

The Elsewhere Storybook

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Elsewhere
606 + 608 South Elm Street
Greensboro, North Carolina 24706
<http://goelsewhere.org>

The Elsewhere Storybook
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
1. Art 2. Children

First Edition

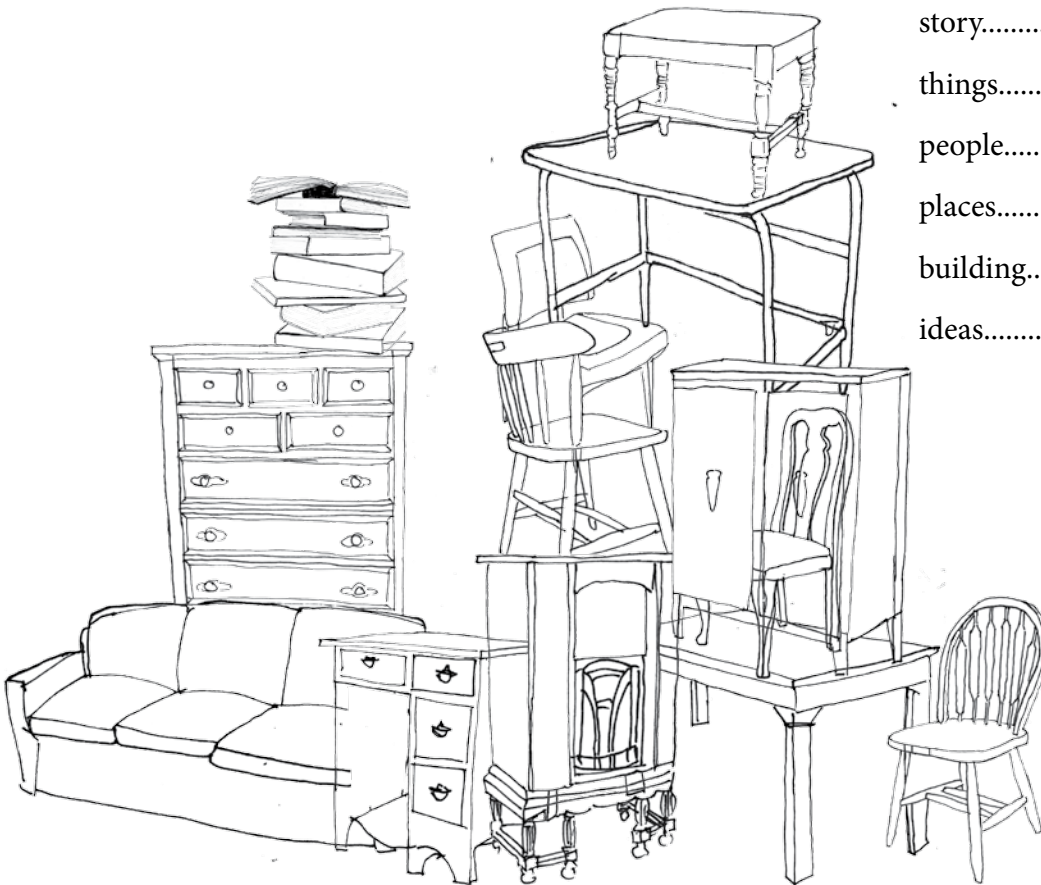


for Sylvia

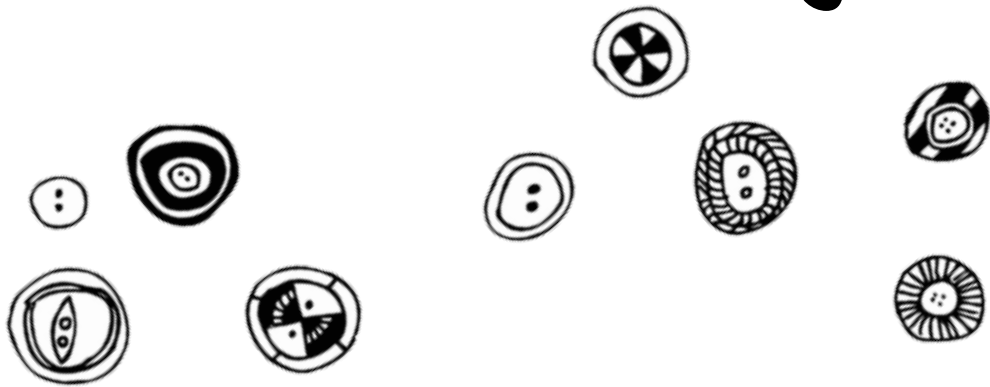


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story



On a sunny morning in the spring of 2003, George opened the door to his grandmother's thrift shop. It had been six years since anyone had entered the building, sixty-four since Sylvia and her husband Joe first opened their downtown store. Three stories up and filled to the brink, now millions of things slept inside.

The little city of Greensboro began as three simple streets - Greene, Elm, Davie - in the middle of a deep forest halfway between the ocean and the mountains. Greensboro eventually became a vibrant town and manufacturing hub, the home of textile mills and furniture makers. There were good churches and temples and schools and hospitals, a major intersection for roads and rails, and a place of civil rights action. Eventually people moved away from downtown to the suburbs, businesses closed and services moved out. Greensboro became a sleepy town of seed shops and antique dealers, and Sylvia's second-hand store, which lived at 606 & 608 South Elm Street on the southern side of the tracks.





Our story begins in 1939, when Joe and Sylvia Gray first opened their store as a furniture shop. The Grays saw that trucks full of new North Carolina furniture going to New York were coming back empty, so they started buying-up second-hand furniture at auctions up north, and sending it south to be repaired and sold out of their Greensboro store. After WWII, Sylvia and Joe added army surplus to their inventory. They started selling their wares by catalog and out of their store, mailing second-hand pup tents, army bags, and canteens to Boy Scout troops and hospitals around the country. Joe managed the Carolina Sales Retail and Realfit Shoe Co. on the first floor, while Sylvia tended to the boarding house's four tenant apartments on the second floor, and oversaw surplus mending and fulfilled mail orders on the third. The Grays lived in the building with their three children, Michelle, David, and Sidney.

In 1955, Joe died unexpectedly, and Sylvia took over the business. She moved to the suburbs with the children, and shut down the boarding house and mending warehouse. The first floor store became her domain. She started to collect fabric rolls and scraps from the local mills, then women's wear, and then some menswear too. She went to second-hand shops and rummage auctions and thrift sales and made daily visits to the nearby Goodwill and Salvation Army. She gathered dishes, toys, books, games, housewares, knick-knacks, bits and bobs, cast-offs and misprints--an impossibly large collections of objects that for one reason or another no one wanted anymore.

Some people tell stories of ladies following behind her, snatching up items she returned to the shelf. Some say she was a child of the Depression, which made physical objects valuable as salvage for some future use. Others thought she was fulfilling the fates of lost objects, looking for their perfect owner. Maybe she shopped to remember what she had. Anyway, she was a puzzlemaker at that, her things piled up and up and up as she went out every day to bring more things in.





Sylvia believed that everything had its perfect owner, and every person their perfect thing. She didn't like people browsing her wares, so she sat at the front of the store and took your request, and then scurried off to find the desired thing amidst her piles. If she liked you, she gave you a deal. If she didn't like you, for whatever reason, she'd quote you an impossible price. If you tried to bargain with her, she would raise the price on you. If she thought you were stealing, she would lock you in. She was proprietress and protectress of her incredible, unbelievable, chaotic, infinite collection of things.

Sylvia worked at the store until April 20, 1997, the day she passed away. Shortly thereafter, the store was closed down and boarded up. No one knew what to do with this vast collection, and no one knew just what those mountains and piles contained. Her son David inherited the store, with plans to give the building to the grandchildren one day. The door was locked and all of Sylvia's things awaited an uncertain future.

