SHELTER WAITLIST UPDATE: As of August 14th there are 1,175 people on the waitlist for shelter in SF.

Joanna Ruckman / @joannaruckman
WWW.JOANNARUCKMAN.COM
Joanna’s work explores intersections of social engagement and creative practice. Her research considers how hair shapes identity, and can be used as a tool to combat systems of institutionalized oppression of particular bodies. She is an anti-disciplinary artist, layering diverse media to create works ranging from public printmaking, to her visual and oral history project, to formal gallery installations. Joanna is a candidate for the dual degree MA/MFA at SFAI and earned her BA in Visual Arts and Cultural Anthropology from Brown University. Her current thesis research asks: how might hair be mobilized as a material in contemporary art and culture to perform social critiques and towards creating decoloniality.

Why are the police writing tickets and taking tents when there aren’t enough shelter beds and apartments to put people in? The tent takers are exposing the homeless folks to the elements. We all know what happens when unemployed people are exposed to cold air, cold rain, and a hot sun: they get sick and have to go to the emergency room. Those who are elderly will not survive that long out there, and the city has to pick up the tab and charge it to the taxpayers. My suggestion is just to leave the damn tents alone. Help find them housing first, be humane about this situation and not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people. They bring their agenda to us.

Caring

Lisa Aragon

Sometimes you don’t know what to do
If you look, there will be help, that is true
Things you need are long overdue
Life does not always give us the best view
Homelessness will never be new
People that get over it are very few
Everyone is locked in some kind of zoo
Whenever you pray, it doesn’t have to be on a pew

This poem was written with thanks to everyone and, especially, the Coalition on Homelessness. Only in San Francisco.

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition’s work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agenda to us.
Art in Activism, Activism in Art: An Interview with Leslie Dreyer

**Johnna Gadomski and Emma-Rosa Kessler**

“All good art is political! There is none that isn’t. And the ones that try hard not to be political are political by saying, ‘We love the status quo,’” Toni Morrison (1931-2019), Rest in Power.

The world of activist art embraces the political nature of art, leveraging art to inspire thoughtful conversations, shape culture and drive new policy. Leslie Dreyer — an artist, housing justice organizer and activist — has been working with the Coalition on Homelessness on creative direct action since 2015. This year’s Art Auction hosted by the Coalition on Homelessness will feature pieces by Dreyer.

“The idea is to think about, you know, how to use art for social political means to help people see something from a different perspective than [the] dominant norm,” Dreyer said in an interview.

Through projects like Stolen Belonging, First They Came for Our Homes and the tech bus protests starting in 2015, Dreyer has collaborated on and instigated creative actions that have epitomized how art and activism can harmonize to create important ephemeral community spaces and shift public conversations.

“I frame the work I do as tactical art organizing or art as direct action, because it merges direct action tactics, theater tactics, performance tactics, visual art and whatnot, for a specific goal to change our collective situation,” explained Dreyer.

Protesting in this way can engage and push culture in new directions, offering different methods of driving change. “Pickets and all sorts of protest are important,” said Dreyer, “but I do think art has a way of helping people feel more engaged instead of just reacting, especially if the audience may not be on the same political page.”

She commented on how “people are distracted and desensitized, to some extent, which could lead to them ignoring more traditional forms of protest.” Alternatively, art “has a way of making people sit with something a little longer to help them think it through or perhaps even see their own place in it.”

Creating a space for people to consider unconventional ideas through various art forms can help some foreign ideas become more digestible. Dreyer broke down a part of an action she worked on, which happened to be the first tech shuttle blockade. It was a prefigurative intervention—an action in which participants act out a situation performing the world that they want to live in, something that could be possible.

In this action, the participants were protesting the fact that the tech buses were using public infrastructure, like public MTA bus stops, to pick up workers commuting out of the city, while also spiking rents and evictions all around them. Objecting to tech fueled displacement, the privatization of public space and how the tech companies take advantage of public infrastructure, they acted out a made up city agency, the San Francisco Displacement and Neighborhood Impact Agency.

“We wore yellow vest and acted like we were city workers enforcing the law that they were technologically breaking… I calculated that if the companies had to pay a fine for every time their buses stopped, it would be approximately $1 billion, and we could use that for eviction defense or for truly affordable housing efforts,” explained Dreyer.

By performing actions like this one, performing what could be possible “people can more readily relate to the idea that this is not absurd, it’s actually something that’s totally possible,” she said. “It’s totally possible and urgently necessary for us to stop displacement and not give away our public space or infrastructure.”

