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Read/Write: A People's Guide to the Queen's International

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READY! WRITE

THE PEOPLE'S GUIDE

TO THE QUEENS INTERNATIONAL

Zine Issue #2 | January 2019

**The People's Guide to Queens International
Zine Issue #2: Read/Write**

Edited by Brian Droitcour
Designed by Christine Wong Yap
Published January 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.

For more info, to read more, or to write:
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Introduction

“Read/Write” is the second of three zines published by *The People’s Guide to the Queens International*. For the title I picked a phrase that came up repeatedly when Christine and I were discussing the concept of the *People’s Guide*. These words, in this configuration, refer to protocols of access in an operating system. “Read” lets you see a file. “Write” lets you change it. *The People’s Guide* is designed to make the Queens International a “Read/Write” exhibition—to open it to changes that incorporate user input. “Write” is the key action: contributors to the *People’s Guide* take part by putting their thoughts and feelings down on paper. “Read” is meant here metaphorically, as interpreting whatever sensory experience a work of art might produce, rather than in the narrower sense of understanding marks on a surface as words and concepts. But literacy nevertheless hovers around the project, because works commissioned for the Queens International debuted at three branches of the Queens Library on November 10.

On that day, when a bus ferried viewers from one branch to another to see all the works, the *People’s Guide* held a workshop at the Lefrak City Library to discuss the installation there. A collaboration between poet Paolo Javier and musician David Mason, *Fel Santos: I of Newtown* is dedicated to an experimental writer who draws on the nonsense syllables of baby talk, religious ecstasy, and Filipinx American creole to create a private language for incantatory, spellbinding poetry. “Reading” the work is primarily an act of listening: the library’s teen area is

outfitted with several stations where you can listen to recordings of Santos reading his work, sometimes to or with children. This zine begins with **texts generated at the**
pages 4–5 — **workshop** as we tried to transcribe these ecstatic sound poems and describe the experience of listening. Some participants answered questionnaires about **what would go**
page 6 — **into private poetic languages of their own.**

In his work *Black Cloud, Thin Ice*, Mo Kong uses imagery related to bees and honey—from maps of migration patterns to the molecular structures of various kinds of pollen—to express feelings about his own movement from China to the United States, and the related experiences of restlessness and looking for home. It’s fittingly installed at the Flushing Library, which provides many services for new and future US citizens. **A response to works by Kong**
page 7 — **and Haley Bueschlen at the Queens Museum** picked up on the themes of foreignness and belonging in the work, asking: “What is an a-social, a-political alien panda in the land of America?” I’ve included it as a prelude to other writing produced at a December 1 workshop at the Flushing Library in response to Kong’s work there. We imagined
page 8 — encountering *Black Cloud, Thin Ice* **as alien anthropologists.** We **shared the images and feelings we associate with**
pages 9–13 — **changing homes** and speculated about how others might interpret them. Finally, we read the poetry on Kong’s print and took apart its lines, **using them to generate new**
pages 14–15 — **poems** expanding on the theme of the original.

Christina Freeman's *UltraViolet Archive* is a mini-branch of the Queens Library in a gallery at the Queens Museum: from the library's holdings, the artist borrowed media objects—books, CDs, DVDs—carrying works that have been challenged by censors in various places at various times, along with a small reference collection to flesh out the historical context. A space for reflection that presents reading as a collective, community-oriented activity, *UltraViolet Archive* has inspired **a number of responses** to—— pages 16–17 the *People's Guide*, which are included here. At a workshop at the museum on December 8, we spent time with and around the archive. Thinking about how the work of online censorship is often outsourced to algorithms, or performed by content moderators who are asked to look at images from strangers' lives in a robotic way, **we approached** —— pages 18–21 **works in the gallery as cyborgs**, imagining how machines might scan, interpret, and even learn from art. This seemed like the right way to close out “Read/Write,” a zine whose name is an entanglement of metaphors and functions, controls and permissions, human empathy and mechanical analysis, designed to inspire further reading and writing.