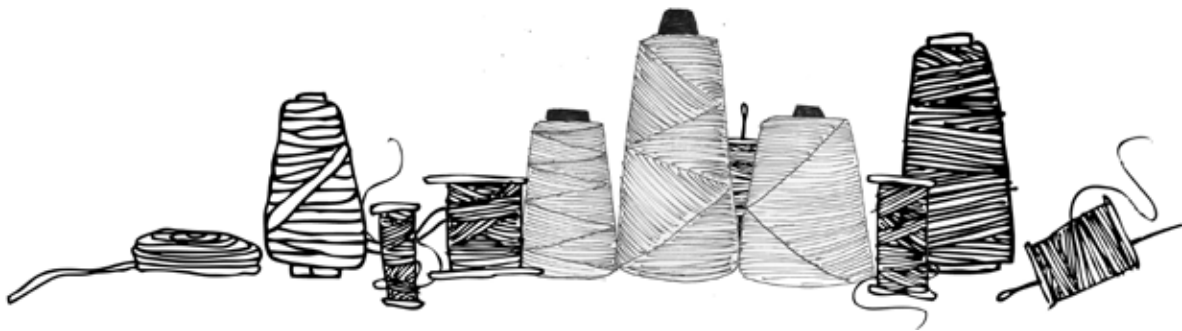
This is how Sylvia's grandson George and his friends Josh and Stephanie found the store in 2003, when they stopped in from a road trip and opened the door to this musty wonderland. They explored this marvelous land of treasures for hours, eventually filling a box of things to take home with them to George's Philadelphia apartment. A group of writers came over to create collaborative fiction, and they started playing with the old things and clothes. They discovered that these things helped them invent better characters for their stories, were launchpads for new imaginations and actions. They considered how things are props, metaphors, symbols, representations, markers of the past and future, and how they hold places in the present, inspire connections. And during that beautiful spring with that box of things, inklings of a big idea began in George's living room.



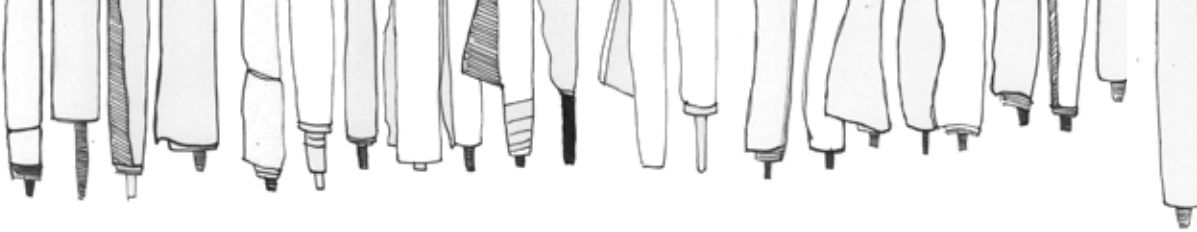


In May, without much thought of a plan, George graduated from college and moved to Greensboro. At first, two friends from Michigan joined him for the journey, with dreams of building a place for lots of people to live and work and play with all the things in-between. They declared nothing for sale, for the sake of discovering this collection--its unknown arrangements and endless iterations, and to consider the value of things beyond what they are worth. Slowly, ever so slowly, things were sorted, cleaned, ordered and organized, clearing new spaces and places amidst the mountains. Stephanie came to stay for good. Someone uttered the word Elsewhere, and someone else remarked that it sounded like a good name for the place. One year later, they posted a call online inviting artists from all over the world to join them. Thus began a steady stream of characters from Greensboro and across the globe re-thinking and re-making and re-purposing Elsewhere.

things

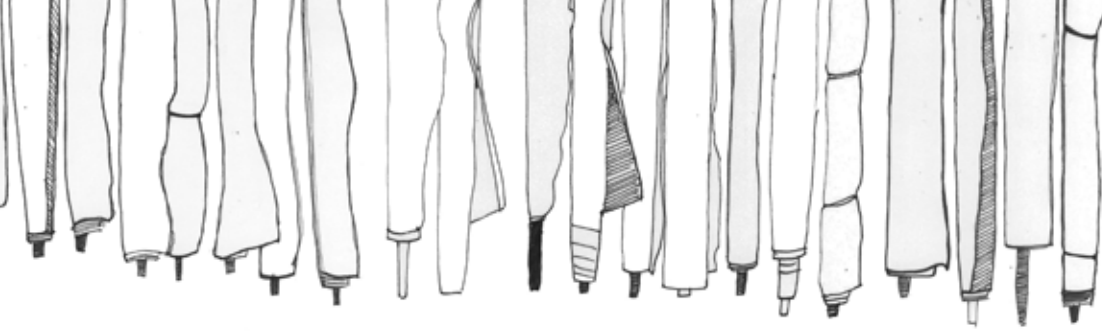


The front door to 606 South Elm Street jingles as little bells and keys clink against the glass. Window light streams in from the street.

