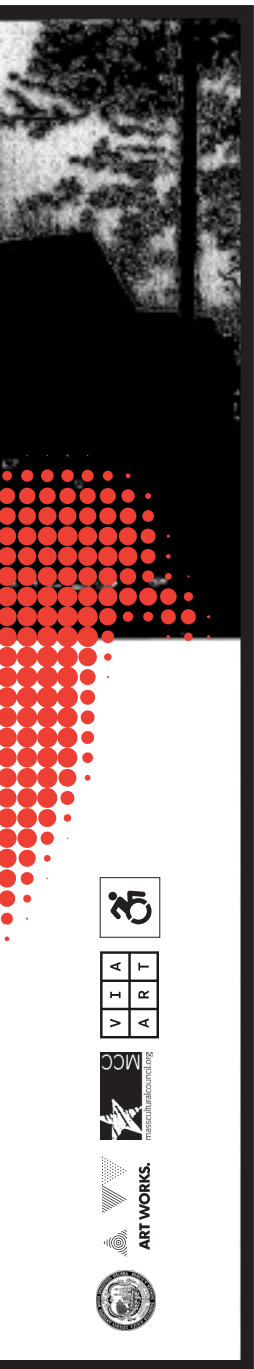


Common Exchange



A PUBLIC ART
PROJECT PRESENTED
BY CAMBRIDGE ARTS,
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

FEATURED ARTIST

**KELLY
SHERMAN**

FEATURED ARTIST

**XAVIERA
SIMMONS**

FEATURED ARTIST

**ALLISON
SMITH**

CAMBRIDGE | ARTS

Beginning

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ALLISON SMITH

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Stewart, and Michael Talbot

Common Exchange is a special-edition newspaper that serves as a companion to a series of interactive public art performances, installations, and exhibitions that present responses by ten contemporary artists to the historic site of the Cambridge Common.

Situated at the heart of the city, the Cambridge Common, like all public spaces, only acquires meaning when citizens use it. Since its early days dating back to the 1600s, when it was a place for livestock grazing, and during subsequent periods when it became a site for military training and housing, a place for concerts and protests, and parkland for contemplation and play, it has remained an important communal space that houses and reflects the changing temperament of public participation in civic life over time.

In 2016, a renovation of the Common brought many improvements and increased its

accessibility and connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods for pedestrians and bicyclists. It is on this occasion that we celebrate an improved civic space at the heart of the city with a unique suite of public artworks.

The four issues of *Common Exchange* revolve around themes addressed by the public artworks: sound, histories, access, and (dis)connection. The newspaper is available at selected park benches on the Common and in various public buildings around the city.

We hope that you check out the Spring–Fall 2017 schedule of events and exhibitions and all issues of *Common Exchange*. Visit us online for more information.

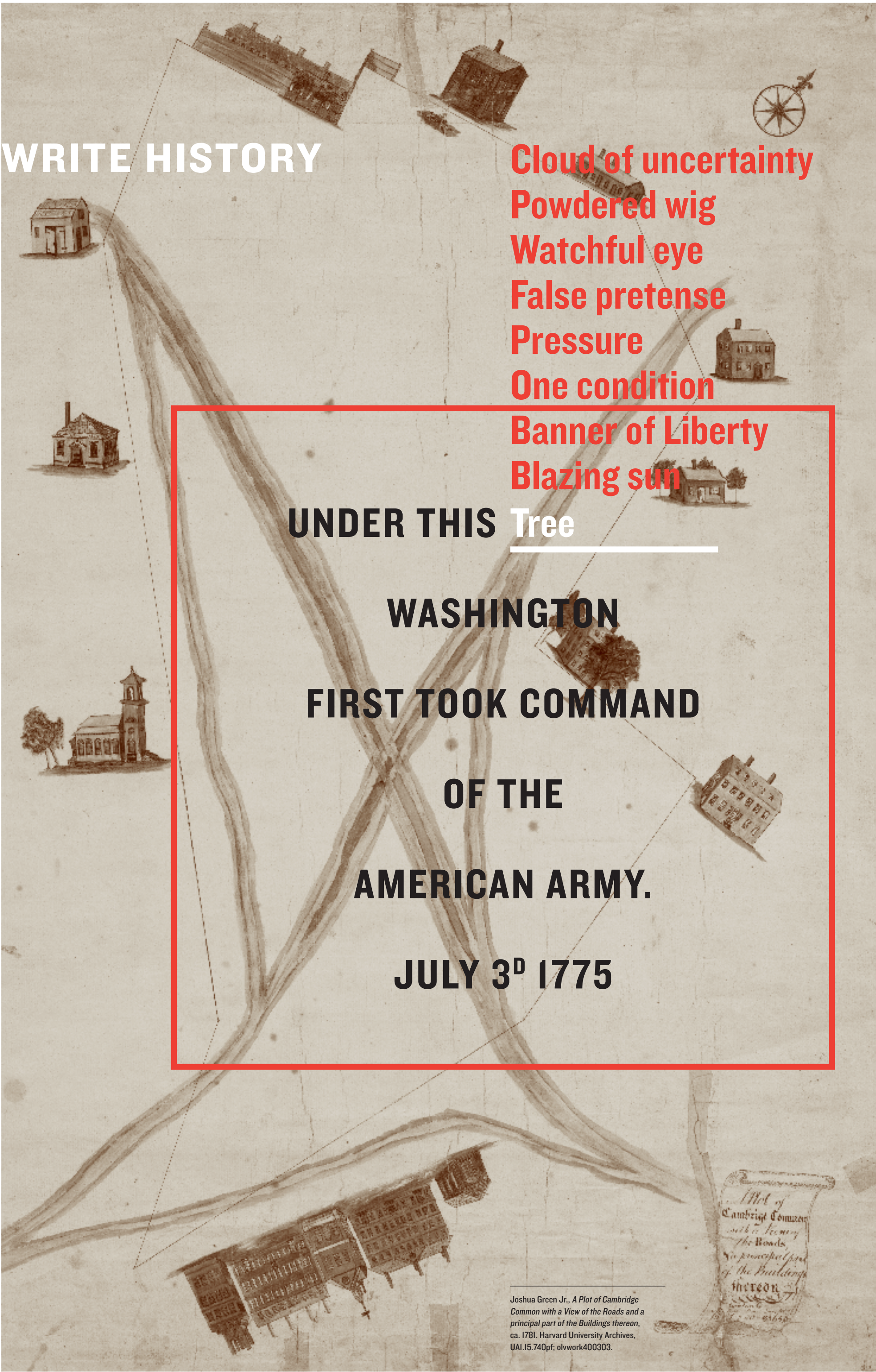
CambridgeArtsCouncil.org
f @ CambridgeArtsCouncil
t @ CambridgeArts
CommonExchangeCambridge
PerformingTheCommon

— Lillian Hsu, *Director of Public Art
and Exhibitions, Cambridge Arts*

As the city's official arts agency, Cambridge Arts commissions temporary and permanent public art throughout all neighborhoods of Cambridge. We are pleased to present *Common Exchange*—its exhibitions, performances, installations, and newspaper. The newspaper is produced through a collaboration of the Cambridge Arts Public Art Program, curator Dina Deitsch, and Lesley University College of Art and Design (LUCAD)

SPONSORS:

Common Exchange is made possible through multiple partnerships and sources of support, including the National Endowment for the Arts, Cambridge/Agassiz/Harvard Community Culture and Recreation Fund, Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Artists Resource Trust Fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Community Design Studio of LUCAD, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Massachusetts Cultural Council, VIA Art Fund, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, First Church Cambridge, Holosonics, and the City of Cambridge.



