

Career Day

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Career Day is an artist group that is interested in the socially based practices of art in public spaces. We aim to create a contemporary connection by way of conversation through inventive sculptural actions. The group is composed of four artists currently residing in Chicago. Our performative approach is with expanding notions of public art by enlisting “viewers” as volunteers and creating a new relationship to the “known” city experience. Career Day’s collaborative goal is to create social situations which can begin to expand art experiences by uniting people with a shared act.

The Cartesian X - Y coordinates of the city grid, cross at Milwaukee Avenue, a street that meets, divides and creates so many neighborhoods in Chicago, a corridor that marks borders as well as creates crossroads between many social groups. The Chicago Sweep Project was with the approach and sculptural action to perform an endurance tag team relay from block to block in a timed choreography, exchanging brooms and uniforms with volunteer “sweepers” waiting at each major intersection. This was a celebration and simultaneous intervention as a Laurel and Hardy approach to the comedy and tragedy of social public space.

Over 62 volunteers met and coordinated over a four month period of planning. Some volunteers we knew, others responded through public posting on the streets of the city or on the public space of the internet. Neighbor meeting neighbor; we did not “sweep” in the traditional sense of



hand to broom “cleaning” notions. Instead, with our timed caring sweeping action, we performed with gentle caressing motions; lovingly touching the streets and sidewalks creating a lively conversation with passerby along the way.

The experience began to take on a different meaning for each of us along this 14 mile stretch of concrete and asphalt. Our performative action became a 16 hour physical endurance test creating inward moments of reflection challenging the typical anonymous city experience. The neighborhoods along Milwaukee Avenue, define some of the history and social politics of Chicago, Polish, Czech,





Serbian, Latino, African as well as the visual language of gentrification greeted us as we worked our way south on this historical diagonal path. The sculptural performance with our 5 hand made brooms allowed neighbor to meet neighbor, creating conversation and making a demonstrated humorous connection to this place we now call home. The anonymous gaze of the city street, was charged with a traffic stopping identity with a social pattern of art along the pathway of Milwaukee Avenue.

Water samples of the Chicago River from near the source at Devon Avenue, marked our beginning and the team's terminus. These "authentic souvenirs" were bottled and handed out to volunteers and people we met along our journey. The souvenirs were a kitsch nod of respect to the river that defines the city and its history. Milwaukee Avenue,



once an Indian trail, takes its diagonal stripe across the grid due to the course of the river. At the end of the day's journey, we symbolically poured the water which remained from Devon Avenue back into the bend in the river at Kinzie Avenue, a celebration, a full circle triumph for the City of Chicago.

*Upcoming: Career Day will "sweep" Broadway, NYC, Spring 2006
Please log on...and sign up to Volunteer! <www.careerdayteam.org>*