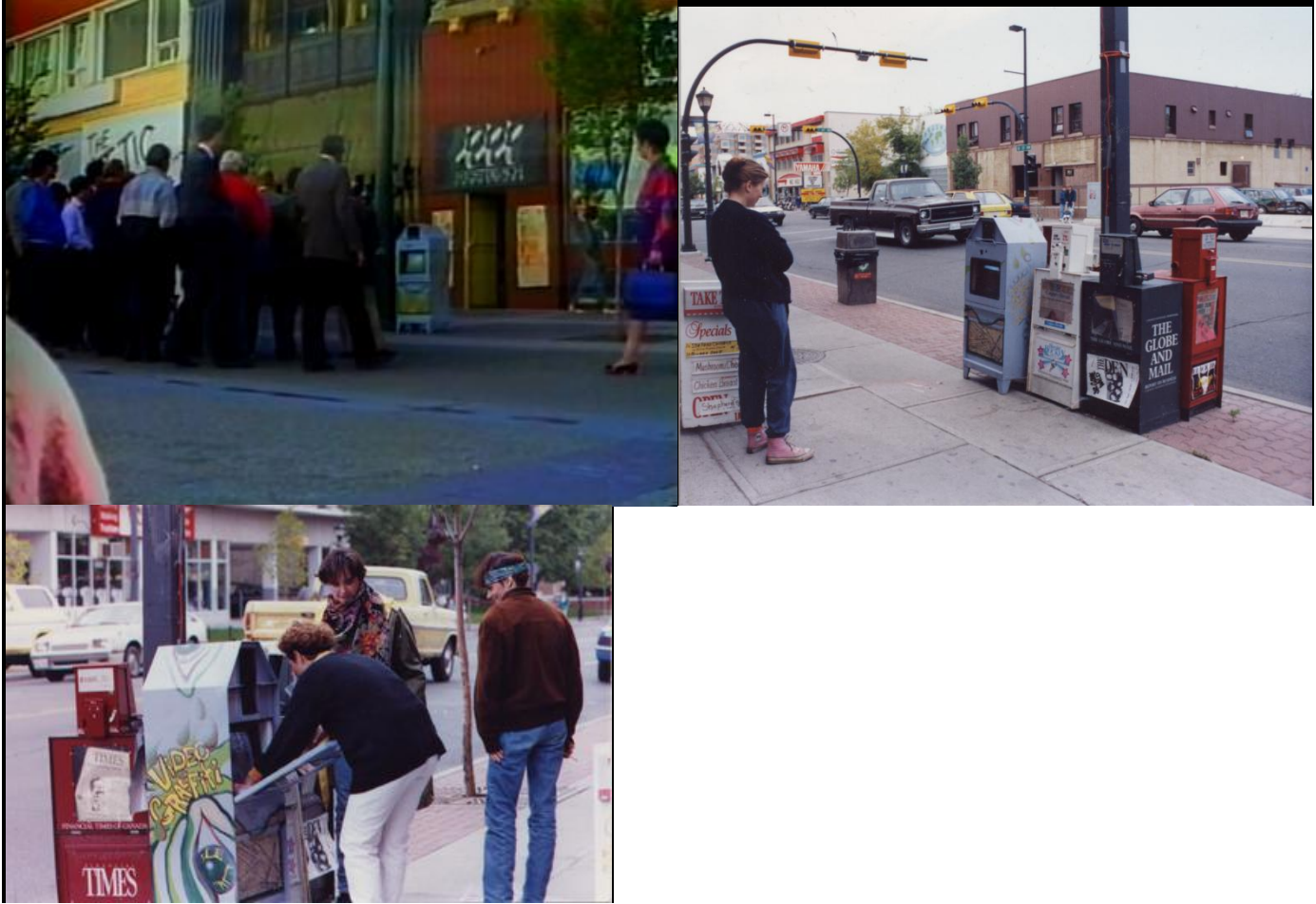


1991



Video Graffiti, 1991 – My first project exploring public spaces and media art. A video newspaper box was designed to house a monitor and VCR. The newspaper box was stage beside mainstream media and ran 3 short videos on subjects that don't get much media attention: PMS, Condom use, and the demise of a community. Public reactions were caught on camera that was occasionally attached to the top of the newspaper box. The public installation was set up every day for one week in 5 different locations in the downtown core and inner city. The action was guerrilla in that – permissions were granted after the videonewsbox was set up and electricity was required.

2003 – 2005**L.A. Bridge Party**

A working collective of multidisciplinary and participatory performance artists - Xstine Cook, Cori Stent, Penny A.P. Anderson, and Sharon Stevens



Performances during MAYworks Festival of community solidarity and culture

1. Guernica

The May Day Parade featured Labour and The Arts' unique interpretation of Picasso's Guernica. This "live relief" street performance involved collaboration between members of Labour and The Arts and 17 artist and non-artist marchers. A 10 foot, 3D canvas was designed by Penny A.P. Anderson and painted by community volunteers. This 'painting' was carried in segments in the May Day March.

2. Three Ladles Full

A court jester held court as master of ceremonies for an arts and Culture Cabaret while audience members wrote out lies on small pieces of paper – "Ralph Klein likes cream pies". The lies were ladled out to the rest of the audience, read out and projected on overhead projector.