—Brian Droitcour

Listening to Fel Santos

*I ~~listen~~ listen to the sounds and I see visuals of lines and shapes
edges and the volume changes the height of the waves*

Transcription:

an open air vent, the sounds of the room,
syncopation, a child's call / cry / chant
briefly, echoing a current of air amplified
dense tonality that opens up a deep space
a flow that bulges, is parsed from one ear to
the other, is synthetic
it gets louder, then subsides
sound with several rings or layers that
operate all at once at different levels,
maybe oceanic
there's a beat at the bottom of it
that is strained by the synthesizer,
stretched out by it

Notes:

How we were affected by the sound and
experienced in our body
Trying to describe what it remind us of or
what it might sound like to someone
else.
—Rachel

Kyembot toto Kyembot

Thanks to radio, we've become
accustomed to speech
We've now succeeded
Humunculus
choking sounds
plop plop
distant murmuring
ko ko ko ko
unga unga
ka kaka
vro mmm
cascading sounds, like water
bubbling sounds
slapping
—Vyoma

I like the rich variety of sounds.

I thought that it was a technologically
updated version of Dada, with machine-
made sounds interspersed with human
utterance and ulalalia.
The children are particularly playful and
enter into the game, which they don't
adhere to rigidly.
—Anonymous



Spellabrasions, 2018

gon gon gon
talk to the kids
the kids are over there
hello
was there a Lefrak meeting today?
When's the next meeting?
Nino nino nun nun
Laca laca laca nun nun
Balinga linga lun lun
Works that you can practice
La tu tu la tu tu
Quiii. . .
—Ayanna

It felt like a Fender Stratocaster guitar in

layers on layers. It felt like my body was moving thru a tube with no air, but I didn't need the air.
When you step on leaves—and acorns—it gives you goosebumps.
I saw the universe today at Lefrak
—Baseera

In high school I used to talk in my sleep.

(It was gibberish.) In my dream it was real, a conversation. My friends would wake me and say, “What are you saying?” One thing they could understand was a name.

Being alone, no one can understand you—that's uncomfortable + embarrassing.

I felt like a dog trying to understand, thinking “What do you want me to do?” Like I was trying to tell a Cuban dog, “Sit!”

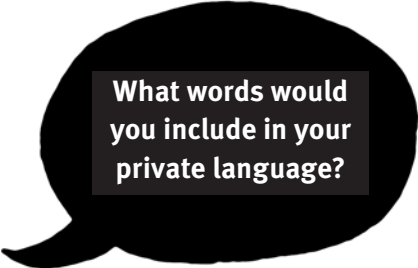
At what point does it go beyond embarrassment and understanding? Is it exactly between? I don't know—where is the vulnerability?

Some people will attempt to visualize and some people will attempt to transcribe.

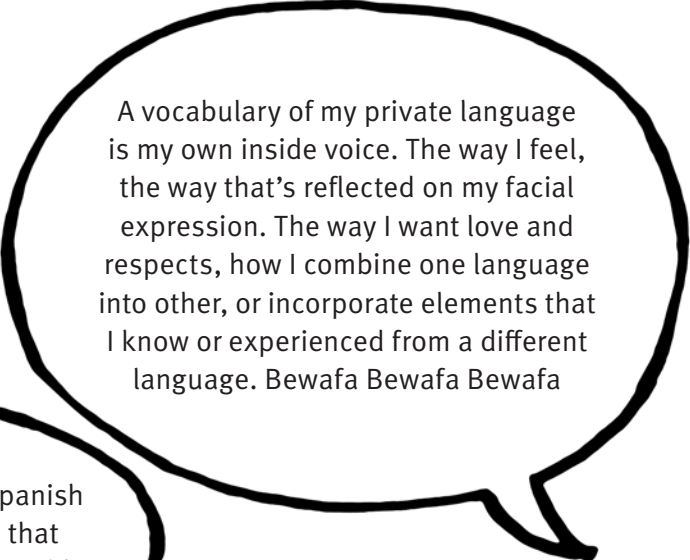
Sounding stupid is embarrassing. Why is making baby noises embarrassing?