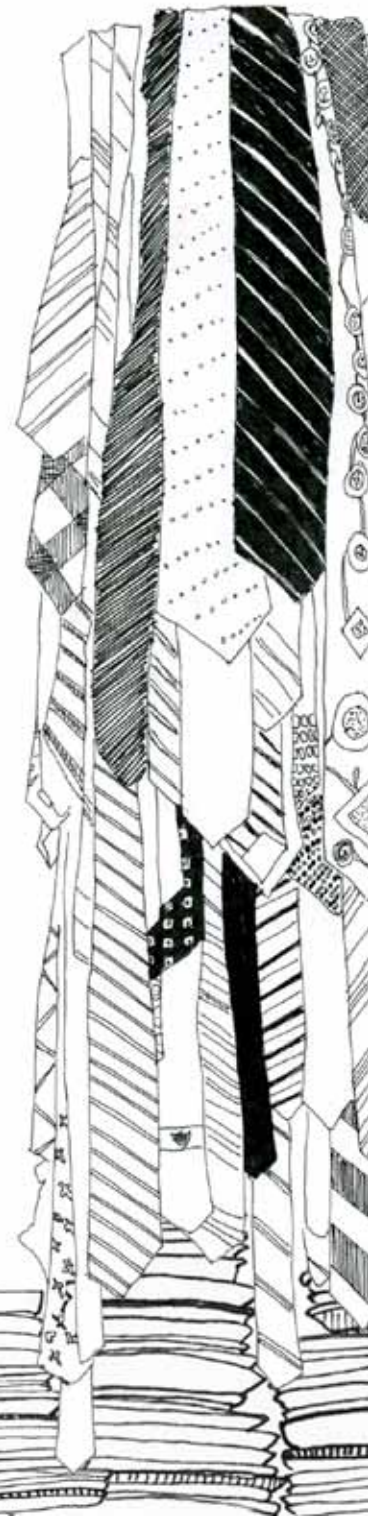


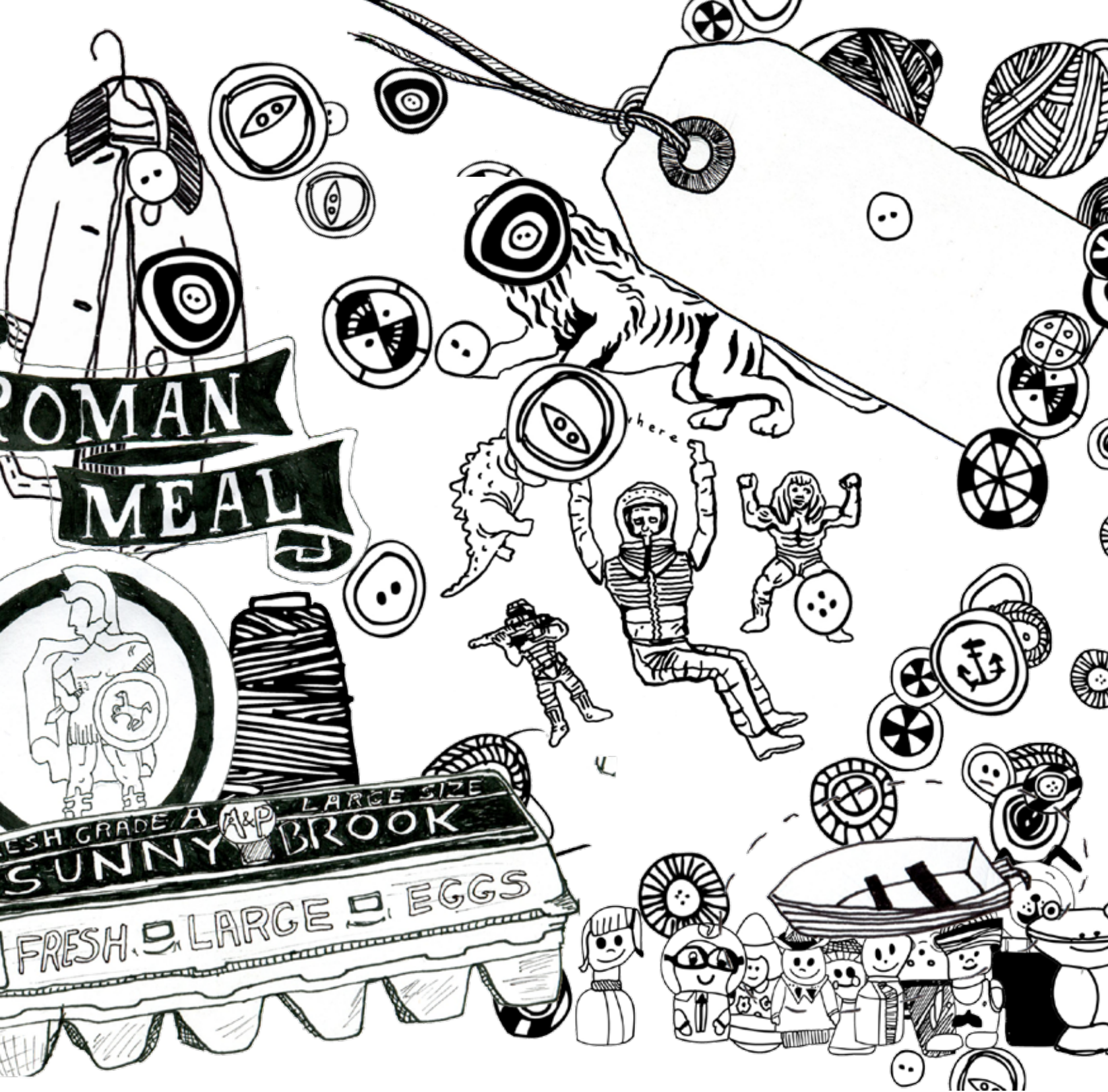
Fabric stacks fade from green to blue, tan to red, yellow to orange. Dishes and glasswares line the paths. Umbrellas and strollers and toys are tied together. Buttons are stuffed in jars, ribbon rolls have been washed and ironed and rolled on a pencil, earrings are sorted in egg cartons. Signs are scrawled on masking tape and accounting penciled on tissue boxes. Puzzles are marked complete or incomplete. Breadbags house ordinary collections--cowboys and indians, sea shells, plastic flowers, baby doll parts. A pig pencil-sharpener is stowed with the pigs not the pencils. The chip of a lamp is bagged and tied to the lamp from which it broke. At first it all appears without rhyme or reason, but an order is there indeed, made of ends and extras, parts and pieces. The more you discover the more you see.





Day after day, week after week, month after month, things were sorted. Like kind to like kind, kins and companions, each sift opening a bit more room than the day before. Nothing was discarded, but some things inevitably accidentally disappeared and some were intentionally displaced. A mushroom hook rug was left outside until it disintegrated into the dirt, moldy fabric was dropped into a hole under the floor, a trunk full of belongings tragically left behind on a trip to a festival. As a tribute to the first rule, each week buttons and pins and particulates and even sparkles were rescued from the sweepings, saved for the sake of example.

