-in-residence to ASU Art Museum for six-week residencies originally. The opening reception would literally be in an empty gallery. The artist would be there. We would have an opening reception and it was a chance for the artist to just meet the community and talk about what they were thinking about and then the project would develop in an open studio setting, the actual public gallery space, over the course of the exhibition through the artist's vision.

We worked first with Jarvis Lopez from Brazil. He's this amazing guy. He did some stuff at the São Paulo Biennial with woven bikes. They were amazing. Then, he just left them around so anybody that was at the Biennial could borrow these bikes. We brought him and the only request he had is that we just put cardboard on the entire floor. I'm telling you this because it leads into why I'm thinking what I'm thinking here.

The first day he was there, we had a high school class and a college class meet with him together. We were told he spoke English, but he really didn't. His gallerist was like "Oh yeah, Jarvis speaks English. He's all cool." It was pretty funny. He got there and we realized quickly that he only spoke Portuguese. So, during this class, he invited a student to be the translator for him, but the student did not speak Portuguese. It was this amazing moment — they had a 40-minute seminar class where this student was translating for Jarvis based on body gestures, based on visuals, based on things that he was sharing.

Then, as the class progressed, Jarvis proceeded to disrobe and then it turned into a life drawing class on the cardboard. So, he brought it back to the roots of art. The basics of art is drawing a figure. Of course, our curator of education comes in and is like, "Ah! Jarvis is nude in the gallery and we have elementary school classes coming!" So, the director called me into the office and was like, "John, what are we going to do?" I said, "Marilyn, do we really believe in these artists? Do you believe in this process of socially-engaged practice to the fullest? If we do, then there's only one thing we can do." She's like, "What's that?" I said, "We need to grab a video camera and document it."

So, that's what we did. This is where the artist goes, and we follow that lead. We had no problems during the whole exhibition and it really became about that trust in the artist. Most of the projects that we were doing were in the museum. They were that format. We worked with Josh Greene. We worked with Jillian McDonald, Julianne Swartz, and Jennifer Nelson.

When we did Gregory Sale's project, which bounced out into the community a little bit more because he was the first local artist we were able to work with — it gave us more time. We did a three-month project. We did 52 programs all based on the topic of incarceration. We brought people

to the Tent City Jail. We brought Sheriff Joe Arpaio into the museum for a conversation.

AK

Oh my gosh!

JS

We had a roundtable discussion with him at the table, but also people from his team, people from Amnesty International, people that were formerly incarcerated in his jails that have formed these support groups, people from the Attorney General's office, the prosecutor's office, probations, ASU faculty, and students. We had a civil discourse for two and a half hours with audience around, and then it opened into a conversation with the audience. A couple of days later, we brought Angela Davis out to speak.

And then we brought Barry Scheck out from the Innocence Project. It was 52 programs. We had incarcerated youth come to the museum and we had current inmates come to the museum and work with us from the beginning. They came back when they were freed when the exhibition was closing. That got me thinking when I got here that the walls can't be the barrier of the institution and limiting the artist with those walls is a mistake. We're very much about the open process. We're very much about thinking about the community and thinking about community engagement, but what does that mean? How do you truly engage with communities and allow an artist to realize their vision? That's what we're doing. Community engagement is very, very deep to us. It's building partnerships, building relationships, building trust, building a Rolodex where if an artist comes, we're like, "You're interested in this? Here's our contact. Go!"

We have these good contacts. We have these great community relationships that we can reach out to an activist group that's protesting gentrification, the school district, city leaders, or developers. Whoever they want to work with, we reach out. If we don't know those contacts, then we pick up the phone and we cold-call and we end up in weird spaces as well, like crematoriums.

AK

It sounds like you always start with the artist: you start with a dialogue with the artist and then you see whether it needs to leave the walls of the exhibition space, and what resources they would need.