Issue: Histories

The Cambridge Common dates back to the earliest days of the City of Cambridge from 1630 when it was, like most commons, a shared livestock grazing field and gathering site for local militia. While it was officially sanctioned as public open space in 1769, it was not until the nineteenth century that the Common gained its now-historical status as the ground where General George Washington first gathered the revolutionary troops in 1775 under a large elm tree. While the details of this event are widely debated and apocryphal at best, the Cambridge Common and its long-gone Washington Elm have generated numerous plaques and monuments to that revolutionary moment as well as markers to lost soldiers of the Civil War and World Wars I and II alongside memorials to the Irish Famine and Prince Hall. In fact, there are a total of 17 stone

and metal monuments on the Common today, all drawn to the park for its significance as the oldest portion and geographic center of Cambridge.

The artists featured in this issue of the *Common Exchange* newspaper—"Histories"—each looked at the park as an iconic site and asked which past events are noted and why. They offer alternatives to the grandiose gestures of permanent statues by means of temporary and participatory performances, banners, and workshops. They choose moments that are intimate to people's lives rather than large-scale military or political events.

KELLY SHERMAN's banners advocate for the strength of the park as the locus for the untold personal histories within it; XAVIERA SIMMONS uses it as a stage to perform lesser-known narratives

of the area through the neighboring archive at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study; and ALLISON SMITH retells the history of making in Cambridge to address issues of statehood, revolution, and the capacity of objects to effect and reflect change.

Together, they argue for a public form of historic narrative that takes into account the range of underlying voices of the past and present, those that are often overlooked or underserved, as a more accurate representation of lives lived.

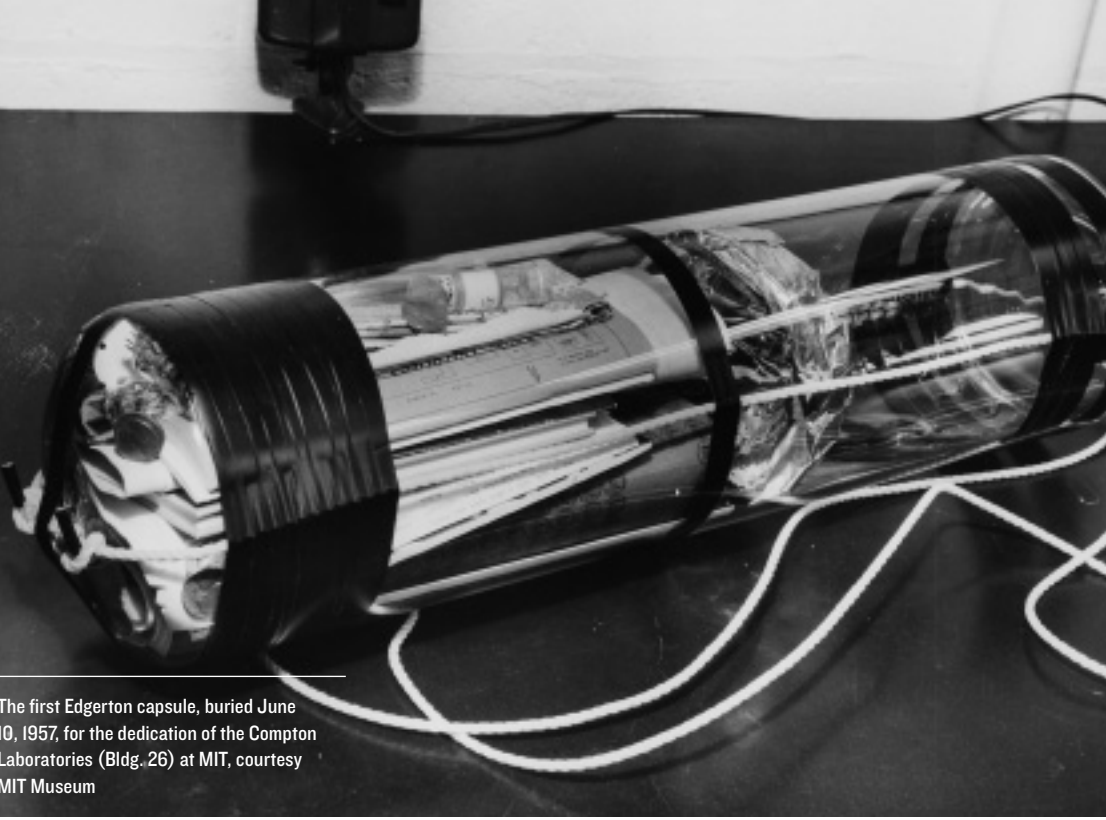
—Dina Deutsch, *Curator*

*For the record:
the proper
collective term is
'an argumentation
of historians.'*

The future: paper clips and Betty Crocker

Imagine a future generation unearthing a time capsule buried in the Cambridge Common. What would you like them to learn from its contents about our life and times? Please share a photo of an object that you would include in a Cambridge time capsule along with a caption explaining its significance.

📷 @CambridgeArts #CommonExchangeCambridge



The first Edgerton capsule, buried June 10, 1957, for the dedication of the Compton Laboratories (Bldg. 26) at MIT, courtesy MIT Museum

Our notion of history does not need to be limited to a distant, dusty past. With each passing second, we are writing history, and our actions, informed by what came before, also influence the stretch of time that moves far beyond us.

One way that humankind makes physical the abstract connection between our times and the future is the creation of time capsules, each one a striking gesture of both self-reflection and optimism.

On June 10, 1957, exactly 60 years ago, a glass time capsule (left) was assembled by Dr. Harold E. Edgerton and buried at MIT with the hope that it would be unearthed after 1,000 years. Edgerton supervised the creation of a larger capsule in 1966, buried beneath Alexander Calder's *La Grande Voile* (The Great Sail) in McDermott Court. We celebrate their spirit!

PARTIAL LIST OF CONTENTS BURIED MAY 5, 1966

- 5 aerial views of Boston/Cambridge
- BETTY CROCKER COOKBOOK
- Sears-Roebuck Catalog
- Rand McNally Road ATLAS
- 3 seismic records of a salt dome
- TIME, Vol. 87, No. 14
- Lead plate 1/10 x 9/10 x 32/10 inches, letters of ALPHABET incised on one side and NUMBERS 0–9 on the other
- 5 PAPER CLIPS different sizes/shapes
- STAPLES for a stapler
- Lucite cube, 2 1/2 inches on edge, containing 1964 COINAGE
- Toy PLASTIC AUTOMOBILE (Corvette), 3 3/4 inches long
- Pair of non-rim SPECTACLES

