

**QUEER**

**ROCKER**

**WO/MANUAL**

**a FLOSSA**

**( Free/Libre/Open**

**Source Systems and**

**Art ) PROJECT**

**For my namesake, my great-grandmother Caroline,  
who rocked on her North Carolina porch,  
her mouth full of tobacco,  
and for my dad, who harvested dried  
tobacco leaves with his little boy arms.**

When my dad first met his grandma, *my* great-grandma Carrie (short for Caroline), she sat in the corner of her sunny front porch rocking and stroking a big white cat. His grandma was chewing something in sync with her rocking and petting, chewing something like he'd never seen before.

My dad noticed a small twig hanging at the side of her mouth and being worked over by her almost toothless jaws. Every now and then Carrie would reach over, lift a little can, and spit a small brown dribble into it. It seemed like a part of her talking and rocking. She was smiling, revealing a few brown teeth that she hid shyly and quickly. She was not proud of her looks; they had been very fine at one time, but she knew her lack of teeth meant poverty and ugliness. The smiles their visit had brought her had pressed her cheeks up so high that tears pushed out of her eyes. She radiated her love.

My dad's dad (my grandpa) had 30 years of catching up to do with Carrie. My grandpa had run away from home at 16 upon graduating high school and had now come back with her two grandsons, 8 and 11 years old. After iced tea and fried chicken and succotash on the porch very few details of his life had come to light. Carrie said, "Buddy could you get some black gum shoots for me? I'm near out." Grandma was still chewing in sync with her rocking.

## **Queer Rocker**

### **Caroline Woolard**

2012–16

plywood, text, open source file

dimensions variable

### **Source**

Plywood courtesy of Rosenzweig Lumber in New York City and Cayuga Lumber in Ithaca New York (Business)

Photographs of Shakers courtesy of Hamilton College Library's Digital Archive (Public)

### **Tool**

4' x 8' ShopBot PRS Standard 9648 CNC Router accessible to members of the School of Visual Arts (Business)

4' x 8' CNT Motion CNC Mill, accessible to members of Cornell University (Public)

### **Labor**

Illustrator file by Caroline Woolard

SketchUp Illustrations by Ian McConchie

ShopBot file by Tak Cheung

Publication Designed and Printed by Sam Gould

### **Encounter**

Cornell University Biennial exhibition (Public)

State University of New York at Purchase exhibition (Public)

### **Narrate**

Text by Caroline Woolard

Photographs of Rocker by Martyna Szczesna

### **Transfer**

Caroline Woolard gifted the Queer Rocker files to the public domain

Caroline Woolard bartered with SUNY Purchase student Ian McConchie: a rocking chair for a SketchUp file

Cornell University paid Caroline Woolard for an exhibition, workshops, and development of this project

Sam Gould gifted Caroline Woolard the design and publication of this booklet

### **Acquire**

Students from SUNY Purchase, and members of the Ithaca Workers Center will acquire a Queer Rocker.

### **Depart**

Queer Rockers that are not taken from the Cornell University exhibition will be mulched for the university grounds

### **\$upport**

In addition to the support mentioned above, Caroline Woolard relied on credit cards, day jobs at CoLab.coop and The New School, past grants from Eyebeam, and cash gifts from her partner, Leigh Claire La Berge, to support her livelihood during this project.

### **License**

While the Queer Rocker circulates in the public domain (CC0) as a Free/Libre/Open

Source System and Art project, this text is bound by a Creative Commons

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# QUEER ROCKER

## Queer Rocker

A common Shaker trademark is a small sticker that depicts a rocking chair and contains the words “TRADE MARK No. 0” and “Mt. Lebanon.” The Shakers, a 18th-century communitarian sect, produced rocking chairs for “The World” to support their communal livelihood as pacifists, feminists, abolitionists, vegetarians, and inventors. Converts who fled to Shaker communes sought escape from bad marriages, slavery, child labor, and industrialization and they often brought Shaker furniture with them. The chairs stood for another way of life. By the 1830s, over 6,000 Shakers shared possessions and lived on egalitarian communes made possible by the sale of their furniture, among other wares. Today, however, Shaker furniture is more often associated with images of early colonial America rather than the longest-lived American utopian experiment. Becoming familiar with this radical Shaker history made me wonder: Could a furniture movement today be fused with a radical politics and a more equitable economy?

