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Re-view: The People's Guide to the Queens International

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RE- VIEW

THE PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO THE QUEENS INTERNATIONAL

Zine Issue #3 | February 2019

**The People's Guide to Queens International
Zine Issue #3: Re-View**

Edited by Brian Droitcour
Designed by Christine Wong Yap
Published February 2019
Queens, NY

The People's Guide to the Queens International is a collaborative art project organized by Brian Droitcour and Christine Wong Yap. We invite the public to write reviews of artworks in the *Queens International 2018* exhibition at the Queens Museum from October 7, 2018 to February 24, 2019.

Thanks to the contributors, Sophia Marisa Lucas, Baseera Khan, and Lindsey Berfond.

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Introduction

Patrick Killoran’s installation for the Central branch of the Queens Library creates an opening in the nonfiction stacks. He aligned identical square dividers on all the shelves, so when you bend down to look you can see all the way through to the other end of the library. Titled *Passage*, Patrick’s intervention make you feel more ————— page 4 aware of the space of the library, of how information is organized there, and of your body’s movement through it as you search.

On January 12, *The People’s Guide to the Queens International* held a workshop at Central. The first thing we did was stroll around and observe. When you’re at the library, familiarity and habit—as well as a focus on whatever you went there to do—can keep you from noticing both finer details and bigger questions about the way the place is structured. Following the spirit of Patrick’s project, **we paid more attention** and wrote ————— pages 5–7 about what we found. I noticed how, parallel to Patrick’s *Passage*, a central alley runs through the library, lined with benches and light fixtures resembling streetlamps, as if it were a promenade in a park. After that, we split up and looked for books on topics that interested us without the aid of a catalogue, and **we reflected on how it feels to embody the search** in a time when the work of searching is most often carried out by algorithms. ————— pages 8–9

The awareness of space we practiced at Central is exactly what the *People’s Guide* is designed to encourage. Any museum predisposes a visitor to contemplation, but we

wanted to heighten that experience by asking people to put their thoughts and feelings into words, to share as feedback and conversation. One of our prompts asks: “Can you describe one work two ways?” We put the forms with this question in a gallery of works that are concerned with matters of vision, light, and color. Our intention was to emphasize that these works were made with sensitivity to the viewer’s perception. But beyond that, the question communicates an important aspect of the thinking behind the *People’s Guide*: the invitation it extends to viewers to reflect on their position and perspective. This third and final issue of our zine is titled “Re-View.” We took the word commonly used for writing about art and split up into its parts as a reminder of its etymological meaning, to see again—a reminder that responding to art as a form of sustained attention.

If one person can see a work of art from at least two angles, then the audience as a whole brings a multitude of perspectives to the Queens International. One of the great pleasures of reading the *People’s Guide* is seeing how people describe the experience of encountering the same work in very different ways. In addition to materials from the workshop at Central, this issue includes various responses to three works on view at the Queens Museum:

pages 10–12 — **Cullen Washington Jr.**’s mixed media painting *Od Matter*,
pages 13–17 — the funky sculptures of **Milford Graves**, and *Relative Fields in a Garden*, a monumental mural by **Liz Philips and Heidi**
pages 18–20 — **Howard** with sound and sculptural elements.

We are so grateful to everyone who took the time and care to contribute to the *People's Guide*. Thank you for viewing and re-viewing the Queens International with us.

—Brian Droitcour



Patrick Killoran's *Passage*

Such a discovery to come to the library and find the “passage” through the stacks—the books!

The space/opening through entering/reading brings something very private and mysterious to the public domain—the communal space of the library/archive/knowledge.

The notion of interior/exterior—finding what you are looking for in unexpected ways—the betweenness of books.

—Sandamini

I liked Patrick's thing! It was cool that it totally would not have worked in a gallery or museum bc the work plays off the environment around it (I guess that's what “site-specific” literally means lol). It made me want more works (like this!) in non-museum/gallery settings that aren't just big dumbass sculptures in central settings. Imo it also feels like ppl don't do stuff like Patrick's bc they think “the public” is too stupid to understand it, but—as the responses happening in our group evidence—this is NOT true lol.

