

Co-Lab Projects: The Three Directors

JUNE 11, 2014 *By intsculpturectr in ART & ACTION Tags: GRACELEE LAWRENCE* [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



Kyle Evans Installation at Co-Labs Projects.

I am thrilled to introduce you to the directors of Co-Lab Projects, a dynamic and constantly evolving non-profit art space in Austin, Texas. Since 2008, Co-Lab has been producing around 30 exhibitions a year across two sites and other venues, offering a range of immersive, experimental, and free programming in a non-commercial space. It is made possible by an all-volunteer team of administrators, advisers, directors and interns. As an artist-run organization, they work directly with the exhibiting artists to present well produced, enjoyable, and thought provoking contemporary work to a diverse and growing audience.



<https://iscbookreviews.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/lisa-choinacky.gif>

Lisa Choinacky Installation at Co-Labs Projects.

How did Co-Lab Projects begin? What kinds of work do you show and why?

Sean Michael Gaulager: Co-Lab came about when I decided to see if there were any interesting places available in my old Eastside neighborhood. Drawing on past experiences and what we had been observing in the Austin art scene, we decided to create a space that focused on sustainability (economic and ecological) and experimentation.

I've been active in the Austin art scene for ten years and have seen a lot of change. I can honestly say that work is becoming more interesting and is in better conversation with what is happening nationally. The community of artists and administrators is stronger and more mutually supportive all the time. More artists are staying here after school and relocating from larger art centers.



(<https://iscbookreviews.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/ben-brandt-all-over.gif>)

Ben Brandt, All Over. Installation at Co-Labs Projects

Austin Bradford Nelsen: We have an interest in showing and exploring experiential and temporal installation, performance, or collaborative work. Most galleries are focused on curating profitable shows and don't leave a lot of room to experiment. However, there are many artists in Austin that are interested in sculpture, installation and performance. We provide a venue for these artists and take the pressure off the need to show marketable work. This structure leads to more genuine and open-ended approaches to art making within the context of an art space or the contemporary art community as a whole.



(https://iscbookreviews.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/bullshit-detector_jamie-pan.gif)
 Jamie Panzer, Bullshit Detector. Installation at Co-Labs Projects.

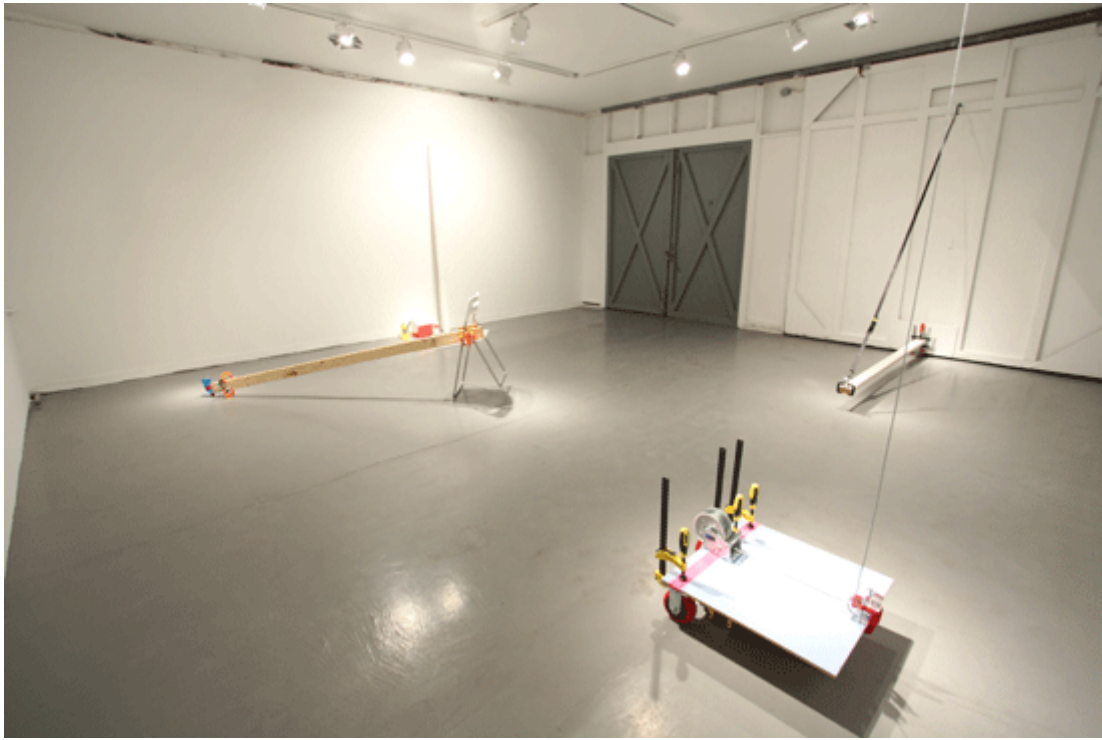
Christopher Charles Whiteburch: When Austin moved back to Texas, we all sat down and Co-Lab became Co-Lab Projects. We have a vision to champion contemporary art in Texas and beyond. We are working to create an organization that extends beyond any particular place yet has roots knowing where it came from and where it is going. I want Co-Lab to show adventurous projects that challenge the viewer and push the artist to take risks and step out of his/her comfort zone. Co-Lab is special because there is room for artists to experiment and even to ultimately fail.

In a sentence, how would you describe the art scene in Austin?

SMG: Austin is a community of strong-minded and resourceful individuals who create their own opportunities where few may exist initially, working collectively to ensure the future of our city as a destination for contemporary art.

ABN: There isn't a big commercial market here for contemporary art yet, but there are some very talented artists creating a vernacular that widely differs from what is happening in L.A. or New York. There is a regional style and movement that is finding its voice.

CCW: Austin may not have the infrastructure of a strong collector base and traditional commercial gallery scene, but there is plenty of great contemporary work being created here and I believe we are continuing to build upon a strong grassroots community of diverse artists and arts organizations.



<https://iscbookreviews.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/robert-jackson-harrington.gif>

Robert Jackson Harrington Installation at Co-Labs Projects.

For more information, check out co-labprojects.org (<http://co-labprojects.org>)

By [Gracelee Lawrence](https://blog.sculpture.org/gracelee-lawrence/) (<https://blog.sculpture.org/gracelee-lawrence/>)

Sean Michael Gaulager, the Executive Director & Curator of Co-Lab Projects, has lived in Austin since the age of 12. He is a co-founder of Pump Project Art Complex, Cantanker Magazine, and Co-Lab Projects and was the Assistant Director of Volitant Gallery from 2007-2008.

Austin Bradford Nelsen, the Director of Development & Communications at Co-Lab Projects, was born in Dallas, TX and moved to Austin in high school, where he became friends with Sean. He attended Pepperdine College and lived in LA for several years before returning to Austin in 2010.

Christopher Charles Whiteburch, the Director of Special Projects and Facilities at Co-Lab, was born in Waco, TX and received a BFA in Studio Art from UT Austin in 2012.

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