- Glass ampules with: a.) cotton, b.) wool, c.) linen, d.) nylon, e.) fiber-glass, f.) dynel, g.) silk, h.) braid, gold/silver, i.) sequins, gold/silver
- Machine shop items: a.) 3-inch clamp, b.) wire-cutting pliers, c.) 4-inch adjustable wrench, d.) 9-inch flat file, e.) 6-inch triangular file, f.) 9-inch hacksaw blade, g.) 4 1/2 inch stainless steel tweezers, h.) point punch, i.) 5-inch cold chisel, j.) 15 taps, k.) 2 dies, l.) screw drivers, m.) Phillips (starred) screws
- Box of miscellaneous items: a.) SHARD OF POTTERY, b.) cigarette lighter, c.) safety matches, d.) razor blades, e.) transistors, f.) capacitors, g.) resistors, h.) springs, i.) bolts, j.) nuts, k.) screws, both iron and aluminum, and grooved and starred, l.) A FALSE TOOTH, m.) Xenon flash tube, n.) vacuum tubes
- Inch-square, thin plates of metals and alloys: a.) stainless steel, b.) ordinary steel, c.) galvanized iron, d.) tantalum, e.) copper, f.) nichrome, g.) nickel, h.) molybdenum, i.) lead, j.) brass, k.) aluminum, l.) beryllium rod, m.) tin plug, n.) punched aluminum, o.) PLASTIC-LAMINATE WOOD
- 20 bolts of different sizes and threads
- 2 drills for drill-press
- 8 stock materials—cylinders of carbon, brass, aluminum
- Piece of EMERY PAPER
- Two aluminum cans: a.) hooks and eyes, b.) SAFETY PINS, c.) pins, d.) thumbtacks, e.) snaps, f.) buttons, g.) scissors, h.) glass-metal seal
- Spun glass as filler
- Argon gas, used to fill the Pyrex glass tube containing the numerous items listed above

—Excerpt from a letter buried in a time capsule at MIT, 1957;
J. R. Killian Jr., *President*

ALLISON SMITH

Common Goods



ARTIST STATEMENT:

Common Goods, 2017. Workshops and oversized Windsor chair on the Common. Photographs printed on linen with chair at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, 24 Quincy Street

Allison Smith presents a site-specific project engaging the Cambridge Common and its history within broader concepts of “the commons” as a utopian ideal and critical site of

communication and exchange. In association with Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University, *Common Goods* is a series of performative demonstrations and discussions that suggest a poetic reflection on the simple acts of making and repairing common, everyday things, and the role of objects in exploring the things we have in common.

Smith presents an oversized sack-back Windsor armchair (also called a “double Windsor”) that is large enough to encompass two sitters in its sculpted saddled oval seat. Windsor chairs are a type of stick-back chair made of three different varieties of wood that was developed as early as the sixteenth century by wheelwrights. Smith’s chair will be a mobile work of public art moving into

and out of public space throughout the summer. “Sack-back” refers to a sack-like covering that is said to have been pulled over the backs of these chairs with the purpose of warding off winter drafts in the early American colonies. With its splayed, turned blunt-arrow legs and steam-bent arms with carved knuckle handholds, Smith’s chair offers a formal embrace and protected space

for intimate exchanges between invited woodworkers and chance passersby. The conversations, prompted by Smith, explore a series of individual functional objects that, like the chair itself, suggest a social and poetic response to the politics of our time. How can common items, these common goods, be the basis for our understanding and reinvestment in “the common good”?



ARTIST BIO:

Allison Smith, b. 1972, Manassas, Virginia; lives and works in Oakland, California

Allison Smith uses a variety of materials, such as textiles, ceramics, printmaking, and wood furniture, in her artistic practice. Through these mediums, she explores ideas of historic reenactment, social activism, craft, and national and gender identi-

ties. She has exhibited her work throughout the United States and in England, France, Germany, New Zealand, and South Korea. She has produced more than 25 solo exhibitions, installations, performances, and artist-led participatory projects for institutions, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Public Art Fund, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (Ridgefield, Con-

necticut), Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (St. Louis, Missouri), Berkeley Art Museum, Indianapolis Museum of Art, and Arts Club of Chicago. Smith is Associate Professor and Chair of the Sculpture Program at California College of the Arts, San Francisco, and is represented by Haines Gallery in San Francisco.

Chair built by Eli Cleveland of the North Bennet Street School, Boston

Workshop Dates: June 4, June 15, June 17 (featuring Judith Leemann); special thanks to the Cambridge Historical Society’s History Café Program (June 15)

LEGENDS: a Washington Elm CHRONOLOGY

DEC 17, 2011

Conor surprised Michelle with a marriage proposal under the Christmas lights in Cambridge Common across from the Harvard Law School.

CIRCA 1940

Statue of John Bridge on Cambridge Common pulled down by vandals.

APR 12, 2014

Why, hello Cambridge Common! And now to wiggle toes in grass.

FEB 27, 2016

The Cambridge Police report a possible person with a gun in Cambridge Common. It turns out to be a reenactor dressed in Revolutionary War clothing with a replica rifle.

JAN 9, 2017

Well, I burst into tears over how beautiful Cambridge Common looked covered in snow. So, that's where I'm at.

JUN 24, 2012

People in the Common are playing baseball with a basketball. I'm not sure what the game is called.

APR 1, 2011

Feathers will fly in a Pillow Fight on Cambridge Common tomorrow at 3pm. 3,750 RSVPs so far!

SEP 25, 2009

A man is playing jazz trumpet on a dark bench in Cambridge Common. I am listening as I pack boxes in my apartment. I will miss 02138.

MAY 13, 2009

I wonder what the dancing dudes in white outfits and suspenders waving white scarves in Cambridge Common were all about.

FEB 23, 2013

Walking through the Common in a clown wig. Yes, it's just an ordinary Saturday morning.

SEP 2, 1774

Citizens from all over New England marched toward Boston and 4,000 protesters gathered on Cambridge Common.

APR 19, 2013

In Cambridge Common, a man, who asked that his name not be used, lay in the warm sun on the grass with his pit bull named Xena and a girlfriend whose hair was dyed blue.

SEP 22, 2010

"Mooch" juggled clubs on Cambridge Common.

AUG 1, 1857

Harvard Sophomore vs. Freshmen football match on Cambridge Common.

MAY 3, 1918

City Council allows the U.S. Navy to construct thirteen barracks on the Common for a radio school.

NOV 30, 2013

I spotted a bagpiper in kilt and full regalia who was alone in the middle of Cambridge Common playing a Scottish reel.

1969

I met Timothy Leary on Cambridge Common. Turn on, tune in, drop out. That was me.

JUN 5, 1830

Agreed to: level the surface of the ground, to plant trees, and to lay out and make walks within said enclosure.

AUG 21, 2013

I just passed a hula hoop meet-up in the Common.

JUN 12, 2015

REPORTING: there's a banana in the rain on Cambridge Common.

DEC 1, 2014

Students, faculty, and staff march across Cambridge Common in protest of the Ferguson Decision.

AUG 4, 2015

Cambridge Common: DS, IO, is splashing in a water puddle with a flock of sparrows but there are many more of them. And he's like, Hitchcock?

1902

Anne Whitney's statue of Charles Sumner was installed on the Common after it was rejected by the City of Boston on account of her being a woman artist.

JUN 5, 2016

A splendid 35-foot-tall American Liberty Elm was planted in the Common.

APR 19, 1775

Jason Russell was buried in common burial in the Cambridge Common with the other casualties of the first action of the Revolutionary War.

AUG 14, 2016

There are a bunch of people in Cambridge Common on Segway's playing Pokemon go! I'm screaming.