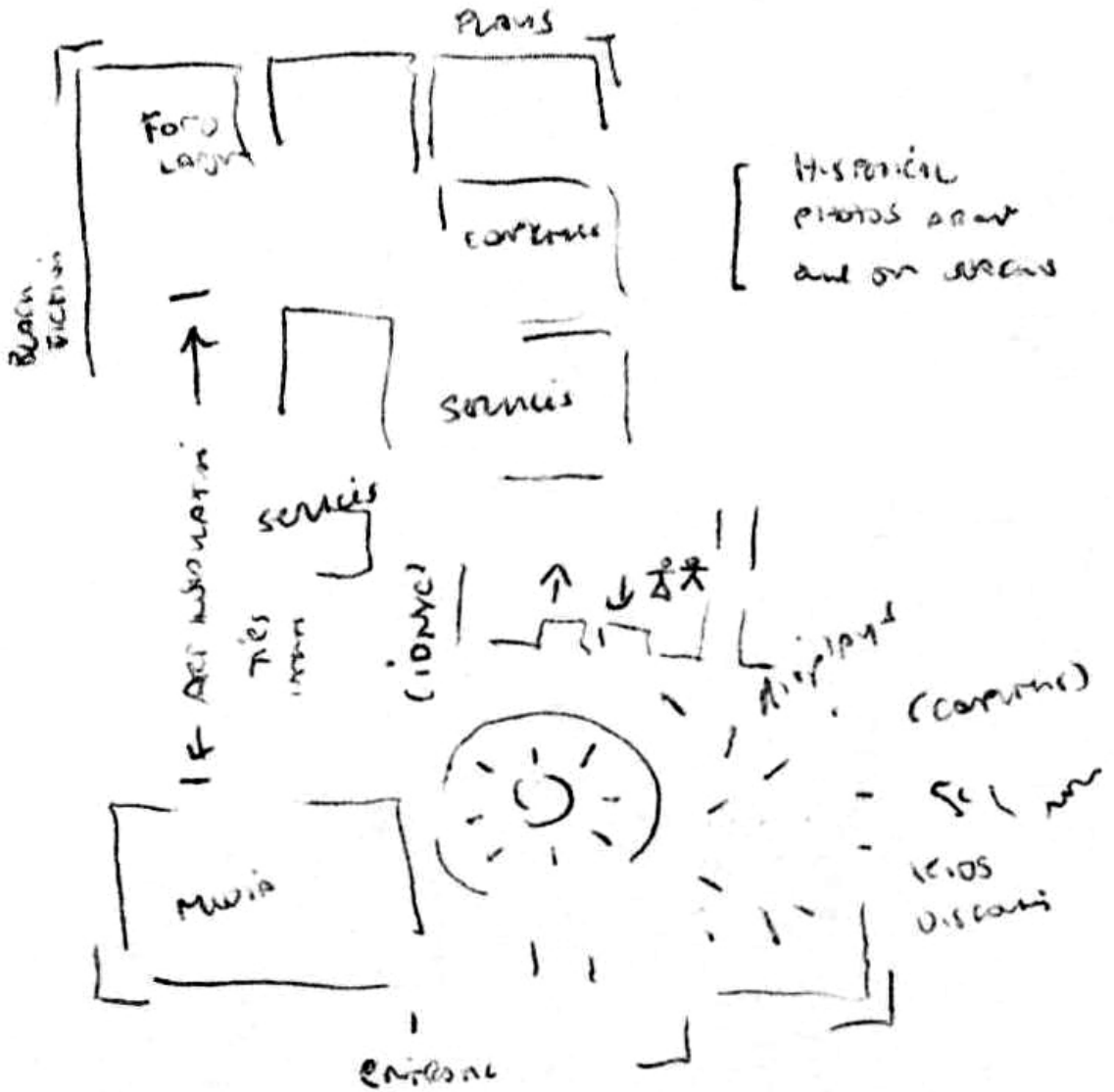
—Charlie

This work is remarkable.

