

The Kitchen

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The Kitchen Presents *In Support*, a Group Exhibition Featuring Works by Fia Backström, Francisca Benítez, Papo Colo, and Clynton Lowry, November 18, 2021– March 12, 2022



Still from Clynton Lowry, *Invisible Art Handler (Chop Saw)*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

Coinciding with The Kitchen's 50th Anniversary Year and the Recent Announcement of Upcoming Renovations to its Chelsea Building, the Exhibition Brings Together Artists, Staff Members, and Audiences to Explore How Support Functions Within and Beyond Arts Institutions

The Kitchen presents *In Support*, a group exhibition that examines how support operates as an offering, practice, and position within and beyond institutional contexts. Featuring new commissions by **Fia Backström**, **Francisca Benítez**, **Papo Colo**, and **Clynton Lowry**, the exhibition is on display across the three floors and mezzanine levels of The Kitchen's building at **512 West 19th Street**, sited in many areas that have never before been open to the public. The artists' works respond specifically to interstitial architectural sites that both hold up the building

and hold artists, staff, and audience members as they enact, exchange, or negotiate support in its manifold forms. See below for descriptions of included artworks. *In Support* is organized by **Alison Burstein**, Curator, Media and Engagement, with project management by **Zack Tinkelman**, Production Manager.

The exhibition opens on Thursday, November 18 from 4–8pm. Weekly, free open hours are Thursday–Saturday, 2–6pm (closed November 25–27, December 11, December 23–January 15, January 22, February 5, February 19, and March 5). An immersive installation by Papo Colo, titled ***Ceremonies***, will be viewable on select Fridays at 6pm and 6:30pm (free, RSVP required via thekitchen.org). Please note that portions of *In Support* may be closed temporarily on select days when staff or artists need to use areas of The Kitchen’s building for other programming or administrative purposes.

The exhibition’s title alludes to a stance that mission-driven, nonprofit institutions like The Kitchen commonly articulate in language describing their aims, activities, and ways of engaging publics. *In Support* invites participating artists to reflect on the meaning and implications of such expressions, asking: Who and/or what do institutions like The Kitchen support? Who and/or what supports them? In what ways do institutions position themselves in support of people, projects, or causes? How do institutions rely on cycles of providing and receiving support? What hierarchies of support exist within and among institutions? Is support inherently good?

The phrase “in support” additionally serves as a statement of intent for how the artists, curator, production manager, and staff have engaged with the given subject while realizing the exhibition. Here the exhibition’s process and format take up a call voiced by artist Céline Condorelli in the book *Support Structures* to “not think about support, but—tautologically perhaps—be supportive to it, and think ‘in support’.” In this spirit, the open-ended prompt for artists to create new work encourages them not only to consider support as an abstract concept, but also to challenge, embed into, or expand on frameworks for support that exist within and beyond institutions.

As a whole, the process of realizing *In Support* has been a collaborative exercise in negotiating the opportunities—and grappling with the limitations—of the types of structural, fiscal, interpersonal, and ideological support that are present inside and outside The Kitchen. The exhibition’s artists spent time developing their ideas by exploring every corner of 512 West 19th Street, talking with staff about current and historical institutional protocols, and/or poring over the institution’s archive and internal documents. The resulting works ground their explorations in The Kitchen’s physical space in locations ranging from the lobby, stairwells, and elevator to the administrative offices, dressing room, production workshop, storage areas, and roof. Certain pieces will unfold or evolve over the course of the exhibition. What unifies these works is a keen attention to how networks of support interlock across varied times, scales, and contexts, from the local to the global and the personal to the institutional.

About the Included Works

Fia Backström begins an associative trajectory with material traces of the institution’s past, such as wall colors, temporary structural remedies, and artworks previously installed for the most recent benefit exhibition. From a foundation of these givens, the artist brings into play oral histories, archival material, personal biography, and broader cultural forces, working toward a polyphonic configuration for being held in and through language, architecture, and community. The resulting installation takes on a durational arc, emerging in the interstices of the building between the exhibition’s opening and closing.

Francisca Benítez's series of photographs, videos, sound, and drawing centers on irrigation as a life-support system. The installation of these pieces transposes scenes capturing methods that farmers deploy to construct waterways in rural Chile onto areas in The Kitchen where movement patterns and maintenance work transpire. Probing several registers of support, the work amplifies awareness of a specific regional infrastructure and set of practices while simultaneously pointing up the universal concerns that link the two distinct environments.

Papo Colo's immersive installation *Ceremonies* similarly establishes a bridge between the architectural landscape of Chelsea and elsewhere. Through painting, video, light, and sound, Colo brings to The Kitchen the presence and values of Pangea Art Republic, a space he initiated in El Yunque National Rainforest in Puerto Rico in 2016. As an extension of Colo's longstanding investment in the question of how institutions can support alternative forms of art production, the work proposes a commitment to sustainability and the integration of natural elements as generative methods for artistic expression that are also supportive to the world's ecosystem.

Clynton Lowry's series of 360-degree videos and a parallel installation play with tropes of visibility and invisibility in order to shed light on the typically unseen labor of art handlers and other technical crew members within institutions. While underscoring the essential functions that these individuals play in supporting an institution's everyday activities, Lowry raises questions about the extent to which the operational structures they help to maintain also provide for their own personal perspectives and needs.