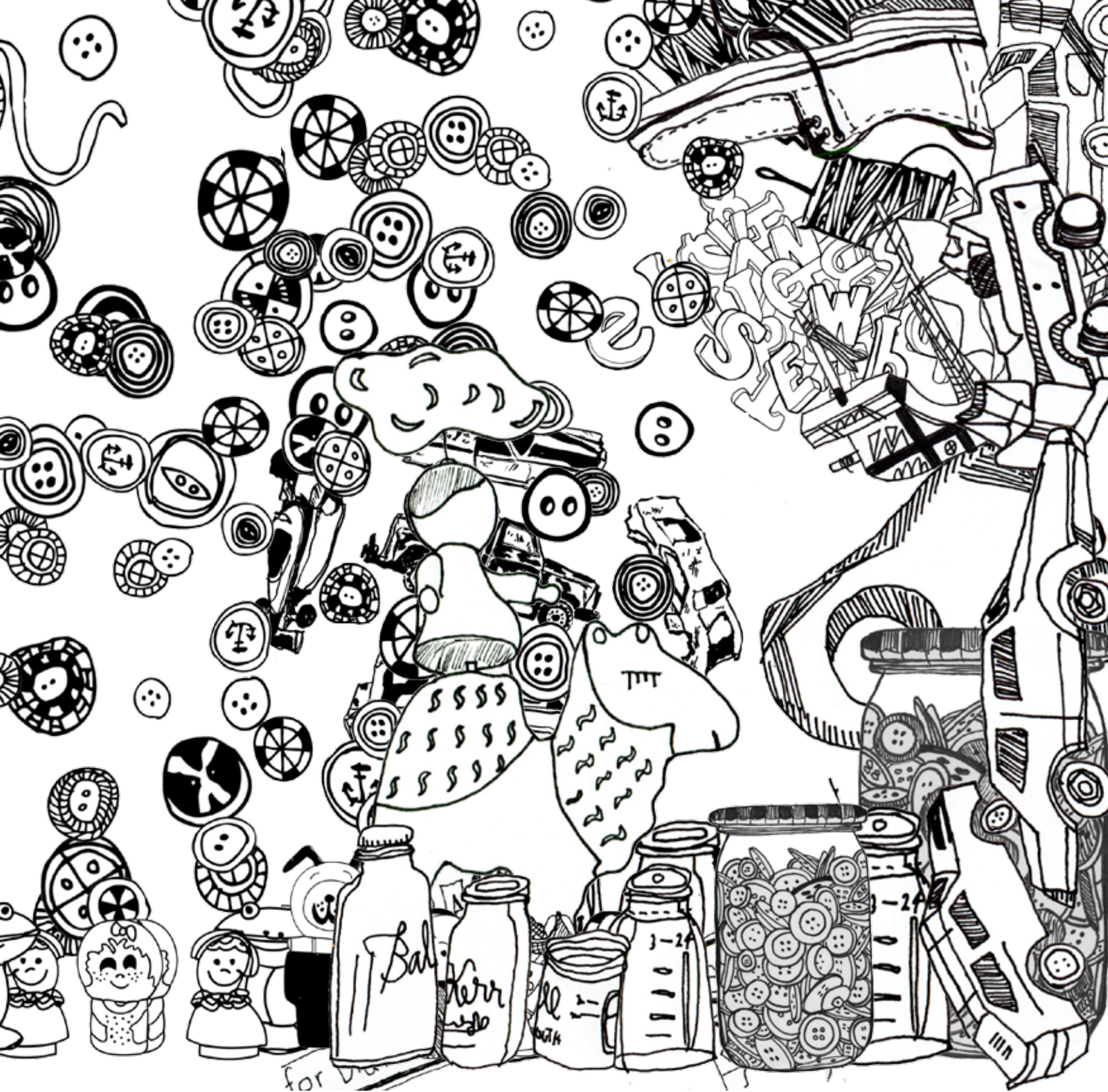




ROMAN

MEAL

FRESH GRADE A LARGE SIZE
A&P
SUNNY BROOK
FRESH LARGE EGGS



Herringbone buttons, marbles, plastic pearls, beads, silver broaches, scraps of paper, bolts of fabric, puzzle pieces, crayons, piano hammers from a Schumann. A bike tire, six bed springs, andirons, hollow voltage boxes, tapesooter model 120s, a pressure gauge, an old weather vane. Spools and books and blocks and clocks and soap dishes and ashtrays and adding machines, fabric patterns and cabinetry stuffed with telephones, half completed appointment calendars, knitting needles, bent and folded business cards, a tube of toothpaste, some super glue, shoes, shoelaces, and dried out pens. An APF Mark 30 electric calculator with square-root function. Lighters and matchbooks. Brushes and combs. Mirrors and glass. Thousands of toys haphazardly boxed up sitting silently in an old dark room. Throw pillows stuffed in garbage bags tucked into metal furniture frames. Hundreds of dishes precariously stacked. Thousands of books, thousands of fabric bolts. Radios, strollers, and Christmas ornaments. Hats, dresses, sport coats, blouses, cufflinks, skirts, pants, shirts, belts, bow ties, gloves, jewels. Sports equipment. Wicker dolls, a Frost Sno-Man snow cone maker, PeeWee Herman, Yosemite Sam, Curious George, the State Puff Marshmellow Man, Minnie Mouse, a Jimmy Carter Heritage plate, Brother Bear multiples. Lamps, nails, a mailbox.

Each thing in this puzzle Sylvia created had a story of its own, with endless iterations over time and across the set. Worn and weathered by time and touch, once-identical objects wore unique expressions. Some things continued to break and collapse; others were repaired, recomposed, and stitched back together. Some days they accepted surplus and it took years to finally rid the space of these foreign imports. Probably more often than they hoped, objects were lost to pockets of visitors. Things would pass through whole seasons unseen. Every day once-loved things, like ideas, would re-appear. Each object contained stories of their past owners and each person encountering them added stories of their own. More and more people came to interpret these things, inventing new stories with others, creating an important moment every time these objects were understood again for the first time.

people



When George came to Elsewhere, he brought his college couch. In bringing it in, he broke the second rule of Elsewhere: as nothing can leave, nothing (without function) can enter. Josh and Matt had come a few days earlier, so by the time he arrived the fluorescent lights were humming and the water was on. The three felt like explorers of uncharted terrains of the recent century. When they weren't sifting and building and piling and such, they sat on the couch, ate on the couch, and took turns sleeping on the couch, until they found a three level bunkbed. This kept them happily rested during that first epically long hot and sticky southern summer.

George plodded around the dusty store barefoot reciting James Joyce and telling tales, with ties tied around his head and toys tucked into his knitted caps. Alan, from the local coffee shop, came and started building things and stacking big pieces of furniture on top of one another. Amber, Brandie and Jennie from town helped to sort clothes amidst the chaos. The three girls bought a little camping stove and they all cooked dinners and played music together amidst the wreckage. They read Edgar Allen Poe aloud on the roof and the rafters. They bathed at the bathhouse of a local hotel pool until they built a secret shower in the alley. They talked and argued and discussed and disagreed about what the place might become, and how it might get there.





Stephanie passed through Elsewhere a few separate times before she moved to Greensboro. She was there on that initial fated spring break trip, and then again in the summer, when she was traveling across the country and stopped in town for a night that turned into a week of surplus adventures. She came again in the fall, when George took up living in the window and writing notes to the few South Elm Street passer-bys. On an unusually balmy late October night, Stephanie came to Elsewhere to stay for good, and she and George and Alan sat laughing on the sidewalk late into the night under a brilliant giant moon.

The first event was a haunted house. They rescued a three-tiered touch-candelabra and hooked it into an orange extension cord, running energy up from the floor below. There wasn't much haunting to add, so they just swept a little footpath for flash-lighted visitors to walk through the miasma of dark shapes and wide-eyed dolls. The upstairs was a place for archeology, yielding strange and familiar artifacts, with an enchanting possibility of beautiful new components in an increasingly understood collection.

The first winter was like Valley Forge. Two more people--Sigh and a different Josh than before--joined the crew. Working helped them stay warm. They built forts and nooks and nestled beds amidst bolts of fabric and into walls of books and between dresses three-layers deep. They made a library maze for story-readings, and a sound stage for musical acts. Matt learned how to install electric outlets. They moved the ovens and old iceboxes and tables down from the second floor to organize a large communal kitchen, shabby but homey. They started a food co-op, buying groceries and organizing cooking and cleaning to keep things tidy and economical.

One morning Alan put on goggles and a lab coat and announced that he was going upstairs for 24 hours. He stayed in an upstairs bedroom he created out of a springy mattress, fraying chair, and sturdy yellow desk found in the same room. When he ordered a pizza that evening he created an ad-hoc dumbwaiter that he descended out the window for delivery. Slowly but surely they transformed all of the boarding house rooms, removing boards from the windows, and peeling, painting and plastering the walls. They sewed curtains and organized beds and tables. No one could know they lived there since it wasn't zoned for habitation, so they kept it a public secret and winked when they said that no one lived there.





In those early days they would open the front door every so often just to see what or who might come in. The neighbors from the block stop in day in and out to watch over their progress and sometimes slow it down. There was Sonny the painter who channeled Picasso and Miro, and Lowell, the wiley interior designer next door who always seemed to be whispering some impossible truth. There was Lane, a marvelously fashionable old codger who once knew Sylvia and now transported objects back and forth across town in his red wheelbarrow and gave the women flowers plucked from local gardens. Every now and then, especially when you least expected it, strange travelers stopped in--clowns, golfers, preachers, hipsters, carpenters, art lovers, and city leaders. They started conversations that lasted for hours or years. They were constantly trying to figure out how to explain the art of things and things as art.

The years rolled on and things got more organized, as building and enterprise. At first, the Greensboro Arts Council gave them a small grant just to get going, which paid for electricity. Eventually they wrote more and more grants and they had enough money to buy practical things like vacuums and trashcans, nails and thread. Just as they were about to run out of money--something would come through--like the B horror movie shot in the second floor hallway, or the hotel that commissioned a giant Lite Brite that paid for the electricity upstairs. They decided to call it a living museum so that people wandering through would understand how to look around. They opened to the public regularly for a \$1 visit and they had interns and then a team sitting at the front desk to greet them. After three times trying, they got a grant from Andy Warhol's Foundation, and they threw a big party to celebrate. People from the community became members of the museum and gave them museum to keep it going. The extravaganza became an annual tradition. More and more people found out about Elsewhere, and the artists kept coming and coming. Soon Elsewhere was hosting tours, workshops, education programs and weekly events led by the artists, and eventually they started making projects for other museums, and its directors were giving talks all over the globe.

elsewhere



2008

Amber Phelps Bondaroff
Lauren Simkin Berke
Guerra de La Paz Chad
Eby Molly Goldberg Joshua
Haringa Grant Heaps Brian
Hitselberger Travis Janssen
Leslie Kubica Annie Reichert
Laurencio Carlos Ruiz Alex
Wolkowicz Meng-Hsuan
Wu Les Caison III Wendy
Deschene Abigail Gunnels
Leanne Hemingway Siebels
Amy Laughlin Susannah
Mira Claire van der Plas Jason
Watson Jason Workman
Mollie Levy-Roseroort
Shalini Patel Cat Hannay
Lily Goldberg Aliya Bonar
Colleen McNamara Katie
Minton Yuri Woodstock
Bobby Williams Kaylan
Szfrenski J Gamble Danna
Rooth Mary Rothlisberger
Douglas Kelly Kirsten Bauer