This chair is a Free/Libre/Open Source Systems and Art project. I made the designs, files, and assembly process for the *Queer Rocker* available for use and modification because many students, activists, and grassroots organizations cannot afford to purchase furniture. I want to furnish gathering spaces with unusual objects, and I want to contribute to an economy that celebrates racial, sexual, and economic justice. I hope to add spaces of reflection and healing to social movements, so many of which are, at present, focused on protest and progress. From the baby’s cradle to the retiree’s rocking chair, this form calms people of all ages. As an artist, I learn by doing as well as by uniting research with action. My aim with this project is that through its communal production and alteration, a radical politics will emerge.

Queer theorist Sara Ahmed suggests, “queer furnishing is not such a surprising formulation: the word ‘furnish’ is related to the word ‘perform’ and thus relates to the very question of how things appear. Queer becomes a matter of how things appear, how they gather, how they perform, to create edges of spaces and worlds.” This rocking chair is “queer” because it is simultaneously a dividing wall, a window, a table, and a chair. It is “queer” because its holes become its strength and its structure. It is “queer” because it makes the politics of its own production visible. It is never singular, as it desires adaptation and interdependence. It is “queer” because it rests in organizing spaces that recognize the rights of LGBTQ people, which have been and will continue to be won through grassroots community organizing for economic and social justice.

## Background

My organizing, teaching, advocacy, design, and artistic work focuses on the solidarity economy. The concept of the solidarity economy emerged in the global South (*economía solidaria*) but is known internationally by different names: the workers’ economy, the social economy, the new economy, the circular economy, the regenerative economy, the

local economy, and the cooperative economy.<sup>1</sup> It is recognized globally as a way to unite grassroots practices like lending circles, credit unions, worker cooperatives, and community land trusts to form a powerful base of grassroots political power. The solidarity economy is a system that places people before profit, aiming to distribute power and resources equitably. I believe that the objects that surround us can be as imaginative as the organizing work we are doing for the solidarity economy.

The projects I hope to produce and the ones that I admire situate themselves in relationship to their historical moment. They conjure critical questions about the politics of production and they invite us to debate an object's history and future. But the institutions that present these works are often only open during standard, if outmoded, working hours, from 10am to 6pm. They rotate exhibitions every few months. How can the path I hope for these objects become actualized in such limited circumstances, in such conservative spaces? I believe that in addition to making objects, artists and designers must make new networks and organizations to support those objects, to allow them to circulate to broader populations with increased availability.

For this reason, I continue to co-create organizations *alongside* objects. These organizations move at the pace of interpersonal relationships, rather than the pace of the art and design markets, and they produce a shared discourse and transformative relationships. I use such organizations to ask: if works of art only become visible to us through networks of people and institutions that validate and affirm projects *as works of art*, which people and institutions are able to confer validity and how can that conferral become more democratic?

Since 2008, I have co-founded an affordable studio space (Splinters and Logs), a barter network (OurGoods.org), a barter-based learning platform (TradeSchool.coop), and an advocacy group for cultural equity (BFAMFAPhD.com), and I helped convene the NYC Real Estate Investment Cooperative. I have been transformed as a participant in collective houses, cross-sector economic justice work (New York City Community Land Initiative, East Harlem/El Barrio Community Land Trust, SolidarityNYC.org), action research training (CUNY Critical Participatory Action Research Institute), an art teachers' learning network (Pedagogy Group), and Occupy Wall Street.

I create installations and social spaces for encounters with fantasies of cooperation. Police barricades become beds. Money is erased in public. A clock ticks for ninety-nine years. Public seats attach to stop sign posts. Cafe visitors use local currency. Office ceilings hold covert messages. Ten thousand students attend classes by paying teachers with barter items. Statements about arts graduates are read on museum plaques. My work is research-based and site-specific. I alter objects to call forth new norms, roles, and rules. A street corner, a community space, a museum, an office or a school can become sites for collective reimagining.

The objects I make cannot be disentangled from their economic and social lives. My *Work Dress* is available for barter only. My *Statements* increase in price according to student loan rates. *Artists Report Back* is made by BFAMFAPhD, a group that you can contribute to. I understand art as mode of inquiry that expands beyond exhibition and toward life cycle; from display to production, consumption, and surplus allocation. I begin each project with an invitation. I facilitate an experience. A group gathers. I share and develop leadership. The project becomes a group effort, and the objects multiply. The objects are known in the group and shown much later.

I aim to communicate across social spheres. I make multi-year, research-based, site-specific projects that circulate in contemporary art institutions as well as in urban development, critical design, and social entrepreneurship settings. Though I am often cited as a socially-engaged artist, I consider myself to be a cultural producer whose interdisciplinary work facilitates social imagination at the intersection of art, urbanism and political economy.