JS

It's all about the artist. It's all about following that creative process and not putting any pressure on the artist and that process can change as well. If we're deep into a project that they think they're going to realize, and then all of a sudden, they've met somebody and that person has informed their thinking in a different way, and the project has to shift 100 percent, we go there. For us, when a project is realized, we kind of know it with the artist. It's then our opportunity to market what has been realized. So, it's not that we're marketing what's going to be realized and then it has to be realized. We don't try to put the pressure on the artist that way. We really want to leave it open-ended for the process to unfold the way creativity unfolds.

AK

With that working methodology, is there ever an instance where your galleries are dark because the project has gone outside of the building, or are you always trying to have something on view in the space while also pursuing these threads?

JS

There's never a time we're dark.

AK

So, you balance out the rhythms to make sure that projects that need to be in the gallery are on at the same time that you're pursuing things that are out in the community.

JS

Or, if it looks like all of a sudden it's going to be dark for some reason, we find an artist that needs that opportunity to use the space and ask if they want to do a performance or what they want to do and then we figure it out. It's the institution's responsibility, it's not the artist's.

AK

No, of course.

JS

This also comes out of going to Open Engagement conferences and hearing so many of those conversations where they have the institution-led panel talking about social engagement. I used to go to those and I was probably that angry guy in the audience all the time that people were like, "Oh God, Spiak's going again." But you would have a curator from an institution, usually with a title like Curator of Public Engagement, located in the education department rather than the curatorial department, start the conversation with "we had this wayfinding issue at the institution, so we brought in these artists to develop a project to help solve this way of bringing people from that lobby to the upstairs galleries."

Or another institution would always say "we thought we had all this money for a landscape architect and that money fell through and we were left with this big grass area, so brought these artists in and asked them to activate the space." Or institutions complaining about not having young audiences, so they have the artists develop their engagement projects that they feel would attract that demographic. I would get frustrated by these panels and would always ask, "Why are the artists always being brought in to solve the problems of the institution?" This is a medium just like video art, just like photography, just like painting. Why can't we respect it for the medium it is, and allow the artists to do their projects the way they envision it without any of the "You need to get audiences," or "Here's these mandate checklists you need to check off," for the institution's benefit.

AK

Right.

JS

That's what drives the expansion of these institutions. They always seem to be attempting to take over these social practice projects in communities, or have artists develop them for a targeted group, try to take claim for them, which usually results in messing them up. You look at what institutions have tried to realize in inner city communities where they haven't been engaged. As soon as the institution tries to get a hand in it, it opens up this can of worms where it doesn't become authentic anymore and opens up legal issues because the institution has to make sure they're doing certain things right. The institution has an agenda, to show how it is "serving" certain communities to either address funders or social criticism and pressures the institution has been feeling. Now all of a sudden...

AK

You're creating new problems for people.

JS

These institutions attempting to engage with communities that aren't, and haven't ever been, connected with the institution, are large distances away, and for which the institution doesn't even understand. When, in reality, there's places one block away that are ethnically diverse that you're not even engaging with and yet you're going to go into another area just because you think it'll serve your checklist? It just drives me nuts. Or the education department too, where there's a mandate to serve children or make something that's engaging, but it's done in a standard formula, without taking the time needed to understand the diverse needs communities might have and what might be truly relevant.

AK

I think there are a lot of good intentions, but I think there's also a lot of confusion.

JS

It's abusive to the artists, its abusive to those communities for which the institutions are attempting to engage. It's really not allowing the creative process, inspiration, dialogue and engagement to flow the way it needs to.

AK

Exactly.

JS

Because the institution has placed its agenda, and perhaps limitations, from the very beginning of a project with an artist, it creates these restrictions to creativity and the creative flow. Timelines do this as well. If we are to build trust, openness, and discovery, we can't do this.

AK

There were a lot of things that you brought up that I think are very interesting that I want to make sure we get to. Backtracking a little bit, because you brought up language, how do you deal with language in your community? Are you a bilingual institution?

