

Open Create

Newsletter of the Block Studio Project Winter 2018

The Block Studio Project is a grassroots attempt to build creative literacy through building and maintaining corner donation boxes of Arts & Crafts materials. Each Studio also serves as walk-by workspace and neighborhood art project. Feel free to open one and create.

With a little luck, the hard freeze waited one more day, allowing one more installation of a new Studio at ArtSpace Jackson Flats. Thanks much to the talented tenants there who are willing to host the Studio. We are looking forward to seeing how their Studio changes and grows.



Speaking of growing, we are proud to announce that we've been contracted with Audubon Neighborhood Association and Sheridan Neighborhood Organization to build and install 6 new Block Studios for each of their neighborhoods. We are busy building, hoping to have them all ready come Spring thaw.

But of course, we need your help. If you presently live in the Logan Park, Audubon Park, or Sheridan neighborhoods, or are a business or renter with the permission of your landlord, and are interested in hosting a Studio - let us know. They are free and we will even help you with stocking them. Even if you live outside of these neighborhoods and want one, give us an email. We have extra and are seeking small donations to get them up and installed.

Which brings me to the overarching goals of BSP. I am far from anti-social media or digital approaches. I use them often and find the value in them, even having been sucked into the occasional lost hour quizzes and games they offer as well. What those of us who take part in BSP are hoping for is to provide an avenue for creators of all ages and abilities and opportunity to remember that what we create does not have to be tagged, liked, or shared to mean something. It doesn't even have to mean something to mean something. The act of creation does not need parentheticals of where it will lead to something 'bigger, viral, valuable...'

In that vein we use social media, slowly and occasionally, as an opportunity to reach creators who may not know us otherwise and to share ideas of what other hosts are doing with their Studios. It's not that we see online communication and face to face co-creation as opposed. But the opportunities to randomly connect in physical space with others who share similar interests have dwindled a bit ... and we just want to add a few. So run out to your nearest Block Studio and add that haiku or cartoon or paper robot you've been thinking about. And if you can't find a Studio, contact us about hosting one in your own front yard.

Here's to a Year of New.

Mathew Somlai, Coordinator, Block Studio Project

Doodle out the can't

Linda Somlai offers an exercise she has used continuously for the past 40 years to ... not so much silence the internal editor ... but rather help that internal editor remember to speak kindly, creatively, and joyfully. You can do this by yourself, but it really helps to get a group. Sometimes an internal editor just needs to speak to someone else's internal editor to remember how to be helpful instead of mean! Everyone participating will need a piece of paper, a pencil, a black marker, and colored pencils.

Step 1. Randomly let your pencil move around the paper with your non-dominant hand. Only do this for a minute.



Step 2. If in a group, pass the paper to someone new with each step. Use your black marker and dominant hand to find shapes using only what is on the new page in front of you. Don't add. Find an abstract bug or dragon or self portrait in the images and outline them.



Step 3. Use colored pencils or different thicknesses to detail what was outlined. Don't try to decipher. Simply see what you see and start detailing.

Step 4. If in a group, share. Or put it away and return to it later, investigating how your images changed and grew, and what your place was in that growth.

