

**Jeffrey Michael Austin**  
**Artist's Statement**  
**"Unnecessary Things"**

"I will learn also to kneel down  
Into the world of the invisible,  
The inscrutable and the everlasting.  
Then I will move no more than the leaves of a tree  
On a day of no wind,  
Bathed in light,  
Like the wanderer who has come home at last  
And kneels in peace, done with all unnecessary things;  
Every motion; even words."

— Mary Oliver

On October 8th, 2018, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report detailing the projected environmental and societal impacts of global warming 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels, the long-term temperature-stabilization goal posed by the Paris Agreement of 2016.

In this report -- now, nearly 1.5 years old -- the IPCC urged the global public to recognize that avoiding the forecast catastrophes of an Earth warmed beyond 1.5° C would require " rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society."

What can be made of this message? What, in practice, can it mean to fundamentally change everything, everywhere, in all aspects and in ways never before seen -- and to do so very quickly? It's the kind of sweeping, philosophical challenge that brings every individual, every trade, every movement into question. It is a call to return our collective attention to that which is vital.

How might we move from this place? How might we, at last, come home?

These reflective sentiments weave throughout the works present in Unnecessary Things , one of two concurrent Chicago solo exhibitions by Jeffrey Michael Austin. A curious layering of reclaimed waste material, idyllic imagery, urgent pleas and spray paint on mirrored surfaces form an environment as disconcerting as it is spirited and inviting.

## **Jeffrey Michael Austin Biography**

Jeffrey Michael Austin is an interdisciplinary artist, musician and educator based in Austin TX. Through a variety of sculptural and installation processes, Austin composes situations characterized by instability, impermanence and illusion -- inviting from their visitors a sense of empathy, mindfulness and openness to the unknown. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, recently including such venues as Societe d'Electricite (Brussels), The Luminary (St. Louis), Chicago Artists Coalition, Hyde Park Art Center, Ed Paschke Art Center, Le Carreau de Cergy (Paris), Kunstenfestival Watou (Belgium), The University of North Texas Art Galleries, Lehr Zeitgenoessische Kunst (Berlin), The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Fondation Vasarely (Aix-en-Provence), The Mission, The Franklin, and Manifold, a partner of ACRE Artist Residency. Austin studied at Columbia College Chicago and the Burren College of Art in Ireland before eventually receiving his BFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Austin also produces music as Young Elder and as one third of the Growing Concerns Poetry Collective. Growing Concerns has performed at such venues as The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Steppenwolf Theatre and WBEZ Chicago. The collective recently published a book titled Five Fifths with Candor Arts.

# Jeffrey Michael Austin

## Resume

### Education

2014  
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Bachelor of Fine Arts)  
2013  
Burren College of Art, County Clare, Ireland  
2011-2013  
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
2006-2008  
Columbia College Chicago

### Solo Exhibitions

2020  
Everything Must Go, Chicago Art Department, Chicago IL  
Unnecessary Things, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL  
2018  
Outstanding Balance, Heaven Gallery, Chicago IL  
What We Can Handle, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL  
2017  
Strange Mess, The Luminary; St. Louis, MO  
Puddles: A traveling solo exhibition presented by Say Uncle. Participating venues included: University Galleries of Illinois State University, Normal, IL; DEMO Project, Springfield, IL; Sidecar, Hammond, IN; Boneyard Arts Festival, Urbana, IL  
Stay alive, Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago IL  
2014  
You Have No Idea, THE SUB-MISSION, Chicago IL

### Group Exhibitions

2019  
In Conversation: Free Write Arts & Literacy, Chicago Art Department  
Rulers, Coco Hunday; Tampa, FL  
2018  
Proximities, Bradley University; Peoria, IL  
Dangerous Professors, Flatland Gallery; Houston, TX  
1,500,000,000,000, Triumph, Chicago  
2017  
Outside Jokes, DEMO Project; Springfield, IL  
The 2017 Terrain Biennial, South Shore, Chicago  
TIME, Société d'Électricité; Brussels, Belgium  
2016  
Welcome To The End, The Franklin; Chicago  
Not Just Another Pretty Face, Hyde Park Art Center; Chicago  
BOLT Preview 6: We've Met Before, Chicago Artists Coalition  
Bad Habits (Remember Me), fort gondo compound for the arts; St. Louis, MO  
New Business, Hyde Park Art Center; Chicago  
Dock 6 Art & Design Series #9, Dock 6 Collective; Chicago  
You Are Looking Good, A Real Good Looker, Chicago Artists Coalition  
2015  
Construct, FLATSstudio; Chicago

LAPS, Le Carreau du Cergy; Paris  
Dark Fiber, Curated by Marissa Lee Benedict and David Reuter; EXPO Chicago 2015  
Rough Idle, Chicago Artists Coalition  
Kunstenfestival Watou, Watou, Belgium  
ACTIVATE , Represented by Johalla Projects; Chicago  
Lost in Trans, The University of North Texas Art Gallery; Denton, TX  
2014  
No More Drama In My Life, Lehr Zeitgenössische Kunst; Berlin  
From Downtown (We Got This), A collaboration with Matt Austin; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago  
The Middle of Everywhere, Burren College of Art; Newtown Castle, County Clare, Ireland  
Starwalker: Threewalls Annual Gala, Represented by ACRE, Sixty Inches from Center, Autotelic Studios and The Chicago Perch  
Mana Contemporary, Chicago  
LAPS, La Fondation Vasarely; Aix-en-Provence, France  
BFA Thesis Exhibition , Sullivan Galleries; The School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
You Have No Idea, THE SUB-MISSION; Chicago  
Please Stand By, ACRE\_TV; Mana Contemporary Chicago  
2013  
Present, Chicago Art Department (West); Chicago  
Hi-Vis, Burren College of Art; Newtown Castle, County Clare, Ireland  
Serenade, Terrain Exhibitions; Oak Park, IL  
&again&again, Chicago Art Department (East); Chicago  
Dock 6 Art & Design Series #5, Dock 6 Collective; Chicago  
At the Threshold, A performance with The Mountain Was A Gift; The Smart Museum of Art, Chicago  
Mere Observation, Manifold (In collaboration with ACRE Projects); Chicago

### **Awards & Residencies**

2019  
La Wayaka Current Artist-In-Residence; Guna Yala, Panama  
2018  
Facebook Artist-In-Residence Program  
Montello Foundation Artist Residency  
2017  
BOLT Residency; Chicago Artists Coalition  
2016  
Ox-Bow School of Art Fall Residency  
ACRE Artist Residency; Steuben, WI  
The Center Program; Hyde Park Art Center  
2015  
Luminarts Visual Arts Fellowship Award  
The Burren College of Art Alumni Residency Award  
2015  
HATCH Projects; Chicago Artists Coalition  
2014  
HATCH Projects; Chicago Artists Coalition  
Award of Excellence; Dave Bown Projects  
Edward L. Ryerson Fellowship Award  
2012  
Mormyrid Artist Residency; Chicago, IL  
ACRE Artist Residency; Steuben, WI

**Public Collections**

Facebook  
Hyde Park Art Center  
ACE Hotel Chicago

**Private Collections**

Nick Cave  
Jason Kalajainen  
Myrna Kaplan  
Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection  
Patricia McMillen  
Bert Green