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Letter from the Director

This annual report calls for a summary of Clockshop’s work over 2020 and 2021—by far the longest years that I have served as Director. During the pandemic and the political upheaval that preceded and followed its onset, time has been both compressed and deeply extended, so much so that it is hard to recall all that we have accomplished.

At the beginning of the shelter in place order we sent out an email that opened with a quote by the Hungarian writer Magda Szábo: “Creativity requires a state of grace. So many things are required for it to succeed.” We acknowledged that the work that we undertake, as an artist-run organization, working with artists and also government agencies, requires patience and composure. The pandemic put all of this to the test. Looking back on this time, I see that we pivoted with purpose. Carmen Argote’s proposed sculpture project became a short film which documented the walks she took through an empty and quiet East Los Angeles. We, and our generous funders, were able to see the importance of creating a record of this time. Many other artist commissions followed: Ignacio Perez Meruane’s sculpture progression without end, Eddie Aparicio’s Pansa del Publico oven, and Mercedes Dorame’s installation with Lilliana Castro, Pulling the Sun Back, all at Los Angeles State Historic Park. Each of these projects enriched the experience of time spent on public lands in the center of Los Angeles for thousands of visitors.

Our work at the Bowtie continued in the form of Outreach and Engagement for the future State Park on the Los Angeles River. Working in partnership with California State Parks, Rachel Allen Design and Research (RADAR) and landscape architects at SALT, we gathered input from our neighbors and community members on what people wanted to see at the Bowtie. We convened a youth council of nine young people who formed the Bowtie Youth Council. The BYC researched and polled their peers on what they wanted to see on this piece of public land. Their work ultimately took the form of a presentation to California State Parks architects and staff. Results of all of these efforts can be found on our website and in this document.

The Covid pandemic pushed us to re-imagine programming at a time when people desperately needed to be together while at a safe distance. Reading by Moonrise became Listening by Moonrise at Los Angeles State Historic Park, at which our audiences gathered outdoors with masks and heard musicians play for an audience, for the first time in over a year. In July 2021 we launched the first annual Kite Festival at the park and more than 400 people came out to fly kites together. It was a clear warm day and our souls and spirits were lifted up with the strong breeze that sweeps down across the park and into the City of Angels. We are closing out this most challenging time in a very strong place; change is in the air, and we are looking ahead for what Clockshop will become in 2022.

With gratitude,
Julia Meltzer
Executive Director
Our Work

Clockshop is an arts and culture organization that seeks to generate social change through people’s experience of public space.

We collaborate with artists, activists, researchers, educators, curators, institutions, and our neighbors to reframe how we view and engage with public space. Our work activates portals to revisit the past and reimagine possible futures.

We bring this mission to our partnership with California State Parks at Los Angeles State Historic Park in Chinatown and at the Bowtie Project, an underused public space along the Los Angeles River. Together, we work with our community in shaping the future of the city.

Leadership Statement

Clockshop is committed to advancing equity as the lens through which we frame our curatorial, education, and public programs. Since the founding of our organization, we have strived to develop programs that are inclusive of advocates, partners, and stakeholders who represent many different perspectives, especially those from underrepresented groups. We also recognize the essential purpose of applying an equity lens to our internal work, allowing this to frame our organization, with a special emphasis on narratives and perspectives that have not been validated or interpreted in the context of historical cultural production. Internally, our Board members and leadership consider diverse points of view to be essential to establishing Clockshop as a leader in the arts and culture field.

Advancing equity through our work with underrepresented artists, particularly women BIPOC artists, is central to our mission, done by supporting art commissions that engage with historical narratives that bring forth knowledge and perspectives that have been systemically erased and displaced. Through all our work, we want to create an invitation for diverse communities to engage in this reframing and become contributors to a new sense of learning about place.
Our Team

Julia Meltzer, Founder & Executive Director
Leonardo Bravo, Director of Curatorial and Strategic Programs
Colleen Corcoran, Designer
Lindsey Lee Eichenberger, Director of Youth Programs
Hugo Garcia, Director of Community Organizing

Our Board Members

Sue Bell Yank, President
York Chang, Vice-President
Ashley Hunt, Secretary
Alia Ali, Board Member
Beatriz Cortez, Board Member
Bill Deverell, Board Member
Elizabeth Gibb, Board Member
Tracy Gray, Board Member
Cynthia Vargas, Board Member
Andrew Vought, Board Member
Andy Wong, Board Member
Julia Meltzer, Board Member
Meldia Yesayan, Board Member
Programming

The focus of Clockshop’s work at the Bowtie and the LA State Historic Park is artist commissions and cultural programs. The unique features of both sites attract artists of all kinds, who see the commission as a rare and unusual opportunity to engage with the public within a dense urban setting and reimagine a sense of place and belonging.

