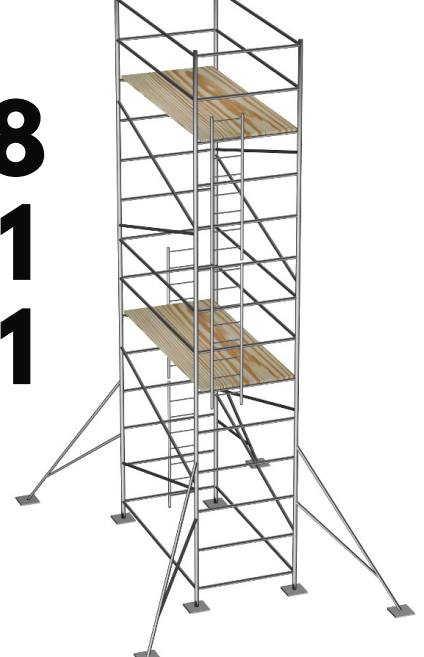




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S W E L L A GROUP EXHIBIT ON SCAFFOLDING CURATED BY LAUREN M. PACHECO

Exhibition Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated the nation's arts sector. A 2021 Americans for the Arts survey reported that 99% of exhibits and shows were canceled, 37% of nonprofit arts jobs lost, and 63% of creative workers are unemployed. Still, it isn't hard to observe an awe-inspiring amount of creative activity taking place despite the COVID-19 pandemic. This past year forced the creative sector to develop new systems of exchange when confronted with a global and national pandemic, massive displays of civil unrest, and collapsing public and private economic systems. As turbulent and stressful as the situation, creative responses have been inspirational. Bold curatorial endeavors and self-initiated projects by artists and activists, or artist collectives, have highlighted new systems of production and exchange.

Thanks to thriving online communities across various social media platforms, a sort of pandemic production phenomenon has revealed and cultivated experimental collaborations and remarkable ingenuity. Creative workers and makers seized this moment in our shared history as a time for practice and production. One might suggest the pandemic produced a series of new research bodies that are practice-based, relevant, and time-sensitive—driven by learning, unlearning, exploration and curiosity, fear and loneliness, and incredible technological improvisation.

Sculptural installations have the power to confront traditional understandings of art production and material history. This group exhibition explores the relationship of modes of presentation to the artist and the curator. Within the South Shore Arts center's expansive gallery, fabric walls show signs of something that has already happened. As a curatorial intervention, this site-specific exhibition chooses to connect the usual and unusual, ubiquitous, and unfamiliar elements by bringing together artwork, objects, and a scaffolding platform system most commonly installed on construction sites. The scaffold, a flexible and temporary structure, consists of multiple tubes, boards, and couplers fitting together to reinforce and support labor.

SWELL is a collective practice exhibition unconcerned with boundaries and attempts to recreate a space within a space. Secondary to the artworks themselves is a conversation in challenging aesthetics and assemblies of what exhibits can and should represent - a new way of thinking to help change how we see and interact with space, curator, and artist. SWELL exhibiting artists and the individual works drive discourse and critical art practice. Some work across disciplines. Most are peculiar and different, provocative and beautiful. Others reflect or reject the past, present, and future.

**SOUTH SHORE ARTS | CENTER FOR VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
1040 RIDGE ROAD | MUNSTER, IN 46321**