FEB 8, 2011

Rain, shine, or snow—I worshipped with the Outdoor Church in Cambridge Common. Then we offered lunch and Communion to anyone in the streets who wanted it.

JUL 4, 1775

No Person is to be allowed to go to Fresh-water pond a fishing or on any other occasion as there may be danger of introducing the small pox into the army.
—General Washington

MAR 7, 2012

Yes, I did run across the Common barefoot to turn in my thesis. DONE!

NOV 20, 1769

All the common lands . . . (commonly called the Town Commons) . . . granted to the Town of Cambridge to be used as a training field to lie undivided, and remain for that use forever.

JUL 28, 2012

At the Cambridge Common: kids digging in the sand, a bride being photographed just before the rain.

FEB 11, 2014

Beware of fox near Cambridge Common.

JUN 1, 2013

A girl strutting through the Cambridge Common in muddy soccer gear reminds me of the young me. She's picking her nose furiously.

JUN 28, 1970

First anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. "Gay-in" at the weekly rock concert on Cambridge Common: "flutes, wild rice, cacophony, smiles, frisbee, and undulation."

DEC 12, 2012

Overheard on the Common: "She lives in total distress and without consolation."

1951

Chairman of the Traffic Board proposes paving the Cambridge Common for parking.

NOV 6, 2015

More than 100 trees to be planted on Cambridge Common; half now and the rest in the spring!

JUL 6, 2010

Watch Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in Cambridge Common tonight at 7pm. It's free!

JUL 11, 2009

I'm officiating at a wedding on the Common (It appears to be tweet-free).
—via Twitter

MAR 29, 2010

I slept in a tent in the Cambridge Common to protest dirty energy. I made a sleeping bag of a windbreaker. Wet feet, cold. This better work.

JUN 17, 1869

Groundbreaking for the Cambridge Common Soldier's Monument. [dedicated in 1870]

FEB 18, 2015

Of course there's an igloo in Cambridge Common. Why wouldn't there be?

APR 2, 2011

I just read the Gettysburg Address on a Civil War Memorial in Cambridge Common. What a speech!

MAY 12, 2012

There is kickball afoot in the Common today. I don't have much faith in the guy playing in jeans and a camouflage army hat.

JUL 11, 2014

I hit a rut and got thrown off my bike in Cambridge Common—a nightmare scenario but thankfully I just got scraped.

A LITTLE GRAPHIC NOVEL

SLOW MOTION

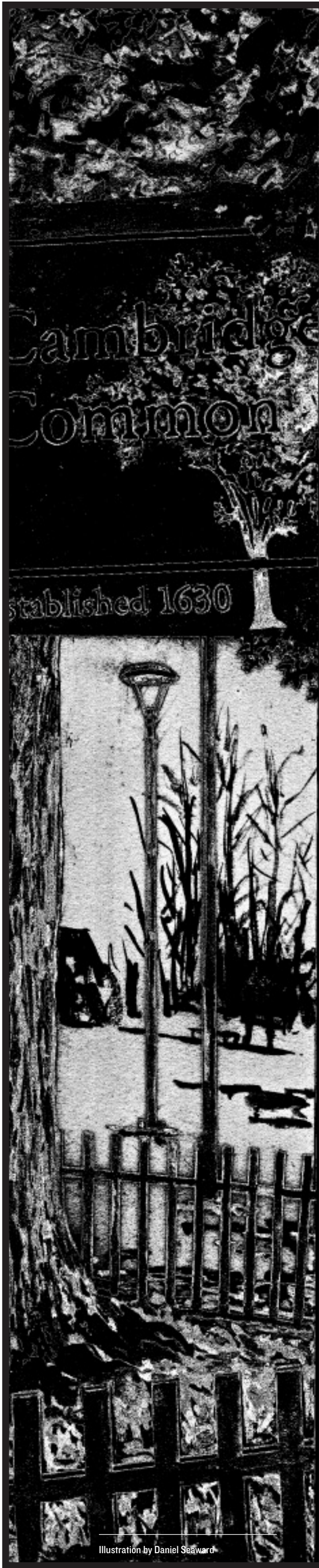


Illustration by Daniel Seaward

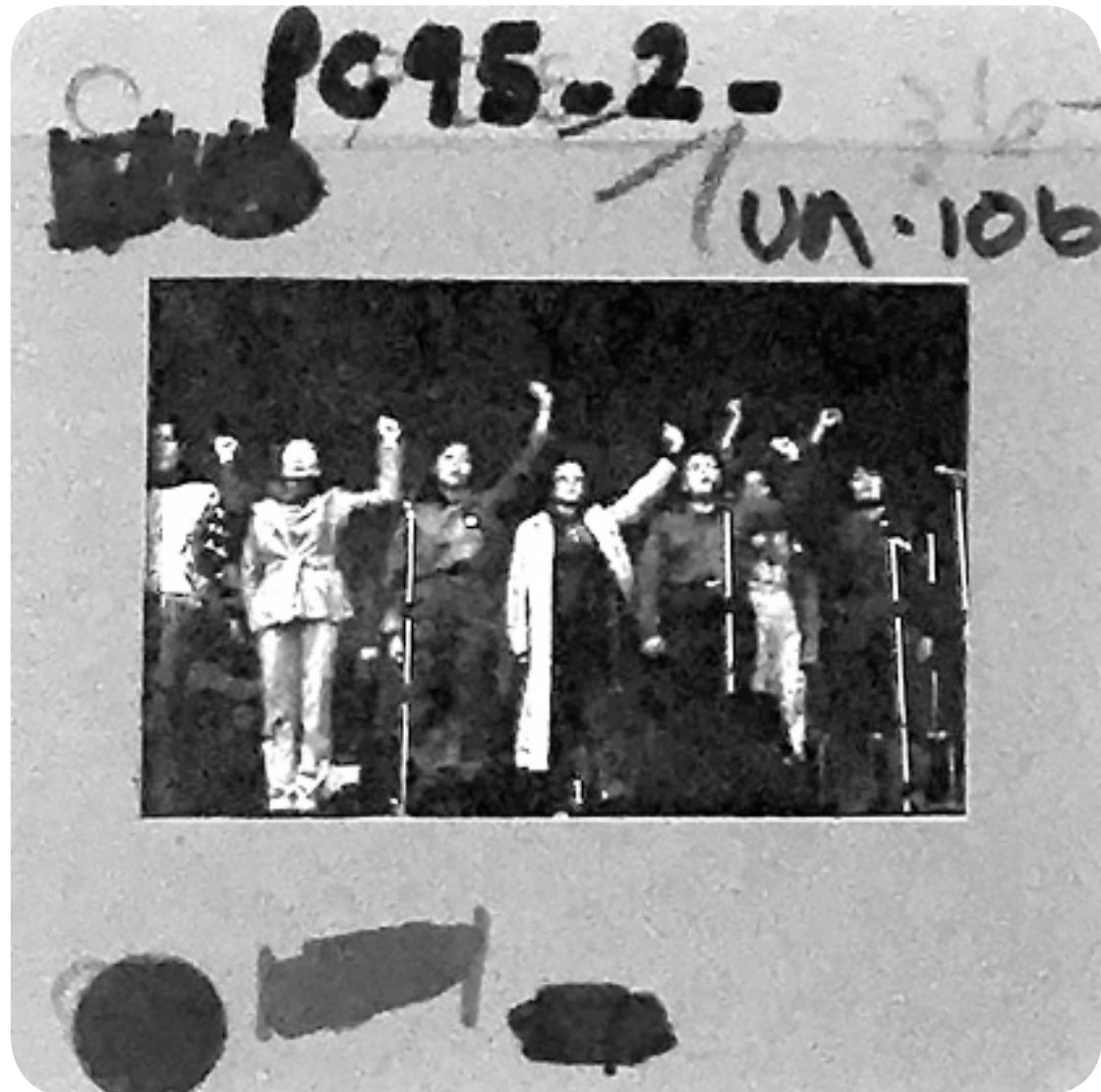
FEATURED ARTIST

XAVIERA SIMMONS

Number 22 (Overlay)

Special thanks to Meg Rotzel and Joseph Zane for producing and supporting this project in full and Yukio Lippit, Sean Wehle, and Radcliffe's Academic Ventures team for their ongoing research and support.