In 2020–2021, Clockshop produced three artist commissions with artists Eddie Aparicio, Mercedes Dorame, and Ignacio Perez Meruane, all at Los Angeles State Historic Park. We also brought relief and a sense of togetherness and joy with our low-cost or free public programming, which was offered during the Covid pandemic. We started a quarterly music program, Listening by Moonrise, and held the first annual Kite Festival in July 2021. Each of the artist commissions also was paired with an offering of free public programs.
California State Parks Partnership

Through our partnership with California State Parks (CSP), Clockshop has access to both an urban landscape that is on the cusp of tremendous change, the Bowtie Parcel near the LA River, and the Los Angeles State Historic Park near Chinatown, a well-established and supported green space at the intersections of Chinatown and downtown Los Angeles. Artworks created for both sites are relevant to their time and place, allowing us to connect contemporary art practices to critical social and political issues.

The collaboration deeply serves California State Parks as well; CSP’s 2001 Urban Strategic Initiative found that state parks were not adequately serving urban communities of color. At Clockshop, over 75% of our commissioned artists identify as people of color, and our audiences include 50% of people of color.
2020–2021 Project Highlights

4

ART COMMISSIONS

17

EVENTS

OVER

10,000

PARTICIPANTS

Listening by Moonrise June 2021. Photo by Gina Clyne.
Pansa del Publico, a sculptural installation by Eddie Aparicio (May–September 2021)

Inspired by his Salvadoran roots, the Zanja Madre, and the Ceiba tree, Pansa del Publico was a sculptural object and functional beehive oven by artist Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio. In this work, the artist centers his own family’s history, the strength of collective organization, and a material investigation that draws from the deepest well of indigenous technology to shift the object away from the modernist conception of the supremacy of form as a universal given. Pansa del Publico was part of a programmatic collaboration with Occidental College’s Oxy Arts initiative and WE RISE.
Pulling the Sun Back – Xa’aa Peshii Nehiino Taamet, a sculptural installation by Mercedes Dorame with Lilliana Castro (October 2021–January 2022)

This commission is a site-specific installation by Mercedes Dorame inspired by the three elements of Tongva community structures, intertwining the traditional Tongva Kiiy (home), Shyee’evo (healing space), and Yovaar (ceremonial space). This structure imparts a cosmology of possibilities: how we interact as a communal collection of souls within new sites of meaning and re-imagining new futures rooted in the landscape of Tovaangar (Los Angeles). The movement between time and space creates a continuum of Native existence, highlighting vertical and spiraling pathways of existence throughout time, such as that between the land and sky. By engaging multi-planar sites of meaning, this project aims to break linear understandings of people, knowledge, space and time.
**progression without end**, a sculptural installation by Ignacio Perez Meruane (October 2020–January 2021)

Ignacio Perez Meruane’s *progression without end* was a site-based sculpture inspired by the unique history of the Los Angeles State Historic Park. Combined from ready-made industrial materials, uncovered railroad scraps and hand-carved components, Perez Meruane’s work speaks to expansionist ideas of modernity and constructed notions of linear progress. At nearly 100 feet in length, *progression without end* was a collapsed artwork, forming a precariously elegant guide rail, each piece balancing on the next.
**Last Light, a short film by Carmen Argote**

Made immediately prior to and during the first wave of the pandemic, *Last Light* is a meditation on walking and memory in Los Angeles. The film explores notions of selfhood under the dual threat of contagion and isolation. Combining video and still images of an evacuated city with an intimate voiceover, the narrator reflects on feelings of vulnerability and betrayal, and draws on childhood memories to make sense of a city transformed. Over the course of the piece, day moves to night as the artist traces a path from demolition and sickness to envisioning a different world.


vimeo.com/464393097
Community and Unity / Comunidad y Unidad The First Annual Kite Festival at LA State Historic Park

Clockshop and California State Parks hosted Community & Unity, our first annual people’s Kite Festival in July 2021, a free family event. This festival brought together diverse communities in Los Angeles through the art of kite making and a day full of joy, culture, and uplift through the arts. It featured a “gallery in the sky” flying demonstrations with kite masters, Ron Gibian, Scott Skinner, Joe Hadzicki; family art and printmaking workshops with Yuju Yeo and Dewey Tafoya, and a musical performance with the Maqueos Band and Neon Dots (Andres Leñiero). This will be an annual event moving forward.