3. BINGO

A community meeting space transformed into a gallery of art around the theme of social justice. Fifty old-style bingo cards were suspended in rows from the ceiling. Participants could enter into the 'game' and the bingo winner received a canned chicken.

4. Generosity

Visitors to the exhibition were asked a single question "what is the greatest act of generosity someone has given to you or you have given to someone?" The answer was written on the reverse of Monopoly money and delivered, like a ballot, in a secured box.

5. Labelling

The performance art was undertaken with audience members at a concert by WAR PARTY – an aboriginal hip hop group. Each audience member was labelled, literally, as they entered the concert space. The labels were created spontaneously and were transcribed for all to see – using an overhead projector at the back of the concert hall. The issues of assumption, perception and reality as well as having a voice and being silenced were explored through this performance.

6. Picnic

The final action took place during a sunny MAYworks community picnic on the prairie (an urban field) for workers and their families, activists, artists and other hungry folks. It began with the creation of red tape suits along with a continuation of the Monopoly money question. Everyone who attended was encouraged to contribute an 'answer' or a story related to the generosity question. These were again, deposited into a box over the course of the afternoon.

7. Red Tape

The red tape suit people carried the box from person to person and asked them to reach in and pull out a 'story' to share. Participants then read out the monopoly money written thoughts into a microphone for everyone to hear. Via walkie talkie, the monopoly money written thoughts were simultaneously transcribed and projected onto the walls inside the community hall for those people who were taking part in a book fair. This served to intrigue people and lead them out to more engaging activities outdoors.



Planet Overture – impromptu performance resulting in a 2:30 video. *The video represents a symbolic funeral pyre for a bruised and battered papier-mache globe that had accompanied activist events facilitated by the Arusha Centre for the past few years. In the video, a haz-mat-suited individual emerges for this globe, coats the globe in black tar-like substance before setting it ablaze. Darkly overturned, the piece reads like a challenge against a dystopian future.* Tomas Jonsson Mediating arts and activism EMMEDIA Handheld Media Arts Magazine summer 2010



We call ourselves “The Id Collective”. A year-long public performance as a tool of engagement with Colleen Huston, Jodie Stevens and Sharon Stevens

We explored society's willingness to share how people self-identify. We also refer to ourselves as artists and part of our role as artists is creative use of public spaces for civic engagement and art making. Public performance created support and tools for people to explore or create an identity.

Since the invention of the internet, shared identity has connected us to strangers from privacy of our homes and laptops. However civic engagements in our communities, community halls, and in the formal art spaces have diminished. We focused the project on how to engage citizens in a research about self-identity in public spaces.

ID Collective designed an ‘exhibit’ data collection tool we called the ID Photo Booth at arts and activist events during spring, summer and fall of 2008. We used the principals of public performance, use of friendly public space, as well as both hi-tech and low-tech processes to create a comfortable space for participants to contribute to the ID Collective.

We asked people at community events, social gatherings and within virtual environments “How do you self-identify? What would you like the world to know about you?” Finding common ground by pushing the social norms of community gatherings to ask people to share with us how he or she self-identities. We used digital photographs, buttons making, signs and the internet as a way to publicize how people self-identify.

92 people participated in the project and 48 people created a ID photo button to commemorate the experience. From a disability pride parade to a community street painting fair to conversations on a barstool. The project was inspired by a trip to Mexico City to see 100th anniversary celebrations of Frida Kahlo's birth.

2009 – ongoing

OX: A Crash Course on Loving Calgary



OX is an ongoing interactive, net-based audio/visual, community mapping project, where ultimately, the final product is a downloadable podcast walking tour of OX spots in Calgary contributed by artists and activists.

“Media artist and social activist Sharon Stevens’ OX: A Crash Course on Loving Calgary takes the concept of the everyday, those places we pass by in our daily lives, and elevates it to the level of love, asking us to stop and pay attention to the special parts of this city, why we respond to certain things in our environment and asking us to claim what we love about it. Steven’s project involves a multi-media approach to civic engagement; collecting voices, images and videos to present a journey through the city and inviting people to contribute their own devotional way stations to a larger whole.” Melody Jacobson – arts writer

Selected video projects:

Altar(ed) 3:55 minutes, black & white shot on Super 8 and hand processed, video colour, stereo sound 2007



A bride, jilted at the altar, remains determined to find herself in the state of holy matrimony. Reminiscent of a sentimental silent movie, *Altar(ed)* is a witty examination of the meaning of marriage and love. A lonely bride wanders the streets of Calgary forming brief but unfulfilling relationships with statues in a misguided attempt to find permanence in love before realizing that ultimately the love she seeks is hers to give. *Altar(ed)* is a saucy short that offers a fresh perspective on the state of marriage. The film was showcased in a 'One Night Stand' installation at EMMEDIA.

Becoming 3:27 minutes Colour, Stereo, 2003



Our divergent responsibilities (home, children, work, art) can be crazy making. Yet, it is often out of these particular responsibilities that our creative projects grow. *Becoming* is an abstract exploration of the place of art and creation in a woman's life as we struggle with obstacles, responsibilities, and general fuckupedness. The three wise crones lead a young girl through a labyrinth of baby shoes, spoken word by Nancy Jo Cullen and soundtrack by Anne Loree (*Insensitive* songwriter) along with stop motion animation, this short video is a brief sojourn walking into the lives of women.