1. Visualizes the search experience & the visceral reaction one has when looking.
2. Democratizes the search experience by eliminating the need to reach an objective/goals, finding & its association to winning.
3. Highlights the contradictions of libraries: as much as we collect, organize, & preserve, our attempts are futile. i.e. Library of Alexandria. The only permanence we have is perhaps eternity.
4. Embeds the art in the stacks instead of isolating it in a display space. Democratizing art; it is not put on a pedestal.
5. Programming alongside the piece further to open up art experiences to wider audience.

—Kalli

Queens Library



What does a search feel like?

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE QUIET ROOM?

- Healthy Habits
 - Casitas del bosque
 - Sewershink
- } children's books

I just wanted to look up something I was curious about mixed media art and about the program called Word on the computer. I found it quite easy because I'm familiar with certain areas of the Library. Before when I couldn't find something I asked a librarian for assistance. The book on Word was what I was looking. But I could not find a book on the subject of mixed media art—but that search is for another day. I will keep searching. I would like to create a template of my own.

—Angeliqué

My experience at this library was a combination of public & private. My experience was “led” to a “private” space which led to a sense of disturbance. Not wanting to disturb/interfere. Peeking into someone else's space.

—Danielle

- Green shelves w/ archival photos
- Empty shelves
- Languages! Polski
- Portal into discovery room
- Portal under Gondaleeza Rice book
- Program Roo (no 'm')

Openness—feeling of discovery

A place for collaboration—not passive & isolated search

A place of life, rather than grayness.

A place of passages

—Nayana

I found what I was looking for by staying open to colors + textures & font. My book was near the end of Patrick's art installation, immediately catching my eye. The art guided my search. The colors attracted me to the book. By flipping through the pages, I stopped on my line. It's in Hausa. It's a good mantra for this season of my life. *Ya dada kokari*: He tried harder.

—Emerald

Patrick Killoran is interested in the library as the physical embodiment of the “search”—an activity that has largely been absorbed by the internet. As a visitor to the library, try to experience the physical feeling of searching. Pick a topic and move around the library until you find a book about it.

Skim the book until you find a sentence that seems very important to its purpose. Write it down.

“Trust is vital to email users, especially with the proliferation of spam.”
From *Guerrilla Marketing for Consultants*
—Christine

“Eventually, everyone has someone they view as a freak... We just want to identify the real freaks so that we can feel closer to normal.”
From *Gender Outlaws* by Kate Bornstein
—Charlie

“As for this responsibility of the writer, which, as we have already seen, is international or cosmo-political, as for his mission that consists in overcoming or transferring nation-state law, Hugo does not hesitate to call it also a right.”
From *The Death Penalty* by Jacques Derrida
—David

Describe your experience of the search.

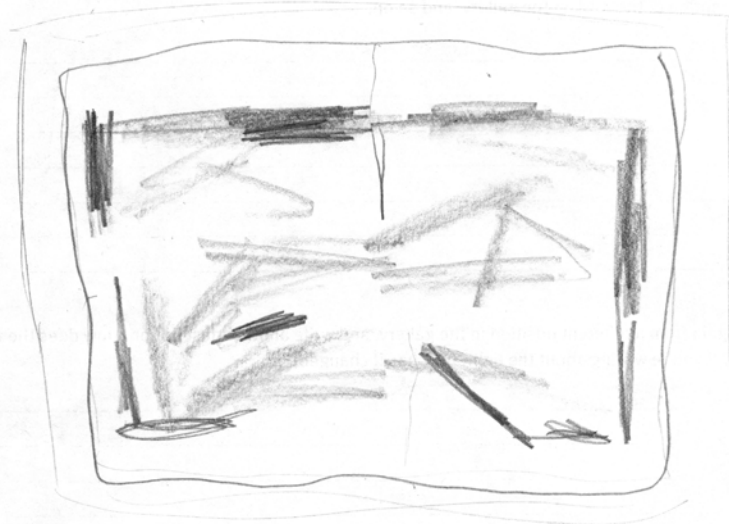
The architecture guided me to serviceable titles with practical tutorials and advice. I was struck by how many of the displays featured pragmatic rather than literary works. I wanted to draw from prominently featured books because I was curious about how books had been curated by the librarians for a digitally inclined audience. In that sense, the book I pulled was very much one I was looking for. It did not interest me, personally, but it has a wider appeal for library patrons seeking hands-on skills. The title fits the current aesthetic and purpose of the public library today: a community center, a job center, a workspace.
—Christine