In addition to inviting thoughtful consideration of what a better world could look like, creative actions that incorporate art can also set a positive tone and create a space for celebration and community.

“When you make an action more joyful—joyful and militant—and use art for more militant means to exert our collective power, it changes the way the participants, all of us, feel while doing it.”

Pairing the exposure of injustices with the celebration of art and the community can powerfully communicate a narrative, while also inviting people in to participate in the movement.

“There’s music, there’s folks on the mic making demands in the face of power, and, for Stolen Belonging, for example, there’s real hard stories all over that DPW fence.”

At the Stolen Belonging action in June, the stories of DPW and SFPPD stealing people’s survival gear, the ashes of their loved ones, their medications and more were on display across the DPW Operations Yard fence. Although the stories of these heart-breaking injustices lay at the center of the demonstration, the atmosphere was cheerful.

“We’re loving each other, we’re honoring each other’s words and we’re lifting each other up… people can connect to each other more when there’s art and music and poetry,” remarked Dreyer.

“Data doesn’t move people. It’s personal stories. It’s feeling connected to something and art helps to do that,” Dreyer continued. “It helps people see things on a much more personal level. We can hear innumerable percentages, but until you put some stories and emotion behind it, make it beautiful, make it irresistible, then things may not change.”

Dreyer spoke to the increasing importance of using creative tactics to push social justice initiatives and campaigns. “I definitely think in movement history we have seen that art and culture are vital in the face of so much oppression and social control.”

The social and political climate of our world can be changed by artistic activism. “Cultural change is necessary to achieve political change. So you have to move the culture, shift people’s ingrained beliefs and get folks involved to make them feel a part of it instead of isolating folks who may not be with us just yet.” Dreyer emphasized that it’s especially important to “bring people in… who’ve never been a part of movements, you know, or might even be on the opposite side of it. It is our work to try to bring people in.”

On September 12, the Coalition on Homelessness is hosting their 19th annual art auction at the SOMArts Cultural Center. The exhibition will feature over 200 art pieces. The narratives centered in these diverse works, all pushing for cultural change, are about homelessness and housing.

Dreyer will feature a brick from her “Reclaim Disrupt” project, which “took bricks from a San Francisco demolition site… then etched them with stories of folks who had been evicted, folks who had become homeless and also reasons why people are fighting for the city. … the word ‘disrupt’ is also etched the opposite side of the brick.”

“The purpose of using this word according to Dreyer was to “take the word back from the tech industry. They use it to congratulate themselves for disrupting or deregulating the market, when they’re actually disrupting people’s lives and livelihoods.”

Looking to the future, the powerful Stolen Belonging action at DPW was just the beginning. In the coming year, the project team — including COH members TJ Johnston, Shanna Couper Orona, Sophia Thibodeaux and Meghan “Roadkill” Johnson — will dream up more artistic actions. The team will also periodically release oral histories detailing the resiliency of unhoused folks in the face of theft and violence by the city of San Francisco, while reinforcing to larger movement’s demand to StopTheSweeps.

To view or support the Stolen Belonging project, visit https://www.stolenbelonging.org

Photo by Leslie Dreyer

Image description: hands hold a brick tat is engraved with the word “For a world in which people are valued more than capital" Brick from the project Reclaim Disrupt, reclaimdisrupt.org
Luisa Morena, 2019
by Melanie Cervantes

Melanie Cervantes [Xicana] has never lived far from the California Coast. Born in Harbor City, California and raised in a small city in the South Bay of Los Angeles Melanie now makes her home in the San Francisco Bay Area where she creates visual art that is inspired by the people around her and her communities’ desire for radical social transformation. Melanie’s intention is to create a visual lexicon of resistance to multiple oppressions that will to inspire curiosity, raise consciousness and inspire solidarities among communities of struggle.

Small Collage 2, 2019
by Nathan Becka

I’m not sure when or how I got here. I sort of became aware of it one day, but it’s possible I might have always been here. I do know that I’m the only one at this never ending headquarters of a company that seems to have the capability to make every possible thing and probably did. The production floors, offices, and stock rooms go on forever. All the facilities and equipment are intact and functional, but certainly aren’t getting any newer. The warehouses are packed tight with items like un-awarded runner’s up trophies for all variety of competition already engraved with the recipient’s names. The offices are so expansive, I believe they are every office. The factory is definitely somewhere in the heart of the country. The address on all the stationary says Cutler, Missouri. But that doesn’t make sense because Cutler’s not a real place. My name’s Nathan. I suppose I’m the custodian of this place.