The exhibition *Overlay* is on view at the Radcliffe Institute's Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery (8 Garden Street) from April 25 to June 30. Performance Dates: May 20, June 1, June 17, July 20, and August 3.



ARTIST STATEMENT:

Number 22 (Overlay). Live performance, pedestals, pamphlets, 1 hour

Xaviera Simmons is interested in the unexpected ways the past overlays the present landscape. For *Common Exchange*, Simmons delved into the archives of the neighboring Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America for a new body of work centered on female narratives. She was especially struck by their holdings of travel writings, back issues of the lesbian magazine *Outrageous Women*, and images taken at a 1980 United Nations conference for women. Using these collections as inspiration, the artist developed a speculative narrative, or score, that reimagined the 1980s women's conference through a distinctly contemporary intersectional feminist viewpoint. Women of all nationalities and identities are considered in an audio landscape of 16 different languages, including Yoruban, Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish, Jamaican Patois, Portuguese, Mandarin, and more. In the gallery, the installation of sound, video, and a grouping of photographs provides these women new voices and audience, which is especially significant for people who might not have been afforded the same possibilities due to gender, lineage, and privilege. On the *Common*, Simmons presents a musical performance with local musicians, framed as the soundtrack to this conference of voices, ideas, and histories.

Fusing the historic record with a political imaginary of what could have been, Simmons uses the specific landscape of the Common and its associated academic holdings to underscore the variations and similarities between then and now and what could have been.

ARTIST BIO:

Xaviera Simmons, b. 1974, New York; lives and works in New York

Xaviera Simmons's body of work spans photography, performance, video, sound, sculpture, and installation. She defines her studio practice—which is rooted in an ongoing investigation of experience, memory, abstraction, present and future histories, and, specifically, shifting notions surrounding landscape—as cyclical rather than linear. Simmons received a BFA from Bard College after a two-year walking pilgrimage retracing the trans-Atlantic slave trade with Buddhist monks. She completed the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program in Studio Art (2005) while simultaneously completing a two-year actor-training conservatory with the Maggie Flanigan Studio. Simmons's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art/PSI, Studio Museum in Harlem, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Public Art Fund, SculptureCenter, New York, Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, among others. Simmons is represented by David Castillo Gallery, Miami, Florida.

FEATURED ARTIST

KELLY SHERMAN

We Were Here: Memories of Cambridge Common

Don't Climb Trees

1960–1970

During the 1960s I remember that there was a lot of music being played by everyday people on the Cambridge Common, guitars, recorders, harmonicas and especially drum circles. On the weekends especially, young people would gather to hang out, make music, and be a part of the ‘scene’. The people who gathered represented a cross section of ‘townies’, college students, and young families protesting the Viet Nam war.

Folks would also hang out to smoke pot—and I specifically remember that there was an unspoken agreement between the cops and the kids smoking pot on the commons—that as long as the kids didn’t climb the trees, the cops would leave them alone.

—Judy
Service Coordinator
Holyoke, MA

Potty Training

2010–2020

Potty training my daughter. . .we had a true breakthrough while at the Common’s playground and ended up using a quiet patch of grass as a temporary port-o-potty. But the underwear stayed dry!

—Dina
Curator
Cambridge, MA

Wild Thing

1960–1970

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, when I was a teenager, I went to the Cambridge Common to hear live music, smoke pot and be with my boyfriend and his friends. A group that played there, “Wild Thing,” performed the “Vanilla Fudge” version of “You Keep Me Hanging On,” which was excellent. They had strange big rock and roll silver painted hair that was a combination of retro 1950s and a little bit futuristic toward the 1970s.

In 2009, I reconnected with my former boyfriend, and in 2010 we got married. At our wedding, I requested that the DJ play the song “Wild Thing” by Jimi Hendrix as our first wedding dance.

—Gerri
Artist/Educator
MA

Flash Mob Pillow Fight

2010–2020

Someone planned some sort of a flash mob pillow fight on Cambridge Common and I headed over with my pillow and 100 other people showed up with their pillows. Goofiness and silliness ensued.

—Kristin
Management Consultant
Arlington, MA

A New Baby

2010–2020

It was at the Cambridge Common playground in 2015 that I first met Linda Rose, the beautiful newborn daughter of my dear friends Pete and Julia. It’s a moment I will never forget.

Mary Robinson

1990–2000

I remember walking across the Cambridge Common in my late 20s to see a huge crowd gathered in the distance. I happened upon Mary Robinson, then President of the Republic of Ireland, dedicating the Irish Famine Memorial. I now think of her and remember that day every time I cross the Common.

—Alan
Teacher
Cambridge, MA

CIT Girls Night Out

2010–2020

My favorite times in Cambridge have been my get-togethers with my girlfriends that I was CIT’s with at a theater camp. The very first time we went it was all six of us plus two other friends. We went out for dinner, did a little shopping, and enjoyed musicians playing in the pit. Finally we all walked to the Charles Hotel to wait for our rides home. We hugged each other goodbye and looked longingly to the future to do it again next year.

Sadly, one of my friends tragically and suddenly passed away. We could never have all six of us in a room again. The rest of us CIT girls still try to meet in Cambridge once in a while to keep her memory alive and celebrate the good times we had with her. Our friendship has grown stronger and we have learned to appreciate living in the moment and to cherish those we care

about even more, because you never know when you might lose them.

—Gail
Student
Waltham, MA, and Farmington, ME

Reflection Point

2010–2020

I worked at a retail store in Cambridge and would take the bus over from Brookline, as one of my four odd jobs. I was right out of school and the economy was awful, I had just been broken up with, and I was so worried about everything. I started a small tradition of sitting there before my shift, I’d listen to my iPod and it started to be this space that was important for me to reflect on things.

Things eventually changed for the better and I moved away—but I still look back on those afternoons in the park, by myself and am grateful to have had that.

—Eleanor
Product Design and Strategy
Illinois

Simple Sunny Memory

2010–2020

It’s a simple, sunny memory. We don’t come to the Common often. It was late summer. My older daughter was just 2, my younger one a nursing infant. We’d been in Harvard Square and stopped on our way home. A full-sized hot-air balloon was there—I’m not sure I’d ever been so close to one, and I’m certain my daughter hadn’t. She was transfixed.

Eventually she went off to the playground with her dad, and I settled with my back against a tree to nurse my younger daughter.