JS

So, right now, we have a great team member who is making everything bilingual. Text panels are obnoxious enough. They're huge. We have entry-level text panels for every exhibition. To make those bilingual, it just takes up too much room. Instead, we've now created a zine at the front lobby that has all those texts in Spanish. We've just made a Spanish component of our website, and we have Spanish tours once a week of our exhibitions, and we have bilingual team members that are here on site. So, we're not perfect but we're getting there and we're continuing to expand that ability.

AK

Right, but you're acknowledging that that's a part of how you want to see your audience grow and how you want to engage with the community that's around you.

JS

Exactly. Well, it's just the need of the community around us. It's not expanding anything, but serving the audiences that already exist.

AK

Who is your audience, and do you think of your audience as being the same thing as your community?

JS

For sure.

AK

Is it a monolithic thing?

JS

When I got here, they told me that we have art walks and tons of people show up. To me, that's a cringe-worthy moment; it's not about the numbers. In Phoenix they had an art walk and it was just a bunch of kids cruising. They would get a lot of people there, but they're not looking at or fully engaged with the work. I knew something was different about this place. One of the first shows we did had Gillian Wearing, Christian Jankowski, and Guy Ben-Ner in it and everybody was sitting and watching these pieces fully through. We get about 2,000 people first Saturday of the month when we have this monthly art walk.

AK

That's a lot.

JS

It's a lot, and they read the text panels and they engage with the work and nothing ever gets touched or broken. It's just mind-boggling. They ask incredible questions. When we tell artists this, they have that same response that I do, "Oh yeah, whatever, you get 2,000 people through." Then they come and they're like holy cow! Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle was blown away by the people we had. She was like, "This is incredible and the way they engage with my work is stronger than I've ever had people engage with my work." They're tough topics. She did a performance with Tyler Matthew Oyer with nooses on their necks and pulling each other back and forth. It was intense and people engaged with it.

People will sit with an hour-long video here and they read the text panels, and it's age diverse and it's culturally diverse. That's why we tell the artists that they don't need to build our audience. We have an audience here. They will come to you. I think it really reflects the community. I think if you came to an opening, you would see the cross-section of our community. We see a lot of people that we know now that are from the community that weren't engaged and now are engaged. We do outreach programming.

We have open studio spaces downstairs where anybody can come in, and it's a free space to join other artists for creative process making because a lot of times, it's not safe to do that in our community. A lot of times, you're not supported as an artist of Latino descent. It is not seen in homes as a job option, a career option. There's not a lot of space in your home. Maybe you're living with multiple other family members here. So, we tried to make a free zone for people just to come and create with no agenda. We've tried to make it a real community space.

We also have realized that we had these empty classroom spaces that were being underutilized, so instead of importing artists from elsewhere, we found organizations that existed in the community that didn't have physical spaces, like Breath of Fire Latina Theater group. We just said you need a space, here's your space, here's \$10,000.00 to kind of seed you for the first year. Just exist because we believe in what you're doing and your mission. Now they've been here for three years.

AK

That's great. So, then what you're doing at Grand Central isn't just supporting individual artists through residencies and exhibition programs, but you're

also supporting local community organizations and giving them grants and space as well.

JS

Yes.

AK

That's super exciting. When you arrived were the apartments already there? Was the structure of the building already in place so you didn't have to do renovations or things like that?

JS

We've done some aesthetic cleaning up, but everything was in place. We had classrooms and places downstairs.

AK

Incredible!

JS

There was supposed to be a computer lab when I arrived, and I was super excited about it. It had about 30 Macs in there and I just thought we can do film creation, programming, whatever, but then I found out that they were all wiped, and they were all old, and out of date and they had never been used. The campus brought a whole bunch of them down here. These spaces that we thought we were going to utilize in one way, we had to shift.

AK

You're in an interesting position where you have a massive space that is multifunctional, and you could theoretically decide to reclaim that restaurant space or this other space and bring it back into the fold of the organization. I'm curious how you think about scale — how you are scale-wise now and maybe how you're thinking about it in the future.

