

INTERLOCUTOR (//) Aug 24

MAN BARTLETT

Multidisciplinary Artists (/new-blog/category/Multidisciplinary+Artists)



Photo by Mengwen Cao

Man Bartlett is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in New York. His diverse practice includes sound, drawing, collage, video, performance and digital projects. Bartlett has exhibited or performed in a variety of venues including: The Barnes Foundation (Philadelphia), The V&A Museum (London), his bedroom, The Brooklyn Museum, a Best Buy store, Freies Museum (Berlin), Arebyte Gallery (London), Eyebeam (New York), Flux Factory (Long Island City), iMOCA (Indianapolis), Port Authority Bus Terminal, The Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Bert Green Fine Art (Chicago), Secret Project Robot (Brooklyn), and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among many others.

Bartlett has also participated in residencies at VCCA, Signal Culture, The Institute for Electronic Arts (iea), Flux Factory, The Wassaic Project, and with Residency Unlimited as a Social Media Artist-in-Residence.

Interview by [Hayley Owens](https://interlocutorinterviews.com/new-blog/tag/Hayley+Owens) (<https://interlocutorinterviews.com/new-blog/tag/Hayley+Owens>)

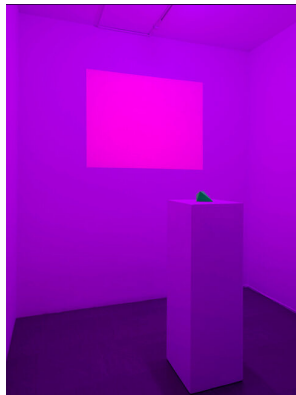
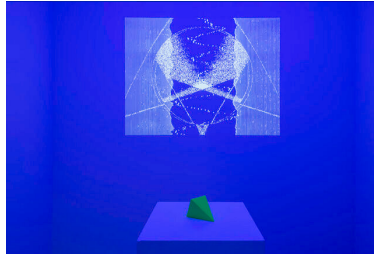
The most recent work on your website is *SPACE ON EARTH V*. Having been released towards the start of the COVID pandemic, was that an influence on the piece? How has the pandemic had an effect on your work (or why hasn't it)?

I started following the news out of China shortly before the last track on the album was recorded, in early January, but it was too early to have any real impact on its creation. It wasn't until late January/early February when I began to really understand just how bad it was about to get. As for how the pandemic has affected my work, practically speaking my output has decreased substantially. Conceptually, I trust that this period of reflection — on so many levels — will have a massive impact on my future work, but there's no rushing that process, and I'm just not there yet.

SPACE ON EARTH... by Man Bartlett	
1. 20180516	09:51
2. 20181023	13:22
3. 20190101	07:18
4. 20190218	09:16
5. 20190503	06:24
6. 20190509	17:36
7. 20190829	07:56
8. 20200112	06:37
9. 20191024 (Bonus Track)	06:39
10. 20191205 (Bonus Track)	04:16

Both *SPACE ON EARTH V* and *END GAME* explore this journey of our psychic energies following some catastrophic event. Through creating these works, does it give you an answer to your questions: "What is the transference method of our psychic energies after the destruction of our planet? Where might the remaining matter of our essence travel to when our physical home is no more?" How does art play a role in answering some of these more existential questions?

Some days I wish these works gave me answers! Instead they often lead down deeper avenues of exploration, with more questions along the way. Which is often a reward unto itself! In the example of "where might our psychic energies go," for *END GAME* I set a vessel in motion with humanity's collective consciousness inside. But getting to that point entailed years of other questions coming out of other bodies of work. The next phase in this project (*EXIT PLAN*) involves encounters with alien intelligence as the vessel leaves the heliosphere for interstellar space, at which point I expect more questions to arise! In general I think if art can get us thinking more deeply about the questions themselves, then it has served a noble purpose.



