

**Youth Innovators +Artist-in-Residence
proposal by Melissa Wyman**

**Pushing Obstacles
Action and process based design strategies**

Description:

Pushing Obstacles is a four-week collaborative project developing and exploring process-based design strategies, sports, and relational aesthetics resulting in a final interactive installation/performance.

A broad spectrum of sports provides a controlled context for exploring the challenging, competitive yet collaborative elements of human nature. For athletes and practitioners the process of creating and overcoming obstacles in the form of objects and other people is a lifestyle; and the obstacles themselves are necessary in the evolution of the game. I propose a residency working together with youth to develop a project that utilizes team sports, martial arts, and game strategies as a jumping off point for innovative thinking and group discovery. Expanding upon ideas from my current art practice, which includes Collaborative Combative Drawing as a method of art making (*see attached description), we will develop a final interactive installation that addresses ideas of “the obstacle” as an invited challenge for creative growth.

Cultivating creative confidence:

Youth will gain experience in alternative collaborative design and creation processes as well as develop their own critique and feedback methods for expanding ideas and completing work. They will have the opportunity to work in small and large groups to investigate notions of relational aesthetics in terms of collaboration and participation and use a variety of materials including: wood, fabric, clothes, paper, and reconstituted sports and game equipment (and whatever else deemed necessary for the final installation) to create a platform for interaction and exchange.

Proposed duration:

A 4-week residency with two periods of youth involvement. Week 1: Workshopping ideas at school with the youth. Week 2 & 3: at the Djerassi mostly working solo gathering materials and creating the framework decided on in week 1 with a once weekly check-in with the students. Week 4: An intensive 3-4 days at Djerassi working along with the youth to develop the project for a final show at the end of the week.

*** Aforementioned description of Collaborative Combative Drawing**

Collaboration can be messy. Whether negotiating personal or business relationships or simply coexisting, everyone comes to the table with their own ideas. Sometimes those ideas fuse, sometimes they clash; often they do both. The harmonious side of human nature seeks a common ground, knowing there will be pushing and pulling before a new perspective can be adopted. Collaborative combative drawing utilizes the energy produced by this "pushing and pulling" inherent in human relationships to create surprisingly dynamic works of art.

Artist and self-defense instructor Melissa Wyman invites participants to go head-to-head in the creation of a collaborative (and combative) drawing. In a sumo-style drawing session, pairs of artists must push, pull, escape or outwit each other in order to complete a single drawing of their personal power animals. Melissa Wyman will train all participants in safe and effective techniques to move with and around their partner in order to get their power animal down on paper. The end result is a unique animal fusion that is a visual result of the physical process.

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