When I went to rejoin them, my older one was testing herself on the sloped surfaces of the playground and I remember appreciating the way this playground encouraged her to stretch her body and her imagination. We stayed till the sun was setting, needing to pry her away.

Again a simple memory, but a sunny warm one in those uniquely precious time of our early parenthood.

—Ela
Innovation Coach
Cambridge, MA

ARTIST STATEMENT:

WE WERE HERE: Memories of Cambridge Common, 2017. Text, banners, website, and surveys courtesy of the artist; Heritage Flag Company

Kelly Sherman adds a layer of intimacy to the historic center of the city through a series of park-wide banners that memorialize individuals’ personal narratives in poetic form. Sherman collected stories from Cambridge residents over the course of the year through in-person meetings, online forms, and an open telephone line and distilled them into short texts. Flying high on lampposts as public signage, fragmented phrases coalesce to evoke powerful moments of love, loss, and generosity that have occurred on this very ground. “As the Cambridge Common has transitioned over the centuries from battleground to playground,” explains Sherman, “the important memories being created here are becoming less public and historic, and more private and personal.”

ARTIST BIO:

Kelly Sherman, b. 1978, Hyannis Port, Massachusetts; lives and works in Cambridge, Massachusetts

Kelly Sherman creates research-driven, socially engaged art as well as traditional media artworks that reside in numerous private and public collections, such as the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, where she was awarded the 2007 Foster Prize. Her most recent artist residencies were research-driven collaborations with art schools, including Konstfack in Stockholm and Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where she received a BFA in Sculpture in 2002. Her artwork can be viewed at Center Street Studio, which has published a number of her print projects, and the Barbara Krakow Gallery, where she has exhibited since 2003.

—Heidi
Strategic Partnerships Manager
Cambridge, MA

Bread & Roses

2010–2020

I live in front of the Common. Every year in the Fall, I can hear boisterous sounds and I know Bread & Roses has arrived for their annual satire play.

The Congregation

2010–2021

There is often a meager table where a finely adorned priest gives mass to a group, usually homeless men, and it is followed by a meal.

Figure Eights

2010–2020

When it snows, I make cross country tracks and ski there. Usually there is one other person who might join me and make more tracks.

Sundays

2010–2020

I love to sit on the bench on Sundays reading the whole *New York Times* with my coffee and scone from HiRise. You hear all different sounds, languages.

Borgia

2010–2020

The poet Borgia, when he was here as a visiting fellow at Harvard, wrote a poem about the Common and the changing of seasons.

—Torii
Educator, Artist & Activist
Cambridge, MA

Two Generations at Play

2000–2010

It was a softball game, with teams who met regularly, started by people involved in world peace but open to all, old and young. My husband loved to play and for one game invited our son-in-law to play, too.

I remember being so moved watching the two together, my husband nearing the end of his playing years, my son-in-law not far from the beginning of his. They were so engaged and happy to be in the game.

The ballfield no longer exists but often when I pass that part of the Common I think of that game and rejoice that they had it.

—Heli
Architectural Historian
Cambridge, MA

First Kiss

1980–1990

My husband of 30+ years and I shared our first kiss in the tot lot in Cambridge Common.

—Hilary
Retired
Cambridge, MA

Late Night with a Newborn

2000–2010

The trees around the monument used to be lit up at night, shining light down on the rippling brick walk. I remember the surface of the bricks, smooth from foot traffic, but also undulating from tree roots and other forces. I would walk there at night when my daughter was newborn and could not sleep.

—Sarah
Design and Sales
Arlington, MA

Getting Engaged

2010–2020

My fiancé and I got engaged at the Cambridge Common! We enjoyed the historical significance of the Cambridge Common, but also our children have played at that playground over the years so the space is filled with many happy memories for us. It was important to us that our engagement happen close to our home and the Common felt like a natural choice.

—Heidi
Strategic Partnerships Manager
Cambridge, MA

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Sundays

2010–2020

I love to sit on the bench on Sundays reading the whole *New York Times* with my coffee and scone from HiRise. You hear all different sounds, languages.

Borgia

2010–2020

The poet Borgia, when he was here as a visiting fellow at Harvard, wrote a poem about the Common and the changing of seasons.

—Torii
Educator, Artist & Activist
Cambridge, MA

Two Generations at Play

2000–2010

It was a softball game, with teams who met regularly, started by people involved in world peace but open to all, old and young. My husband loved to play and for one game invited our son-in-law to play, too.

I remember being so moved watching the two together, my husband nearing the end of his playing years, my son-in-law not far from the beginning of his. They were so engaged and happy to be in the game.

The ballfield no longer exists but often when I pass that part of the Common I think of that game and rejoice that they had it.

—Heli
Architectural Historian
Cambridge, MA

Fifty Years Ago

1960–1970

I have lived near the Common for 50 years. During the late ‘60s and early ‘70s we could hear impromptu concerts from the Common to our house. And the Common was filled with hippies, families, and Bread & Roses free

food. It was a vibrant place, especially on the weekends.

—Charlotte
Feltmaker
Cambridge, MA

Fall Preschool Field Trip

2010–2020

I was chaperoning for my daughter’s preschool class field trip to the Cambridge Common in Fall 2015. We buried a teacher in a pile of leaves to celebrate her final year before retirement during this annual field trip.

—Robin
Mom
Cambridge, MA

Path to a Chapter

2000–2010

When I was a young woman, I moved to Cambridge from Minneapolis to take my first job as a teacher. I was all alone in the city. My now-husband still lived in Minnesota and was wooing me from afar. Every week, for nearly a year, he ordered a bouquet of flowers from the Brattle Square Florist, and sent me across the Cambridge Common from my nearby apartment to pick up the flowers.

Why didn’t he have them delivered? Because he thought that I would make a friend in my new city if I talked with the florist each week. Every time I traversed the Cambridge Common, I felt so happy, so lucky. The Cambridge Commons was a bridge to a new chapter in my life: one that included a thoughtful, kind, and loving partner in life.

—Sarah
Project Manager
Cambridge, MA

I Believe in Love. . .

1960–1970

In the late ‘60s, I would go to Cambridge Common nearly every Sunday from a suburb north of Boston. I’d take a bus, but sometimes it was faster to just thumb, hoping a neighbor did not see me and tell my parents.

The Common was the place to be. Groups of people gathered around a bench making music, everyone participating by drumming on anything, passing a joint, laughing, barefooted, being with like-minded people. It was a time of change; war protests, woman’s lib, desegregation, the sexual revolution, the pill, hopes of peace and brotherly love.

Maybe we were naive back then, but we made lots of progress with civil disobedience, and here we are today. We became the people over 30 that we were never going to trust. We are turning grey and it’s O.K. And we are still making music, smoking pot, making love and trying to change the world for the better!

—Chris
Retired IT Director, Published Author
Scituate, MA

The Scavenger Hunt

1980–1990

I have two memories, both from my childhood. One was in 4th grade, walking from Longfellow Elementary to the Common for a “scavenger hunt.” Our teachers set one up so we could go on an adventure around Cambridge, but of course because we were pint-sized it was just around the Common, haha. So imagine a pack of like twenty kids running around like loons looking for clues around the Common. Naturally we thought it was so cool, reading the historic markers to get to the next step, etc..

—Irene
Project/Cash Manager
East Arlington, MA

Cambridge on a Sunday Aft

1970–1980

I remember watching and listening to music groups on the Commons

on Sundays afternoon. Those events molded me for jazz concerts and people enjoyment activities.