END GAME installation photos by Nathan Keay

Many of your works involve combining a multitude of different kinds of elements, whether it be dichotomous emotions in *SPACE ON EARTH V*, or different faces/characters in the *Gifs* series. Is this an intentional part of the art process?

I've been drawn to the role that dichotomies can play in experience since my early drawings of circles, where the elements were effectively just positive and negative space. With these and other works it's often a reduction of form to hold ideas — sometimes complex, sometimes jokes — in the starkest light possible.

You've worked in quite a few different kinds of mediums. How do you decide on what type of media you want to work with?

It can sometimes take years for ideas to take their form. While there's no set process for how I decide what media I work with, it usually starts with a nagging sensation that there's something missing. In the case of my work with sound, it started as a way to counter-stimulate my brain from the visual onslaught of New York, and a general feeling that I had ideas about time and space that only

sound could attempt to answer.

Your work *RAGA/PEAK* allows an audience to listen to audio by visiting three stations. How and why did you choose those specific locations (HVCCA, The Field Library, Peekskill waterfront)?

Each location offered a different potential relationship between audience and experience that intrigued me. For the public library, I really liked the idea of presenting a sound work in a quiet-by-design place where one could get lost in the stacks, with an equally meditative soundtrack. Installing the work within the museum subversively sought to re-contextualize the work within a museum experience, while the waterfront offered the ability for listeners to wander freely outside, taking in the elements as well as the occasional passing train.



Photos courtesy of the artist

With interactive works like *RAGA/PEAK*, do you ever notice any interesting behaviors from visitors? How does an audience's interaction with a work impact the work itself?

Especially with my sounds works – which are often transmitted via FM radio to headphones – I really enjoy watching how different people react. There is a shared intimacy in the collective listening, and folks can choose to either listen alone, or connect via eye contact. Sometimes my work puts people to sleep, which I take as the highest compliment!

Are there any artistic mediums you look forward to experimenting with in the future?

I've been thinking now is a good time to get back into mail art. Related, SAVE THE USPS! Register to vote! Fill out your census!

View more of Man's work on his [site](http://www.manbartlett.com/) (<http://www.manbartlett.com/>) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/manbartlett/) (<https://www.instagram.com/manbartlett/>)

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Man Bartlett and Theo Edmonds

Zephyr Project: Where art meets commerce

FEATURE ([HTTP://WWW.LEOWEELY.COM/CATEGORY/FEATURE/](http://www.leoweekly.com/category/feature/))

February 4, 2015

BY KEVIN GIBSON ([MAILTO:KGRAMONE@AOL.COM](mailto:kgramone@aol.com))

IDEAS 40203 and 'Project 6: Who's Louisville?'

On Man Bartlett's desk on the second floor at Zephyr Gallery is a contraption that looks a bit like a guitar player's distortion pedal, except there are two lights ever flashing — one red, one yellow.

"I keep that there to remind me while I work," he said.

Bartlett is a New York artist who is more or less on loan in Louisville as part of an intriguing artistic installment at Zephyr Gallery — it's a collaboration between Louisville's IDEAS 40203 and an organization based in the Big Apple called Residency

Unlimited with funding from ArtPlace America, the National Endowment of the Arts and the Educational Foundation of America. Bartlett, a multidisciplinary artist, will conduct research into the dietary habits of Louisvillians dealing with Type II diabetes and pre-diabetes as part of a collaborative project with Thrive365, an app that helps people with diabetes monitor and control their diet.

The blinking lights on Bartlett's desk are flickering reminders of why his work is important – the red light represents every person in the U.S. with Type II diabetes, while the yellow light represents each person who is pre-diabetic. In the course of a year, he said, the red light would theoretically blink 29.1 million times, once for each Type II patient. The yellow light would go through a mind-boggling 86 million blinks (based on 2012 statistics).

IDEAS 40203's mission locally is to pair creative thinkers like Bartlett, artists of all types and ethnicities, with startups, entrepreneurs, existing companies, whatever, with a need – such as Thrive365. This pairing also provides an artist with a way to showcase his or her work and utilize his or her talent to make money.