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<sup>1</sup> As Marco Arruda of the Brazilian Solidarity Economy Network stated at the World Social Forum in 2004: "A solidarity economy does not arise from thinkers or ideas; it is the outcome of the concrete historical struggle of the human being to live and to develop him/herself as an individual and a collective... innovative practices at the micro level can only be viable and structurally effective for social change if they interweave with one another to form always-broader collaborative networks and solidarity chains of production-finance-distribution- consumption-education-communication."

# **FREE/LIBRE/OPEN SOURCE SYSTEMS AND ART (FLOSSA)**

Free/Libre/Open Source Systems and Art (FLOSSA) are projects which reveal the conditions of their own production; projects which desire to be made and remade. FLOSSA sees alteration as a form of knowing. FLOSSA must have two out of three of the following characteristics: appropriation, collaboration, and sharing.<sup>2</sup>

## ***Proposal for the Free/Open/Libre Art Foundation***

### **2012**

“Free art” means art that respects viewers’ freedom and community. Roughly, **viewers have the freedom to use, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the art.** With these freedoms, the viewers (both individually and collectively) control the art and what it does for them.

When viewers don’t control the art, the art controls the viewers. The artist controls the art, and through it controls the viewers. This nonfree or “proprietary” art is therefore an instrument of unjust power.

Thus, “free art” is a matter of liberty, not price. To understand the concept, you should think of “free” as in “free speech,” not as in “free beer”.

Art is free art if the art’s viewers have the four essential freedoms:

- The freedom to use the art, for any purpose (freedom 0).
- The freedom to study how the art works, and change it so it does your work as you wish (freedom 1). Access to the materials, tools, and documentation of the production process is a precondition for this.
- The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).
- The freedom to distribute copies of your modified versions to others (freedom 3). By doing this you can give the whole community a chance to benefit from your changes. Access to the materials, tools, and documentation of the production process is a precondition for this.

Art is free art if viewers have all of these freedoms. Thus, you should be free to redistribute copies, either with or without modifications, either gratis or charging a fee for distribution, to anyone anywhere. Being free to do these things means (among other things) that you do not have to ask or pay for permission to do so.

You should also have the freedom to make modifications and use them privately in your own work or play, without even mentioning that they exist. If you do publish your changes, you should not be required to notify anyone in particular, or in any particular way.

The freedom to use art means the freedom for any kind of person or organization to use it on any kind of system, for any kind of overall job and purpose, without being required to communicate about it with the artist or any other specific entity. In this freedom, it is the viewer’s purpose that matters, not the artist’s purpose; you as a viewer are free to use the art for your purposes, and if you distribute it to someone else, she is then free to use it for her purposes, but you are not entitled to impose your purposes on her.

The freedom to redistribute copies must include all forms of the art, as well as materials, tools, and documentation of the production process, for both modified and unmodified versions. It is OK if there is no way to produce a binary or executable form for a certain art (since some languages don’t support that feature), but you must have the freedom to redistribute such forms should you find or develop a way to make them.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Tribe described Open Source culture in this way to me, in conversation. Natalie Jeremijenko spoke to me about adding Systems to Free/Libre/Open Source Systems and Art because she and I both make systems, and discrete works of art. I am so thankful for ongoing debate, inspiration, and support from both Mark and Natalie.

In order for freedoms 1 and 3 (the freedom to make changes and the freedom to publish improved versions) to be meaningful, you must have access to the materials, tools, and documentation of the production process of the art. Therefore, accessibility of materials, tools, and documentation of the production process is a necessary condition for free art. Obfuscated “materials, tools, and documentation of the production process” is not real materials, tools, and documentation of the production process and does not count as materials, tools, and documentation of the production process.

Freedom 1 includes the freedom to use your changed version in place of the original. If the art is delivered in a product designed to use someone else's modified versions but refuse to use yours – a practice known as “tivoization” or “lockdown”, or (in its practitioners' perverse terminology) as “secure boot” – freedom 1 becomes a theoretical fiction rather than a practical freedom. This is not sufficient. In other words, these binaries are not free art even if the materials, tools, and documentation of the production process they are compiled from is free.

One important way to modify art is by merging in available free subroutines and modules. If the art license says that you cannot merge in a suitably licensed existing module – for instance, if it requires you to be the copyright holder of any code you add – then the license is too restrictive to qualify as free.

Freedom 3 includes the freedom to release your modified versions as free art. A free license may also permit other ways of releasing them; in other words, it does not have to be a copyleft license. However, a license that requires modified versions to be nonfree does not qualify as a free license.

In order for these freedoms to be real, they must be permanent and irrevocable as long as you do nothing wrong; if the artist of the art has the power to revoke the license, or retroactively add restrictions to its terms, without your doing anything wrong to give cause, the artwork is not free.