Sweeping up Sawdust on a Windy Day 2, 2018
by Isis Hockenos

Diana Gameros will be performing live at our Art Auction this year! We're SO excited and we're sure you are too.

Among the Bay Area’s bustling music scene is singer-guitarist-social activist Diana Gameros, an artist who quickly caught the attention of national media as well as acclaimed musicians who have been drawn to her singualr music and intrigued by her life story. Diana's songs and story have been featured on Billboard, Mother Jones, NPR's All Songs Considered and PBS Newshour.

Here's what NPR had to say about Diana: “Her voice inhabits that exact place between a dream and reality. It’s like the velvety fog that rolls into San Francisco from the Pacific Ocean with a hint of the emotional power of the best classic Mexican ranchera singers.”

Don’t miss her amazing performance at ArtAuction19!
The San Francisco Chronicle recently published a list of Frequently Asked Questions about homeless families in San Francisco. This was the question: “How many families are homeless, and what’s being done to help them?”

The Chronicle’s reply: “The 2019 one-night homeless count found 201 families (612 people), a count similar to the 2017 one-night count of 190 families (604 persons). That means 8% of the total counted homeless population is made up of families. The Coalition on Homelessness says the count is actually much higher, pointing out that the school district — using its own definition of homelessness — lists more than 2,000 people as being homeless. And the subcategory of chronically homeless people in families grew from 26 in 2017 to 175 in 2019. However, the city has a robust network of programs specifically for homeless families, including Compass Family Services and Hamilton Families, and it is rare to see families living outside. San Francisco offers 800 family shelter beds, a range of rent subsidies, and Hamilton Families, and it is

specifically for homeless families,

as well as the federal Department of Education, because of negative impacts on children’s development. They are denied access to family coordinated entry, which means denied any services at all, despite having requested shelter. The numbers also do not include wait-listed families. These are the city’s hidden homeless population.

According to the SF Unified School District’s cumulative enrollment data, which is collected at the end of the school year, there were 2,257 homeless students in 2016-2017 and 2,469 in 2017-2018, and 2,293 as of May 2019. Sixty percent of these families are living doubled up.

In addition, there are families sleeping in vehicles, afraid to come out of the shadows for fear of intervention by Child Protection Services. In order to be accepted into family coordinated entry, which is pretty much the only way to get rental assistance, housing, shelter or any other services, families living on the streets must be verified by the HOT team. They HOT team does not usually see them out on the streets, and then record that. Many families wait for the Homeless Outreach Team to issue a verification of their status, and HOT never shows up. These disparities need to be addressed to ensure that all homeless families are included — because for many children, their doubled-up or SRO situation can be just as unsafe as sleeping on the street. We have reports of young children attempting suicide, a child in a wheelchair that can never leave because there is no elevator, broken locks where mothers are getting assaulted in their rooms, children developing disabilities and chronic health conditions as a result of unhealthy situations and more inside residential SRO rooms. Doubled up families have parents reporting being forced to trade sex for a place to sleep, abuse of their children, daily threats, active drug use and other situations that make living doubled completely untenable. When these families seek shelter or housing they are turned away flat, as they no longer qualify for services under coordinated entry. SRO families and doubled up families need to be allowed to access coordinated entry instead of having to choose between sleeping on the streets or living in crowded and often unsafe conditions. Even with two-thirds of the families not qualifying for shelter - shelter seekers are waiting months and months for a bed for themselves and their children.

The San Francisco Board Of Supervisors passed an emergency resolution to help these families so that they will have access to the Family Coordinated Entry system. But more needs to be done to make sure that these families are not eventually forced to leave San Francisco, where they have ties to this community.

I am a formerly homeless mother of one. My daughter and I just moved into our own apartment in the Tenderloin recently. We are fortunate. Many other families are not. I have friends who are still homeless. I work with dozens of homeless families week after week. I am on the frontlines of this crisis every single day, trying to seek out the families that I can help.

I am disheartened by the downplaying of family homelessness by the Chronicle.