Idk a lot about trans writers/theorists prior to now (which is so embarrassing!) so I wanted to look for books around that. I went to the “Sexuality” section and picked up *Gender Outlaws*—it was amidst Janet Mock’s books, it made me happy to see those there. Idk how that experience would be different from googling “trans scholarship from the eighties” (lol). Fwiw

I do think that if I asked that in one of the PDF/reference groups on Facebook I’d get a lot of recs. But it’s nice hanging out with ppl IRL now. Makes me miss college lol.
—Charlie

I browsed and chose from the top staff picks from the tops of the shelves. With so many books you have to highlight certain ones, but as a consequence the stuff below the featured materials feels much less visible—if nothing were highlighted or pulled out it would feel more egalitarian and less steered. I chose the book I did because of the clear design and the lack of explanatory text, which required me to investigate to learn more from the evocative title. The quote I chose tied into Derrida’s apparent thrust that the challenges to the death penalty have historically come from writers and it is not just their ability to speak to it but a responsibility.
—David

Cullen Washington Jr.'s *Od Matter*



Choose a work in the gallery and write a careful description of it.

The light reflects from the shiny plastic tape. The textures of the paper also have shadows + light differently. The ink is black in complete contrast to the white.

Look at the work again from a different position in the gallery, and write another description.

Looking at the piece from further away, the piece is shrinking in comparison to others due to the contrast of the black and white. Within the piece itself there are darker areas w/ heavier use of ink. The texture is familiar—associated w/ struggle. Trying to get paint off your hand.

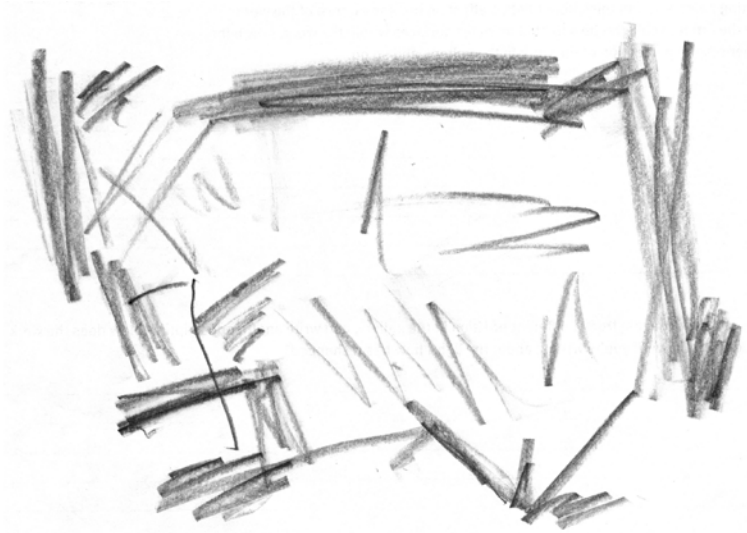
Look at the wall text. Try to fill in any gaps in the description by providing information that is missing from it.

I think a diagram of the collograph process would be helpful. “Scraps of painted canvas” is confusing because the image looks like more than painted canvas.

Give it a new title.

Tape

—Babbie



Choose a work in the gallery and write a careful description of it.

