

INTRODUCTION

CRIBS

Featuring a large-scale installation by Matt Bua with a special project by Jesse Bercowitz

What if all potential building materials discarded in the trash could be utilized for the creation of a new public space? What if a person's personal collection, that accumulation of stuff that is so often hidden away, could be brought out into the open, displayed and viewed by others for the first time? If personal collections, now in storage spaces, under tarps in yards, or stashed within drawers, could be employed in the creation of usable building materials, there would be a fresh upsurge in new public spaces and hand-built museums, even homes—unsanctioned perhaps by the expert or some higher authority, but a product by and for the community at ground level. People work too hard to obtain and maintain their super-sized lifestyles, while the precious stuff in their life actually barely gets used. It is that stuff, having grown old and becoming clutter that needs to be recycled into something new, something revealed, something useful. From that purged material may be built a structure that serves as both shelter and portraiture.

Installation artist Matt Bua of Brooklyn and Catskills, NY, will organize a three-part exhibition project entitled *Cribs to Cribbage*--two exhibits of which will take place in North Adams. A multi-faceted project, it celebrates alternative/experimental architecture, vernacular/folk architecture, green architecture, recycled / secondary use architecture, visionary architecture, the journey of life, collecting practices and material culture, and all aspects of collaboration.

The installation in Kidspace's new gallery on the second floor of MASS MoCA's Building 10—**CRIBS**—will feature a 12'' x 12'' overloaded crib. This gigantic crib will be complete with hanging mobiles, recorded "lullabies", and the bars that contain the infant. Inside the gallery, surrounding the crib will be an outrospective purging of the artist's pack-ratted material possessions-- random detritus combed from the street, found paintings, thousands of vacation slides, 50 guitars rescued from the streets of New York--all will be organized into presented collections.

The structure of the crib itself will climb out of the second story window of the gallery, to escape the chaos of the cluttered future that encroaches on it. The crib must breach the gallery walls and pour it self down to the museum's entrance below. The structure can be entered outside the museum and will house Bua's collections, in conjunction with archived work by artists Ward Shelley, Carrie Dashow, and Lisa Ludwig.

Bua's CRIBS installation will also feature a piece made by his artistic partner Jesse Bercowetz. He will exhibit a mixed media sculpture that combines elements of Bercowetz's childhood home: a shack built on the back of a flatbed pick up truck, combined with a compressed sculpture garden complete with an outreaching mobile that extends out into the space hanging over Bua's crib. The collaged images on the mobile will relate to experimental architecture, utopian environments, and mobility. It will also include images of both artists' individual practice as well as their past collaborative efforts.

For the second part of the project Bua will collaborate with students in the North Berkshire School Union to create their own collection-based architectural spaces or "hand-made museums." These installations will be in an empty storefront on Holden Street in North Adams as part of the annual Down Street Arts celebration. Students will use materials they have collected to build their structures with the artist.

The third part of the project will take place on Bua's property, "b-Home" where various artists will build their own architectural sculptures using found objects. b-Home is an open air studio and architectural laboratory located on the western edge of the town of Catskill, New York. The mission of b-Home is to construct examples of a wide range of environmentally conscious building styles and techniques on a small scale (they will not exceed 12 x 12 feet in size), integrating them with the land adhering to the motto of "treading lightly."

A goal of the CRIBS project is to empower people to create their own structures and to follow through with their ideas that have been tucked away in their "I couldn't possibly" mind frames. With this in mind, the exhibition will offer inspiration, and in some cases, materials. While not a storage facility, Kidspace will serve as a means for visitors to express their ideas and share materials via the Internet and a response area in the gallery. Art projects will also provide the opportunity for visitors and students to build models of their "dream" spaces. Also, some of the artist's objects will find new owners by way of an open call for letters from viewers who saw the exhibit and are interested in using or having them. Wouldn't the 50 guitars make much better sounds if they were in the hands of 50 people who dreamed of what they would play on them? Objects collecting dust, horded by a pack rat in a dark room, are dead; things used and played emit life. Herein lies the idea that **CRIBS** is a game where the community gathers to collaborate on various art projects, and hopefully, will encourage the project ideas to expand into non-traditional art viewing spaces such as on front lawns, storefronts, vacant lots, bus stops, gardens, etc. Like "Cribbage", the game starts at one location—Kidspace—and is played throughout a variety of sites—the Berkshires region and beyond.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Matt Bua of Brooklyn, New York, is an installation artist who has extensive experience establishing artist collaborations. He holds a BFA from East Carolina University and has collaborated with Jesse Bercowitz to create large-scale installation projects for such sites as Governor's Island, NYC; The Brooklyn Museum, NYC; and the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA. His solo work has been shown most recently at galleries and sculpture parks in New York City and upstate New York. Bua has experience working with students to develop an installation for the Socrates Sculpture Park, NYC.

Jesse Bercowitz is a New York Artist. He holds a BFA from The Art Institute of Chicago. His individual and collaborative work has been exhibited throughout the U.S and Europe. As a pre-teen growing up in Kentucky he lived in experimental structures and has experience building shelters while living in parks, hitchhiking and hopping trains as a teen age street kid. As an adult artist, he has worked as a mentor for NYC teens for over a decade. Bercowitz has worked with Bua on several large-scale installations with a strong architectural direction. Most recently, he had solo exhibitions at Volta NY, The Happy Lion L.A. and The Brooklyn Academy of Music, curated by Dan Cameron. He is represented by Michael Janssen Gallery, Berlin and Derek Eller Gallery, NY.

IN A NUTSHELL

Architecture, Collecting Practices, Collaboration

Kidspace exhibitions can always be approached from many different angles, and we continue this tradition with *CRIBS*. The main focus of the exhibit will be on **architecture** and how it plays an important role in defining who we are as a community. We will also use the exhibition to investigate the **collecting practices** of individuals and how collections also can characterize the self and community. And finally, the *CRIBS* exhibit can be looked at as an example of **collaboration** among artists and community members. We will examine how collaborative ventures can present ideal situations for creative acts and problem solving.

CRIBS PROGRAMS

OPENINGS

- On **March 17th** from **4 to 6pm**, the Three Museums invite you to a launch party of Kidspace's new gallery on the second floor of Building 10. The Three Museum directors and mayor will make remarks at 4:30 and Bua will be on hand to talk about his work. Refreshments will be served.

- On **March 21st from 11am to 4pm** families and teachers are invited to a family day in Kidspace celebrating the opening of the new gallery as well as CRIBS, and the writer residency program. Professional actors will read the script developed by 3rd graders in North Adams as part of their fall 08 writer residency program with Scribner. Refreshments will be served.
- On **May 2nd from 12 to 2pm**, students from the North Berkshire School Union will be invited to the opening of the Holden Street installation and a separate opening celebrating Down Street Arts will be held in late June. North Berkshire students may also present their writing projects developed with Scribner at this event.

TEACHER WORKSHOPS

Teacher workshops are an important aspect of the Kidspace program and we require that all teachers participate in them. Educators will explore the extensive curriculum packet, which will help you to better connect the Kidspace program to your various curriculum areas and to be better prepared to incorporate Kidspace into your busy schedule. There are two workshops planned for your school this spring. At these workshops we will review how to make connections between art and other subject areas including science and English language arts. We will also try-out projects outlined in this curriculum. Evaluation is also an important aspect of the program. New this year, we will invite all teachers from the NBSU to MASS MoCA for a year-end reception and group evaluation of the entire year. Please mark the workshop dates on your calendar (you can find the dates in Section 2 of this curriculum.)

KIDSPACE PROGRAMS

This curriculum provides you with classroom activities that you can do with your students before and after visits to Kidspace. We have also continued to provide you with activity cards, which you can do as a class or have individual students work on their own. Activities can easily be adjusted to suit the needs and interests of your particular grade level. In certain cases, we offer different activities for the different grade levels. Please note: There is one activity in the curriculum that we ask all teachers to make sure to complete with your classes. It is to collect materials we will need for the building project as part of the artist residency program.

Each class will visit Kidspace. During your visit to Kidspace your students will work with Kidspace staff to explore *CRIBS*. Students will then have the opportunity to create their own architectural sculpture inspired by the found object work of Matt Bua.

The artist residency program continues and is expanded this year. We received the MCC Creative Schools grant! This means that we can provide your students will more intensive experiences with working artists. Look for the schedule in Section 2 of this curriculum.

- **WRITER IN RESIDENCY:** The 2 - 4 grade students will have five 90-minute sessions with professional writer Juliane Hiam Scribner, in collaboration with Inkberry, North Adams' writer cooperative. Juliane will work on playwriting and creative writing projects that connect to the themes in the *CRIBS* exhibit.
- **ARTIST IN RESIDENCY:** All students in Savoy, Florida, and Clarksburg will work with Matt Bua to create group architectural collections-based sculptures, which will then be on view in North Adams. In addition, Matt will work with the 4/5 class at Savoy, the 6th graders at Clarksburg, and the 7 / 8 graders at Florida to design site-specific installations in North Adams. This will be fully explained in section 3 of this curriculum.

Public programs to be aware of are: In addition to the openings mentioned above, Kidspace will organize public art class programs relating to *CRIBS* to be held over the summer. Also over the summer, Kidspace and MASS MoCA's performing arts department will host a week-long music class for kids where they will learn about musical instruments with the Bang on the Can performers and make their own instruments in Kidspace.

Public hours for *CRIBS* are:

- **MARCH 21 - MAY 31:** Public hours have been expanded and will be held on Saturdays and Sundays from 11am to 4pm throughout the school year. Additional weekday hours will be held during Spring Break (April 13 - 17) and on Memorial Day (May 25).
- **JUNE 1 - 27:** Everyday except Tuesdays from 11am to 4pm
- **JUNE 27 - SEPTEMBER 7:** Everyday from 11am to 4pm; art classes typically held from 9 to 10:30am.

KIDSPACE PROGRAM GOALS

- Contemporary art can be used to sharpen student visual literacy skills, which can be applied in many subject areas, including art, English language arts, science, and social studies.
- Creating their own works of art can help students to better understand artistic processes explored in museum exhibitions.

- Interactions with artists and their artwork help students to more fully understand the artistic problem-solving processes.
- Curriculum materials and teacher workshops can motivate classroom educators to make multiple curriculum connections to the subject being explored at Kidspace.

CRIBS LEARNER OUTCOMES

The three main focuses of the CRIBS exhibit are on architecture, collecting practices, and collaboration. Students will:

- discuss their understanding of how an artist's selection of material influences meaning in works of art and their design quality;
- recognize that architecture can be made by using any recycled material or object;
- explain how collaboration works to effectively problem solve;
- identify collecting practices in their lives and compare to other students;
- report how a combination of materials can create a site-specific installation and relate to other artwork they may have seen in the past;
- create their own collections-based architectural sculptures.

YOUR FEEDBACK AND SHARING WITH OTHERS

We will have an evaluation workshop with all of the teachers in your school (see your school's schedule in this curriculum), where you will be asked to complete an evaluation form. Meanwhile, we would appreciate hearing your thoughts along the way. Drop us a note at kidspace@massmoca.org, or phone us at 413-664-4481 ext. 8131. **Your comments do make a difference.**

We look forward to a successful collaboration!

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