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ART

7 Artists Take On an Unusual Artist Residency in Times Square

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View from the Work in Progress office. Photo courtesy of Paul Lebot.

Seven artists, one giant office, and one ambitious curator: 'Work in Progress' isn't your average residency.

Many people become artists to avoid the corporate drudgery that often comes with survival in a hyper-capitalist world, but Work In Progress, an artist residency organized by Tiffany Zabludowicz, shoves the ideal of the bohemian, idyllic artist back into its damn desk chair. For three weeks in May, artists Joshua Citarella, Violet Dennison, Cyril Duval, Sigrid Lauren, Haley Mellin, and Brad Troemel worked out of various offices on the 19th floor of a high-rise in the middle of Times Square.

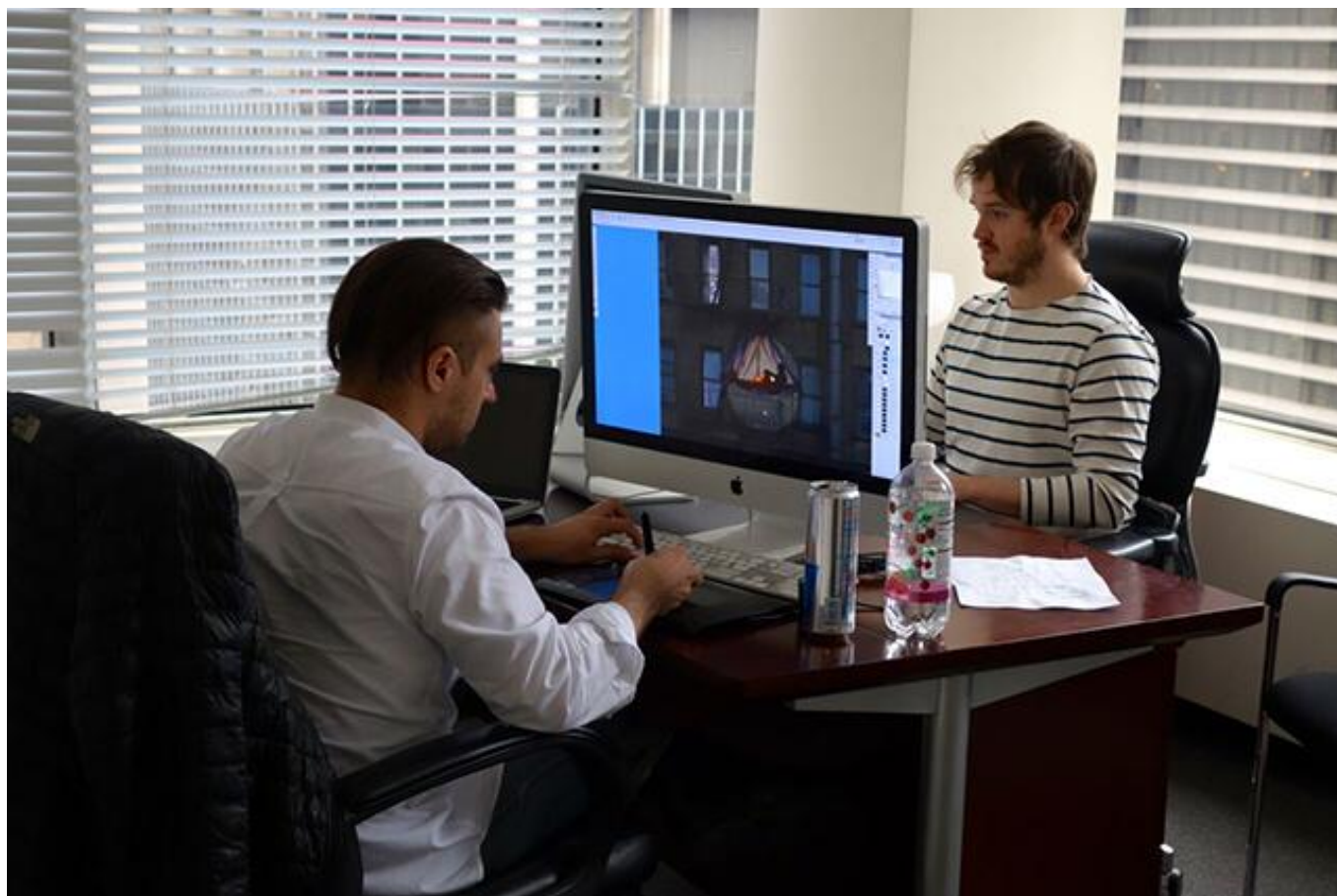
Zabludowicz, the daughter of art collectors Poju and Anita Zabludowicz of the Zabludowicz Collection, is no stranger to curating. Fresh out of Brown's art history program, Zabludowicz curated Kiln, a show of contemporary ceramics at Leila Heller Gallery, as well as a show with The Still House Group at the Zabludowicz Collection last year. Organizing and curating a residency of this nature and scale, however, is something very new to the rising art impresario, and the circumstances surrounding the residency put this squarely on view.