The charcoal + white contrast sharply. The choice of the flat, charcoal, + reflectivity of the tape creates dimension when light hits the pieces of tape. Varying degrees of saturation provides a variety of conditions for the viewer to consider.

Look at the work again from a different position in the gallery, and write another description.

The tape is harder to determine, but it is still clear its presence was there by the collaging process, if not totally obvious from this current vantage point.

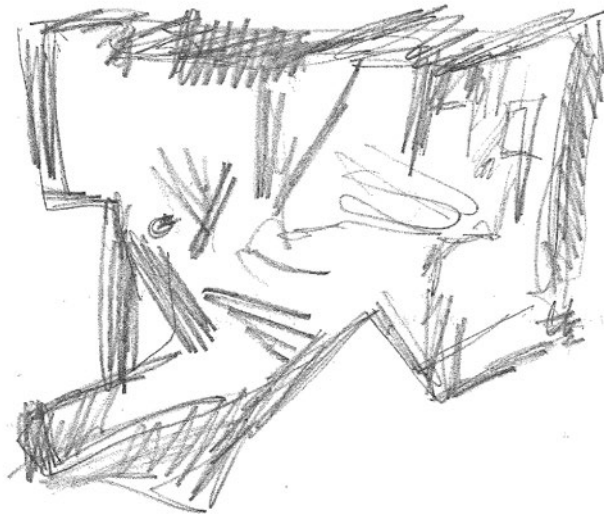
Look at the wall text. Try to fill in any gaps in the description by providing information that is missing from it.

Varying degrees of saturation echo the thinning + failing circuit of the natural systems.

Give it a new title.

UnDone.

—Sarita



Choose a work in the gallery and write a careful description of it.

Upon first appearance the opaque black ink draws across the paper—once my eyes adapt I can see the texture in thick parts glisten—as well as clues with when it was made with the tape’s presence.

Look at the work again from a different position in the gallery, and write another description.

I am familiar with the tape and its placement on the print. Other parts of the print with lighter tones are now visible.

Look at the wall text. Try to fill in any gaps in the description by providing information that is missing from it.

It looks like he also added paint/ink after it was printed.

Give it a new title.

Wide On

—Essye

Milford Graves's *Pathways of Infinite Possibilities*



GABRIEL

Choose a work in the gallery and write a careful description of it.

This artwork shows the human body in many different ways. It mostly shows heads though. Two heads are shown to be connected by a wormhole, one head is cut in half with no skin except for the ear, while the other shows a full head with a globe on top of it. There is a ball that changes color in the middle of the wormhole and green lasers every where. These colors make it sinister to me.

Look at the work again from a different position in the gallery, and write another description. How does the work look different now?

Now what it looks like is, in the middle, the people in the world connected to the wisdom in the people. Further to the left, there is a miniature model of the Solar System, connected to human wisdom by space-time. In between both, there is a pointed part of a (at least I think that's what it is) an old drum. On top there is a light that shine in red and blue, making a bright purpleish color shine on the Solar System and the head. If I go further right, I can

see another painted drum, with a plasma ball under it. And, lastly, under the head representing human wisdom, is a light, also representing wisdom.

Look at the wall text. Try to fill in any gaps in the description by providing information that is missing from it.

After reading the text, I think that the two heads represent knowledge and emotions. These two are connected in the universe and space-time and wormholes and tons of crazy stuff by the human heart and brain.

Give it a new title.

The human knowledge's connection to emotions

—Gabriel

Today I saw the human mind

By the artist

It looks like a lot of wires

I think it is made of anatomy discards and wires

I think the artists made it by cutting it in half

It makes me think of my body

It makes me feel aware

—Jackie



Free Write

Say whatever you like about the exhibition.

I like the human body room because I got to find out lots of information and facts also it was very cool and interesting. I saw what energy looked like.