2007

Simone Frazier Christian French Molly
Gochman Kim Holleman Katie Horwich
Christina La Sala Kristina O'Donnell
Annette Robinson Lucy Steggals Art
Codex Mike Estabrook Brian Higbee
Vandana Jain Glenn Einbinder Cameron
Ayres Monique Besten Cynthia Brinich-
Langlois Irene Chan Erinn Cox David
Dotson Erik Fabian Jason Ferguson JJ
Higgins Pritika Lal Lisa Lipton Kelly
Monico Stephanie Pereira Carolyn
Porter Mary Rothlisberger Jennifer
Schmidt Yuko Takemura Jade Walker
Lucinda Holmes Justin Kuhn Sarah
Witt Emily Fox Jesse Clark Chris
Frost Jarema Osofsky Angelica Rosales
Shalin Scupham Jessie Steffen Caroline
Strimbeck Chelsea Whitton Eliza Wicks-
Frank Caitlin Williams Bing Wingfield
J Gamble Shalin Scupham Ian Gamble

2006

Dan Price Nicole Marroquin
Sadie Wilcox Carrie Morris
Brent Fogt Melanie Manos
Thea Eck Jim Leija Carrie
Morris Jim Leija Robin
Brasington Robert Derr
Highway Rachel Collective Jeff
Martin Joseph Mougel Seth
Perlow Jeff Thompson Cara
Wade Angela Zammerelli Jane
Irwin JJ Tiziou Ben Wright
Saralee Gallien Amanda
Johanna Dan Whitley Dara
Emma Rose Ross Huff Kat Lee

2005

Sarah Julig Daniel Margulies
Erik Parra Angela Zammerelli
Bridget Conn Dee Hibbert-
Jones Nickie Huang Nick
Stedman Nomi Talisman
Dan the Man Jessica Dolance
Sara Norell Ari Fenton Brian
Mike Lees Saralee Gallien
Matt the Ratt Ross Huff J
Gamble Kat Lee Josh Boyette

2004

George Scheer Stephanie
Sherman Jane Irwin Allen
Dunsmore Kevin Sherman
Chris Lineberry Matt Merfert
Allen Davis Josh Fox Allen Davis Josh Fox Jeff Cy

2003

George Scheer Stephanie
Sherman Matt Merfert
Allen Davis Josh Fox



2009

Shane Ward Ashley Lamb Adrienne
 Roberts Sarah Roach Cyrus Smith
 Agustina Woodgate Kara Dunne
 Lindsay Palmer Greg Shelnutt Toni
 Subrià Eliza Fernand Emma Houlihan
 Helena O'Connor Sally Dean Florence
 Peake Rachelle Viader Knowles David
 Petersen Ron Longsdorf Anthony
 Lowe Molly Lowe Derya Hanife
 Altan Angeles Cossio Jeff Thompson
 Claire Cronin Ernesto Gómez Casey
 Droege Erika Villarreal Jeanne Stern
 Valerie Powell Bill Brown Jessie Vogel
 Tiffany Peters Marc Israel Adam
 Brody Laurel Kurtz Steven Beatty
 Kathleen Keys meadow starts with
 p: Andrew, Vienne, Raphael Peterson
 Diana Loughlin Blake Mason Chris
 Crocker Alexa Terry Josh Goulart
 Emily Brown Chad Graves Alissa
 Nelson Siana Wagner Anthony
 Lowe Kat Lee Curtiss Martin Danna
 Rooth Dan White Ian Montgomery
 Blanket Aliya Bonar Kirsten Bauer

2010

Corwin Levi Kate Strathmann Michele
 Thursz Brandon Mathis Jennida
 Chase Hassan Pitts Nora Boxer
 Dawn Weleski Lizzie Vickery Kelsey
 Nelsen Hazel Rickard Juliet Hinley
 Aislinn Pentecost-Farren Ruben
 Millares Antonia Wright Jason Pallas
 Norah Hoover Hannah Nichols Isaac
 Nichols Caroline Mak Rebecca
 Greene Annie Blazer Kate DeCiccio
 Jillian Soto Carole Lung Maura Jasper
 Kathryn Shearman Dixon Stetler
 Rose Luardo Christopher Moore
 Michelle Roche Dayna Kriz Quinn
 Corey Babette Angel Cassie Thornton
 Chris Kennedy Talena Sanders Jared
 Nielsen Katie Waddell Devon Reed
 Camilo Perdomo Mary Pearl Monnes
 Matt Boulette Valeria Osipova Helen
 McCarthy Danielle "Artemis" Unger
 Lori Baldwin James Lipshaw Molly
 Schaeffer Stephanie Stokes Valerie
 Wiseman Rachel Johnson Julia Fergus
 Dan White Jeremy Helton Mark
 Rocusek Claire Leonard Izzy Ferguson
 Blake Mason Danna Rooth Dan
 White Talena Sanders Kate Schlauch

2011

Nikolas Perez Lisa Sikorski Kate Clark J. Angela Zammarelli J Gamble Mary
 Morgan Puett Rabbit Walker Tufts Athena Rothlisberger Ben Gansky Emily
 Kokoronis Lisa Scheer Chris Berntsen Wynn Enslinger Jessie Dodington
 Dawn Stezel Laurencia Strauss Julia Gardner Giada Tagilamonte Louise Barry Bill
 Monica Bryne Norbert Attard Michael Lusk Ethan Wythe Chris Oh Capp
 Borowski Valerie Salez Sam Hoolihan Larsen Katrina Neumann Cat Jensen
 Miranda Trimmier Claire Cronin Whitney Paula Andrea Damasceno de Oliveira
 Trettien Denise Driscoll Adam Rottinghaus Andrea Avery Elliott Montgomery
 Daniel Fishkin Oliver Jones Layet Johnson Meghan MacDonald Laura MacAulay
 Hirsch, Jess Deutch, Laura Ben Garthus Lauren Moore Martyna Szczesna
 Tiny Circus Lauren McCarthy Andy Laura Miller Guadalupe Martinez del
 Sturdevant Leslie Kelman Nicola Winstanley Campo Erin Johnson Kari Marboe
 Lucas Koski Jordana Maisie Hillary Rea Emilio Rojas Kieran Morris Nestor
 Laurencio Carlos Ruiz Sophie Nichols Andy Armando Gil Kristen Degree Heidi
 Ducett Samantha Coles Ginny Maki Kate Bartlett Sarah Goetz Michael Webster
 McQuillen Jennie Suddick Caitlin Cass Caro Clark Aaron Finbloom Ali
 Amanda Heinbockel Najva Sol Leslie Kelman Momeni Amy Mae Flaherty Brandy
 Nicola Winstanley Nicole Lavelle Miles Bajalia Ashley Ivey Peter Maarseveen
 Mattison Lucas Koski Jordana Maisie Ben Colin Bliss Steven Lang Ann Nicole
 Roush Tara Odorizzi Derick Foust Kelsey Armstrong Carrie Schneider Georgia
 Hammersley Kristen Morgan Connie Cann Muenster Irwan Ahmett Naeun Jeon
 Rebecca Cook Shanawa Richardson Karla Alison Wilder Bridget Quinn Andrea
 Holland Jae-Han Min Samantha Rohrborn Polli Lauren Traugott-Campbell
 Theodore Chloe Keenan Alex Augustin Bianca Kolendo Amber Nicole
 Helen McCarthy Jamin B. Guinyard Clare Webster Hannah R Swenson April
 Yaghjian Lucia Carroll Ryan Carty Vix Parker Sydney Vigotov Felicia Nobles
 Walker Savannah Roberts Catherine Wright Jordan Castelloe Haley Peck Sallie
 Alex Graves Alexandra Barao Caitlin Gibson Jackson Oliver Stephanie Nicole Lane
 Rosa Alex Augustin Amanda Fonorow Rosa Ben Boyles Abby Helton Isabella
 Mcelheny Jeremiah Driscoll Jim Padelford Martin Dana Robinson Lauren
 Rebecca Bowers Rebecca Tishman Jae Madelon McClure Cynthia Cukiernik
 Han Min Clare Yaghjian Lucia Carroll Virgina Yarboro Amanda Gelb Alyssa
 Theodore Chloe Keenan Joselyn Lauren Murkin Kimberly Mincello Kaitlin
 Yunker Erica Curry Stephanie Sherman Estill Stephanie Sherman George
 George Scheer Chris Kennedy Valerie Scheer Chris Kennedy Valerie
 Wiseman Robert Peterson Ian Montgomery Wiseman Walker Tufts Jen Martin
 Norah Hoover Nicholas Marcouiller Jill Rob Hamilton Erica Curry Paul
 Mamey Rebecca Henderson Amy Johnson Howe Brennan Broome Jessie Martin
 Gracie Sullivan Buddy Bell