However, certain kinds of rules about the manner of distributing free art are acceptable, when they don't conflict with the central freedoms. For example, copyleft (very simply stated) is the rule that when redistributing artworks, you cannot add restrictions to deny other people the central freedoms. This rule does not conflict with the central freedoms; rather it protects them.

“Free art” does not mean “noncommercial”. Free art must be available for commercial use, commercial development, and commercial distribution. Commercial development of free art is no longer unusual; such free commercial art is very important. You may have paid money to get copies of free art, or you may have obtained copies at no charge. But regardless of how you got your copies, you always have the freedom to copy and change the art, even to sell copies.

Whether a change constitutes an improvement is a subjective matter. If your modifications are limited, in substance, to changes that someone else considers an improvement, that is not freedom.

However, rules about how to package a modified version are acceptable, if they don't substantively limit your freedom to release modified versions, or your freedom to make and use modified versions privately. Thus, it is acceptable for the license to require that you change the name of the modified version, remove a logo, or identify your modifications as yours. As long as these requirements are not so burdensome that they effectively hamper you from releasing your changes, they are acceptable; you're already making other changes to the art, so you won't have trouble making a few more.

A special issue arises when a license requires changing the name by which the art will be invoked from other arts. That effectively hampers you from releasing your changed version so that it can replace the original when invoked by those other arts. This sort of requirement is acceptable only if there's a suitable aliasing facility that allows you to specify the original art's name as an alias for the modified version.

Rules that “if you make your version available in this way, you must make it available in that way also” can be acceptable too, on the same condition. An example of such an acceptable rule is one saying that if you have distributed a modified version and a previous artist asks for a copy of it, you must send one. (Note that such a rule still leaves you the choice of whether to distribute your version at all.) Rules that require release of materials, tools, and documentation of the production process to the viewers for versions that you put into public use are also acceptable.

The GNU project uses copyleft to protect these freedoms legally for everyone. But noncopylefted free art also exists. We believe there are important reasons why it is better to use copyleft, but if your art is noncopylefted free art, it is still basically ethical.

Sometimes government export control regulations and trade sanctions can constrain your freedom to distribute copies of arts internationally. Artists do not have the power to eliminate or override these restrictions, but what they can and must do is refuse to impose them as conditions of use of the art. In this way, the restrictions will not affect activities and people outside the jurisdictions of these governments. Thus, free art licenses must not require obedience to any export regulations as a condition of any of the essential freedoms.

Most free art licenses are based on copyright, and there are limits on what kinds of requirements can be imposed through copyright. If a copyright-based license respects freedom in the ways described above, it is unlikely to have some other sort of problem that we never anticipated (though this does happen occasionally). However, some free art licenses are based on contracts, and contracts can impose a much larger range of possible restrictions. That means there are many possible ways such a license could be unacceptably restrictive and nonfree.

We can't possibly list all the ways that might happen. If a contract-based license restricts the user in an unusual way that copyright-based licenses cannot, and which isn't mentioned here as legitimate, we will have to think about it, and we will probably conclude it is nonfree.

When talking about free art, it is best to avoid using terms like “give away” or “for free,” because those terms imply that the issue is about price, not freedom. Some common terms such as “piracy” embody opinions we hope you won't endorse.

Finally, note that criteria such as those stated in this free art definition require careful thought for their interpretation. To decide whether a specific art license qualifies as a free art license, we judge it based on these criteria to determine whether it fits their spirit as well as the precise words. If a license includes unconscionable restrictions, we reject it, even if we did not anticipate the issue in these criteria. Sometimes a license requirement raises an issue that calls for extensive thought, including discussions with a lawyer, before we can decide if the requirement is acceptable. When we reach a conclusion about a new issue, we often update these criteria to make it easier to see why certain licenses do or don't qualify.

If you are contemplating writing a new license, please contact the Free art Foundation first by writing to that address. The proliferation of different free art licenses means increased work for viewers in understanding the licenses; we may be able to help you find an existing free art license that meets your needs.

If that isn't possible, if you really need a new license, with our help you can ensure that the license really is a free art license and avoid various practical problems.

#### **How to Make This Document:**

1. take documents from the Free Software Foundation

2. replace "software" with "art"
3. replace "program" with "art"
4. replace "users" with "viewers"
5. replace "developer" with "artist"
6. replace "run" with "use"
7. replace "source code" with "materials, tools, and documentation of the production process"
8. replace "computer system" with "system"
9. Replace "computing" with "work"

# **INSTRUCTIONS**

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

### DIY/Non-CNC Requirements (for making it in a woodshop)

- Illustrator file (printed out on a plotter)
- table saw, router, drill press, bandsaw, and jig saw
- 3/4" birch plywood, 0.71" thick (12–15 ply) or found wood
- Email me for woodshop directions, or improvise on your own!