Think of it this way: Anyone who has worked in corporate America, or experienced pretty much any typical “desk job,” has worked with someone who was making their way selling time to “The Man” as a way of paying the bills and simultaneously funding an artistic passion.

You know those people well – they are the computer programmer who actually aspires to be a full-time musician, the graphic designer who is preparing for her first gallery exhibit. Artists are everywhere; there just aren't a lot of paying, full-time jobs available that play directly to their talents. Hey, a novelist has to sell manuscripts to make a living, because Acme Inc. isn't going to pay her to sit around and make up stories.

But for every creative mind, there is also a creative problem-solver. In other words, the weird guy in the corner of your cubicle farm with the messy desk and Nerf Herder tattoos might seem like just a scatterbrain, but he also may be more adept at specific roles than the highly-paid CEO in the spacious corner office.

Theo Edmonds is a co-founder of IDEAS 40203, an organization focused on what he calls “creative place-making” — a creative chamber of commerce, in other words, which is precisely how IDEAS identifies itself. The Zephyr installment of IDEAS 40203, which is being called “Project 6: Who’s Louisville?” (or “The Zephyr Project”), will feature visual exhibits, two months of events and projects like Bartlett’s (see sidebar for schedule overview). But it’s about more than simply being a unique art exhibit — it’s also about working as a community-minded effort.

“It’s not so much about real estate for us as it is about workforce development,” Edmonds said. “Ours is a human resources approach to developing Louisville, and we believe artists have valuable contributions to make in the development of our city. The opportunities we are looking to create are for all income levels and backgrounds.”

“We’re focused on leveraging artists as agents of change,” added Josh Miller, also of IDEAS 40203. “Workforce development, job force training — using these creative minds to find new ways to do engagement in the community.”

Zephyr regularly works with different curators to turn the gallery space at 610 E. Market St. into a different artistic installation of some kind, and Project 6 is the art installation of choice for IDEAS 40203.

“So it’s a little bit different take” on your typical installation at Zephyr, Edmonds said. “We will be engaging in a huge amount of programming activity at the space, connecting people from different parts of the city. We’ll be spending the time here really investigating what is the emerging identity of the city of Louisville, specifically as it impacts our work.”

Project 6 kicked off Tuesday, Feb. 3, with an opening “Mix+Pivot” event, wherein artists and other creative thinkers get together for cocktails and conversations that strive to “describe, design, challenge, invent” the city’s economic and social landscape and future. On Wednesday, Feb. 4, the Zephyr Project continues with guest interviewees Dr. Shiao Woo and John Shaw-Woo, a Think Tank session and Bartlett’s exhibit opening, as well as music by AMPED (Academy of Music Production and Development).

Each week through March will feature similar events; guest interviewees will be chosen weekly by Edmonds and LEO Weekly executive editor Aaron Yarmuth, both of whom will interview the guest on a live webcast with conversations based on updated versions of questions used by statesman Benjamin Franklin in his Leather Apron Club, or Junto, an organization he created in 1727 to debate morals, politics, philosophy, as well as business and cultural affairs.

The Think Tanks will be live and social media events (#wholou) to propose questions that will help collectively identify opportunities for creative place-making in Louisville. Information gathered will then be used as a source for creating IDEAS 40203 advocacy platform and identifying new creative place-making possibilities.

And each week will also offer a cultural event, including artist talks, exhibit openings, performances, etc. Examples of featured artists from outside Louisville include Bartlett, Koren Shadmi, Jakub Szczesny, Alex Schweder and Urban Matter, but local artists will be involved as well.

ART MEETS COMMERCE

The place-making cooperatives generated by IDEAS 40203, and Project 6, can take on many forms in a wide variety of economic and cultural situations. And as evidenced by the partnership between IDEAS and Residency Unlimited, led by director Ayelet Aldouby, it stretches outside the immediate community as a true exchange of talent and ideas.

