

CERRITOS COLLEGE ART GALLERY

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SONJA SCHENK SELECTED AS THE 2017 CERRITOS COLLEGE ART+TECH ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

The Cerritos College Art Gallery, along with the Cerritos College Art & Design and Welding departments, is pleased to announce the selection of LA-based artist Sonja Schenk as the 2017 Cerritos College Art+Tech Artist-in-Residence. In a field of exceptional applicants, Schenk's proposal stood out for its conceptual innovation, as well as the necessitation of both student engagement during the residency and visitor interaction during the exhibition.

During the October-November 2017 residency period, Schenk will collaborate with a cross-section of students, staff, and faculty from the Cerritos College Welding program, and will conduct interactive workshops with the Art Department's 3D-Design and Film students, to ultimately produce a large-scale, modular, and evolving installation entitled *The Box*, to be exhibited in early Spring 2018 at the Cerritos College Art Gallery. As Schenk explained in her residency proposal, the exhibition will consist of "a complex set of parts, carefully packed in custom paper-pulp molding, along with disposable tools, hardware, and a large image-based instruction diagram," all located inside a non-descript metal box. When unpacked by visitors to the exhibition, the contents of this box will expand to produce an assemblage (and/or multiple assemblages) large enough to fill the exhibition space.

In the gallery, in addition to the box and its contents, a video projection, produced with the help of Cerritos College Film students, will replicate the well-known phenomena of online 'unboxing' videos. With the visual assistance of the projected 'unboxing' simulation and the semiotic assemblage mapping of the instruction diagram, the exhibition visitor will be encouraged, either individually or collaboratively,

to attempt to ‘complete’ the work on display through the manipulation of its component parts. “Drawing inspiration in equal parts from Sol LeWitt and Ikea” the modular nature of *The Box* is meant to challenge simplistic conceptions of creative authorship at the same time that it highlights the ambiguous relationship between art and commerce during the contemporary collapse of late post-capitalism. As Schenk concluded in her residency proposal, “in light of changes affecting our planet, the desire to organize, own, and occupy becomes ever more poignant; the action of buying or building ever more futile and desperate.”

It should be noted, that as wonderful as Schenk’s proposed project clearly is, the faculty evaluators still had a very difficult task of selecting from amongst a number of extraordinary proposals this cycle that were equally innovative and viable. In the end, Schenk’s proposal stood out from the rest in large part because of how much it encouraged the engagement of students and, in particular, how well it integrated into existing welding curriculum. The various small(ish) parts that will go into *The Box* are, in fact, perfect little semi-autonomous projects for beginning welding students and, at the same time, the need to fit a maximum volume of components inside a prescribed, compact space will necessitate productive collaboration and frequent communication between the students, the instructors, and the artist. The faculty within the Art & Design and Welding departments could not be more pleased with Schenk’s selection and could not be more excited to help her realize her conceptually innovative installation in the coming months.

Sonja Schenk is an internationally-exhibiting multi-media artist. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Schenk studied studio art at the Université de Bordeaux, France, and she holds a BA in Visual Arts & Communications from UC San Diego and a MFA in Film from USC. Though she began working primarily with video installations, she has also since produced large-scale painting and sculptural projects. Schenk has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Art and History (MOAH) in Lancaster, California and at the Prescott College Art Gallery in Prescott, Arizona. She has created a commissioned outdoor sculpture for Porch Gallery in Ojai, California and served as the artist-in-residence at Shasta-Whiskeytown National Park in 2014 and at the Thomas McKeon Center for Creativity in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2016. Schenk has shown her work at the Yokohama Triennial in Japan, the Musée du Papier-Print in Switzerland, the Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles, the Berkeley Art Center in Northern California, and the Joshua Treenial in Joshua Tree, CA. To see previous projects by Schenk, visit her artist website at: <http://www.sonjaschenk.com>

About the ART+TECH Artist-in-Residence Program: Established in 2014, the Cerritos College ART+TECH Artist-in-Residency is a unique annual program, which pairs a local professional visual artist with the amazing technology resources available on the Cerritos College campus. For documentation of the three previous ART+TECH residency exhibitions, Jeff Cain’s *Natural History* (2014, Engineering Design Technology), Beatriz Cortez’s *Your Life Work* (2015, Autobody Collision Repair), and Stephanie Deumer’s *Features of the Same Face* (2016, Woodworking), please see the Cerritos College Art Gallery’s online bookstore at: <http://www.blurb.com/user/jmacdevitt>

About the Cerritos College Art Gallery: The Cerritos College Art Gallery presents rotating exhibitions highlighting the work of emerging and mid-career artists. A special emphasis is placed on works that confront challenging and pressing issues in contemporary art and culture. In support of exhibitions, the Cerritos College Art Gallery also regularly hosts workshops, lectures, and performances. The mission of the Cerritos College Art Gallery is to serve as an educational, social, and culture enhancement for the Cerritos academic population, as well as the immediate surrounding communities.

About the Welding Program at Cerritos College: The Cerritos College Welding Department is recognized nationwide as a leader in welding education. The 12,000 square foot lab areas boast 76 welding stations, allowing students practical welding experiences on ferrous and non-ferrous plate, pipe, and sheet metal using the SMAW, GTAW, GMAW, FCAW, SAW, and OAW processes on state-of-the-art equipment. Instruction is also offered in pipe layout, print reading, and welding code classes. The program is fully approved and licensed to administer AWS, ASME, API, and state welding certifications and specializes in the Los Angeles City Welding Certifications. Full time Certified Welding Inspectors (CWI) are on staff as well as other professors and instructors noted for their expertise in the art of welding.

About Cerritos College: Founded in 1955, Cerritos College is a public comprehensive community college in southeastern Los Angeles county. The campus is located at 11110 Alondra Blvd, Norwalk, CA 90650.