



Wall Installation by Jean Alexander Frater

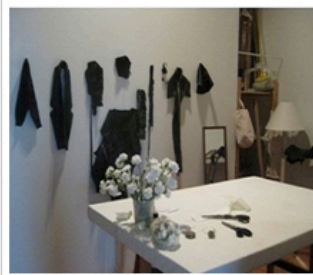
Gallery Spotlight: Spoke Gallery

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By Chicago Art Magazine on Nov 15, 2010 in Articles, Featured

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Heather Reitsma

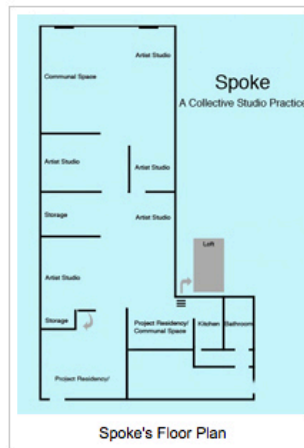


Wall Installation by Kristin Mariani

Tucked away in Chicago's West Loop corridor, a small but incredibly vibrant collective of artists has joined together to create Spoke. As visitors move through Spoke's space, it becomes clear that every square foot of studio is used to make art and absolutely nothing is wasted – each artist has a studio filled to the brim with materials of all different media types. Unlike traditional gallery settings, Spoke is designed to encompass the ever-changing needs of its experimental member base and is anything but stationary in its approach to exhibiting artwork. In fact, Spoke is not considered by its team of artists as a gallery at all. Being a non-commercial, artist collective, Spoke's hosted exhibition space is simply called "front space."

What also sets Spoke apart is the outcome of its projects – often the artists involved are not sure what the end result of their efforts will be, leaving interpretation of outside factors and spontaneity as the shaping force behind art experiments. Video artist, Jeroen Nelemans, has been a member of the artist collective since 2009 and describes what separates Spoke from many of the galleries and artist spaces he has experienced as "More of a documentation of what happens outside of the gallery."

For this reason, artists that are involved with Spoke are often active in submersing themselves into their local communities and external world. Keeping in line with the notion of building an artist community through co-operative projects, Spoke has begun to create an artist residency program. Artists from New York and other parts of the US are able to live within Spoke's single live-in studio space while taking in Chicago and rubbing elbows with any space. Plans to open the artist residency program to International artists are currently in the works.



Spoke's Floor Plan



Spining Wait Cursor, Jeroen Nelemans

Founding artists of Spoke – Rana Siegal, Heather Youngdahl Mullins, Monica Herrera and Rachel Moore – have been pleased with the progress made since Spoke's 2008 inception. The name, Spoke, came from the idea of a wheel that turns and maintains its integrity through the spokes that support its shape. As each artist delves into their own chosen media, the scope of the collective is diversified and strengthened. Currently, artists working in new media, fashion design, metalworking, woodworking, 3-dimensional drawing, installation and painting are all part of the big wheel that makes up Spoke artist collective.

As to plans for the future, Spoke's future is wide open – the aim of this studio collective practice is to trust the process of artist participation and

enjoy the journey, in whatever meandering route it may take. Artists of Spoke collective are focused on maintaining an intentional, creative, and communal environment without placing limitations on what could happen in the years to come.

To learn more about Spoke artist collective and to schedule an appointment to view the exhibition space, visit Spoke's blog at: <http://spokechicago.blogspot.com>

Spoke is located at 119 N Peoria #3D, Chicago.