### CNC Requirements

- ShopBot PRS file
- ShopBot PRS Standard 9648 CNC Router (adjust the file if you have another CNC)
- 1/4" carbide bits (one for a downcut and one for an upcut, not worn down)
- 3/4" birch plywood, 0.71" thick (12–15 ply)

### Tools for Finishing the CNC Queer Rocker

- 1/2" and 1/4" chisels (to carve out the corners that the CNC router cannot reach, by hand)
- Rubber mallet to hit wood together without damaging it. This can also be used to hit the chisel.
- power drill to connect pieces together with screws below
- corx/star drill bit and pre-drill bit
- orbital sander and 240 grit (or other fine grit) sandpaper to sand the rough edges

### Supplies for Finishing the CNC Queer Rocker

- work table: if you have a work table with a surface of at least 4' x 4', handling the rocker will be easier
- screws: 16 pcs per Rocker of #8 construction screw 1-1/4" (3.18 cm). Boxes of these from grip rite are yellow and come with a star/corx bit
- Optional: finish washers: 16 pcs per Rocker of #8 finish washers (if you will use a natural finish)
- sandpaper: extra 240 grit (or other fine grit) sandpaper for orbital sander
- paint, putty, and/or tung oil/wax or other finish for the ply (you choose)

## CNC FILE SET UP

### File Assumptions/Order of Operations when using CNC

1. We will drill holes in the center to screw the material down.
2. We will drill the holes for the screws after that (pecking), and screw the material down in the center.
3. We will then cut the channels for the wood to slide into, cutting inside the lines in the file.
4. We will then cut the slats and the big sides of the rocker slowly, on the outside of the line in the file, cutting halfway into the wood as a downcut, and then changing the bit so that it is an upcut bit and is less rough on the edges.

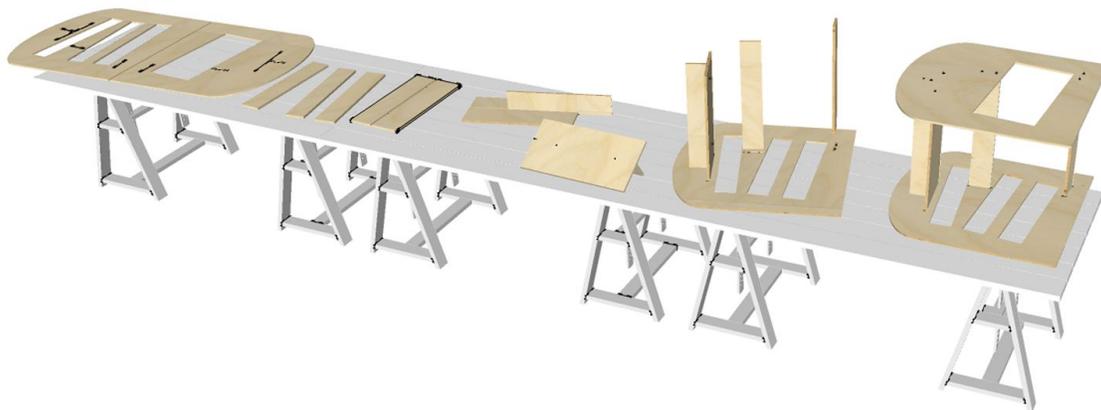
### Making your own File/Ways things can go wrong

1. **Software:** I have provided an Illustrator file and also a CNC file that works with the ShopBot PRS Standard 9648 CNC Router. If you have different software, and are using my Illustrator file, please read this section and adjust your new CNC file accordingly.
2. **Plywood Thickness:** Adjust the Illustrator file based on the thickness of your plywood. Be sure to measure your 3/4" plywood with calipers to get the exact thickness of the ply. The Illustrator file I've made assumes that the ply is 00.71" thick and therefore has press-fit channels that are 00.735" wide. If you need to edit this file, note that the slats and channels are at 5-degree angles and that the T channel assumes a 00.30" depth

for the T. Export a new CNC file. You may be able to adjust the ShopBot file by adding .025 to the channels all around, rather than editing the Illustrator file.

