

[Home](#) » [Reviews](#) » Good Mourning Tis of Thee at Co-Lab Projects

REVIEWS / VISUAL ART

## *Good Mourning Tis of Thee* at Co-Lab Projects

by Thao Votang | Published November 24, 2017



*Good Mourning Tis of Thee* reminds me of what Co-Lab Projects' heart is made of — a full-throttle, 150% ALL THE TIME mentality. Co-curated by artist Alyssa Taylor Wendt and Co-Lab Projects' Executive Director and Curator Sean Gaulager, the exhibition includes more than 100 works of art by more than 60 artists.

"Death and cycles of transformation have long been themes that my personal art practice addresses," said Wendt. "The motivation behind this particular exhibit was to examine and unpack the relationship between our lack of rituals and fear of physical death in terms of corporeal impermanence but also in

consideration of the rampant urban renewal and over-development and demolition happening in cities throughout the world.”



The exhibition swallows you once you pass through the front doors. Maggie Douglas’ mural *Aether Steppe (Invocation of William Fuld)* riffs off Ouija boards and has been installed on the floor. Offset by 30-foot-long curtains Gaulager salvaged from the alley dumpster, a salon style portion has been installed and is complete with red walls, two couches, a rug, and bouquet of flowers that have died and dried throughout the run of the exhibition. The exhibition stretches into the back room, bathrooms, and basement.

“Originally Alyssa proposed a scaled-down version of this show but I, as per usual, wanted to do the largest, craziest, most difficult version because I can’t fucking help myself,” said Gaulager. “Her intricate interweavings of destruction, urban renewal, death, mourning, and transformation address so much of what is happening in Austin, the art community here, our organization and our personal lives. I found it profound, timely, and it just made sense for our last exhibition at DEMO.”





The entire exhibition is dense and the salon even more so. I let my attention be pulled by the works and happily found myself at works by artists I am not very familiar with: Rachelle Diaz, Robert Melton, Benjy Russell, Julia Solis, and Beth Schindler. While planning the exhibition, Prince, one of Wendt's dogs, passed away. Before cremating him, she sat *shiva* with him and documented the process. The photographs of Prince's body surrounded by flowers and his toys are sprinkled throughout and provide a very real moment of mourning. Shared themes in the salon overlap and point to one another: spaces, busts, fragments, skulls, dogs, heads, bodies, absence, and things left behind. Empty rooms, gestures left without evidence of the perpetrator, decay, abandon, and ephemera tangle between the works.

"Like any creative project, you can go forth with specific intentions," remarked Wendt. "But the exhibition becomes its own animal that you can't completely control, so I was fascinated by this process."

Gaulager said, "For six months leading up to the installation, Alyssa and I would bring ideas and artists to the table and deliberate over how they fit in, what they could contribute, how their work would affect the overall exhibition. Our golden rule was that we each had to be ok with the other curator's idea, if either one of us was a strong 'no' regarding anything it was off the table. We each fought for a thing or two here or there but mostly we could see the value in what was proposed."



Wendt and Gaulager received old, new, and site-specific work from the chosen artists. Audio from a video projection, *A Requiem for Douglass* by Oren Goldenberg provides a soundtrack to the main exhibition space. The project reflects on the demolition of [Detroit's Brewster-Douglass Projects](#) and points to the worry both curators have for Austin's art community. *Arch* by Seth Schwaiger/Elizabeth McDonald Schwaiger poignantly comforts us with its massive scale and engraving: *What courage to love in a world where all that one loves will be lost.*



Large, energetic installations by Jules Buck Jones and Angelbert Metoyer draw visitors back into the building down toward the basement. The sour smell of stale urine is unmistakable as visitors walk down into the darkness. *LST VSSLZ* by Wendt includes a boat filled with pine boughs that add to your olfactory experience. "Syrian food and sundries" are laid out around the boat on military tarps as if Charon might take the survival items of refugees instead of money in exchange for passage across the rivers to the world of the dead. Ryan' Hawk's *Untitled (vacuum)* displays a body in a black bag, the air vacuumed out so that the bag tightens to reveal the body within, replayed uncomfortably over and over. Scott Hocking's *Hanging Cairn* is a monument to death, but also reminded me of cocoons and rebirth.





*Good Mourning Tis of Thee* is not an exhibition to only visit once. Like the slow forgetting of memories, seeing older work again refreshed the work in my mind on my second visit. I will undoubtedly forget works I loved in the show and mix works together. The imperfection of our memory and the information overload of 60-plus artists and 100-plus works forced me to look a little more closely. This is the last show at DEMO gallery and I cross all my fingers in the hope that Co-Lab Projects reopens in a more permanent space because they will do this kind of exhibition and go 150% for our artists.

[Good Mourning Tis of Thee](#) is on view through November 25, 2017 at Co-Lab Projects' DEMO gallery. Images courtesy of Co-Lab Projects.

---

[Thao Votang](#) is co-editor of Conflict of Interest, a writer, and co-founder of [Tiny Park](#). Sean Gaulager is on the Conflict of Interest Advisory Council.

---

Share:

Related

Sean Gaulager  
 August 5, 2016  
 In "Articles"

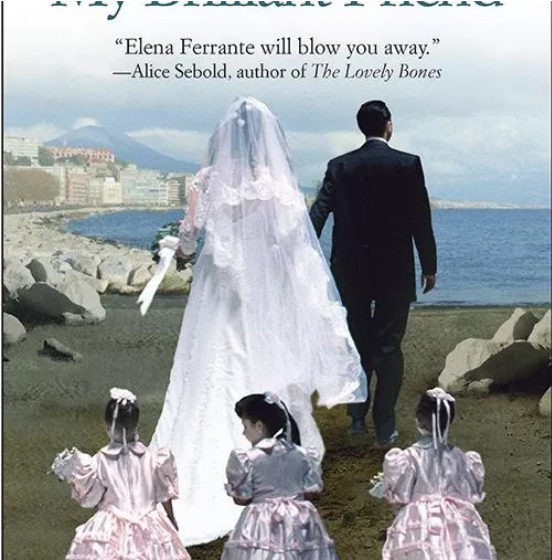
Co-Lab // SUMMERSCOOL  
 August 6, 2015  
 In "Articles"

In the Absence of Ideal  
 Conditions: Elaine I-Ling Shen and  
 Alyssa Taylor Wendt  
 February 9, 2017  
 In "Q+A"

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



Published May 25, 2016  
 Courtney Allen



Published April 16, 2016  
 Review: My Brilliant Friend

## Leave a comment

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

COMMENT

---

\*NAME

---

\*EMAIL

---

WEBSITE

---

POST COMMENT

☐ NOTIFY ME OF FOLLOW-UP COMMENTS BY EMAIL.

☐ NOTIFY ME OF NEW POSTS BY EMAIL.







[◀ REVIEW: \*TENDER GLASS\* BY AMY HAFT +...](#)



[Q+A WITH EUGENE FISCHER ▶](#)

SEARCH




### Subscribe to Blog via Email

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

Join 2 other subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

© 2018 Conflict of Interest – All rights reserved

Powered by  – Designed with the Customizr theme