—Christine, Rann, Jessica, Jean, Ayanna, and Vyoma

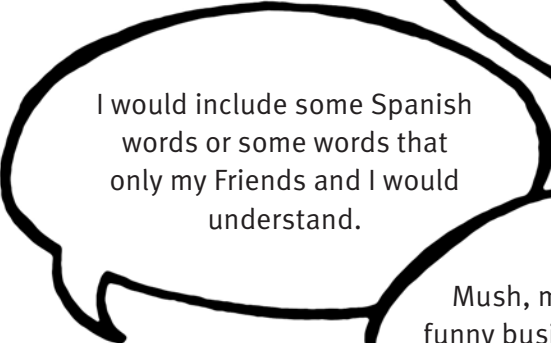
*association with the voices of men and women
women - soft voices
men - deep + loud voices*



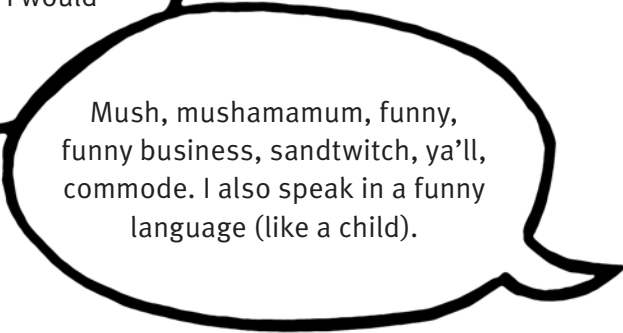
What words would you include in your private language?



A vocabulary of my private language is my own inside voice. The way I feel, the way that's reflected on my facial expression. The way I want love and respects, how I combine one language into other, or incorporate elements that I know or experienced from a different language. Bewafa Bewafa Bewafa



I would include some Spanish words or some words that only my Friends and I would understand.



Mush, mushamamum, funny, funny business, sandtwitch, ya'll, commode. I also speak in a funny language (like a child).

Write a sentence in your private language.

Mi tho es adot Mi Jerma de in es pregante con bebe.

Is there space to create non-social non-political art for aliens on foreign soil? Maybe “the space to create” isn’t the right phrase. Is there space for such art to exist on a foreign land at all? As works of Haley Bueschlen and of Mo Kong are exhibited side by side, one is a clever twist of social incooperation to examine social rules of one’s native land, the other is of a pair of foreign eyes looking at cultural phenomenon of a foreign land, the latter stuck out as a panda in this zoo. Not “a panda that bites your head off,” but one posting lovely gestures corresponding to its foreign environment. The boundaries of geographical marks re-surfaces as an invisible boundary of foreignness. Do there pandas still have exhibition value if it simply exist beyond the boundaries? What is an a-social a-political alien panda in the land of America?

—Yiren on Haley Bueschlen’s *fractured_fag_poetry_2_doom digital.nations. feeds.w..out..logical.vol* and Mo Kong’s *Sticky Liver, Soft Shock*

Pretend that you are an alien from another planet, and that your ship has beamed up Mo Kong's artwork *Black Cloud, Thin Ice* for study. You are a researcher and your goal is to understand humans, but this object is the only thing you have to work with. You don't know anything else about humans or Earth. Working from this perspective, write a report.

Humans communicate in segments, lengthwise, like looking through a row of windows to someone standing outside. They seem to need a place where they can stop moving, even if they don't know where that place is, exactly. Their vision is spotty and glassy, with many circles of many different sizes appearing in their line of sight. They seem to not see colors that are vibrant, like red, orange, purple, or green. Even the numbers they see are full of circles or holes. It seems like their world has been dropped from a tall window and now they are attempting to suture it back together. Everything is a bit cloudy as if their eyes are watering as they perform this task.
—Heather

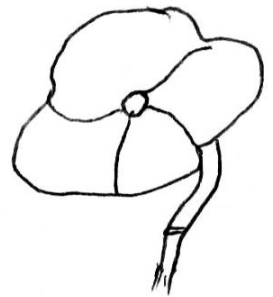
Cycle three hundred thirty four (334) of the Milky Way #2467 Solar System. We beamed up a wall structure painted white with five separated rectangular graphical attachments pasted on with some sort of banding material which has dried. The images on the graphics are circular and based on pi (3.14) but we have deciphered a decimal system of counting written on which makes us the creatures who made this have tens of something within their biology. Perhaps limbs, mouths, or sexual organs.

—Antonius/Oki

What does home look like?

Duckweed. Feeling of having no roots.

—Amy



浮萍、

What does home look like?

[中文請看背面]

THE
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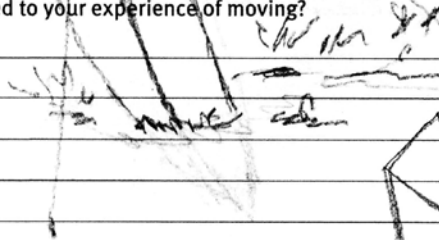
Mo Kong uses imagery related to bees and honey—from maps of migration patterns to the molecular structures of various kinds of pollen—to express feelings about his own movement from China to the United States, and the related experiences of restlessness and looking for home.

What images would you use to describe how you have changed homes? Draw or write your response.

HOME IS A COLLECTION OF PLACES WHERE I PUT STAKES
IN THE GROUND



What are some objects or concepts related to your experience of moving?



How might another person interpret the imagery you have chosen? Imagine the background that someone else could bring to these objects and concepts, and list the possible associations they might have.

SHE SAID: "STOP WANDERING AND GO HOME."




I SAID: MY HOME IS SO HUGE IF I
STOP NOW I WON'T GET TO
SEE IT ALL.



Your Name/Alias _____

Email address (IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN YOUR RESPONSE IS PUBLISHED) _____

Thank you! Please put your completed form in the submission

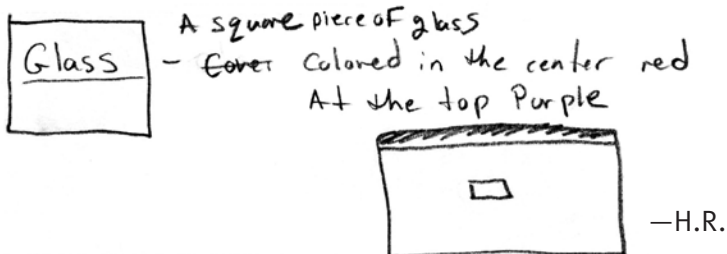
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What images would you use to describe how you have changed homes?



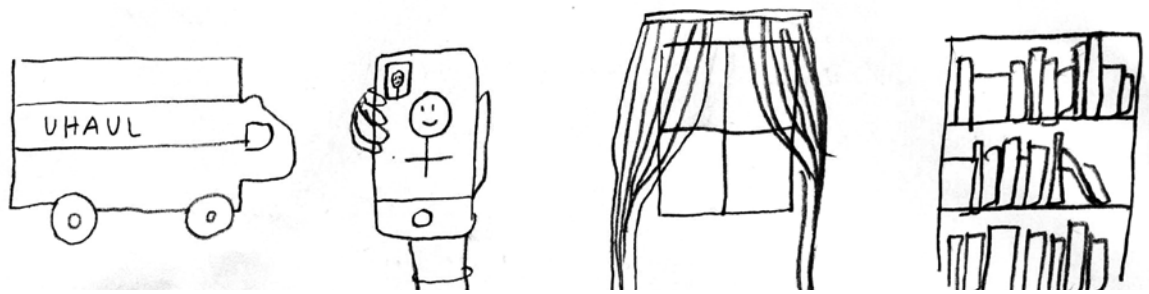
Husband, wife, childrens and all friends and relatives. Togetherness sharing learning with
Big Love elevating well-sounded in Harmony then eternity
Continue sharing illuminating thru all realms of universe

—Ko





—Antonius/Oki



—Heather

What are some objects or concepts related to your experience of moving?

My passports has changed countries and my identities along with it.
—Antonius/Oki

Journey of Growing and let going elevating higher consciousness

Accommodating, thinking for others, seeing self more clearly

Let the Internal sun forever luminating and resurrecting the eternal true self

—Ko

- **Getting rid** of things or donating them
 - Loneliness and feeling unsure
 - Feeling tired
 - Driving
 - Talking w/ friends
- Heather

Fide Et Amore—where I didn't understand but, I had love so I found faith in the unknown and I survived the birth pain of change.
—H.R.

