

# PS1

## MoMA PS1 PRESENTS EXHIBITION ON ART AND PUBLIC SPACE IN NEW YORK CITY OPENING JUNE 2

May 3, 2022—This summer, MoMA PS1 presents *Life Between Buildings*, an exhibition that explores how artists have unlocked the communal potential of New York City’s interstitial spaces—“vacant” lots, sidewalk cracks, traffic islands, and parks, among others. Inspired by the vibrant history of community gardens, *Life Between Buildings* brings together work by 14 artists and collectives, and features drawings, photographs, sculptures, multimedia works, and performances created from the 1970s through the present day. On view from June 2, 2022 to January 16, 2023, the exhibition includes work by Tom Burr, Mel Chin, Danielle De Jesus, Niloufar Emamifar, Becky Howland, David L. Johnson, Gordon Matta-Clark, Margaret Morton, Aki Onda, Poncili Creación, POOL (Performance On One Leg), Matthew Schrader, jackie sumell & The Lower Eastside Girls Club, and Cecilia Vicuña.

Beginning in the 1970s, at a moment when New York City faced a severe fiscal crisis, grassroots groups across New York City began converting unbuilt lots into community gardens. This coincided with artists’ efforts to think beyond the confines of the studio, gallery, and museum as sites for their work, and to consider the politics of public space through an ecological lens. *Life Between Buildings* draws from archival materials and artworks to examine the history of artists making work in conjunction with or parallel to community efforts to rethink the cityscape, recovering space towards creative, communal, and ecological ends. The exhibition looks beyond a history of artists transforming buildings (such as MoMA PS1) to how they have engaged the spaces in between. Through such engagement, both gardeners and artists challenge conventional ideas of individual property rights in a city increasingly subject to environmental crisis and gentrification, emphasizing the importance of, and unequal access to, public space.

*Life Between Buildings* brings together select projects across 50 years to track key moments of this history, and consider the transformative potential of art and ecology. For example, the exhibition highlights the influence of urban gardens on Gordon Matta-Clark, who worked with activist group CHARAS in 1976 on a lot that became the garden La Plaza Cultural; Becky Howland’s ephemeral installations in the streets of Tribeca in the late 1970s; documentation of Cecilia Vicuña’s *Sidewalk Forests*—performance installations celebrating the weeds flourishing amongst the concrete—which have not been seen in New York since she first made them in 1981; and the groundbreaking work of dancers and performers Peter Cramer and Jack Waters, whose work as POOL (Performance on One Leg) in the early 1980s formed one facet of their multi-pronged engagement with public space, and presaged the founding Le Petit Versailles, a community garden they started in 1996.

The exhibition also explores the continued struggles around community gardens and park space that has been heightened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising rents. In a newly produced series of paintings, Danielle De Jesus reflects on the central role of community gardens in Bushwick as spaces of communion and celebration of Nuyorican culture, but also, at times, unwitting agents of gentrification. A multi-media

installation by artist and composer Aki Onda bridges past and present through a close look at 24 community gardens in the Lower East Side—including field recordings captured at the height of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

*Life Between Buildings* is accompanied by a dynamic series of programs, performances, and collaborations:

On June 11 and 12, 2022, Aki Onda will present a new iteration of his sound piece *Cassette Memories* in community gardens in the Lower East Side.

On July 9, 2022, taking place in the public plaza in front of the museum's main entrance, MoMA PS1 presents an afternoon of readings by poets, writers, artists, and gardeners. Reflective of—and reflecting on—the ways that the city seeps into language, the speakers explore the intertwined histories of artmaking and struggles for common and green space in New York City.

On July 29, 30, and 31, 2022, the PS1 Courtyard will host large-scale performances by Poncili Creación—a collective based in Puerto Rico, with roots in DIY performance, puppetry, and street theater.

Through the summer and fall, *Growing Abolition*, a multipart project by jackie sumell & The Lower Eastside Girls Club, will be presented in PS1's Courtyard. Encompassing a greenhouse, plantings, and internship program focusing on the intersection of environmentalism and prison abolition, *Growing Abolition* emerges from a multi-year collaboration between sumell, the Lower Eastside Girls Club, and MoMA PS1. An offshoot of sumell's celebrated *Solitary Gardens* project, the greenhouse is scaled to the footprint of a solitary confinement cell from a maximum security prison—transforming a space of confinement into one of possibility. Reflecting on a history of community gardens in New York City, the project also considers how urban gardens can exist as expressions of love, as much as resistance. *Growing Abolition* will expand organically from spring to fall, both within the museum's Courtyard and beyond.

*Life Between Buildings* is organized by Jody Graf, Assistant Curator, MoMA PS1



*Life Between Buildings* is made possible by Allianz, MoMA's partner for design and innovation. Allianz is proud to support a series of programs at The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1 that share new visions for a more sustainable future.

Significant support is provided by the Contemporary Arts Council of the Museum of Modern Art, with additional support provided by Jane and John Comfort.

## **ABOUT MoMA PS1**

MoMA PS1 champions art and artists at the intersection of the social, cultural, and political issues of our time. Providing audiences with the agency to ask questions, access to knowledge, and a forum for public debate, PS1 has offered insight into artists' diverse worldviews for more than 40 years. Founded in 1976 by Alanna Heiss, the institution was a defining force in the alternative space movement in New York City, transforming a nineteenth century public schoolhouse in Long Island City into a site for artistic experimentation and creativity. PS1 has been a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) since 1982 and affiliated with The Museum of Modern Art since 2000.

**Hours:** MoMA PS1 is open from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday through Monday, and until 8:00 p.m. on Saturday. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

**Admission:** \$10 suggested admission; \$5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York State residents and MoMA members. Free admission for New York State residents is made possible by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Tickets may be reserved online at [mo.ma/ps1tickets](http://mo.ma/ps1tickets).

**Visitor Guide:** Discover even more from PS1 with the Bloomberg Connects app. Read wall text, hear directly from artists, and uncover the building's history with this multimedia visitor guide. This digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

**Directions:** MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

**Information:** For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit [moma.org/ps1](http://moma.org/ps1). Press Contacts: Kai Mora, [kailyn\\_mora@moma.org](mailto:kailyn_mora@moma.org); Molly Kurzius, (718)392-6447 or [molly\\_kurzius@moma.org](mailto:molly_kurzius@moma.org)

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