

FOR TONIGHT:

University of Maine Visiting Artist Caroline Woolard stands in solidarity with the University of Maine System faculty, staff, alumni, and students and community groups. She writes:

How might we heal, dream, and struggle against stagnant wages and austerity measures in 2014? I look for and create artworks, neither singular nor static, that revolve around voluntary, reciprocal commitments. Rather than sitting alone on a pedestal, these artworks embrace dialog and labor. Meaning is made in action as two (or more) people gather, build, and distribute ideas. These artworks refuse to separate production from objecthood; political economy from the presentation of ideas. I am dedicated to celebrating artists and activists that engage in cooperative, alternative, and non-market economies.

Understanding social practice, intermedia, and art making as practices of belonging, of radical pedagogy, and of political organizing, I hope that event provides a living example of artists working in, with, and for social justice. In the past two years, we have struggled to keep Cooper Union free, but after 154 years, the school will go from \$0 a year to \$30,000 a year. From \$0 to \$30,000! This is the end of the institution that made all of my work possible. Resisting the firing of faculty is going to take a mass student movement, and political analysis and struggle, but movement building also builds relationships of care and friendship, and allows future generations the right to education.

I do not think that art making can be separated from the political economy. Instead, the meaning of any art practice is created in the labors of education, production, distribution, and circulation. When I make work, I return to these six points:

1. Art making is not separate from the political economy.
2. Objects are not singular: the labor, materials, production, and distribution are part of the work.
3. Moving between Art spaces and non-art spaces allows for multiple meanings, timeframes, and publics.
4. Meaning is embodied: objects should be touched, used, and/or activated to be understood.
5. Connecting two people (or more) in a reciprocal encounter or agreement is powerful.
6. The work is ongoing and should be replicated or modified!

I stand in solidarity with resistance movements like #UMaineFuture while creating spaces of hope and healing in New York City as a collective member of The Pedagogy Group, SolidarityNYC.org, BFAMFAPhD.com, NYC To Be Determined (NYCTBD.com), and TradeSchool.coop. While I regret that I am not here physically, I cannot imagine a praxis of mutual aid and social practice better than the gathering students, faculty, and the UMaine community to organize together. Only together can you make sure that you all create, support, and defend the UMaine that you know is just.

I am not speaking about my work in particular tonight, because this struggle is more important. Please join #UMaineFuture. Try joining in for me, or for yourself, or for your grandchildren, or for justice, or for art, or simply because education is a human right. No right is won without a struggle. You might even have fun joining a student movement. I know I have.

PRESS RELEASE:

University of Maine Visiting Artist Caroline Woolard will deliver a performance and discussion in solidarity with the University of Maine System faculty, staff, alumni, and students and community groups on Tuesday, April 1st at 7pm on the University of Maine campus in Orono (104 IMRC Center, Stewart Commons). Understanding social practice, intermedia, and art making as practices of belonging, of radical pedagogy, and of political organizing, this event aims to provide a living example of artists working in, with, and for social justice. This event is free and open to the public.

<http://www.intermediamfa.org/wp/visiting-artists-spring-2014/>

PDF 11 x 17 poster link to:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/botickwofhmkp/poster_creatives_SNYC_White%20%281%29.pdf

PERSONAL STORY:

Woolard graduated from Cooper Union with a strong commitment to art within the solidarity economy movement. Despite a long student occupation protesting an overt violation of the mission of the school, the Board of Cooper Union voted to charge tuition for the first time in 154 years. Woolard does not think that art making can be separated from the political economy. Instead, the meaning of any art practice is created in the labors of education, production, distribution, and circulation. Woolard is outraged by the corporatization of education, and stands in solidarity with resistance movements like #UMaineFuture while creating spaces of hope and healing in New York City as a collective member of The Pedagogy Group, SolidarityNYC.org, BFAMFAPhD.com, and TradeSchool.coop.

BIO:

Caroline Woolard is an artist and organizer based in Brooklyn, New York. Making sculptures, furniture, and events, Woolard co-creates spaces for critical exchange, forgotten histories, and plausible futures. Her practice is research-based and collaborative. In 2009, Woolard cofounded three organizations to support collaborative cultural production; three long-term infrastructure projects to support short-term artworks: a [studio](#) space, a [barter network](#), and [Trade School](#).

From 2008-2013, Woolard was supported by transformative organizers she met as the media coordinator for [SolidarityNYC.org](#), a Fellowship at [Eyebeam](#), a residency at the MacDowell Colony, Watermill, iLAND, and funding from the Rockefeller Cultural Innovation Fund. Woolard is currently an Artist in Residence at the [Queens Museum](#), a lecturer at [Cooper Union](#) and the [New School](#), and a member of Trade School and the Pedagogy Group.

Woolard's research includes: the rise of the [BFA-MFA-PhD](#), footnote [systems](#) for research-based art, socially engaged [failure](#), [compensation](#) in the arts, and [incommensurability](#). Forthcoming writing will focus on a [project at MoMA](#) that closed in June, as well as the implications of debt and duration for [social practices](#). By 2018, Woolard hopes to establish a [community land trust](#) in New York City with community organizers, computer engineers, and [artists](#) who are dedicated to lifelong [commoning](#).

Principles in Caroline Woolard's art:

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EXTRA:

Caroline Woolard supports quality higher education as a public good and a right for all the people of Maine. She stands in solidarity with #UMaineFuture and the coalition statement below:

We believe that supporting public higher education is critical for the future and vitality of our state: our economic prosperity depends on it, as well as the creative and intellectual life of our communities.

We believe that our incredible faculty and staff are the beating heart of our university system. As the people who carry out the university system's core mission, it is their job to teach and care for students, to foster critical thinking, and to maximize the creative and intellectual capital of our state to meet our current and future needs. Therefore we believe that state support for public higher education must be based around supporting our faculty, staff, and the university's core mission—rather than empowering a bloated administration.

We ask you to join us in rejecting recent draconian efforts to shrink our universities and deny a comprehensive liberal arts education to lower income, place-based students. The University of Maine system has long distinguished itself in the caliber of education it offers such under-served constituencies as non-traditional students, working adults, first-generation scholars, returning veterans, and recent immigrants—enhancing the quality of life for all Mainers.

We reject the erosion of transparency in university governance and financial matters, and we ask you to join us in demanding that funding for higher education must be transparent, and that academic freedom must be maintained through the use of shared governance on all campuses.

We call upon all Mainers to recognize the incalculable value of public education and demand more support from our state. What is happening in Maine's public universities is symptomatic of a larger problem, and we seek to work in solidarity with all people, organizations, and communities who believe that state budgets should exist to ensure the basic human rights to education, healthcare, food, housing, and a healthy environment.

Please join us in keeping our best and brightest here in Maine, to ensure a vibrant and productive future for us all.