2012

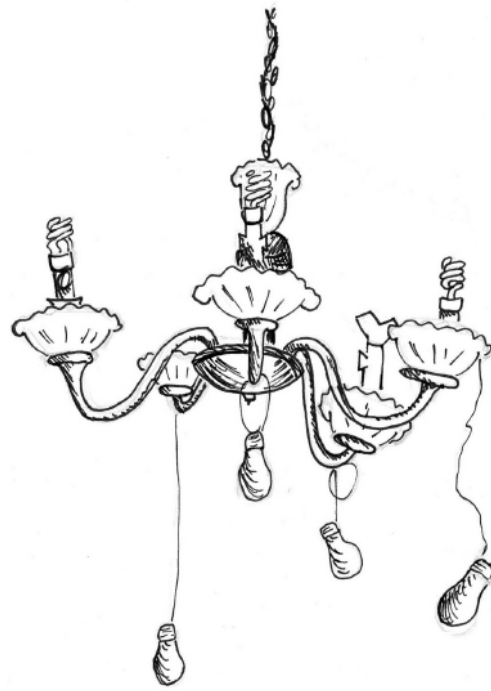
Molly Goldberg Mary
 Rothlisberger Paul Richardson
 Josh Boyette Nick Szuberla
 Appalshop April Bartlett Monica
 Lacey Suzanne Kopf Carmen
 Tiffany Sophie Holstein Jenny
 Lee Craig Joan Vordenbruggen
 Samantha Persons James
 Huckenpaher Peter Pendergrass
 Meaghan Carpenter Lauren
 Bullock Melissa Vanderberg
 Rebecca Noone Lindsey Clark-
 Ryan Ashley Yeo Joey Orr Wesley
 Chenault Gregory Jay Bloom Lea
 Devon Sorrentino Clinton Sleeper
 Thomas Choinack Andrew Dewar
 Casey Middaugh Anthony
 Villasmil Jonathan Armistead
 Dao Nguyen Taylor Giles Tower
 Emma Reaves Jazz Brian Leeb
 Jeannette Petrik Michelle Murphy
 Erin O'Daniel Nikita Gale Kirsty
 Robertson Bridget Beck Jillian
 Mayer Tom Butler Katie Ford
 Daniel Dean Bronwen Moen
 Loukas Bartatilas Janet Wade
 Brendan Giebele Jude Giebele
 Shannon Stratton Rod Northcutt
 George Scheer Stephanie Sherman
 Erica Curry Valerie Wiseman
 Jennie Carlisle Paul Howe Emily
 Wynn Enslinger Lucia Carroll
 Chris Kennedy Lu Xu Nasimeh
 Bahrayni Maria Sollecito
 Gracie Sullivan Buddy Bell

2013



The experiment failed a million times over. Sometimes it felt as though no one understood. It was stifling and difficult amidst so many things, easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. But then again, the point was different for everybody. And through the clutter and clamor, everyone had marvelous times that outweighed the hard ones. They held new year's reunions for all the artists to gather together, and people from the community returned regularly, to see how much Elsewhere had changed and how the whole city of Greensboro was changing around them.





places

When the group arrived in 2003, South Elm Street was sleepy and slow. On Sundays they could play tennis on the street in front of their building because most people were at church or in the suburbs. In the evenings, when they got tired of organizing stuff, they would traverse the empty downtown as a merry band-passing its few old stores selling seeds and appliances and books and antiques that would close before dusk and building after building with windows full of abandoned objects with far-away owners.

It just so happened that right about the time they arrived, Greensboro started to come alive. A coffee shop started up across the tracks, providing a place to use the internet and have a drink and meet other people in town. The streets seemed a little bit busier. More people renovated old buildings or bulldozed them for new ones, restaurants and bars opened up, stores with clothing and trinkets came, as did music clubs, and new loft condos. A park went in on the North side of town, hosting gatherings and movies and exercise classes. On Elsewhere's side of the tracks, a pizza restaurant and new art galleries and stores came in. They saw places come and go, but more and more the downtown became alive again enough to be like the little city it once was.

As the city around Elsewhere came alive, the building within became more and more refined, and the places within Elsewhere more and more specific. The artists made rooms of materials--window installations, an army bunker, a glass forest, a wishing well, a fortress and castle, an aviary, a post office, a laboratory and a library, a kitchen and a department store, apothecary, speak-easy, a tea-party room, a wardrobe of clothing. Some installations stayed for years, while others came down days after the artists departed. The front window became a theater opening up onto the street, the kitchen hosted dinners for many people each night. The library hosted readings and nooks for telling stories. The alley garden bloomed with herbs and flowers. A workshop for sewing and building went in, and then got updated. They made little cubbies for sleeping and stowing personal items in the old boarding house room. They tilled the plot of land out back between the two abandoned buildings, starting a garden. They hosted performance games that turned the museum into a City, where people from the street would wander in and pretend to be bankers, shopkeepers, and street sweepers and the pretend bureaucracy would record the events. When Elsewhere was at its most magical, people would come together to reinvent their habits, inhabiting the unexpected, finding the everyday extraordinary life in the most simple, incredibly complex things.















WINDOW
RE 8PM

MUSEUM
is
OPEN
come
explore

























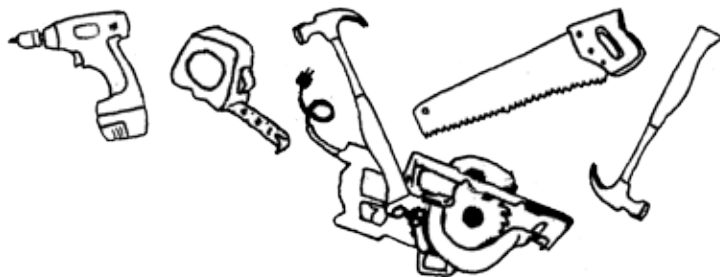






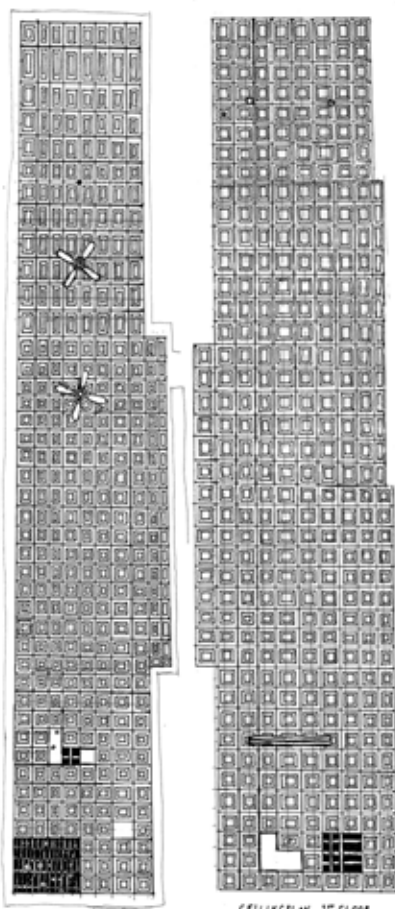
One of the best things about Greensboro was the changing temperatures. In the coldest of winter, there would be days the sun would shine so strong you could wear short sleeves for the afternoon. In the late summer flash thunderstorms would convert the thickest of Southern days into a perfectly pleasant evening. A night train passing through on its journey from New Orleans to New York might deliver a warm gust of wind.