—Charlotte
Accountant
Cambridge, MA

Old Man

1990–2000

When I think of how each generation tends to view its forbears as irrelevant, a certain scene I witnessed at the Cambridge Common comes to mind. It’s a day in the late 1990s, and I’m crossing from the Harvard Law School side of Mass Avenue to the Cambridge Common side, using the main crosswalk there. Walking slowly toward me, slightly stooped, is a man of advanced years with a close-cropped head of gray hair.

All of a sudden, right behind this man—practically bobbing against him like waves against a shore—is an impatient detachment of the high school girls’ cross-country team. He is their roadblock, and, with muttering, they somehow jostle in a zigzag pattern past him. I observe that one of these young, inconvenienced students is an ambitious girl who lives two doors away from me.

And then the man himself—that oblivious impediment to progress—comes fully into view as he and I maneuver to pass each other. He is Archibald Cox, that same man who, a mere quarter century before, commanded the entire world’s attention as the special prosecutor closing in on President Nixon’s cover-up of a brazen, highly partisan break-in at the Democratic Party’s Headquarters: the Watergate scandal. When Nixon had Cox fired at a time calculated to minimize media coverage, it became known as The Saturday Night Massacre and intensified calls for impeachment. These, in turn, led to Nixon’s resignation, a (so far) onetime event in U.S. history.

Instantly on passing Cox, a line comes back to me from Samuel Johnson’s long poem “The Vanity of Human Wishes,” which I’d had to write about in college: “Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.” I feel aggrieved on Cox’s behalf.

But, not letting up my pace, I then find myself going through the very center of the Cambridge Common. There, from atop his pedestal, Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. President most conscious of the transitory nature of life, seems to be bestowing his inimitable blessing of wryness and kindness upon all the generations passing one another in their turn, along the intersecting paths around him.

—Larry
Retired College Teacher
Cambridge, MA

Empty Chairs

2010–2020

This story starts on February 21, 2017 and goes back in time.

On February 21, I was riding my bike through Cambridge Common.

One way, in the morning, there were a few benches that were populated with a group of young people gathered around listening to a craptastic sounding boombox that I know would be called ‘crust punks’—they were dread-haired, worn-shiny-spiked-jacket-wearing, ganja-smelling sunburntish folks—by many. I don’t know why we can’t just be more honest with our language and say ‘young people who can’t go home for one reason or another, but probably because it’s worse than this’.

On my way back through The Common, a few hours later, they were gone, but there was a chair pulled up to the end of one bench, which I remember now made them able to be sitting-together earlier in the day in a way that felt more circular and communal than most bench configurations do.

This empty chair reminded me of the one and only time I have ever gone to an AA meeting. I don’t remember what year it was, but the meeting was

at a detox that my partner at the time was checked into. In Cambridge actually I think. . .I had been invited to come as an assist to the recovery process, so I did, and in the meeting they put a chair up on a table. It looked like the one I saw in the park today. Same kind of chair.

No one asked about the chair, so I asked and they explained that they put it there to represent the person (not a specific person, but just that there was statistically likely to be a person) in every substance abuse recovery group who didn’t make it to their regular meeting because the disease of addiction took them down. Not just made them drop out of the program for a bit or forever, but took them down for good. The end. Dead.

Tuesday night, the 21st, after dark, I was at Cambridge Common, too. I had seven different-shaped clear bottles filled with shredded paper—love letters from long ago put through a paper shredder and carefully stuffed down bottle necks to fill each bottle’s basin. Part of an art project. I poured lamp oil and lighter fluid into each one, and then dropped in matches—an attempt to burn the paper in the bottles. But it didn’t work. Not enough oxygen I think. I tried for awhile. It was windy. My matches kept going out. After awhile, I gave up.

This was a failed performance. With no audience beyond anyone who might be in the park for the night. I needed to do it as a part of an art piece, but I wasn’t able to. I have since forged a plan for an alternate performance that will honor the intentions of the original one.

The art piece, the failed and alternate performances, the letters: they all connect back to the person that I went to the AA meeting to support.

Twenty years or so after that meeting, many of which were homeless years, but the last 8 of which were happy, rooted, sober years, she became, after a week or two of relapse, the inhabitant of the empty chair.

When we met, we were both still in high school and ‘crust punks’ were just called ‘punks’ or, if they weren’t surly enough, ‘hippies’. Whatever it was called, we were both essentially that thing: ‘young people who can’t go home for one reason or another, but probably because it’s worse than this’. The ‘this’ was more often Kenmore Square, not Harvard, but same difference.

My memory is more a reminder than a memory: I’m reminding myself to appreciate that Commons (like the Cambridge Commons) are places that people can go to when they have no place else, and that probably some of those people would become inhabitants of empty chairs even faster if they didn’t have some place that it was okay to go to for at least a little while every day and hang out with others in the same boat. Like anyone else.

—Heather
Artist and Writer
Boston, MA

Strolls with Grandparents

1990–2000

During 1993–1994 my young family lived in Harvard Square. My son Travis attended the Newtowne School. His grandparents from Shanghai, China would walk him to and from school. They would spend time in the Common during the afternoon.

—Kenric
Engineer
Watertown, MA

Painting

2000–2010

Set up my easel to paint canvas. 5 x 1 foot that spans the Common from Church of Science to First Church. Completed and shown inside First Church Friday Cafe. Has now returned to my studio.

—Henry
Artist
Cambridge, MA

Make Way for Ducklings

1960–1970

Growing up in the 1960s I had grandparents in both Observatory Hill and Inman Square. My mother would walk my siblings and me through Harvard Square and the Cambridge Common to shuttle between grandparents’ homes. It was the human version of the *Make Way for Ducklings* tour. All in a line, following our older brother with mom bringing up the rear. Warned to avoid eye contact with any of the hippies, Krishnas, co-eds, cops or cabbies along the way. It was a tumultuous time of social change and upheaval and it was all on display on the Common.

—David
Business Consultant
Longmeadow, MA

Disgraceful Behaviour

1960–1970

My uncles. Two incredibly brave men who grew up in Cambridge who joined the United States Marine Corp. Both ended up in Vietnam during the war. Marine Officers both, men of duty, courage, and impeccable character. Marines who, upon returning to Cambridge, were met with chants of “baby killer” and spat upon by the vile cowards whose misdirected frustration with the war was directed at these incredible men of Cambridge who risked their owns lives for what they believed was the American Way of Life.

—David
Business Consultant
Longmeadow, MA

Protest Rally

1960–1970

In the spring of 1968, several of us at The Architects Collaborative (TAC), in Harvard Square, heard about an anti-war rally to be held on the Cambridge Common led by Professor George Wald of MIT. This was of special interest to me because only a month before I had been in Vietnam, serving as company commander in “Charlie Company,” 554th Engineer Battalion.

We were met in the Common by a large group of people, many of whom were from surrounding college campuses and all demonstrating against the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. We ended up standing next to a young fellow who was waving a Viet Cong flag. I told him to put it away since it was an insult to those of us who had served in the military—as well as being unpatriotic to promote sympathy with our adversary.

He refused and we would have gotten into a fistfight if my friends had not intervened. This incident demonstrated to me that our freedom of speech must allow for many points of view. I still believe he was wrong to display the VC flag, even as my views about U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia have evolved over the years.