JS

We have a space with a tenant right now and we are going through that questioning, they are constantly late on their rent, but they've been in here since 1999. They serve a little bit of the community but not a very big direct connection. I'm eyeing that space and it's a question of whether we take that monthly amount out of our budget. It would make a really good black box projection space and activate the downstairs in a new way, or it would make a really good multi-purpose room, or what new tenant might be a better connection with our communities. We could do lectures down there and public programs.

In the next month, I'm doing a big fundraising campaign to see if we can replace some of that for at least two years. Then, we're going to work on an endowment so we can actually hire another employee. We really need a public programs person, and we probably need a curator as well. So, that's the goal. It's our 20th anniversary in 2019.

We just got a new support group. We've had two meetings so far and we've got the program in place. Right now, it's about marketing. We've run a whole series of ads in *X-TRA* magazine to kind of stake our claim. We've asked artists that we've worked with for quotes about what it was to work with us, and we got really good ones. We're trying to put that out there in the community and see if we can get some more regional recognition for what we're doing.

Two of those artists are in the exhibition *Made in L.A.* at the Hammer right now and they talk about their first shows at Grand Central, like Beatriz Cortez talking about her first show. Alison O'Daniel talking about the early stages of creating *The Tube Thieves*, that we supported and that we sent her off to New York to film at the Maverick Concert Hall to re-envision John Cage's 4'33."

AK

That's great. Would you say that scale for you would not be about leaving the building you're in or anything like that, but more about perhaps repurposing some of the spaces that are in the building you currently have and making a more financially stable institution?

JS

Those two things are key. We do expand outside the building through projects, but we don't want to expand our responsibilities in terms of space.

AK

You're not looking to quadruple your staff size. You're just looking to structurally enhance it a bit.

JS

Just two more employees would make us breathe a lot easier.

AK

Right, it would mean you could take that real vacation next year.

JS

Or my staff could just really focus a little bit better on things they want to achieve.

AK

You mentioned that you have a support group. Do you have a board as well and how do they function?

JS

We didn't want to do a board because we already answer to the College of the Arts. I report to the dean of the College of the Arts. Our budget is this corporate arm of the university so all the revenue that we're generating goes into this thing called the ASC, and they have a board. The university has a foundation board. So, instead of a board, we decided to have the Director's Circle. It's just an advisory committee and the next director can make it their own if they choose to.

I didn't want to make it like a board and now they're indebted to this institution and they're controlling too much. They're just a group of really supportive individuals and visionaries that can help guide us. Maybe an annual event to connect us with new individuals that could help support Grand Central or be here when we need a little bit of an audience.

AK

Do you have artists that are involved with that as well?

JS

We have artists, we have one celebrity, we have some funders.

AK

Which celebrity is it, I'm curious?

JS

Louis Pérez from Los Lobos.

AK

Nice.

JS

It seemed like the right move. He was originally going to study art at Otis. He's an interesting guy.

AK

You were talking earlier about taking ads out in *X-TRA* and reaching the regional Southern California audience. I'm curious how you see Grand Central in relation to audiences that are outside of your local community. Maybe another way of putting that is, who do you see yourselves in dialogue with as an institution?

JS

I think that's where some of our frustrations are and some of the reasons we're running the ad right now, because the art world is in L.A., it's not in Orange County. We're trying to figure out how to draw more people in Orange County and educate them and get them interested in contemporary art. Because Orange County's art museum is currently closed as they move into a temporary space before they build their new building, there's this real lull right now with the energy of contemporary arts. We're kind of frustrated that we're not in those consistent dialogues. When people talk about residencies out here, they're talking about 18th Street and Main Museum. When they are talking about interesting programs right now, the ICA is being talked about, Hammer Museum, or Vincent Price Art Museum, and we're never in those conversations. Yet, a lot of those artists that they're showing are artists that we have shown previously and have kind of established and supported in different ways.