Bartlett is a prime example. In 2012, he took over the social media channels of an organization in another city as a way of developing new ways for that organization to engage and to, as he put it, “subvert expectations.”

He explained, “People approach social media as a broadcast tool for personal promotion — what I had for lunch, selfies. I’m more interested in how we communicate and the depths of those communications, and getting people to see those exchanges in a different way.”

He said the takeover ultimately benefited the business, but the collaboration didn’t end there. While he was taking over the social media identity of this business, a group of other artists took over his social media identity. Speaking of selfies, that’s a scary

proposition that Bartlett said was just as unnerving as one would think.

“I actually almost had a breakdown,” he said, seeming to be only partly joking. “I started getting trolled at the very end of the project. These nine people were responding to this troller while I watched in horror.”

But the point is that each collaboration is unique in its own way and also has an element of art and/or experimentation. The organization or business benefits from getting a new perspective from an outside creative mind — an artistic consultant, if you will — but the artist also gets a chance to stretch out and learn while also being compensated for his or her talents. Art meets commerce for the win.

Bartlett’s current project with Thrive365 marries diabetes research — which hopefully will help the app’s creators to provide a better experience for end users — with a visual project. Bartlett, whose repertoire includes drawing, collage, video, performance and digital arts, not only has created a fun, interactive online questionnaire to gather information about diabetes and dietary habits — when the form asks for your profession, it notes that “daft pope” is a perfectly acceptable answer — along with a diabetes-related visual exhibit.

The prints hanging at Zephyr as part of Bartlett’s exhibit include art made from images of sugar cubes as well as enlarged documents offering a peek into potentially shocking decisions made by the government and medical realms regarding health, specifically diabetes. When art meets commerce, education usually tags along.

Another project offering a prime example of this creative chamber of commerce approach is Roots & Wings, which is scheduled make an appearance at Zephyr on Feb. 20. A collaboration between Bridge Kids International, The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts and Metro Louisville Government Office of Safe & Health Neighborhoods, among others it is a theater project integrating art and performance as catalysts for restoration of self and community in west Louisville’s “Zones of Hope” neighborhoods.

It’s an interesting example of IDEAS 40203’s mission in that it brings young people from low-opportunity backgrounds together and gives them arts-related education and opportunities to which they would otherwise not have access.

The project, headed up by Stacy Bailey-Ndiaye, along with Edmonds, is a national finalist for an ArtPlace America grant, being one of 90 from an initial 1,283 applications to make it to the final round — the grant would bring \$250,000 into West Louisville’s creative economy (ArtPlace will make final decisions this summer).

But the project also means more: It provides marketable skills while also paving the way for artistic endeavors.

“The skills that young people are gaining through these kinds of efforts,” Bailey-Ndiaye said, “are exactly that — there is an economic benefit to the individual and to the city as a whole. Once you have skills and also a sense of agency, and you actually can change your life. That’s something you can take to the marketplace.”

Bringing it full circle, Project 6 is making such collaborations immediate and urgent. If Roots & Wings focuses on a specific part of Louisville, the Zephyr Project casts a city-wide view and offers a way to provide all parties a seat at the discussion table.

“I think one of great things they are doing at Zephyr,” Bailey-Ndiaye said, “is putting people together who would not necessarily always be in the same room. Through these programs at Zephyr, [IDEAS 40203] is bringing in a really diverse crowd, which is a very needed outcome.”

“Diverse” may be putting it mildly. To look at the schedule of events and guests is to get a snapshot of seemingly every angle of Louisville.

During the project’s second week, which is healthcare-themed, sexual health advisors Sara Choate and Beth Henson will discuss healthy sexuality, aided by the Squallis Puppeteers. That same week, Alex Frommeyer of Beam Technologies and several other tech entrepreneurs from around the region will participate in a panel discussion about trends in consumer tech, finding talent and funding, and more.

