



NEUBAUER  
COLLEGIUM  
FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

# The Chicago Cli-Fi Library

Geissler & Sann

Jenny Kendler in collaboration  
with Andrew Bearnot

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle

Dan Peterman

Feb 22 - June 11, 2023

Anthropogenic climate change is the greatest existential threat faced by humankind in its three-hundred-thousand-year history—yet it often seems as if the apocalyptic prospect of global warming and other consequences of this “great derangement,” to paraphrase the title of a book by Indian writer Amitav Ghosh devoted to the subject, hardly make themselves felt in the mainstream of cultural production.

Although there exists a long history of environmental concern expressed through works of art, and although the climate crisis is an increasingly prominent topic of conversation in contemporary art discourse, as subject matter it remains curiously marginal to the programming of many of the world’s leading museums as well as to the curatorial arguments informing many of the world’s leading biennials and the like.

Aside from the fact that, as an integral (and often especially wasteful) part of the entertainment and luxury industries, contemporary art is perhaps uniquely ill-equipped to confront this issue head on, one could make the case that it is the very enormity of the challenge of imagining the unimaginable—the end of life on Earth as we know it—that causes this peculiar paralysis. *The Chicago Cli-Fi Library* is a modest attempt to make sense of this paralysis, suggesting that art’s response to the complexity and enormity of the issue at hand can only ever be piecemeal, ad hoc, and hyperlocal—all of which must be understood as virtues.



Dan Peterman, *Archive (One Ton)*, 2012.

Named after the emerging literary subgenre of “climate fiction,” or “cli-fi,” and accordingly bookish in both conception and realization, this exhibition features the work of Chicago-based artists Geissler & Sann, Jenny Kendler, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, and Dan Peterman. A new work by Geissler & Sann titled *How Does the World End for Others?* reimagines a string of literary fragments culled from the cli-fi genre as a score for a performative reading.

On the terrace outside the Neubauer Collegium, Dan Peterman has installed a new iteration of his *Archive for 57 People*, a seemingly empty library built out of the artist’s signature recycled plastic (the internal measure of the piece is defined by the annual average plastic consumption for 57 people). In the gallery, Jenny Kendler exhibits a selection of biocharred books from her ongoing *Underground Library* project, “based around a collection of five decades of defunct, passed over or ignored books on climate change—from unread technical manuals to forgotten best sellers.”

Another work of Kendler’s featured in *The Chicago Cli-Fi Library* was made in collaboration with Andrew Bearnot. Titled *Whale Bells*, the work consists of a set of hand-blown glass chimes that incorporate the fossilized ear bones of an extinct whale species. An enigmatic older work by Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle is based in part on a newspaper photograph of a young Dustin Hoffman in front of the Greenwich Village townhouse that was accidentally blown up by the Weather Underground in March 1970. Bob Dylan famously sang, “You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.” No—you just need to read the writing on the wall, the contents of which can be consulted in *The Chicago Cli-Fi Library*.

Curated by Dieter Roelstraete.

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Gallery hours: M-F, 9:00am - 4:00pm. Please visit our website for more details.