CONTINUE ON REVERSE IF NEEDED

Your Name/Alias Calista ☺

Two views of Graves's *LabVIEW chart*



Today I saw *LabVIEW chart* By Milford Graves

It looks like an early computer program transformed into an idea map

I think it is made of multiple pieces of printer paper glued together, ink

I think the artist made it by making a complex computer program, charting the connections and printing it

It makes me think of a computer with a pop-up blocker, hackers

It makes me feel overwhelmed but intrigued.

—Nikki

Imagine that you are a cyborg and your eyes are a pair of optical scanners. When you look at the artwork, where does the scanning start?

The middle is where I start, where all the pathways converge. I feel like I'm looking at a lighting circuit, maybe a motherboard, definitely a map. Sheets of paper taped together form the grid lines but some sheets are empty in the bottom right corner.

The speakers to my left & right emit heart beats, a resonant soft low ringing, and voices—it makes me paranoid—like someone is behind me reading this paper.

I want to say these paths go from left to right—a start, or condition, and an outcome—but I really can't say for sure. The symbols I took for arrows don't look like arrows anymore. There are symbols and symbols within symbols.

—Winnie

Heidi Howard and Liz Phillips's *Relative Fields in a Garden*

Choose a work in the gallery and write a careful description of it.

Relative Fields In A Garden—The Giant, Awesome, Mural. This Work Spans End To End Across This Museum's Diagonal Wall, Giving Light From Both Windowed Ends, As Well As Light From the Skylight & Ceiling Lights



Look at the work again from a different position in the gallery, and write another description. How does the work look different now?

I Didn't Even Notice The 7 Rain Sticks, Until I Climbed The Stairs. Then, As I Crossed The Museum To Read The Title & Description, I Was Able To Hear The Soothing Bird Sounds. I Also Did Not Realize The Dimensional Aspect of The Flowers Until Walking Back Across The Museum.

We Were Floored By This Work!

Look at the wall text. Try to fill in any gaps in the description by providing information that is missing from it.

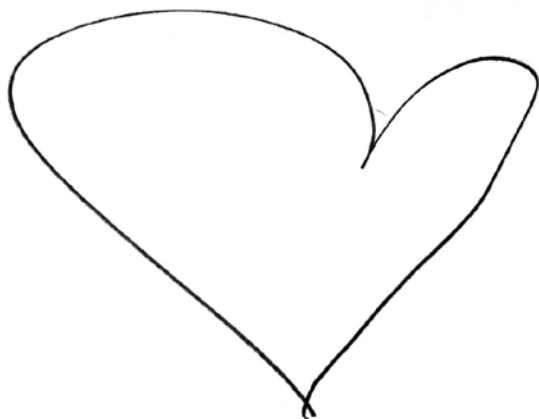
Nothing Is Lacking or Missing

Give the work a new title.

Eden Is In Our Hands

—Sharon and Chatty

I Like how you Guys did Act on the
Big Wall when you first see it you
can't see it correctly but
when you are upstairs you can
see the lady the flowers
it is beautiful



Free Write

THE
**PEOPLE'S
GUIDE**
TO THE QUEENS INTERNATIONAL

Say whatever you like about the exhibition.

The usual animals me
of the best kind of evening
summer warmth ~~~~~



CONTINUE ON REVERSE IF NEEDED

Abstract arts,
the unknown truth,
bends to us,
 into our ideals.
a splash of colour
 a random shape,
 an object,
 all having meaning together.
What the meaning is,
 is up to the spectator.

—Adam

We think anyone can be an art critic.

WE WELCOME ART WRITING FROM EVERYONE, INCLUDING CHILDREN & TEENS.

WE ARE ORGANIZING THIS PROJECT IN THE SPIRIT OF PEOPLE POWER,
ACCESS, OPEN-MINDEDNESS, GENEROSITY & INCLUSION.

We believe that art criticism can take many forms. It doesn't have to be a description with a stamp of approval (or disapproval). It doesn't have to be a distanced contemplation. It's writing that expresses the difference that art can make in your life, and the potential for anyone to find meaning in any artwork.

BRIAN DROITCOUR & CHRISTINE WONG YAP

For more info or to learn how you can participate, visit:

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