

### **Jeff Robinson and Allison Lacher: Subdivision**

- Artist lecture: March 8 at noon
- Artist events:
  - February 21 at 5pm: Andy Roche and Selina Trepp
  - March 3 at 7pm: Amanda Bowles and Erin Hayden
  - March 10 at 7pm: Alejandro T. Acierto
  - March 24 at 7pm: Thad Kellstadt
  - March 31 at 7pm: Melissa Oresky & Zak Boerger

With several white-picket fence decals on the walls surrounding seven 10-foot high house-like architectural sculptures, Allison Lacher and Jeff Robinson's *Subdivision* transforms two galleries into a faux neighborhood where, on a weekly basis, eight additional artists are invited to respond to one of the home-like structures. Spread throughout the gallery floors, the sculptures are primarily framed-out wooden facades—reminiscent of old Hollywood film props—with rear supports to keep them erect. Glossy white sheets of acrylic hang on the face of every form—each with its own vinyl decal depicting a common household object such as a vent, light switch, or power outlet creating a visual clash between form, function, and representation. In the early weeks of the exhibition, the installation immerses visitors in a landscape that evokes a recession stricken, partially developed subdivision that is strangely populated by utilitarian Mondrianesque sculptures.

*Subdivision* will continually evolve throughout the five-week duration as the eight artists—curated by Lacher and Robinson—incrementally build upon, reinvent, or alter one of the aforementioned sculptures “causing the exhibition to develop in ways not entirely within anyone’s control.” During the opening reception on February 21, Andy Roche and Selina Trepp will be the first participating artists to engage their pre-selected structure. Following suit, each Friday artists Amanda Bowles, Erin Hayden, Alejandro T. Acierto, Thad Kellstadt, and collaborative duo Melissa Oresky and Zak Boerger will conclude their work with a free public event in the gallery. In the last week of the exhibition, the “subdivision” will have changed from a conglomeration of similar architectural forms to a mash-up of different aesthetics, styles, practices, materials, and tastes—from a series of houses to a community of neighbors.

Throughout this collaborative and time-based exhibition, Lacher and Robinson’s role will have transformed from traditional artists to artist-curators or from material-manipulators to exhibition-makers. This hybrid role often has creative freedoms not afforded to a “professional” curator, from disregarding clarity in favor of experimentation to destabilizing conventional roles in favor of critiquing institutions—sometimes in the very institutions they are creating in. The artist-curator freely moves between labels uninhibited by expectations other than producing the unexpected. Everything the artist-curator does can be deemed as a work of art, from materials and coordination to another artist’s artwork. For Lacher and Robinson the exhibition is the true medium and, as media theorist Marshall McLuhan said, the medium is the message.

Allison Lacher and Jeff Robinson began their collaboration in 2015 with the exhibition *A Kitchen Without a Knife is Not a Kitchen* at Kitchen Space gallery in Chicago. For the next year and a half the duo continued to produce collaborative exhibitions at Museum Blue, St. Louis; Roman Susan, Chicago; Outhaus, Champaign, Illinois; and The Ski Club, Milwaukee. The artist team is also Co-Founders and Co-Directors of DEMO Project, an artist-run contemporary art gallery in Springfield, Illinois. Individually, Lacher has exhibited nationally at venues such as E.TAY Gallery, New York; The Luminary, St. Louis; CAUC Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City, Utah; and Illinois State Museum, Chicago and Springfield, Illinois. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Edinboro University, Edinboro, Pennsylvania, and a Master of Fine Arts in

Sculpture from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Along with a rigorous independent curatorial practice, Lacher is the Gallery Manager at the Visual Arts Gallery of University of Illinois at Springfield. Robinson's work has been exhibited at the Chicago Industrial Arts and Design Center, Chicago; Northern Illinois University Art Museum, DeKalb, Illinois; (SCENE) Metrospace, East Lansing, Michigan; University Galleries, Normal, Illinois among others. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from University of Illinois at Springfield, and a Master of Fine Arts in Painting from Illinois State University. He currently works at the University of Illinois at Springfield as an Adjunct Professor and as the Director of the Visual Arts Gallery.