Listening by Moonrise

The pandemic pushed us to reimagine our quarterly Reading by Moonrise series. In 2020–21 we programmed four Listening by Moonrise events where musicians were stationed at different locations in the park and audience members could listen at a safe distance. We plan to continue this program in 2022.
The Bowtie
Outreach and Engagement for the Future State Park at The Bowtie

During 2020–2021 Clockshop worked in partnership with California State Parks to lead the Outreach and Engagement effort for the future State Park at the Bowtie. Hugo Garcia, Director of Community Organizing for Clockshop, engaged over 1700 community members asking them what they want to see at The Bowtie. The result of this engagement effort can be found on page 30-31 of this report.
Bowtie Youth Council & The Future of The Bowtie

The Bowtie Youth Council, which concluded in August 2021, was a space for a group of youth to convene and ideate about the development of the future Bowtie Park. During this year-long initiative, members advanced their advocacy for green open space by gaining skills in public outreach, meeting facilitation, and learning to create compelling stories that influence public and civic policy. Council members were compensated for their work and were connected to experts in the field. This program built on efforts since 2014 to gather community members to transform this industrial site into parkland that serves residents.

At the conclusion of The Bowtie Youth Council in 2021, the council was invited to propose a series of concrete next steps for the partnership with California State Parks, which has been read, responded to, and is in the process of being made into real, tangible change. The key proposals centered on:

1. Habitat & Nature Restoration
2. Community-Centered Events & Resources
3. Safety for Who? (Considering police presence and accessibility)
4. Land Sovereignty

In Fall 2021, CSP and Clockshop also launched a community listening process, in order to hear directly from residents about their wants, needs, and questions about their future park. Community feedback will be used to inform and guide the design of the Bowtie as a future State Park, and advocate for the resources needed to make it a reality.
Community Survey Responses

1,737 Total Responses

Race
- Latino/Latina: 49.8%
- White: 26.8%
- Black: 2.0%
- Indigenous: 2.9%
- Mixed Race: 4.3%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 11.6%

Neighborhood
- Glassell Park: 32.9%
- Cypress Park: 10.2%
- Lincoln Heights: 7.6%
- Elysian Valley: 5.2%
- Highland Park: 5.1%
- Atwater Village: 4.7%

Age

What is most important to you at The Bowtie?

1. Restoration and enhancement of natural habitat at the Bowtie, along the LA River, including native plants and landscaping that supports restoration of wetlands habitat, to attract birds and wildlife

   - Strongly Agree: 80.1%
   - Agree: 16.4%

2. Opportunities to view birds and wildlife, such as river access and seating along the river

   - Strongly Agree: 69.5%
   - Agree: 21.4%

3. Accessible trails and paths for exercise and recreation – walking, jogging, biking, etc.

   - Strongly Agree: 78.7%
   - Agree: 16.7%

4. Green, open space for relaxing, picnicking, yoga, and more

   - Strongly Agree: 65.0%
   - Agree: 23.4%

5. Shaded seating areas for eating and small gatherings

   - Strongly Agree: 58.4%
   - Agree: 24.7%

6. Unstructured play areas, such as open space, rocks and other structures built into the land that allow for climbing, jumping, and other opportunities for children to interact with the landscape

   - Strongly Agree: 58.4%
   - Agree: 24.7%

7. Historic, cultural, or environmental interpretive installations to provide educational opportunities

   - Strongly Agree: 52.0%
   - Agree: 23.1%

8. Public interpretive art such as sculptures, installations, performances, or land art that are relevant to California, Los Angeles, and the varied communities that surround the Bowtie

   - Strongly Agree: 55.6%
   - Agree: 27.2%

9. Programmed community events, like educational workshops, after school youth activities, festivals, guided hikes, kayaking trips, and more

   - Strongly Agree: 57.6%
   - Agree: 26.1%

Strongly Agree: 80.1%
Agree: 16.4%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 80.1%
Agree: 72.6%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 80.1%
Agree: 72.6%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 65.0%
Agree: 23.4%
Neutral: 8.8%
Strongly Agree: 65.0%
Agree: 23.4%
Neutral: 8.8%
Strongly Agree: 52.0%
Agree: 23.1%
Neutral: 13.9%
Strongly Agree: 52.0%
Agree: 23.1%
Neutral: 13.9%
Strongly Agree: 58.4%
Agree: 24.7%
Neutral: 13.1%
Strongly Agree: 58.4%
Agree: 24.7%
Neutral: 13.1%
Strongly Agree: 66.0%
Agree: 23.4%
Neutral: 8.8%
Strongly Agree: 66.0%
Agree: 23.4%
Neutral: 8.8%
Strongly Agree: 72.6%
Agree: 17.9%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 72.6%
Agree: 17.9%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 72.6%
Agree: 17.9%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 72.6%
Agree: 17.9%
Neutral: 6.0%
Strongly Agree: 72.6%
Agree: 17.9%
Neutral: 6.0%
Clockshop’s Curatorial Vision: Looking Back, Looking Forward