I think we're using the *X-TRA* ad to establish ourselves — at least consider us in the conversation. So, we're trying to do that and we're trying

to figure out if there is a publication in Orange County that people who are interested in contemporary art read. Is there someplace that people are going to that might be like-minded or how do we bring people to the institution and start educating them on contemporary art?

I've been going to a whole series of events that different organizations are holding and I'm trying to meet the interesting people at those events and then inviting them here for a tour and talking about what we're doing and trying to build connections. It's starting to snowball, but I think it's going to be a little bit of a process.

AK

I'm curious along those lines about whatever frustrations or roadblocks you've experienced in the seven years that you've been the director. Is that one of those frustrations or are there other ones that kind of impact your work on a day-to-day basis?

JS

Now that we've built this thing, we've had time to build our reputation, now the frustration is getting recognized. We've been doing this stuff, now we have enough that we can say, "Look, what other institution in Orange County, or even Southern California, was up for two Emmys this year? What other institution in Orange County has had two Warhol grants in the last five years? We have a MAP, a New Music USA, we have Metabolic Studio grant." So, there's not many other organizations that are doing this in Orange County, let alone L.A. I think now that frustration is, how do we get in a bigger discourse and dialogue than the audience for Orange County. It's just frustrating.

I think the other big frustration is that the campus, with its physical distance from Grand Central Art Center, isn't as engaged with us as I feel they could be. That's frustrating to me.

AK

Do you do publications?

JS

I was really critical of the publications when I came.

AK

Right, exactly, and then you had 18,000 catalogues sitting in your

closet, or whatever it was.

JS

We have done a few publications. We just did one with an artist from Mexico City and we did one in collaboration with UCSD on a project we did about deafness, but we're producing our first major catalogue with Cognate Collective who have been in residence for five years. It's going to document their time here and that'll be a big meaty catalogue. We're working with a designer in

L.A., and I think it's going to be a really good bilingual catalogue. We're also producing an LP with David Greenberger. He's an artist from Upstate New York and Andrew Shea has designed the album cover for us. So, that should be an art worldly kind of talking point. And Philip Glass' Orange Mountain label is releasing a 1DVD/2CD box set of our Vireo opera at the start of the new year.

AK

Do you ever tour projects? Do you try to partner with other institutions to try to get some of these amazing projects that you're generating out into the world in other places?

JS

We've collaborated with some institutions such as Otis, UC San Diego, and the Orange County Museum of Art, but we really haven't toured exhibitions because we don't have a registrar or shipping, all that stuff. We're just not good at that and it wouldn't be a responsible practice without such team members in place.

AK

Sure, so the administrative structural elements of it prevent those kind of partnerships from unfolding.

JS

The partnerships we have done, like with Cal State Long Beach, we've hosted an artist here that's helped develop the project that was realized there. We just did that with Otis. We hosted an artist that's in their Pacific Standard Time show that's now touring nationally. So, we hosted the artist here and helped that artist create the piece that went into the show. We created with Here and Now in Boston. Paul Ramirez Jonas was developing the project. He developed it here, he workshopped it here, and then that ended up becoming a public

art piece in Boston, then Mexico City. So, we collaborate with institutions that way and build those partnerships, but we really haven't toured our exhibitions per se.

AK

That's sometimes another way of bringing outside attention to the things that you're doing in other cities. But I'm also curious about who are the institutions or organizations that you look to personally that are inspiring to you, that you're in dialogue with or that you aspire to. This doesn't have to be even an arts organization or even of the contemporary moment. This can also be a conceptual question.

JS

I loved what the Queens Museum was doing, but I don't know where it's going now with all the changes that have been taking place there since Tom left and Laura Raicovich's unfortunate departure. But I really admire the way they were working with community and what Tania Bruguera had developed there. I just find that really inspiring. I like what Courtney Fink is doing at Common Fields right now. I think as an organization, in thinking about collective experience and equities, I think she's just nailing it right now and I'm really inspired by what she's doing. There's a local organization right now I'm a little envious of. It's the Ecology Center, where two artists purchased this farm and they've created an education center with public programming and farm-to-table events. Just the way they're doing it is very, very smart. I'm still constantly looking at ASU because I'm blown away by the way that institution as a whole works, not just the museum, but that campus and the way they're thinking. Super innovative and super aggressive, and I love that. They just opened the Barbara Boxer and Sandra Day O'Connor building in Washington, D.C. so that their students that are studying law and political science and communications can go there and be there. It's like this huge, towering building that's all ASU.