—Perry
Architect
Cambridge, MA

Seeing Thanks in the Eyes

2010–2020

Frequently when I drive by Cambridge Common, nearing Harvard Square, a man stands next to the cars holding a sign asking for donations. When I hand him a small contribution, his eyes light up and he wishes me God’s blessing. It is a fleeting but meaningful moment; in the space of a few seconds we recognize each other’s worth as a human being. What a great gift this is.

—Alice
Retired College Professor
Watertown, MA

Forecast: hindsight

[CAMBRIDGE WEATHER, *OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC* LONG-RANGE FORECAST FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2017]

1-3

T-storms, cool

4-8

Sunny, turning warm

9-14

T-storms, cool

15-18

Hurricane threat

19-21

Sunny, cool

22-30

T-storms, warm

then turning cool

Avg. temperature: 68°

Precipitation: 7.5"

Conversation: the language of the Common

The “commons” is a place of shared knowledge and resources while also being a contested area of collective action and possibility; it is the term by which we legally frame our public rights and hold our democratic freedoms. It is the locus of dialogue itself; as philosophers Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri remind us, “Conversation is the language of the Commons.”¹ The “Common” (notably missing the s) is the physical manifestation of this idea in space, publicly shared and historically a field of grass at a city’s center used for collective livestock grazing.²

The Common—as both a literal and conceptual site—is defined by gathering, exchange, and the multitude of voices and actions that take place within it. In effect, the Common is the landscape of citizenry and a place defined by dialogue, between people, cultures, and histories, that can echo the best and worst of our civic states.

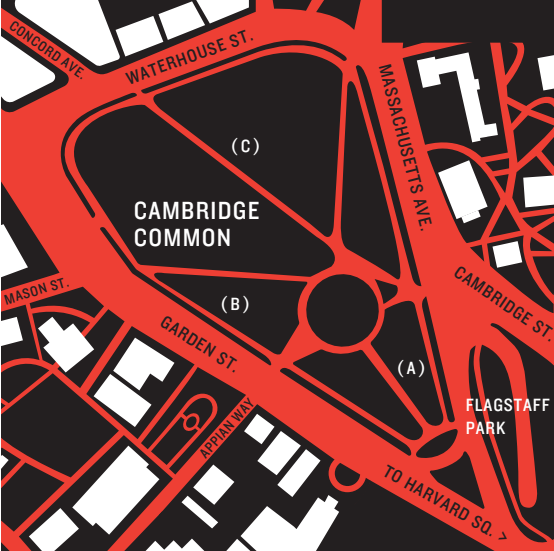
Common Exchange is a series of temporary art installations and performances presented in one of the nation’s oldest common greens, the Cambridge Common. Organized in honor of the park’s recent pathway renovations, each project that constitutes *Common Exchange* reiterates the park’s physical and ideological function as a connective space, one defined by the exchange of ideas, words, and things, a space of conversation.

Over the course of the summer, time-based and participatory works will occupy the Cambridge Common to address connectivity and exchange in the twenty-first century, moving from interpersonal to communal and historical relationships. The public remains the central figure in these works to emphasize that it is participation and public discourse that ultimately shape our civic spaces.

—Dina Deutsch, Curator

¹ Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri, *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

² This history of shared grazing space has also spawned social and economic theories of misused resources in unregulated systems. See Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science* 162, no. 3859 (December 1968).



PARK INSTALLATIONS:

In addition to the performances and events listed below, look for these park installations in the Cambridge Common, May–September 2017: (A) Kelly Sherman, poetic memory banners featured in this issue of *Common Exchange*; (B) Paul Ramirez Jonas, contributory monument; and (C) Julianne Swartz, interactive bench.

Event Schedule / Map:

MAY	8 / MON	6–8 PM	Kelly Sherman: Artist Reception	Gallery 344
	13 / SAT	3 PM	OPENING CELEBRATION Lee Walton & Jon Rubin: <i>When the World's on Fire</i> , Walking Musical Performance	Common
		4 PM	Andy Graydon: <i>Gathering Note</i> (a facsimile), Interpretive Choral Gathering	
		5 PM	Carmen Papalia: <i>Blind Field Shuttle</i> , Eyes-closed Participatory Tour	
	14 / SUN	1 PM	Carmen Papalia: <i>Blind Field Shuttle</i>	Common
	18 / THU	12–2 PM	Aki Sasamoto: <i>Food Rental</i> , Food/Performance Cart	Common
		6 PM	Aki Sasamoto: Artist Talk	CCVA
	20 / SAT	12–1 PM 1–2 PM 4–5 PM	Aki Sasamoto: <i>Food Rental</i> Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i> , Collective Theatrical Performance Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i>	Common
JUNE	1 / THU	6–7 PM	Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i>	Common
	4 / SUN	1–3 PM	Allison Smith: <i>Common Goods</i> , Demonstration / Conversation with Judith Leemann	Common
	15 / THU	6 PM 7:15 PM	Allison Smith: <i>Common Goods</i> Allison Smith: Artist Talk with Cambridge Historical Society	Common Hong Kong Restaurant
	17 / SAT	1–3 PM 3–4 PM	Allison Smith: <i>Common Goods</i> Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i>	Common
	18 / SUN	1 PM	Allison Smith: <i>Common Goods</i>	Common
JULY	16 / SUN	1 PM	Andy Graydon: <i>Gathering Note</i> (a facsimile)	Common
	17 / MON	6–8 PM	Andy Graydon: Artist Reception	Gallery 344
	20 / THU	6–7 PM	Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i>	Common
AUGUST	3 / THU	6–7 PM	Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i>	Common
	17 / THU	6 PM	Allison Smith: <i>Common Goods</i>	Common
SEPTEMBER	7 / THU	6 PM	Allison Smith: <i>Common Goods</i>	Common
	15 / FRI	5–7 PM	Carmen Papalia: Artist Reception	Gallery 344
	16 / SAT	12–2 PM 3 PM	Aki Sasamoto: <i>Food Rental</i> Carmen Papalia: <i>Blind Field Shuttle</i>	Common
	17 / SUN		CLOSING CELEBRATION Aki Sasamoto: <i>Food Rental</i> Andy Graydon: <i>Gathering Note</i> (a facsimile) Carmen Papalia: <i>Blind Field Shuttle</i>	Common
DAILY EVENT	MAY 14 – JUN 12		Lee Walton & Jon Rubin: <i>When the World's on Fire</i>	Common
	12–2 PM			
GALLERY EXHIBITIONS	APR 24 – JUN 30		Kelly Sherman: <i>We Were Here—Memories of Cambridge Common</i>	Gallery 344
	APR 26 – JUL 1		Xaviera Simmons: <i>Number 22 (Overlay)</i>	Radcliffe
	JUL 17 – SEP 8		Andy Graydon: <i>Gathering Note</i> (a facsimile)	Gallery 344
	SEP 18 – DEC 15		Carmen Papalia: <i>Blind Field Shuttle</i>	Gallery 344

EVENT LOCATIONS:
Hong Kong Restaurant
1238 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Gallery 344
Cambridge Arts
344 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139

CCVA
Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts
Harvard University, 24 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery
Byerly Hall, 8 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

PLEASE NOTE:
The *Common Exchange* event schedule is subject to change. Please confirm listings at cambridgeartscouncil.org.