building

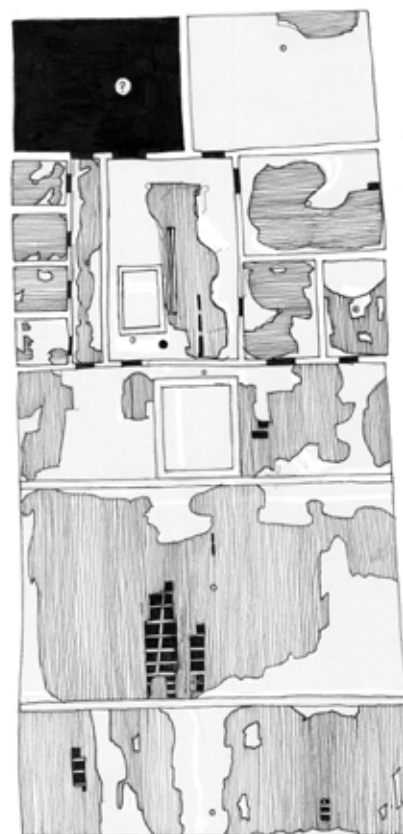
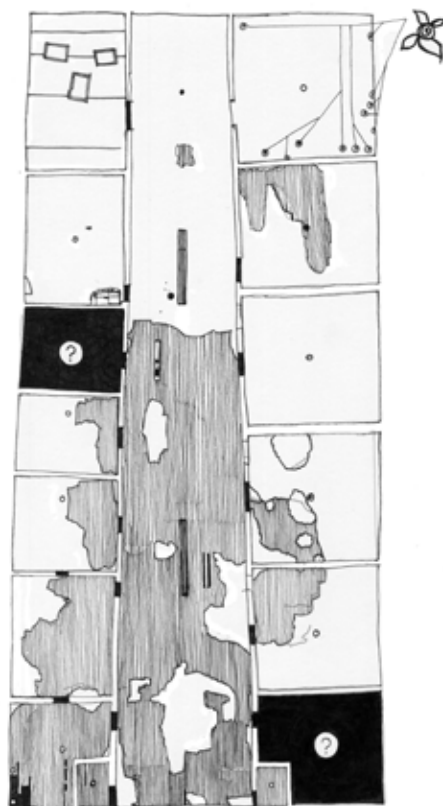


Elsewhere's building was built in 1910, when masons both laid brick and plastered rooms. Bricks, timbers, boards, lath, nails, plaster, and millwork, it was likely built to no blueprints or codes. It faces east, towards the sun as it rises.

In a perfect world, bricks are rectangles, laid squarely each upon the next, lumber is flat and straight, erected plumb, and never changes size or shape, and the earth upon which it sits is firm and forever. But in reality, bricks are lumpy, twisted things, some brittle and small, burnt in the kiln, some undercooked, doughy and swollen. Masons are hungover. Their trowels have worn unevenly to one side, their wrists hurt, and the mortar is dry. The carpenters are scared of heights and the sawmill is closed on Mondays. Monday it rains, and the naked framing, open to the sky, swells and twists, but they put the roof on Tuesday anyways and it's all crooked everywhere. The plaster goes up, the trim is tacked in, a beam is installed. In come the beds and plates and dresses. Gravity pulls and pulls. In 2013, the brick facade on Elm Street has swollen 6 inches away from its wooden framing, the second floor walls are sinking, and a ball placed stationary on the 3rd floor won't ever stay put.



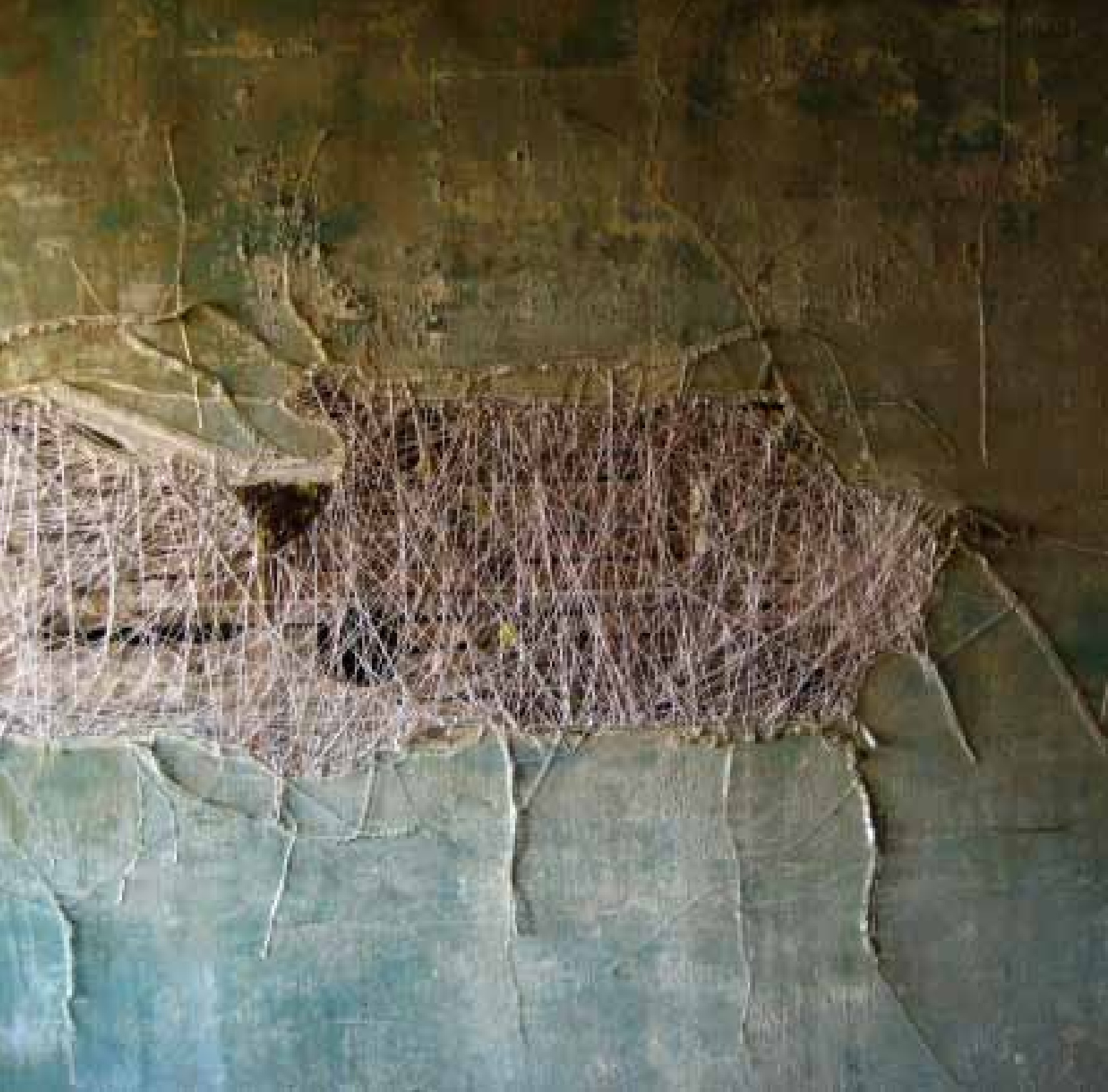
L.S. BERKE © 2000





Elsewhere has always been battling its building. A building settling and gasping, neglected and illogical. It started with a little repair here and there. At first, an electric socket, then two, then five, then hundreds. More hard lines replace a tangle of cords. Paint over the fading blue and yellow walls, clear sealant for the ones peeling so prettily. An opening between the floors. Windows unboarded, glass inserted, roof sealed. New lights add a warm glow. A plan for renovations. Bearable, habitable, livable, sound.