3. **Type of Plywood:** Make sure your plywood has as many ply as possible (12–18 ply) as regular plywood only has 7–8 ply and will cut very rough and not look good.
4. **CNC File Channel Depth:** make sure you cut your channels at 00.30" depth (everything in purple is a channel).
5. **Cutting Inside or Outside the lines:** Always cut inside the lines for the channels, but make sure all passes for the slats/windows and the rocker sides go on the outside of the lines in the files, otherwise the pieces won't fit!
6. **Hole size:** make sure you drill the holes with a 1/4" bit.
7. **Many Passes:** For all of the lines (the slats/windows and the rocker sides) make sure you make many passes (3–4 passes) with a down cut bit and then many passes (3–4 passes) with the up cut bit to finish it, so that the plywood has a smooth edge on both sides—is not rough and ugly.

## ASSEMBLY



1. **Chisel the tabs:** Dislodge your pieces from the sheet of plywood by chiseling the tabs away from the pieces you want to keep. Be careful not to chip the plywood.
2. **Chisel the corners.** Every channel has rounded corners due to the nature of round the router bit. Using a 1/4" or 1/2" chisel and a rubber mallet, make the corners of all 6 channels square. Carve it out fully and carefully, or else the slats won't be able to press-fit in. You do not need to elongate the channels.
3. **Sand the surfaces and edges.** While your pieces are separated, take time to sand the surfaces of all pieces while it is easy. Sand the edges of the long sides of the slats and the entire perimeter of the rocker and the windows of the rocker so that the plywood doesn't chip and is easy to handle. If the plywood is chipped, sand off the chips and remember that you will likely have to putty, sand, and paint the rocker.
4. **Put the T seat together.** One of the 5-1/2" slats sides into the channel on the large slat, making the seat for the rocker. Carefully slide the 5-1/2" slat into the channel of the large piece, using the rubber mallet to assist you with this press-fit. Once it's in, pre-drill into the top of the T where you see the 1/4" holes and screw in 1-1/4" #8 corx/star bit construction screws (optional: with #8 brass finish washers if you won't paint it).
5. **Put the T, lumbar support, and top slat into one side of the rocker.** Place one side of the rocker on your work table, so that you can slide part of it off the work table and get under it to screw it together. You are assembling the rocker on its side. Press fit the T seat, the lumbar support slat, and the top slat into that side. Use the mallet to help you. Get under the rocker and pre-drill holes where you see the 1/4" holes and screw in 1-1/4" #8 corx/star bit construction screws (optional: with #8 brass finish washers if you will not paint it).

6. **Put the other side of the rocker on top.** Place the other side of the rocker on top, carefully aligning all the channels to the slats that you just screwed in place. Use the mallet to help you. Stand on top of the table or use a stool to get above the rocker (still on it's side) and pre-drill holes where you see the 1/4" holes and screw in 1-1/4" #8 corx/star bit construction screws(optional: with #8 brass finish washers if you won't paint it).
7. **Get help lifting the rocker off the table and try it out on the floor!** Now, your rocker should be assembled securely, with all 16 screws in all 16 holes. With help, move the rocker from its sideways position on the worktable to the upright position on the floor. Try it out!
8. **Finish the piece.** You likely see parts of the rocker that need to be sanded, as well as parts that are chipped and that could use putty. Decide whether you would like a natural finish (bowling wax, beeswax, tung oil, etc.) or if you would like to paint it a color. If you are painting it, you can fill the chips/splinters with putty, sand it, and finish it to hide them. Be sure to recess your screws enough so that they are hidden.

# REFLECTION

## How do you determine what you want to make?

I go through the following process: I define the qualities of the work I want to make. I figure out what steps I need to get there, and then list which things are supporting me and what is blocking me. I then make a list of things to do, a schedule, and get started.

Right now the work I want to make:

- is tactile and can be appreciated for its craft
- is well researched/conceptualized
- is the lovechild of Tenorobu Fujimori, Peter Ivy, Etienne Boulanger, Bas Jan Ader, and Serverine Hubbard
- is something I would want to live with in our house (if possible, my partner Leigh Claire La Berge likes it)
- is something I could imagine my friends wanting as a gift
- is something I could imagine people I know using/enjoying in meetings

To get to that place it would be good if I could:

- spend time in the hot shop blowing glass
- apprentice with a yakisugi teacher and woodworker
- continue to read about amphorae, reach out to amphorae scholars
- look at more work that I love

The things supporting me in the above are:

- a residency in Santa Ana with a storefront at Grand Center Arts Center
- time away from work, a new job that supports work from afar at CoLab.coop
- relaxation and support from Leigh Claire

The things blocking me from doing the above are:

- my impatience and self-judgement
- finding a method to "just go" or "just start"
- fear of sitting with myself and needing recognition/immediate feedback from collaborators

## What is success for you?

It changes each year. Right now, I am fixated on stabilizing my income through a tenure-track teaching job or a full time job with a worker-owned business. I want financial stability right now because I no longer live in an inexpensive collective space, and I am currently feeling fulfilled in my collective work, my research, and in my work with grassroots organizations. I have taught as an adjunct for the past five years while working in underpaid non-profits, organizing events and actions for collectives and organizations without pay, and making my own discrete objects without pay. That worked while I lived in a collective and paid less than \$500 a month from 2008 to 2015. I am now a semi-finalist for tenure-track positions at four schools, and I also have a new job at CoLab.coop, an international design firm that is a worker-owned business. One or the other will work out. I know my image of success will change again. In the past, I made an exercise that helped me think through these things, and want to share it here in case it helps.

