

ENSEMBLE

A collaboration with New Haven Public High School students from
Artspace's 6th Annual Summer Apprenticeship Program

ARTIST > JEAN SHIN **PARTICIPATING STUDENTS >** MOHAMED BADAWI,
JAMES BARROS, GABRIELA DE JESUS, WESLEY FRASIER, KIMBERLY JOWERS,
OYIN KOLAWOLE, NICHOLAS PFAFF, ALIKA POTTS, SARAH RIVERA,
STEPHANIE RIVERA, ARZOO ROHBAR, OLIVIA ST. JOHN, ALEJANDRO VELAZQUEZ

untitled (space) gallery

a program of **ARTSPACE**

July 21–September 16, 2006

Jean Shin's *Ensemble*

Each summer Artspace is faced with the task of finding one artist and a group of high school students to work together in the spirit of collaboration. In just three short weeks this group gets to know each other, learns new art-making skills, and completes an intricate installation in the Artspace galleries. The goal of this project is to provide new experiences for both the students and the artist and to create a work that becomes a proud part of the legacy of all those involved. It may sound daunting, but each year, without fail, Artspace, one artist and a group of students pull off this Herculean task.

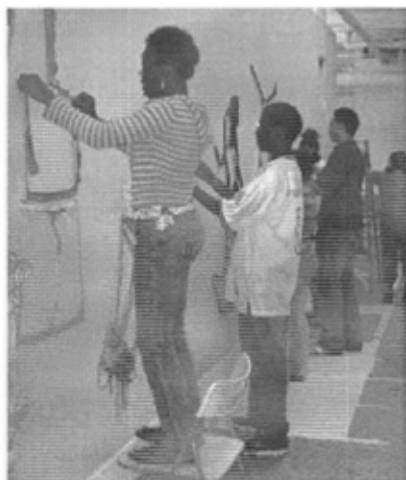
We are pleased to say that this, our sixth year, is no different, as New York-based artist Jean Shin served as the brave artist-in-residence. Over three weeks in July, Shin and her 13 student apprentices created an installation that explored the transformation of individual identity into a collective vision. This shift began as each apprentice brought in items of clothing representing themselves; these objects were then disassembled and reconfigured to create the installation on view, where one wall is starched with cut out clothing forms and a web of seams, cuffs and zippers hangs from the opposing wall. The individual clothes are then turned into skins and skeleton-like forms, and what ultimately results is a true collaboration.

Interview with Artspace Gallery Director Denise Markonish (DM) and Jean Shin (JS):

DM: You decided to call this exhibition *Ensemble*. Can you talk about why you chose this title and how the term, which signals clothing as well as collectivity, applies to this project?

JS: In choosing the title, I liked that the word "ensemble" could have a few different associations. In fashion it refers to a coordinated outfit. In performance it refers to a group of musicians, singers, dancers or actors who perform together. In each case, it is an assemblage of parts to form a whole. In the Artspace project, 13 high school students come together to create a new installation. At the individual level, each student selected a unique ensemble of clothing to donate as material for the project. The installation itself can be seen as a large ensemble of this collective vision.

DM: I know that you recently worked with the Museum of Modern Art in New York to develop an educational guide for their galleries. Here at Artspace you have also developed an educational system for the students. Can you talk about the differences that you encountered between planning a more abstract lesson plan to one that involves a hands-on approach?



Oyin Kolawole and other apprentices compose initial clothing seam "drawings" on wall.



Jean Shin (with son Tyler) works with Mohamed Badawi and James Barros installing fabric cut-outs for final composition.



Wesley Frasier and James Barros examine seam "skeletons" prior to installation.



Gabriela De Jesus starches and flattens deconstructed fabric cut-outs.

JS: At MoMA I created an activity guide that would encourage students to explore the museum's permanent collection while introducing a contemporary artist's point of view. It invites kids to draw, ask questions and make connections with various artworks they see around them. It's a self-guided tour (with family supervision) so I am not there with them.

The experience at Artspace is very different since I am working directly with a group of students and collaborating to create my work. Each student is unique and the group dynamic is also unpredictable. Everyday is a work-in-progress and I am constantly revising my plans for what will be done that day.

DM: Can you speak about what it was like to work with a group of high school apprentices, both the challenges and rewards, citing some of those moments with the students where you could see how their understanding of what art can be shifts?

JS: I think the students were initially very reserved and hesitant to open themselves up to each other. There is also the difficulty finding a comfort level in working together and making decisions as a group—not to mention collaborating to make art that is new to them, and they are only beginning to understand. Then there is the challenge of the work itself which asked them to think conceptually while very demanding in time, labor and materials. The first week we didn't have enough clothes, and then I began to question our lack of time or energy. But by the second week, the students extended themselves by digging deep into their closets and finding more clothes that they wanted to include or inviting others in their lives to participate. Some students volunteered to come early to help paint and starch the garments so that it would dry in time. When we were working digitally to design the wall, it was great to see students with different set of computers-based skills take ownership of the project.