Then, they just announced this week that they just got a 100,000 square foot historic building in downtown L.A. that they're going to preserve with the Hearst company, Hearst newspapers, and they're going to have elements of their Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication out there as well as their Herberger Institute for Designs and the Arts. To me,

that's just the way it should work. You're in Arizona, you're kind of landlocked, you see that the mass communication field and arts world are really moving to L.A. Why not have a branch where your students can directly connect with that and be in the heart of that action? They just built a relationship with LACMA. They're doing these art history programs for free. They're just super aggressive and I love that. That university president, Michael Crow, the way he thinks is just brilliant.

There's no barriers to it and I would love to see more of that here at Cal State Fullerton because we have a campus that has the potential to do that. We're located between Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego, and Riverside. We're like this hub or intersection space, and we have great weather. I see things starting to change, so I am very positive about the future of this university.

AK

You're selling it to me.

JS

Well, you could court the very best faculty members you want, and I think there's a mindset and attitude here that is beginning to better understand these opportunities.

AK

How does the name of your institution affect what you do? I'm curious what you think of as an "arts center." The "Grand Central" part of your name comes from the market, I'm assuming?

JS

Yes.

AK

How do you understand what a center is and also how do you think that that's perceived by the public? One of the things that prompted us when we were starting this project was thinking about how ICA doesn't really have name recognition for a

general audience. When you hear Institute of Contemporary Art, unless you're kind of in the know, maybe you don't understand that it's a place where you can come and see art. People might think of us as a research center or something like that, especially because of our affiliation with the university. I'm really curious how people are thinking about the language that gets used in their day-to-day lives.

JS

I think a lot of people that probably come in for the art side of it think that we show student art because of the Cal State Fullerton name attachment, but we don't normally show student work. The center side of it, I think a lot of the community gets. We were thrown into this community, we were thrown right into the center. We were a gentrifier in terms of institutions establishing in downtown Santa Ana. There's no other way to put it. We were a space that was put in here for economic development. It's gentrification. That's what happens with the arts. It's the history of the art world.

For us, it's really taking responsibility for that, being an institution that is not just doing complacent exhibitions or doing projects that are feel-good or only speak to an insider art world audience, but really getting down and dirty, inviting those conversations about gentrification into this space, being a hub for connection. Also, that means constantly having your ear down and knowing what's happening on social media and hearing what's being protested and who you can work with and who you can't work with and who's hated right now and who's loved and what's going on politically in the city.

You have to be down with everything that's going on because you could step into something instantly. Fortunately, right now I think we're doing stuff that's respected by a majority of our communities. Our artists have been respected by the community, but that could blow up at any minute. That's what's good because it keeps us on our toes.

AK

Earlier you had mentioned wanting there to be a sense of it being a community center. Art centers can be exhibition spaces, but a center also has those other

reference points of being a community center or gathering point. It was interesting for me to think that it could have that other connotation in the context that you're in.

JS

It's become a gathering site because we have a plaza that's outside so a lot of things happen out there. It's becoming this place where people connect on multiple levels, not just about the arts. Because of the conversations we have here, they're not always focused on art, they're focused on what it means to have an understanding of policies, events, tragedies, and changes that take place around you, in your city and communities.