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This is an exercise in:

- 1) imagining the multiplicity of ways that your next project could be successful,
- 2) recognizing which aspects of success matter to you most at this time,

3) identifying ways to act upon these notions of success.

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**PART ONE:** For each of the prompts below, *set a timer for 5 minutes* and write for the entire time. Allow yourself to free write. This means that you do not need to worry about grammar, spelling, or “bad ideas.” Simply write. You will have time later to refine your writing. This is an exercise in getting out of your own way in order to discover what matters to you. You will not be required to share this writing with your peers. Write your responses below, in a sketchbook, on your phone, or wherever you are most comfortable.

A. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because your project brought you into deep dialog with one or two people you respect, and who also respect you. You will continue this dialog for years. Who are these people? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

B. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because your project landed you a job or a sale. Who are you in touch with now? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

C. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because you learned and/or refined your craftsmanship, something that no one can ever take away from you. What skills/crafts did you learn or refine (typography, writing, woodworking, etc.)? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

D. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because it led you to a community of researchers in a field outside of art and design, and you will continue these relationships and research for years. What field did you connect to? What ideas are you talking about together? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

E. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because you received public attention for your work in the news. Where did you gain this notoriety? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

F. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because it represents deep personal growth. What aspects of your character (courage, patience, self-care, humility, curiosity, humor) did you embrace and expand upon with this project? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

G. Imagine that it is six months from now, \_\_\_\_\_(date). Your project is successful because it is used by a community group, political project for social justice, or by a social movement. What larger project did your work contribute to? (Free write for 5 minutes.)

**REFINING PART ONE:** After free writing for thirty-five minutes (5 minutes x 7 options), take 20 minutes to identify and rewrite a few of the most surprising and/or important aspects of your responses to each prompt above. Write clear sentences that you can share with me. Again, you will not be required to share your responses with your peers.

A. Mutual Respect as Success: I am in dialog with...

B. Financial Remuneration as Success: I have a job/client/collector named...

C. Technical Agility as Success: I am proficient in...

D. Curiosity/Research Community as Success: I work with researchers in the field of...

E. Professional/Public Recognition as Success: I am known by...

F. Individual Growth as Success: I embraced my...

G. Social Justice as Success: My work contributed to...

**PART TWO:** Begin to think about which responses from part one above excite you most, which responses seem impossible, and which responses you would like to make a reality in six months from now. Notice that B (financial success) and E (public recognition) are outside of your immediate control, but that they often follow from the rest—F (individual growth), A (mutual respect), C (technical agility), D (curiosity), G (social justice). There are many forms of success!

Take 15 minutes to rank these aspects of success, based upon the ones you would like to focus on in the next four months, with #1 being your top priority and #7 being your lowest priority. Remember, these answers are for *you* alone. You will not be required to share these with your peers and I am no more or less interested in any of these aspects of success.

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) Mutual Respect as Success: I am in dialog with...

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) Financial Remuneration as Success: I have a job/client/collector named...

\_\_\_\_\_ (C) Technical Agility as Success: I am proficient in...

\_\_\_\_\_ (D) Curiosity/Research Community as Success: I work with researchers in the field of...

\_\_\_\_\_ (E) Professional/Public Recognition as Success: I am known by...

\_\_\_\_\_ (F) Individual Growth as Success: I embraced my...

\_\_\_\_\_ (G) Social Justice as Success: My work contributed to...

**PART THREE:** Take 15 minutes to write down 3 steps you will take to make your top priority a reality.

Write them down:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Here are a few examples of action plans for different priorities:

If A is your #1, you could begin to identify people that you'd like to be in dialog with, keeping a log of their writing/research/work so that you know where your interests overlap. This way, you will be able to articulate the interests you share in an email where you invite them to tea or to do a studio visit, or to visit you, as your project develops.

If B is your #1, you could identify recent hires at companies that you want to work at on LinkedIn, find their portfolios, and notice shared sensibilities, aesthetics, or skills that you might develop or showcase. You could also interview people you know about how/if they have sold their work.