I think they were beginning to understand that the project is literally about them and will reflect what they personally and collectively put into it. My work is about transformation of things, but in reality it is about changing expectations and altering our understanding of ourselves.

DM: You have done this type of project before, where you deconstruct clothing forms. Other than the difference in the actual clothes used, how do you make each version of this project unique?

JS: This is the first time in which the people who donated the clothes assisted me in making the actual work on site. The students had a very hands-on experience in creating the installation—from the initial process of selecting the outfit they want to donate, to deconstructing the clothes and assisted

in making all formal decision decisions along with way as to how the final work would be presented in the gallery. It's a very unique opportunity to work together every step of the way to realize this installation.

DM: To me, the essence of this project is in the shift from individual to collective identity, along with the deconstruction of the body; turning clothing into stand-ins for skin and skeleton. How do you think identity and the body are transformed in the final form of this work?

JS: The clothes are metaphors for our bodies and our identities in society. If we extend that analogy we see the full spectrum of our varying skin colors, tones, lifestyles represented and brought together into one large installation. In the process of deconstructing our clothes, we see things so intimate to our bodies become less familiar even abstract in its presentation. Stripped from its context, we see similarities in the colors, patterns, shapes, and structures—as well as the difference that set ourselves apart. We see ourselves in relationship to others. Our bodies and identities share the same space and co-exist with others. Each person has a place that they fit into. I think there is comfort in knowing that even though we are unique as individuals, we are also part of something greater than ourselves. Our identities are connected to a larger history of people and places. Ultimately, the project becomes a reflection of our collective identity in which each person plays a critical role in shaping.



Jean Shin (b. 1971, Seoul, South Korea) lives and works in New York. BFA in Painting from Pratt Institute in NY, an MS in Theory, Criticism & History of Art, Design & Architecture from Pratt, she also attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine. Solo exhibitions include: Frederieke Taylor Gallery, NY; Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, NY; Apex Art, NY; and Museum of Modern Art, Queens, NY. Select group exhibition include: *Counter Culture*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY; *Open House: Working in Brooklyn*, Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY; and *Custom Fit*, and Smack Mellon Gallery, Brooklyn, NY. Recently, Shin was an artist-in-residence at the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA, and has received awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts and The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation.

Aside from the participating students, schools and Jean Shin, Artspace would like to thank the following people for helping make this year's Summer Apprenticeship program a success: The Smart Family Foundation; Public Allies; Bec Rindler, our Yale Presidential Public Service Fellow; Artspace Youth Programs Director, Samuel Rowlett; Destiny Palmer, Aliza Shvarts, and Anne Marie Newport for working so diligently with the apprentices; Leslie Hart at the Yale Child Studies Center; Craig Dreeszen at Dreeszen and Associates; Juan Carlos Bojorquez of WestEd; videographer Erika Van Natta; photographer and graphic designer Angie Hurlbut, Jessica Sack, associate Curator of Public Education at the Yale University Art Gallery; and Suzanne Sustaita, 2006 Artspace Public Ally. Thanks to Trader Joe's for providing food for the opening reception.

Ensemble Views



Mohamed Badawi, Hill Regional Career High School >The Apprenticeship helped my teamwork skills. We all worked individually and together to form one piece. Putting everything together and seeing the final result gave me a sense of accomplishment and success.



James Barros, Metropolitan Business Academy >It was a lot more work than I thought it would be, I gained a lot more respect for the amount of work that an artist puts into their art. I learned about deconstructing clothes and working as a team—it's not always what you want, but sometimes you have to change things for the better of the group, and for the finished piece.



Gabriela De Jesus, Hill Regional Career High School >The project made me think of art in a different way, we were actually making something real instead of just drawing it. I learned about working in a group, which brought a lot of dynamic personalities together, working together to make it cohesive.



Wesley Frasier, Common Ground High School >Making art is a lot harder than everybody thinks. I thought it would be like an after school art class; it's a lot more active, it's serious artwork, not just kick back and do your own thing. I'm seeing everything in a different pattern, even though I see art one way, I will think about it more and act on it differently, following through and not giving up on a project.



Kimberly Jowers, Hillhouse High School >You can take anything and make it art, not just a pencil and paper. Time management was a challenge—getting as much done as you can in as little time as possible so you can move onto the next step. I enjoyed cutting the clothes, because it was different, something I'd never done before. I gained a connection with clothing that I didn't have before.



Oyinkansola Kolawole, West Haven High School >I used to associate art with paintings and drawing, and now after being exposed to installation and contemporary art, I am interested in other forms of expressions. I liked cutting the clothes; it let me look at how a garment is constructed. I liked pinning the seams together to create a new form of art different than the original function.