→ ○ X

How might another person interpret the imagery you have chosen? Imagine the background that someone else could bring to these objects and concepts, and list the possible associations they might have.

X **Perhaps they may be** impartial based on the tone of the thought produced by my mind. I imagine great laughter and the idea of being emotionally naked.
—H.R.

X **I think they can interpret** they are silhouettes, but I don't know if they will recognize the buildings/ images inside and what they represent.
—Antonius/Okii

X **Thinking positive** at all times working with all persons towards the works of Heaven at every moment
—Ko

X **Based on what I drew,** I can see someone associating this w/ some sort of life change, even if it's not moving—starting school, starting a new job, welcoming a new day, etc.
—Heather

My mom, my dad told me

Stop wandering and go home

Tears fall while walking

My mom, my dad told me

Two different things,
but always pointed in the
same direction
Walking to the train I think
of them; getting on
train I think of other things
Like the lemon half I left
out on the counter
And the cockroach crawling
Under a glass bowl in my
bedroom
Last time I was home I told
My mother I experience
Happiness as a shifting target
And she grimaced into her
spaghetti

—Heather

Stop wandering and go home,

she said.
I said: My home is
so huge if I stop
now I won't get
to see it all.

—Birgit

Tears fall while walking

They don't usually fall while
laying down on your back
Tears fall while running
But if you run fast enough
they fall backwards, and
you leave them behind.
Tears fall while sitting.
Sometimes, if you lean down
and let the tears collect
on your iris, the tear falls
slower. But bigger. And the
world goes from blurry to
clear.

—Antonius/Oki

Wandering to where?

Wandering to where?

Is it a choice, a need, a forced evacuation? Is this wandering long-term? Do I have a destination? Will I be welcomed there? Are they expecting me? How long will it be before I wander again? Am I along or with others? What histories of wandering have come before us?

—Lindsey

New York is my home now

—Mo Kong, *Black Clouds, Thin Ice*

New York is my home now

ONLY WHEN I win the Powerball Tonight!
then I can afford it to live here. Or get a decent paying career.
And propagate Heaven's works.
Continue to learn, share, connect with all aspects of this journey
adjust, update, work

—Ko

Reading the *UltraViolet Archive*

I walked past a room + saw an exhibit that was set up like a library; actual shelves and carts + “check out” cards for the books. I hoped I could read the books + after reading about the exhibit, happily learned that I could.

There was a book, middle of the middle shelf, right when you walked through the door called Women Filmmakers Refocusing. As a filmmaker who happens to be a woman, this pulled me in, so I sat down at the table in the middle of the exhibit + read a chapter featuring one of my favorite filmmakers, Deepa Mehta. I learned more about her filmmaking process—specifically how she uses her daughter’s colored pencils to create a color palette for the film.

Then, she writes specific colors (“she lays down her orange sari”) into the script. I love her movies specifically for her use of color, so this description confirmed my eye (I’m still rather new).

I would never have stopped to read a book in the middle of an art exhibit if it hadn’t been set up like a library. Learning that the artifacts (books) came from the libraries in Queens made it even more personalized. The exhibit empowered me by teaching me that art isn’t something that’s created by the few, but that by simply participating in life, we are making art.

—Katherine

Pretend you're an alien anthropologist.

(translated using device into English)

I am interested and drawn to Christina Freeman's *UltraViolet Archive*. She has many square objects with images and texts. The piece shows how many of those square objects (called books, DVD's with movies, and CD's with music) were censored or banned. I learned that when humans censor or ban that means that other humans may not have access to those objects. They cannot view these square objects! So, I observe that some humans are intolerant or sensitive to ideas different from their own. This is a new concept to me as on our planet it's very different. Many of these square objects contain a wide range of information including a book about the internment of people of Japanese ancestry in the U.S., to two male penguins that care for an animal. I wonder what else will be banned or censored? I wonder why?

—Alien XWVZ

Focus on something you see in the archive. Where was it before it arrived in the gallery? Who had contact with it besides the artist?"

Carolee Schneemann's *Kinetic Painting* book from Christina Freeman's *UltraViolet Archive*. This book is on loan from the Queens Library because its content has been challenged or censored in some way—how?