If C is your #1, you might identify practices, mentors, workshops, or tools that you need to acquire to refine the skill you have in mind.

If D is your #1, you could begin to identify conferences, events, graduate students, faculty members, and classes in this field, and attend these events or plan to meet with these people.

If E is your #1, you could begin to identify the people behind publicly visible projects, and then plan to speak to the PR firms and/or the creators of these projects who received recognition about what they did to promote, invite, and connect with people to reach this level of visibility.

If F is your #1, you could begin by identifying the practices, places, and people that allow you to be most honest and vulnerable with yourself, and make a plan to return to these weekly.

If G is your #1, you could begin by identifying the issues that matter most to you, seeking out groups that work on these issues near you, and going to meetings to listen to what contributions might be wanted by these groups.

# **SUPPLY CHAIN**

In the classroom, arts educators confront the socially idealized occupation of the cultural producer and the frequent disavowal of a relationship between cultural production and the contemporary political economy. It is my aim to articulate existing economies of cultural production as well as plausible futures of cooperation in art. I do this in my teaching, scholarship, and independent work. Most recently, my forthcoming co-authored articles with Susan Jahoda of BFAMFAPhD (*On the Cultural Value Debate*) and teaching tools co-authored with Susan Jahoda and Emilio Reynaldo Martinez Poppe (*Of Supply Chains*) speak to these concerns. We want to make the politics of production for projects visible, important, and open to contestation. To do so, we attempt to trace the supply chain for projects, including the Queer Rocker, and this text below. Forthcoming writing on this topic will be featured in the Cornell Biennial in September 2016. We write:

*Of Supply Chains* is a teaching tool traces that the life cycle of projects—the ways materials are sourced, how the labor for producing a project is organized, how tools are accessed, how an artwork is supported, copyrighted, narrated, encountered, acquired, and how it finally departs, ready for another life cycle. *Of Supply Chains* provides a set of practices to think through structures of legitimization and economies of solidarity in the arts. *Of Supply Chains* consists of a workbook, game, protocols and syllabi that can be used and adapted to various classroom and workshop contexts. We hope that it invites a practice of reflection and narration that prompts the reader to ask, How might public conversations about the lifecycle of a project change the value—the cultural and social significance, as well as market prices—of that project? What if the discourse surrounding any project included all the practices involved in its making?

Please go to <http://BFAMFAPhD.com> for more information on our work, and to download our teaching tools, card game, and syllabi.

**Support for the project was provided by** the CNC team at the School of Visual Art's Visible Futures Lab first in 2013 as a barter that I boldly proposed to Allan Chochinov, Leif Mangelsen, and Boris Klompus: CNC access in exchange for a workshop at SVA. In 2016, I had regular access to the CNC again through my status as an adjunct faculty member in MFA Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts. In 2016, Tak Cheung, John Heida, and Boris Klompus in the Visible Futures Lab provided incredible support. SketchUp drawings for the project and assembly of one rocking chair was made possible through bartered labor with Ian McConchie, Christoph Sawyer, and Scott Rivard from Brooke Singer's class at SUNY Purchase. Financial support for the design and development of this rocking chair began during an Eyebeam Fellowship in 2012–2013, and was continued with a space grant in a residency at the Queens Museum from 2013 to 2015. A visiting artist position at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, organized by Brad P. Jirka, Kate Casanova, and Betsy Alwin, allowed Sam Gould of Red76 and me to meet in person and plan this publication. Leigh Claire La Berge and Katherine Pradt edited the text. Sam Gould generously published this text, and organized a book launch for it. Major funding for this project came from the Cornell Council on the Arts, where the Queer Rocker is shown in an exhibition for the 2016 Cornell Biennial. Special thanks to Stephanie Owens, Mariko Azis, and Danny Salomon at Cornell University for their rigor and generosity throughout the process.

**Source:** Business (plywood from Rosenzweig Lumber in New York City and Cayuga Lumber in Ithaca)

**Tool:** Business (access to CNC machine at SVA), Public (access to CNC machine at Cornell)

**Labor:** Individual (Caroline Woolard made the files), Collective (Red76 published the text), Public (Cornell University and SUNY Purchase students and faculty supported two exhibitions), and Commons (anyone can modify the files)

**Encounter:** Public (Cornell University)

**Narrate:** Public (Cornell University)

**Acquire:** Business (Ithaca workers center)

**Depart:** Public (Cornell University mulch)

**Transfer:** Paid/Barter/Mutual Aid

**\$upport:** Day Jobs, Credit Cards, Cash Gifts

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