In March, a discussion of Louisville’s need for a botanical gardens is on the schedule, followed shortly afterward by a discussion of whether making money for playing music constitutes selling out and how (or whether) money stifles musical creativity.

The installation will also feature a number of activities with the aforementioned AMPED, which is a local entrepreneurial youth program centered around music and offering a safe environment for youth to explore creativity through music. As part of Project 6, young musicians and aspiring musicians will be active in scheduling and recording live performances and oral histories in a pop up studio.

A related event in late February will focus on music and best practices for music marketing, particularly digital media. From women in art to ways of exchanging artistic talents for other services, Project 6 is going to bring the IDEAS 40203 vision into one space.

“We will be engaging in a huge amount of programming,” Edmonds said, “connecting people from different parts of the city. We’ll be spending the time here really investigating what is the emerging identity of the city of Louisville, specifically as it impacts our work.”

BRINGING IDEAS TO LIFE

Specifically, IDEAS focuses on three key areas where artists can make a difference: the business world, public policy and civic innovation.

“What we are ... using this Zephyr space for is part chamber of commerce and part entrepreneurial engine and think tank that is designed to help us further uncover an open source if you will platform through which we can build new creative place-making,” Edmonds said.

Like with Bartlett, creatives who get involved in place-making are part of a process that involves the artist, the organization and an entity such as IDEAS 40203 and/or Residency Unlimited. First, the agency determines the artist’s skills set, and then identifies a need in a partnering business or organization. Two or three artists who likely will best match that organization’s needs are introduced to the company, after which an artist is chosen by that company.

Edmonds said IDEAS will then broker the relationship. An artist matched with a local business will relocate to Louisville for roughly a month to problem-solve, and then outcomes are measured over the following months.

“This is a new working relationship for artists and businesses,” Edmonds said. “Traditionally, there has only been a philanthropic relationship between most businesses and artists. I know that there is untapped potential there. One of the things we’re setting out to do is provide higher-wage jobs for very skilled artist professionals, to allow them to supplement their income.”

It’s how Bartlett got started. He was an artist in residency at Residency Unlimited, which has led to several projects. It’s also how he met Edmonds and eventually came to be part of Project 6.

“It’s a phenomenal setup that really benefits everyone – the business or organization and the artist – equally,” Bartlett said.

The goal, of course, is that this creative chamber of commerce approach, of getting organizations to recognize what artists have to offer in the business world, will become a permanent part of Louisville’s culture.

Meanwhile, like the subtle gadget on Man Bartlett’s temporary desk upstairs at Zephyr Gallery, the light of creativity and innovation continues to blink in Louisville. Slowly but surely, businesses are taking note. Art meets commerce, for the win.

PROJECT 6: WHO’S LOUISVILLE SCHEDULE

Each week in February and March will feature various events with rotating themes. Guests and think tank questions will be chosen shortly before each event takes place. Event hours vary; find the full schedule at issuu.com/zephyrgallery/docs/weblayout

Feb. 2-6: Lifelong Wellness & Aging

Feb. 3: Mix+Pivot

Feb. 4: Who’s Louisville guest interview; Think Tank; Cultural Event: Man Bartlett opening; music by AMPED

Feb. 6: First Friday Trolley Hop; IDEAS feature artist: Bartlett; music by AMPED

Feb. 9-13: Healthcare

Feb. 11: Who’s Louisville guest interview; Think Tank; Cultural Event: Sexual Selfie: A Glimpse of Sexuality; Squallis Puppeteers, more.

Feb. 13: Startup/Entrepreneur Round Table featuring Alex Frommeyer of Beam

Monegraph's bid to authenticate digital objects to kick off

Summary: *Monegraph, the first way to authentic digital objects, pushes Bitcoin technology beyond currency and transforms the way we use digital images on the web.*

By Sonya James for [Between the Lines](#) | July 10, 2014 -- 10:00 GMT (03:00 PDT)

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Whether or not you think Bitcoin is going to become the next world currency, there is no denying it is a game-changing new technology. So perhaps the more interesting question is, in what ways will this technology be used? And how will the digital sphere transform as a result of these new applications?