Curator and organizer Tiffany Zabludowicz. Photo courtesy of Paul Lebot.

After Zabludowicz discovered an office space in pre-demolition limbo, where the previous company had already vacated the space but there were still a few weeks before the space would be demolished, the curator made a last-minute decision to throw together a residency in this very unlikely setting. Meant to challenge the ideas that art is not equivalent to a regular day job and that creativity is not the same as productivity, Zabludowicz inserted seven of the newest and sharpest artistic minds into a hyper-corporate Times Square office.

Such a residency might seem absurd to certain artists, but that was the key to Zabludowicz's selection process: "I chose a diverse range of artists who I knew would react well to an office space in the center of the universe and whom I knew had a collaborative spirit," Zabludowicz tells The Creators Project. "I was thinking a lot about post-studio practice today and how artists only need desks and computers to make work."



Artists Joshua Citarella and Brad Troemel at work. Photo courtesy of Paul Lebot.

While each artist approached the residency differently, three of the seven artists effectively operated as corporations. Joshua Citarella and Brad Troemel worked together on their ongoing Etsy store project, uv production house, which sells the concepts and materials to create unusual and often absurd products, like their \$5,000 DIY crust punk couch, or a portable urine-to-drinking water conversion system.

On the less corporate (but no less industrious) side of the spectrum, artist Haley

Mellin took a series of black-and-white Gerhard Richter prints and recreated them with oil paint. Cyril Duval (a.k.a., ITEM IDEM) worked with inflatable objects and created shrines using plexi, small LED strips, and the paper goods used in Chinese funeral ceremonies.