"Touching the Singularity"

Jennifer Friedenbach

Look around

Open eyes look back
Back back back to slavery time

Black bodies bent
Stolen bodies working stolen land

Brown First Nation bodies strewn
Stolen lives losing stolen futures

Look around

Open eyes look forward
Forward forward forward forward to Reagan Trump times

Black bodies lying askew
Stolen belongings sleeping without on stolen ground

Brown bodies kidnapped and detained
Stolen futures killing stolen dreams

Look around

Open eyes see resistance
Resist resist resist to a new time

Black bodies reclaim their homes
Brown bodies reclaim their dreams
Black and brown and white unite
### August 16

**Deadline to Submit Art for Art Auction 19**

To find more information on how to submit artwork to benefit the Coalition on Homelessness visit [WWW.ARTAUCTION19.INFO](http://WWW.ARTAUCTION19.INFO)

### August 19

**Queers Melt ICE**

**Where:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement 630 Sansome St @12-1 PM

Join queer and trans people to say OPEN THE BORDERS, CLOSE THE PRISONS. Queer Solidarity Knows No Borders! Hundreds of queer and trans people have been part of the caravans that made their way to the US, facing violence and repression, many of them because of their sexuality and/or gender expression. Join us for Day 19 of the Month of Momentum to #CloseTheCamps

**Access:** Outdoor event -no access info provided

### August 20

**Stop the Sweeps: Hearing on HSOC**

**Where:** Koret Auditorium, Main Library 100 Larkin Street @11-1 PM

The Local Homeless Coordinating Board will be holding a special hearing on the Healthy Streets Operation Center (HSOC). Join us to speak out against the police-led response to homelessness, HSOC. HSOC is a highly coordinated effort led SFPD, working in conjunction with the Dept. of Public Works, the Dept. of Homelessness, the Dept. of Emergency Management, and the Dept. of Public Health.

**Access:** The Main Library is accessible to persons using wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Entrances on Larkin Street, Fulton Street and Grove Street all are accessible. Please refrain from wearing scented products.

### August 27

**Close the Camps - Calling Adoptees**

**Where:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement 630 Sansome St @12-1 PM

Calling all adoptees to be in solidarity with migrant communities. Show up on Tues. 8/27 to demand the closing of the camps and ending inhumane U.S. immigration policies. Adoptees know the devastating consequences of family separation. And we see clearly that separation through adoption and immigration, and other unjust government systems, are deeply linked. When adoptees stand with migrant communities, we expose those connections. Then we can work together, at the root.

**Access:** Outdoor event - no access info provided

### August 28

**Fat & Disability Communities Unite to Close the Camps!**

**Where:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement 630 Sansome St @12-1 PM

Calling all Fat people, all Disabled people, all our loved ones, and anyone who has experienced being separated, shut away, controlled, disposed of, incarcerated in prisons, nursing homes, fat camps, psych institutions, or generally told they are the problem for society’s woes to UNITE in solidarity with migrants. Together we demand an end to the brutal treatment of migrants, an end to concentration camps, and an end to ICE.

**Access:** This action is on a public sidewalk in a flat area. It’s 6-8 blocks from BART. We will have ASL interpreters. More access details to come on FB.

### August 31

**Compton’s Cafeteria Riots 53rd Anniversary**

**Where:** 80 Turk St @5-8 PM

Calling all adoptees to be in solidarity with FLUX is hosting Compton’s Cafeteria Riots 53rd Anniversary here in Compton’s Transgender Cultural District come out and meet the staff of the District and FLUX - a national transgender empowerment initiative through AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

**Access:** Info not provided

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**The San Francisco Poster Syndicate & the Women of the Resistance Mural presents:**

**The Women of the Resistance Poster Portfolio**

Opening reception September 7, 2019, 6-9 pm, Closing reception September 27, 2019 6-9 pm, Alley Cat Books, 3036 24th St, San Francisco, CA.

Continuing our homage to Balmy Alley’s new mural, *The Women of the Resistance*, the muralists teamed up with the San Francisco Poster Syndicate to create a portfolio of posters depicting each revolutionary woman featured in the mural.

Screenprinted posters and portfolios will be on display and available for purchase September 7 - September 30 2019, at Alley Cat Books.
The building the Coalition on Homelessness is currently housed in has been sold. The new owners are tearing it down. So, after 16 years of calling 468 Turk our home, we have to move everything to another office.

The upside is that we’re signing a new, long-term lease at a building owned by Hospitality House. Our new home will be just a few blocks down Turk Street, ADA-accessible, and best of all, permanent. The downside is that this move is unexpected and comes with many unanticipated costs.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please give what you can to help us cover these expenses, including new wiring/phone system, transitional rent, a moving company, and bulk paper shredding!