Since the dawn of the internet, artist and media makers have grappled with the question of authenticity. I am not referring to "the authentic self," though there has been plenty of that too. I mean literally, how do we know who owns a piece of digital art? There is no way to verify who first uploaded it or see the history of its "transactions" — how it has traveled and multiplied across the Internet.

Enter [Monegraph](http://www.monegraph.com/) (<http://www.monegraph.com/>) . Built in a whirlwind 24 hours by artist Kevin McCoy and technologist Anil Dash at Rhizome's Seven on Seven event at the New Museum in New York City, Monegraph employs Bitcoin's block chain technology to provide the first way to authenticate digital objects on the web.



Artist Kevin McCoy and technologist Anil Dash created Monegraph to authenticate digital objects.

Come July 12th, the first animated gifs using Monegraph titles will hit the market at artist Man Bartlett's show [The Object of an Act of Thought](#) (http://www.chicagoartistsresource.org/events/man-bartlett-object-act-thought?discipline=Literaryimages/duffer_CAR_image.jpg) at Bert Green Fine Art in Chicago.

What if you could connect a title of ownership to authenticate your digital artwork before uploading it? If you sold it, you could transfer this title over to the new owner. Everyone would see the transaction, just like on Bitcoin's public ledger. The history of transactions is digitally embedded in the artwork itself.

Anil Dash writes (<http://monegraph.tumblr.com/>) , "Reblogging is essential to getting the word out for many digital artists, but potentially devastating to the value of the very work it is promoting. What's been missing, then, are the instruments that physical artists have used to invent value around their work for centuries—provenance and verification."

Art forgery has always been possible, but the game changes significantly when there is no physical way of proving the originality of an artwork or the authenticity of ownership. In fact, simply viewing a digital image transfers it onto the users computer or smartphone.

Behind the haze of hyperbolic insider-y banter around the Bitcoin digital currency is a new nuts-and-bolts technology that allows users to track and label digital objects by using the block chain as a public ledger of transaction. Like Bitcoin, there is no central authority.

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There are three easy steps. First you make a digital object (a gif, a cat picture, a work of political satire, for example). Then you publically upload it to the web using a social media platform like Twitter. Finally, you announce its arrival and record its originality and every transaction hence forth by embedding the entry into the block chain.

Monegraph currently uses the established Namecoin block chain, but the project is in its infancy. "We're still trying to set up a web application that can streamline the process," McCoy said. "Our plan moving forward is to be more agnostic as to which block chains we're working with. Part of our development is going to require in-house development of our own block chain."

In the end, only the market can decide whether Monegraph will add value to digital artworks. Yet the future implications could be significant for artists and social media users alike. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram obfuscate how our media transfers ownership and how media is commoditized simply by users' participation.

"If you universalize this system and imagine a mass adoption, it would be incredibly empowering to the user," McCoy said. "A social media platform that has this approach built into it could guarantee that you owned your assets."

The project is soon to be officially hosted by the New Museum's New Inc incubator and has already obtained seed money. "Not a massive amount, but enough for me to focus on Monegraph which is exciting," McCoy said. Dash currently runs two startups – the app ThinkUp and consultancy firm Activate – and acts as an "actively engaged advisor."

Monegraph's impact is yet to be known. But one thing is clear: the alternative uses of the technology behind Bitcoin are worth keeping track of. As Dash writes, "It's clear that geeks are having fun creating a virtual market, but it's hard to understand how almost anyone else would benefit from it."

Topics: [Innovation](#), [E-Commerce](#)

About Sonya James

Sonya James is a multimedia producer based in New York. With creativity and innovation in mind, she speaks to diverse voices on topics from racism in the art world to the patriotic nature of southern food. She holds a Masters Degree in Community Development.

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