

Teacher in the institution,
Take the next forty minutes to make work or works.

Worry more about activating the time (meaning the forty minutes) more than any other expectation you may have about productivity (e.g. making objects; having loyalty to quantity, rigor, and quality; judging things as worthy). At the end of this allotted time, even if you just stood idle, had a conversation, took a nap, or went shopping, you will have made a forty-minute-long thing. The “work narrative” that you recount about what you’ve made *is* what you are making. The work narrative can be constructed with a variety of aids, including—but not limited to—writing, photography, sound recording and video recording. The work narrative can also be passed along orally. This is a much more ephemeral mode of recording what you’ve done, but ultimately the question of how *and* how long you want what you’ve done to “live”, is up to you.

If you decide to make your work(s) in the Museum of Contemporary Art or any other institution where there are clearly outlined expectations of behavior, I would ask that you please not do anything that would provoke the ire of that institution, or the anxiety of their staff (i.e. guards, administrators, etc.). Although, with this type of making, there is much precedence of gestures that can be considered aggressive, vandalistic, and/or subversive in disruptive ways, that is not the objective of this particular exercise. Your goal today shouldn’t be to make enemies; rather it should be to see how far—within the limitations of this institution and your ever-expanding art vocabulary—can you stretch the possibilities of the spaces, objects, people, time, and metaphysics that surround you. The principle shift (or move) should be in you. You’re not trying to convince anyone but yourself today.

If you don’t know where to begin, think about the five examples that I gave you today.

1. **Institution as material:** Think about how to make the institution the material of what you are making. Here you need not just think about the objects in the institution. What are the norms and dynamics of the space that you’re in? What is the social, philosophical, physical, and economic infrastructure of the institution? For example: What would it mean if you paid the admission fee of several strangers visiting the museum? What would it mean if you offer to give personal tours to strangers? What are things that traditionally go unnoticed in a place where the unnoticed is supposed to be brought to the fore? What would it be like to go into a gallery space and just read the placards?
2. **Energy via accumulation:** With the passage of time—at the very least—seconds are accumulating. Breaths, interactions, gestures, movements, sounds, voices, acts of work, commerce, etc. How many things get repeated daily? How many piles exist? What does it mean to do something two times? Ten times? One hundred times? Countless times? Well, in the case of breaths, we can make the argument that the repetition of that mere banality produces a lifetime’s worth of passion, joy, sadness, purpose, sensation, generosity, and dreams. Accumulation needs to begin at one: one gesture, number one of the collection, the first time. One though, is frequently ignored, but accumulation calls attention. It’s what makes the answers to prayers miraculous, what makes atoms life, and what makes the everyday art.
3. **Closeness:** Even within the apparent sterility and policing of the institution there are relationships. The relationships can be intimate and they can be new. They can be between people, objects, and spaces. They can be whispered in secret or pronounced publically. Closeness doesn’t always have to be about physical bodies. Closeness can be one sided, if you know how to do it right. Some things can only be experienced through closeness. Some things can only be re-presented through closeness. Closeness doesn’t always have to do with proximity or size. Sometimes closeness is driven my attitude and/or intention.
4. **Co-Construction:** You may need a partner; someone to carry the majority of the weight. Someone to bring something to the table that you could never bring. This partner might be another person; they might be an object; they might be a location; or a time of day. Find this partner and let them give you parameters. Follow their parameters. Life is a partner. When in doubt, forget art, and live life.
5. **Invisibility:** Some works will never be seen. You may not see them come to fruition. They might only exist in your mind. You might make these works in secret and never tell anybody about them. They might never be documented. They might fade away into memory, time, or material. You may find that no one cares. You might find that you don’t care. Indeed, many of you will leave tonight thinking you’ve wasted a perfectly good night.