Who had checked it out before? It's from the Jamaica Branch on Merrick Boulevard.

It looks barely used at all.

What would Carolee think?

A sign near the book says a formal complaint may have been made.

I would like to formally commend Carolee.

—Lauren

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? Write a step-by-step account of the path your robotic eyes take as they scan a work.

The robot won't see the movie because it's blurry

people: 16

emotion: sad

sound: piano

color: black

—Elek on the Oscar Micheaux screening at the *UltraViolet Archive*

Interrupting threads in nature's stamp
earthly waves bouncing off the mountain,
sloped into the whiteness

—Barry on Jesse Chun's *Landscape 10*

My eyes start scanning from the point of most difference or contrast. The landscape of Jesse Chun's printed pieces are full of pattern. Small dots, overlapping circles and parallel and intersecting lines, reminiscent of sound waves. From the point of most difference, which here is the white spaces empty of pattern, my eyes move to the spaces of most contrasted, crisp details in the snow. Next, the overlapping moving lines of the sky space. Lastly, my eyes can get forever lost in the massive, flat, but nuanced planes of the mountains and the second, less noticeable layer in the sky. There is a lot of movement in the patterns and in the places where they are interrupted.

—Kseniya on *Jesse Chun's Landscape #15*

Center Out Natural Controlled Hourglass

Rotate

—Barry on Beatrice Modisett, *Every Ninth Wave II*

Start Top Down Left Right Light Dark Color 1

Color 2 Color 3

—Barry on Arthur Ou's *Pt. Reyes, October 21, 2016, 7:50AM*

Top left, dense mound square empty underneath at 20 percent from top—vertical bar space vertical bar downward toward base—object on ground plane rotated at 45 degree angle from back of scanned space. ground plane object raised from ground one two three one—two—three equivalent size .02 from ground plane curved in loop

Above at .6 cylindrical—reflective—alternating transparent, solid, tube from left to right glass—brown white black

Rust orange red—liquid interior—red circle

With black words wavy form—back to ground plane—round surface in small area

Drip glaze—spill—glue—brown

Two three far—back to left, white square base—up to two dark bars, up to transparent mound—dense solid underneath—translation

—L.A. on Mo Kong's *Sticky Liver, Soft Shock*

Ani Liu's *Mind in the Machine:*
Psyche in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction



Optical Scanner Eyes

Imagine that you are a cyborg and your eyes are a pair of optical scanners. When you look at an artwork, where does the scanning start? Write a step-by-step account of the path your robotic eyes take as they scan the work. Think about how you interpret the data, and the form that your cyborg report would take.

TOP LEFT & INTERPRETING LIKE SIMILARITIES:

lump lump lumbulumbump
shadow mountain range arrangement just so
crinkle crinkle repeat & vary

loosenup, tightenup, lease

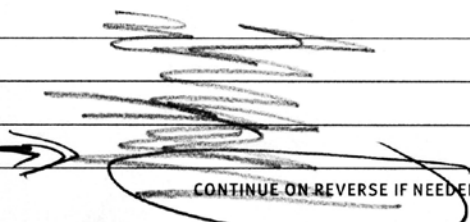


Variation
crinkle crinkle



MEDIUM:

- FABRIC LIKE BLANKET LIKE
BLANKET AT MY MOMS 'CEPT
LOOKS LIKE LAID TO REST



CONTINUE ON REVERSE IF NEEDED

ITSELF LIKE RESTING BLANKET
IN GLASS-VIEW COFFIN OR JEWELRY CASE
REFLECTING RED LIGHT

AND IT WAVES LIKE THE OCEAN



AND AT THE EDGE IT CRINKLES SO NICELY

LIKE WAVECAME THEN WENT LEAVING IMPRINTS

→ OF PATTERN AT LEFT: FOUR GRAPHICS LIKE
SOMEONE POPPED OPEN FOUR CALCULATORS LIKE
SWITCHBOARD (COULD BE ZOOOP ZOOOOP ZOOOP PURPLE
IRRIDESCENT + GREEN & CHESS & CHECKERS & ADVANCED
QUILT STORYTELLER LONG SHORT LONG LIKE MORSE, SHORT THEN
DRAWN OUT

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

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