Going back to that idea of inspirational institutions, I would have to mention the MCA Denver. I just have to throw that out, as I have enjoyed following their engaged activities since Adam had The Lab space at the mall, which later he was allowed to fold that programming into MCA. They had this amazing series called "Mixed Taste" that brought diverse perspectives to conversations. They actually just sold their "Mixed Taste" lecture series concept to the city—do you know this, that they sold that? They were doing it at The Lab and then they brought that over to the MCA. They just sold the concept to the city for a substantial price because the city loved the idea. I find that very intriguing, how the arts and such dialogue can be valued.

AK

That's so weird.

JS

They were able to leverage it because Adam Lerner was like, "We're over that. We've done that. People get it. This is what we do." Apparently, they've used that money now to buy a bus to do performative programming to take people out and do things, which I find extremely interesting.

AK

Interesting. You were talking about this idea of the center and the context that you're in. You have a number of people in your community that are undocumented. Can you talk about the contemporary political context that we're in now in the

U.S. and how that affects your day-to-day working realities? Are you concerned about ICE coming in and going after some of your residents? How do these discussions play out, not just on a conceptual artistic level, but on a practical level in your day-to-day work with the people that you care for and are trying to create a safe space for?

JS

It's definitely impacting us. It's impacting everybody's life. The stress level in the city is much higher. There's always ICE alerts. People are saying there's an ICE raid in this area, avoid this area. We just housed a student that's not from our university who is from Iran — she's a University of California Irvine student — and through a conversation with one of her faculty members, she was losing all of her funding because of the new policies. They put Iran on the No Travel list. Because of that, all her funding is drying up and our government is kind of crushing their economy right now. She was living in her studio kind of illegally over there and we said we can provide her an apartment here. Why should she be doing that? Let's make her an artist-in-residence so she can finish out her program. She couldn't travel home, her parents couldn't come here. It was a mess. We were able to house her for six months here at Grand Central as an artist-in-residence, just to kind of help that situation. But that's something we're dealing with every day.

The gentrification problem too. How do we support the local businesses that we feel keep the cultural identity of the community? How do we support growth and support forward motion, and at the same time talk about rent control? It's difficult — they just built a huge affordable housing community here. You think that's great, affordable housing. What could be bad about that? You're going to put a whole bunch of people into it. Of course, they tore out some houses to do that, but they've built this massive affordable housing community. Then you realize that some of the people that were living in some of those houses were undocumented and they can't apply for the affordable housing because it's all government-related and they don't meet the qualifications to apply. So, there's always these complexities to it that are really difficult.

AK

Do you feel that the organization has a responsibility to the

political context of the community and the stakes of the community? Is there a line that stops at the gallery or is it porous?

JS

I think it has to be porous. You can't create work in a void. You can't create work behind a wall. You have to be aware of everything that's going on and you have to also think of the consequences of an artist working with that. If an artist is going in that direction, I'm going to have that conversation. There's a project right now that we are working on, the project with David Greenberger that has an LP with cover design by Ed Ruscha, I think it's a super respectful project and an approach the artist has been involved with for around 40 years. He has informal conversations with senior citizens and he tells them everything that he's doing and he records their stories and then they create these songs, but it's mostly a bunch of white dudes creating these songs based on the stories of people that live here that are mostly a different community. It's that whole idea of whose voice — who can speak for whom? How do we frame it? It is complex, but we have had great conversations with all those who participated in the conversations and the resulting story songs provide an amazing insight into Santa Ana, those who live here, why they are here, what they desire. It's stuff that I'm already thinking about before this project is even finished. In a real world and in a way that if I was not being respectful to the artist, I would have said to David, "You really need the cover art to be by somebody local." But they're people David desires to work with and we invited this artist, so we have to go with that feeling and direction of the artist. I also think with such connections, these stories of those in our communities will have the opportunity to be heard by so many others, sharing what it is like to live in our wonderful city, a city that is often given a bad rap.

If we get hit with criticism, we have to be honest. We get it. We understand that. Come criticize us and come be critical of it because that's a legitimate criticism of the institution and can we avoid that in the future, while still respecting the artist and still respecting the community. I think transparency is the most important thing all the way around. To say "Yeah, we screwed up," or we didn't screw up. We were following the artist and we 100 percent believe in that artist and that work, and this is the direction that he wanted to go in. Was it right in the alignment with this community? That is still to be determined.

