

I would like to open an experimental art space in a stall at King's Flea Market. The space would have artist made objects and services (both for sale and not for sale), as well as a project space with changing installations. The space would be open one day a week for 3 months and will host 4 openings as well as smaller events.

The space will be split to include space to display and sell objects and services as well as a space that would host 4 site-specific installations over the course of the 3 months. Though the space will only be open one day a week, the work will be visible through the grate the rest of the time. The space will mix more traditional art objects with other forms of creative expression. In addition to the parties for each of the four installations there will also be events, workshops, and performances throughout the 3 months. I have also been talking to the management of King's Market and they are interested in and willing to let me use other spaces within the Market (lobbies, stairway, etc) to place work.

A number of artists have been influential in the development of this idea and are excited about participating. A partial list includes: Jamal Cyrus, Maria Guzman, Danny Kerschen, Alex Mason, Katrina Moorhead, Zach Moser, Robert Pruitt, and Jeff Williams. If the idea is chosen I will be working with these artists to define their exact involvement. I will also be working to bring in more participants and to set an installation and events schedule. The space will open in April and run through September.

This idea has grown out of a series of conversations with friends about the difficulties in presenting work in a way that reaches beyond the usual art audience and our interest in exploring the idea of public space. As artists who believe that our work is meaningful and relevant not only in to the art community, but to society as a whole, we are constantly thinking about how to present our work to new audiences.

Art spaces, even the more experimental ones, have an inherently self-selecting crowd of people who are familiar with and interested in contemporary art. Public art projects are one solution to this problem, but these projects have their own set of issues. On a practical level, you need to deal with the bureaucracy, find the money, and create something that can survive in public. On a more fundamental level you need some sort of real public space, something that Houston is seriously lacking.

One of the main concepts behind the project is the realization that in Houston, and in much of America, retail spaces serve as the closest thing we have to public space. People go to flea markets and malls to shop, but also to socialize and connect with each other, to relax, and to have new experiences, and to see other people from a wide swatch of society. Though these spaces are privately owned, the barriers for entry (as a consumer) are virtually non-existent and once inside, people are relatively free to do what they please. I believe that for many people these spaces feel more comfortable and free than many of the official "public" spaces.

Our hope is that by situating our space in this context, we can create a space where a wide range of people will be able approach our work in an environment they are familiar with and comfortable in. Creating this comfort level allows people who wouldn't normally be interested in "art" to approach the work on their own terms and opens up new conversations and avenues to understanding.