The Covid crisis has led us to reflect and think deeply about what Clockshop does best and how we can most effectively support the artists, scholars, and cultural producers we work with. Our work pushing for more equitable green space by engaging with communities through cultural programs continues to be at the core of our mission. Our Board of Directors recently approved a new five-year strategic plan laying out the vision and financial outlook for future projects, with a key component being our work at the Bowtie, supported by a contract with California State Parks, who will lead outreach and engagement at the site. Most significantly is the understanding that Clockshop engages on public lands where we acknowledge the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar. The next few years will represent a conceptual arc, fostering new ties and strengthening existing relationships with Indigenous knowledge, technology, and sustainable futures. Los Angeles is an ideal place for this because it currently has the largest population of self-identifying Indigenous peoples in the United States from diaspora and relocation programs. Thus, new visions of the future centering an Indigenous perspective are more critical than ever.

In the three curatorial projects that Clockshop is undertaking from 2021 to 2023, we hope to explore the complex relationships between Indigenous history, contested public space, the natural ecology of Los Angeles, and community connections:

Mercedes Dorame, Pulling the Sun Back – Xa’aa Peshii Nehiino Taamet (October 2021–January 2022)
Her site-specific installation at LA State Historic Park suggests a cosmology of possibilities: how we interact as a communal collection of souls within new sites of meaning, and re-imagining new futures rooted in the landscape of Tovaangar (Los Angeles).

Sarah Rosalena Brady, Watershifter (Proposed, Summer–Fall 2022)
This public art installation reimagines LA River rocks (found in Los Angeles Historic State Park) into multilayered form, both physical and virtual, to generate new stratified knowledge, laying bare the spatio-temporal striations of emergence, divergence, and convergence found in the river.

Cristóbal Martínez and Kade L. Twist, Post Commodity (Summer–Fall 2023)
The aim is to develop an advanced technology app that builds an ongoing archive of Indigenous history and identity, channeling elders’ voices to bring forth ancestral knowledge, and build trajectories from the present, to the past and the future.

Central to the work of these artists is forging new metaphors and connecting Indigenous narratives of cultural self-determination and identity within the broader public sphere. More pressing is the notion of the Anthropocene as a linked set of environmental, social, political, processes based on the unsustainable extraction of natural resources as well as the radical economic qualities that destabilize communities and geographies. Their work not only offers a critical reaction and response to these conditions but also reclaims the profound knowledge that First Nations peoples have carried for thousands of years in a symbiotic relationship to the land, the sky, and community.
A Note from
Our Board President

The pandemic years have been extremely trying for all of us, and in many cases have led to instability and upheaval at small arts organizations already balanced on the knife’s edge of precarity. Not so at Clockshop. We entered 2020 with a strong vision for the right to accessible arts and cultural experiences on public lands in our city, and although we had to pivot, alter, and shift plans amidst the shutdown, our vision and core values remained as clear and urgent as ever. This guided us through a remarkably comprehensive and participatory process of outreach to and engagement of our neighbors in Northeast LA (even in the midst of a pandemic!) to determine the development of a new State Park at the Bowtie. We also pushed our artistic production and support to new heights at Los Angeles State Historic Park with monumental artist projects, a cohesive curatorial vision for amplifying Indigenous cultural self-determination and knowledge as it relates to land use, and a series of incredibly popular new public programs, Listening by Moonrise and the 1st Annual Kite Festival. We emerge at the end of 2021 fiscally sound, and with an expanded role as not simply an arts organization, but as a cultural hub dedicated to shifting the public conversation around land use and the people’s right to the city.

Sue Bell Yank
Clockshop Board President
Financials

We are small but mighty. We raised $309,000!

INCOME: $309,000

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: $202,300

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS: $43,000
FOUNDATION: $134,300
GOVERNMENT: $25,000

EVENT INCOME AND SALES: $18,700
CONTRACTED PROJECTS: $88,000

EXPENSES: $301,100

STAFF SALARIES AND PROFESSIONAL FEES: $197,100 (65%)
EVENT EXPENSES: $13,000 (5%)
PROJECT EXPENSES AND ARTIST HONORARIUM: $60,000 (20%)
RENT AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION: $31,000 (10%)
Our Supporters

Clockshop is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and relies on the generosity of government and foundation support, as well as individual donors. Clockshop’s programs were supported by the following entities in 2020–2021: