

## WEBSITE TEXT OVERVIEW

### Informal Opportunities: Cairns

**When:** Sunday, November 17 2024

**Where:** Brower Park

**Time:** 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Facilitator:** Eliza Axelson-Chidsey

**Cost:** Pay what you wish, \$20 suggested donation

**Max # of Participants:** 25

### **About Facilitator**

Eliza Axelson-Chidsey is a designer, artist, and curator based in New York City. Her interest in material culture is manifest in explorations of form, value, and ephemerality. Excited by research and concepts, and informed by her senses, she is regularly reminded how much learning is found through doing.



### **Objective**

Prior attendance to Informal Opportunities Part 1 & 2 is not required!

In this three-part workshop, designer and artist Eliza Axelson-Chidsey explores ways to create form for purpose, connecting the line between the structured, academic discipline, and the informal opportunities that we encounter all the time. Using found materials—whether they are naturally occurring or salvaged/repurposed—we'll extend the same principles of form making.

In the third and final installment of the Informal Opportunities series we will be looking at cairns, a form of nonverbal communication spanning time and cultures, in terms of structure, observation, and intention. We will make cairns, engage with our environment, and finish the workshop with a drawing exercise.



### **What's Included**

Materials for cairn-making

Paper for drawing  
Pens/pencils/charcoal for drawing

### **What To Bring (Optional)**

Rocks, stones, or other things to stack, without leaving litter behind  
Paper to draw on  
Preferred writing/drawing implements

### **Disclaimer**

This workshop will be held outside and include activity around Brower Park and on the ground.  
Bathroom accessible.

### **INTRODUCTION**

- This is the third and final part of Informal Opportunities series.
  - What are Cairns?
    - Rock formations/sculptures/towers
  - Why Cairns?
    - It's a meditative practice
    - Universal non-verbal form of communication
    - Transcend cultures and time, they extend beyond human history
    - They can mean many different things, such as trail markers, signifiers of an important place or destination, boundaries, graces
    - They don't require language to appreciate their presence
    - They are about seeing, recognizing, and observing
    - Wayfinding
    - They are place-based, found-material making– that practice can be carried out to broader contexts.
  - It's important to consider that when making Cairns, to be careful and thoughtful about it. It can cause people to get lost, it can be cultural appropriation, and it can disturb habitats.
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### **ACTIVITY**

- Divide into smaller groups and decide on which group will explore which area of the park.
- In your groups, go to designated area and collect any materials (sticks, rocks, acorns, leaves, etc)
- Choose a place to create a small “intervention” in your area. Using materials you’ve collected, you can stack, balance or assort them.
- After all groups have completed their interventions, gather all together.
- Everyone will walk together around the park, observing, and try to find the interventions made by the other groups.

- When you come across one, discuss what you notice, what materials they used, what is surprising.
  - Continue until all interventions have been found.
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## POEMS

### On Making

Rebecca Morgan Frank

I held a jackhammer once.  
It matched me

in height and weight and I  
planned destruction, ripped

everything solid from the ground.  
The concrete was my prey,

but it was the tool I fought  
to master, its metal body

trembling beneath my hands.  
Or, perhaps, its electric heart

was what shook me through  
my last held bones.

The concrete, gone,  
the rented machinery, returned—

and I wondered if Sisyphus had imagined  
a garden where the rock came from.

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### The Time Being (For Robert Smithson)

By Nancy Holt. 1978

For the time being, in the interim, in the course of time, from day to day, from hour to hour, until, in due time, and in the fullness of time, time endures, goes on, remains, persists, lasts, goes by, elapses, passes, flows, rolls on, flies, slips, slides, and glides by.

Originally published in Arts Magazine 52, no. 9, Special Issue: Robert Smithson (May 1978), 144.

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