Nicholas Pfaff, Hamden High School, Educational Center for the Arts >This project showed a different side of collaboration, working under an artist with a vision. A challenge for me was to not get too absorbed in the cutting and trimming of fabric, which was labor intensive. Composing the pieces was more of a conversation; you have to realize not just your own vision but others' as well.



Alike Potts, Wilbur Cross High School, Educational Center for the Arts >It was a challenge to understand and like everyone's ideas, but when we talked about things it was easier to understand each other. I learned to compromise. I learned it's really time consuming to deconstruct an article of clothing, I began to see [clothes] as shapes and forms, not just a pair of jeans. I gained a different way of looking at clothing.



Sarah Rivera, Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School >We had to work together—we all had different ideas and we had to sit down and talk it out to make an idea work. Art is something that reflects yourself but it can also reflect many people. I learned about being more hands on, using new materials and seeing a different kind of art. I also learned to be resourceful—art doesn't have to cost a lot.



Stephanie Rivera, Cooperative Educational Services >[This project] opened my eyes to see that I'm not the only one with an opinion on art. Taking in other opinions has broadened my view of art. I learned to be open-minded and take in other people's point of view. I expected to be alone doing my own thing, but it was very collaborative, and I learned to enjoy that.



Arzoo Rohbar, Hill Regional Career High School >Well, we're working with clothes! It's something new, I haven't done this before, I expected to be painting or drawing. This is like making art from stuff, we're using materials to create color, shapes, it looks like a painting.



Olivia St. John, Wilbur Cross High School, Educational Center for the Arts >I wouldn't have thought computer software would be useful in making an installation, but applying computers to a large-scale installation is something I will take with me to my own artwork. I've never worked together on one piece with other people. It's not about getting the biggest role in the project; it's about everyone chipping in to get a lot done.



Alejandro Velazquez, Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School >At first, the cutting was hard, but after a while I got the hang of it. I've never worked with clothing as art; it has been an interesting experience. I enjoyed working as a group to fit the whole piece together; it would be really hard to do this alone.



July 21–September 16, 2006

Project Room

The New English

Site-specific graffiti works by Demo, Dooley O, Mister Never and Nick Z, painted directly on the Crown Street facing walls inside of Artspace. These four artists use the language of graffiti to create connections between the street and the inside of the gallery.

Flatfile

New Acquisitions

A selection of works by artists who recently joined the Flatfile, including: Christopher Beauchamp, Ilana Cohen, Andrew Hogan, J.T. Kirkland, Leslie Kuo, Mary Lesser, Steve Locke, Sabrina Marques, Andy Ness, Rashmi, Samuel James Rowlett, Kirsten Rae Simonsen, Tyson Skross, Kevin Van Aelst, and Chad Walker. www.artspacenh.org/flatfile

The Lot/812 Chapel & Continuing Exhibitions

On view until September 16th

Micah Silver and Colby Brown: The Phoenix

Sound samples gathered from throughout New Haven play on speakers suspended over the Lot, in response to signals from infrared sensors, bus schedules, weather patterns, and other data.

Brandon Ballengée

Love Motels for Insects: New Haven Variations

Eco-artist Brandon Ballengée will set up a series of panels lit by insect attracting black lights. Over the course of the exhibition the insects will create "paintings" on the panels by leaving behind secreted pheromones. Look for the artist at the Lot. Call Artspace for schedule.

The Lot is supported by the Greater New Haven Transit District, Town Green Special Service District, the City of New Haven, and the Federal Transportation Authority. Thanks to: Chris Joy, Todd Jokl, Joseph Smolinski, Samuel Rowlett, Chris Engstrom, J. Antonelli, Evelyn X. Silva, Chriss Shaknaitis, Mike Kochis, Rose Martin, Matt Cassidy, Sarah Roblé, Dan Brinsmade, Ryan Bond, and the bugs of New Haven.

Artspace Lounge

Gerald Saladyga: 9th Square Light

John/Jane Project

Liz Nofziger: Fixture

Upcoming Events

Thursday, July 27th, 6:30pm

Artist Teas!

Jim Hett, curatorial assistant at the Aldrich Museum in Ridgefield, CT will talk about Radius, an annual juried exhibition and professional development program for emerging artists from Connecticut and Southeastern New York. The deadline for submissions is August 18th. Come find out about this opportunity.

October 9–29, 2006

City-Wide Open Studios

Join over 450 artists for Connecticut's most exciting visual arts festival and share your work with 10,000 plus visitors. Open your studio in the New Haven area, or show at an Alternative Space provided by Artspace. Open to all Connecticut artists. Details & registration at www.cwos.org
Registration deadline **Friday, September 1, 2006**

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New Summer Gallery Hours Tuesday and Wednesday 11–6pm; Thursday and Friday 11–8pm; Saturdays 2–8pm. The Lot is open to visitors 24/7.

The Summer Apprenticeship program is made possible thanks to support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Anna F. Ardenghi Trust, the Josef + Anni Albers Foundation, Carolyn and Smart Family Foundations, Yale University, and Assa Abloy Co.

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