AK

Do you ever try to have conversations before a project

comes into play? If you have certain reservations like that, is that something that you try to do?

JS

We always talk about the diversity of this community, respect for this community, what's going on in this community, the difficulties, the challenges, the organizations that we see as allies, the organizations that might cause some conflict and difficulties. We talk about all those things with artists on a regular basis and artists navigate it in different ways.

I came to an opening before I was announced as director and this group was protesting out front in front of our building with signs that said "No browns welcome. Your culture is not our culture." I went out and talked to the people and asked who was leading the protest. I said, "I would love to connect with you guys." They introduced me to the individual leading the protest, and for months they wouldn't meet with me and then when I finally was able to talk them into meeting with us, they wouldn't meet me at Grand Central because they would have been seen coming into Grand Central, they would be in trouble with their own communities.

Then, we brought artist Jules Rochelle out — do you know Jules Rochelle? She's this amazing social practice artist and she went to Boston to a law school to teach the lawyers how to socially engage with communities. It's an incredible program that she's doing.

Jules came down and was like, "I just want to meet with you." I was like I don't know why I'm willing to invite you to be an artist-in-residence, but the energy she was giving off, she just needed to be an artist-in-residence. One of the first places we went to was El Centro, this organization. We went to an opening there and we're the only white people there and we're the only ones that don't speak Spanish. Jules just loved this organization and she started connecting with them and halfway through her project, there was a public art commission for \$90,000 that was available in the city and they brought me in to say who the public artist should be.

First, I don't do public art and second, I was advising them to split it up into grants for those people that were displaced from that community instead of the arts. They said no, it has to be for arts. I said you have to ask the local arts organizations who they would recommend because it's not fair for me as a newcomer to come in and say that; it's not fair for me to represent this community in that way. So, they asked El Centro and El Centro came to me and asked for a meeting. When they came to me, they asked permission to invite Jules to be the artist that they nominated.

It was amazing that this organization that was protesting us is now asking my permission to nominate an artist that we brought to the community,

who for all intents and purposes shouldn't be the direct contact connection but just nailed it with her residency in connecting with purpose, and she created the public art piece. She won the commission and created this piece that was amazing and respectful to the community, it engaged with youth in that direct community on a collective design.

AK

Great.

JS

There's those moments of being down with this community, understanding the community and connecting in a way or through the relationship we've built and allowing artists to ride on those relationships.

AK

Do you think of yourself as an institution? Is that the word that you would use and if not, what would you say?

JS

We are an institution. I think you can't escape it. We're all the elements of an institution, but can we be an innovative, new approach to an institution? That's what we're trying to figure out. We are related to a university, we're associated with the city, we're an institution. In terms of long-term, I'm not sure what I want to do. I miss working at an institution where perhaps I'm not the leader and I feel like the things I've done here now could be a real resource to an institution if they let me play, more in a curatorial approach or through artists-in-residence.

I can bring in funding support. I can bring in contacts. I can bring in community relations, but I would really love to kind of support another director's aggressive vision but not have to be the one responsible for everything, as it can be overwhelming at times. Especially in an institution like this, there are days I'm plunging toilets, writing grants, talking to reporters to make pitches, driving artists-in-residence places, laying out exhibitions, touring classes. Yesterday, we had an alarm go off early in the morning, so we have to look at the security cameras and figure out who it was. It's somebody we don't know, so I've got to email all the residents and say is this somebody you know or do we have to notify the police that there was a stranger up in the apartments because it's all keycard access.

AK

That's real.

JS

I would love to just be at an institution where I have colleagues that I can just bounce ideas off of and nothing is too stupid, and through those stupid ideas, something really amazing comes about. I have a great team here at Grand Central Art Center and the new members of our team are amazing, so the bouncing is beginning. I am truly excited to see where the coming year take us!