There are still ghosts in this building. There are tenant ghosts, who hide from the people passing through the corridors. Storm ghosts show themselves in pinhole leaks in the pressed tin ceiling. Ghosts of lost objects gone missing over time appear in the ebb and flow of things endlessly arranged. People ghosts emerge as histories, traces, marks, dreams, and memories. Ghosts of ghost stories pass in whispers across the building.





ALLEY GARDEN
BOTTLE WALL
BIKES

BATH
ROOM
FABRIC CASTLE
SEWING
WORKSHOP

STAIRS
GRAPHOLOGY
INSTITUTE

CO-LAB
LIVINGROOM

MEUPER PIANO
BOUNCY BALL

LIBRARY

AVIARY
READING
ROOM

FIRST FLOOR

KITCHEN
STAIRCASE
FABRIC WALL
SEWING TABLE

STAIRS
SPORTS
FABRIC
SORTS

STAIRCASE
STORY
BANK

COLLECTION
DISHWARE

SINK

COFFEE MINUTARIUM
CONFESSATORIUM

SKY'S
SCRAPER
WONDER
CABINET

TECH
LAB
INFO-DESK
STAGE AND
SWING

CREATURE
COMFORTS
ROOM
RIBBON
ROOM
CAT
ALLEY
SUSPENDED
PRESERVA-
TION (T'S)
BATH
ROOM
SINK

SECOND FLOOR

FIRE ESCAPE

STAIRS

STAIRS

THE
OFFICE
FABRIC
FORTRESS

GLASS
FOREST

WARDROBE
DRESSES
TABLES USED
TO BE STAKED

ACCESSORIES
STUDIO
THE PLACE
WHERE ALL
THE YELLOW
ROOM / SPEAKERS /
GHOST
ROOM

FIRE ESCAPE

WOOD SHOP

TOOLS SAW
FIFTEEN HUNDRED
BOLTS OF FABRIC

LONG BOARDS
SCRAP
WOOD

TOY NADO
ARCHIVE
A POTH
ECARY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

YELLOW WALLPAPER
ROOM / SPEAKERS /
GHOST
ROOM

STAIRS

ARMY'S
SURPLUS
ROOM

THIRD FLOOR

Long before Elsewhere came, there was the Carolina Surplus Company and Sylvia and Joe and their things and the boarders. Before that Mrs. Etta Chandler ran the boarding house. Before that, the International Order of Oddfellows hosted meetings and the Ku Klux Klan met in the third floor warehouse. The Permanent Wave Company and Benjamin Cheek's Plumber & Heating and Hyman's Furniture Company all came and went. The Meat Markets once shared a space with Vuncannon and Langley Company's Grocer and Feed. The W. H. Dailey Grocer and the Gate City Steam Laundry before them. Masons and carpenters, ghosts, clerks and collectors, stretching back to 1901, when the building was first cobbled together.



ideas

Elsewhere is an idea about here and there, about going away and coming home, about the possible and impossible. It is about that somewhere-or-other that is just beyond words, that place where the whole appears as more than the sum of its parts, that feeling of being other, beside oneself, together, where-ever you are.

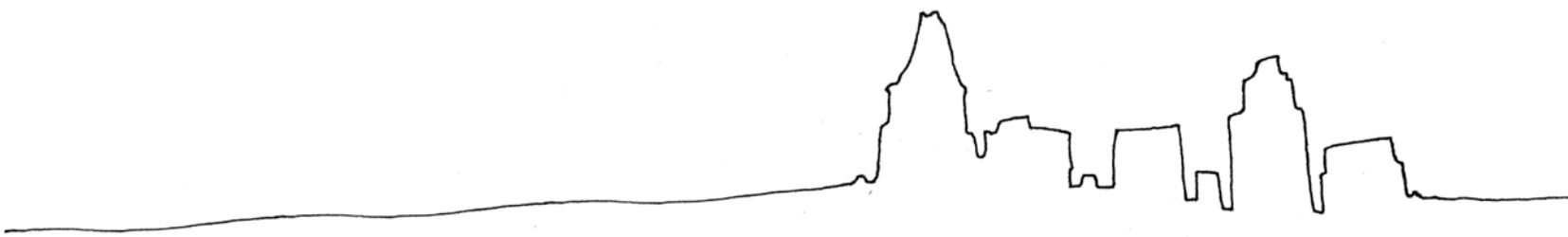
Elsewhere started right after the turn of the 21st century, in an American town that was, like many American towns, struggling to become a city again. It began with the notion that the thinking and doing can't be separated. It followed to view purpose and function, design and order, chaos and accident as equivalently beautiful, interpretable, legible. It emerged at a time when community-oriented systems in the United States were few and far between, when the social world seemed bereft of life. It came of age at a moment when it seemed as if all the words and images had already been used up--when there were no new ideas, and no beginning to start from, just editing to be done. There was, however, a surplus of surplus to navigate, sort, and aggregate. A premonition to pursue. Excess to situate. It seemed right about time to stop making models and start building an example of how things might be--piece by piece.

Look at these treasures all around us. Let's make a place with them--a place combining the school and museum, studio and playground, community center, home and hostel, store and studio, theater and showroom. Let's see if we can make an institution that follows the ideas it espouses. Let's make a place to wonder about what everything is for, what its all worth, where the meaning lies, to dream up new ideas. Let's marvel together at the popular, the rare, both vast and negligible. Let's build upon what we've already done. Let's puzzle together a shared future with the things of our past, with common mysteries, with temporary inquiry, through laughter, reinvention, re-formulation. Let's see if we can change a city. Open inside and outside. Become contextualists. Let's make our being, thinking, learning, and doing together.

Elsewhere set forth to experiment with art and culture, to discover new ways of working and collaborative languages, to find alternatives to isolating, separating, and distinguishing things, to find our 'hereness' in all of its dynamics and dimensions . Museums typically create a timeless and changing world of safe and sacrosanct things; a living museum, on the other hand, is an exhibition of the present, and the things are placeholders for visions and memories, and the people who participate are as important as the objects within. The things are a conduit for people to perform, pretend, invent, and imagine, dream up fictions to better share their reality. Things are passed down across time, through hands, over generations.

The story of Elsewhere is told in attics and basements across the country. It's a story of the Depression, of excess and desire, of subjects and objects, of things and their owners, forgotten cities and buildings. And what will we do with all of our things--valuable and meaningless? Will they go to landfills? Get left behind for future generations? How will we know what to keep and what to let go? How can we hear the voices and stories that emanate from things, the whispers they send towards the future? Inspirations, innovations, inventions, iterations piled up, broken down, put back together again.

Go Elsewhere. Share your heart with a building. Challenge the way you live, work, play, create, repair, adapt, learn, and act. Take everything in. Leave everything behind. Discover yourself beside yourself. Become part of the family.



The End