About the Artists

Fia Backström (b. 1970, Sweden) is an interdisciplinary artist and writer, whose work ranges from projects including institutional frameworks and participants to text-based performances, photography, and installation-based exhibitions. Backström's works have been shown at Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2019, 2010); MUSAC, Léon (2014); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010); Serpentine Gallery (2007); and The Kitchen (2007), among others. She represented Sweden at the Venice Biennial in 2011 and participated in the Whitney Biennial in 2008. Her work was the subject of the Artist's Institute fall season 2015. Her books include *COOP a-script*, Primary Information (2016) and *Fia Backström*, Sternberg press (2011).

Francisca Benítez (b.1974) is an artist born and raised in Chile, living and working in New York since 1998. Her practice explores relations between space, politics, and language, using different mediums including video, photography, performance, and drawing. Interested in systems of collective living, her work usually begins in the places where she lives and is linked to the communities she is part of and interacts with. Her work has been exhibited at venues including Storefront for Art and Architecture, Exit Art, El Museo del Barrio, and The High Line in New York; Museo de Artes Visuales, Santiago, Chile; Museu de Arte Contemporânea da USP, São Paulo; SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM; and Jeu de Paume, Paris. She is the recipient of several awards including a Lambent Fellowship from the TIDES Foundation. Benítez holds an MFA from Hunter College, New York and an MA in Architecture from Universidad de Chile, Santiago. She is an alto singer in the Stop Shopping Choir, an anti-capitalist direct action performance group based in New York.

Papo Colo (b. 1946, Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico) is a performance artist, painter, writer, and curator who lives and works in New York City and the El Yunque rainforest in Puerto Rico. In 1982 he co-founded Exit Art with Jeanette Ingberman, which became one of New York's most

important alternative art spaces. Colo's work has been exhibited at numerous venues, including at MoMA PS1 in 2016 and as part of the exhibition *Radical Presence*, organized at the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, and which traveled to the Walker Art Center, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, and the Studio Museum in Harlem (2013–2015). His work has also been shown at The Clocktower (2013); Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco and MoMA PS1, New York (both 2009); El Museo del Barrio, New York (2008); National Gallery of Puerto Rico (2007); Grey Art Gallery, New York (2006); Art in General, New York (2006); RISD Museum, Providence (2005); and the Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach (2001).

Clynton Lowry (b. 1984) is an artist based in New York and Los Angeles. He is the creator and editor-in-chief of *Art Handler*, the first publication to make the behind-the-scenes of the art world its focus. The magazine celebrates the day-to-day grind that makes possible art's rarefied and glamorous scene. *Art Handler's* goal is to uncover the inner workings of labor and logistics in the art world—conversations that are too often buried and ignored. More than just a magazine, *Art Handler* is building a platform for an expanded consideration of art culture—and the work of producing it. Lowry received his MFA in Painting from Yale School of Art and his BA in English from UC Berkeley. He is also the founder of Jobs.art, an international listings website for the art community.

About The Kitchen

As one of New York City's oldest nonprofit alternative art centers (founded as an artist collective in 1971 and formalized as a 501c3 in 1973), The Kitchen is dedicated to offering emerging and established artists opportunities to create and present new work within, and across, the disciplines of dance, film, literature, music, theater, video, and visual art. Recognizing its longstanding legacy for innovation, The Kitchen remains devoted to fostering a community of artists and audiences, offering artists the opportunity to make—and for audiences to engage with—work that pushes the boundaries of artistic disciplines and strengthens meaningful dialogues between the arts and larger culture.

Among the artists who have presented significant work at The Kitchen are Muhal Richard Abrams, Laurie Anderson, ANOHNI, Robert Ashley, Charles Atlas, Kevin Beasley, Beastie Boys, Gretchen Bender, Dara Birnbaum, Anthony Braxton, John Cage, Lucinda Childs, Julius Eastman, Philip Glass, Leslie Hewitt, Darius James, Joan Jonas, Bill T. Jones, Devin Kenny, Simone Leigh, Ralph Lemon, George Lewis, Robert Longo, Robert Mapplethorpe, Sarah Michelson, Tere O'Connor, Okwui Okpokwasili, Nam June Paik, Charlemagne Palestine, Sondra Perry, Vernon Reid, Arthur Russell, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Spiegel, Talking Heads, Greg Tate, Cecil Taylor, Urban Bush Women, Danh Võ, Lawrence Weiner, Anicka Yi, and many more.

Website: thekitchen.org

The Kitchen OnScreen: onscreen.thekitchen.org

Instagram: [instagram.com/TheKitchen_NYC](https://www.instagram.com/TheKitchen_NYC)

Facebook: [facebook.com/TheKitchenNYC](https://www.facebook.com/TheKitchenNYC)

Production, Installation, Front of House, and Administrative Support as of January 8, 2022

Production and Installation: F.P. Boué, Hannah Birch Carl, John Carlin, Kourtney-Cymone Charles, Joe Galan, Emma Havranek, Michael Hernandez, Leo Janks, Fiona Kans, Steven

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Season programming is made possible in part with support from The Kitchen's Board of Directors and The Kitchen Leadership Fund. To learn more about the Leadership Fund, click [here](#).

Access Note

The Kitchen's building at 512 West 19th Street is a wheelchair accessible location with ramp and elevator access to its three floors. Parts of *In Support* are on view in spaces that only are accessible by stairway, but video documentation of those areas will be available to view by January 2022. ADA compliant restrooms are available on floors 1 and 2, and all restrooms are gender inclusive. For questions about access, please contact info@thekitchen.org.

Press Contact: Blake Zidell at Blake Zidell & Associates: blake@blakezidell.com or 917.572.2493.