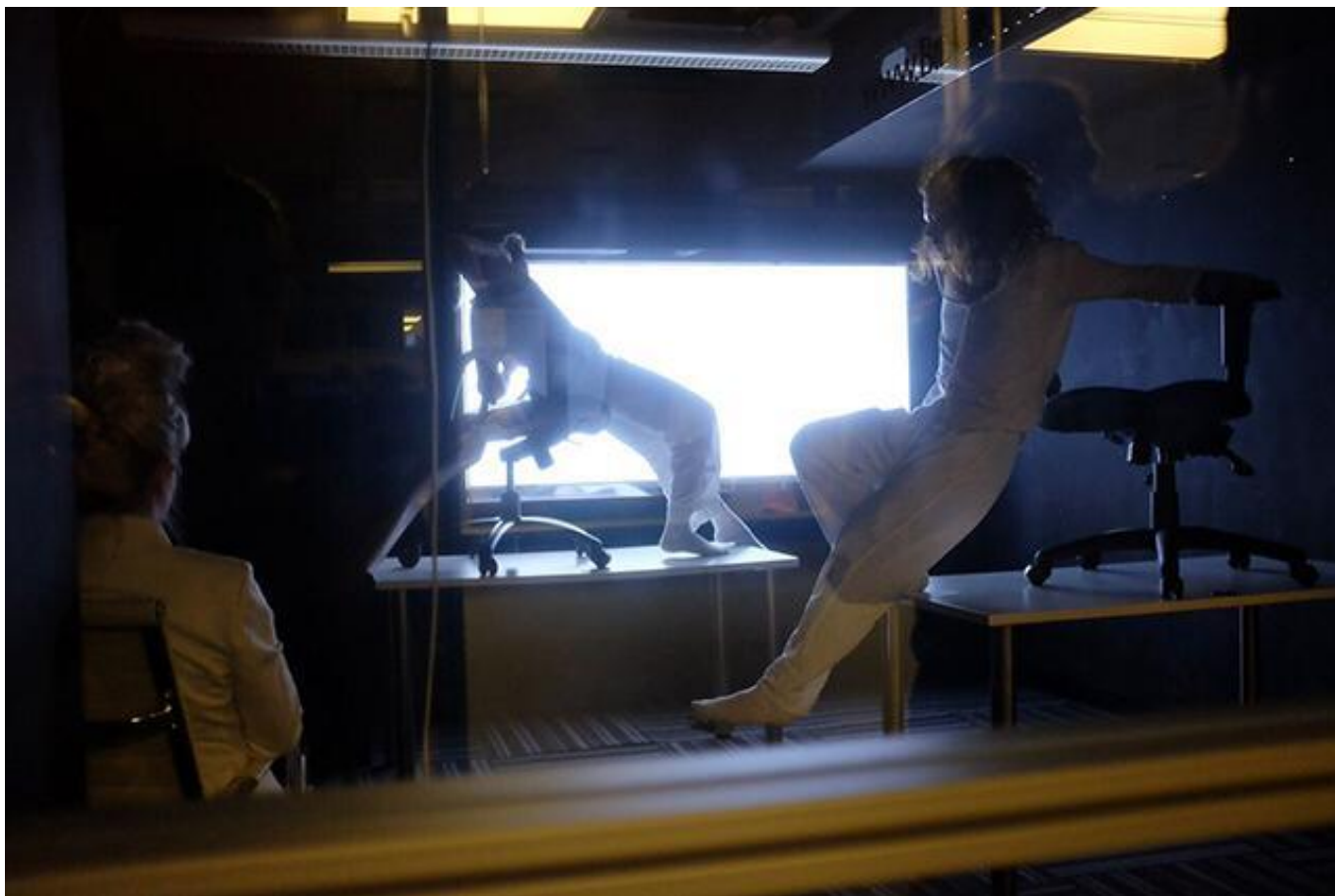
Artist Sarah Meyohas. Photo courtesy of Paul Lebot.

"BitchCoin" creator Sarah Meyohas literally set up a new company during her residency, MEYOHAS LLC, and worked on "arranging employee contracts, health insurance, and other details that go into starting a business," according to Zabludowicz. What MEYOHAS LLC will make or do is unclear, but it is undoubtedly a full embrace of the residency's corporate stylings.



Violet Dennison in her office. Photo courtesy of Paul Lebot.

Violet Dennison worked on a series of cloud sculptures made with metal, glitter, cloth, and flowers, while Sigrid Lauren took a performative route in *LEVELS1*, a dance and choreography she developed dealing with corporate power dynamics, which involved the use of two office chairs nailed onto desks.



Sigrid Lauren's performance. Photo by Elise Gallant, courtesy of Tiffany Zabłudowicz

Although the one-time residency has since reached its conclusion, the fruits of its labor remain as indicators that artists and corporations are not mutually exclusive in this day in age. Beyond the breadth of projects completed, the office dynamic seemed to have altered the ways in which the artists were working: “All the artists became extremely productive, creating so much great work in such a short period of time, working with business-like efficiency. The oppressive office atmosphere was offset by the vitality of Times Square, which seeped in and filled the corporate haze with creative energy,” Zabłudowicz reveals to The Creators Project. “Now I’m just waiting for another office to come available so I can do this project again and keep developing the ideas that came out of this first iteration.”

To learn more about the curator, [click here](#).

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