

# PLAY HARD

## ACTIVITY BOOK

On display at Vision Gallery  
April 3 - May 8, 2021



**VISION**  
GALLERY

# WELCOME

This activity book is a companion to *PLAY HARD*, an exhibit on display at Vision Gallery from April 3 to May 8, 2021. This show features the artwork of Ellie Richards and Melissa Sclafani.

Spend some time with the exhibition either in person or online, and then give these prompts a shot! We'd love it if you'd post your results on Instagram and tag them **#ChandlerAtPlay**.

Scan the QR code with a smartphone camera to see the exhibition online.



Ellie Richards, installation view of *PLAY HARD*

<https://qrgo.page.link/NR94p>



## **ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION**

As an adult, how often do we actually think of playing? What does it mean to play? Who has the ability to do so?

For this exhibition, Melissa Sclafani and Ellie Richards examine the idea of play, but through very different lenses. Sclafani's political sculptures use the aesthetics of the playground to examine systemic racial and economic inequalities in communal outdoor areas, while Richards' readymades and assemblages seek to address the distinct psychological shifts between objects and behaviors associated with childhood memory, labor, and learning.

This lighthearted exhibition with serious themes will inspire you to reconsider an element of our lives that we take for granted.

## **HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

This activity guide features several prompts inspired by Sclafani and Richards' artwork. All prompts are individual and they can be done in any order, using whatever supplies you already have at home. All of them can be done solo, but we highly recommend getting together (safely!) a small group of 3 - 5 folks to do them with.

# ELLIE RICHARDS



Ellie Richards, installation view of *PLAY HARD*



Ellie Richards, *Crooked Mop*



Ellie Richards, *Fly Swat Stickies*

## About Ellie

Ellie Richards looks to the traditions of both woodworking and the readymade to create eclectic assemblages, installations, and objects exploring intersections of labor and leisure. She has traveled extensively to investigate the roles play and improvisation have on the artistic process through residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, the Center for Art in Wood, San Diego State University, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her work, both furniture and sculpture, has been exhibited nationally including in exhibitions at the Mint Museum, the Society of Art Craft, Penland Gallery, and Hodges Taylor Art Consultancy.

Richards maintains an active teaching schedule sharing the fundamentals of woodworking and artistic practice with a breadth of audiences. She has held appointments at Yestermorrow Design/Build School, the Appalachian Center for Craft, and Haystack Mountain School of Craft. Currently, she is a three year resident artist at Penland School of Craft.

# PLAY PROMPT 1

## Make it (Not) Work

Take something practical and make it impractical. You have 15 minutes to complete this prompt using whatever supplies you have at home. Biggest transformation wins!



Ellie Richards, *Pick Up Paintbrush*

## PLAY PROMPT 2

### Incredible Whatsit 5000

Make the best tool out of something unconventional, and then pitch it to a partner in the style of an infomercial. You have 3 minutes to gather your supplies and 10 minutes to construct your tool. Your infomercial must be at least 1 minute long. Bonus points if your tool is multi-use.



Ellie Richards, *Double Noodle Broom*



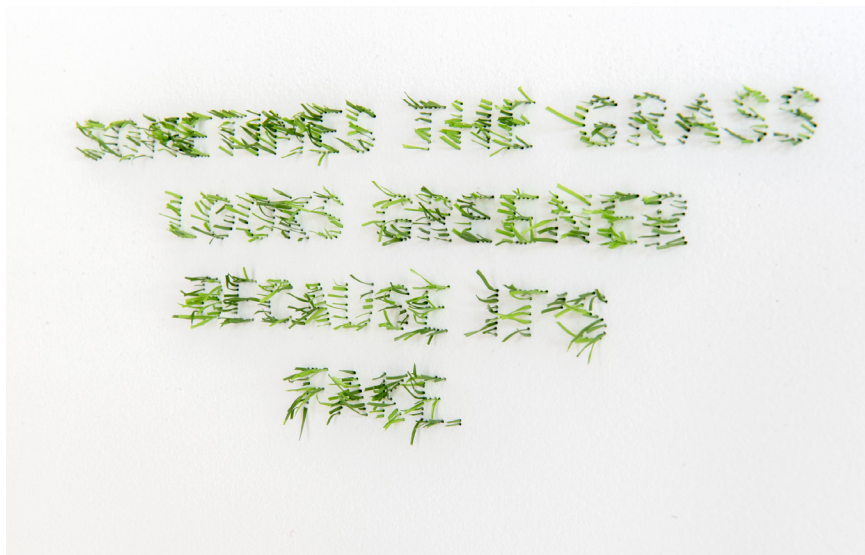
Ellie Richards, *Alphabet Shovel*

## PLAY PROMPT 3

### Dishwashing Disco

Demonstrate the most fun household chore. You have 2 minutes to gather whatever supplies are necessary, and then your demonstration must last at least 1 minute. Most fun demonstration wins!





1

2



1. Melissa Sclafani,  
*The Grass Looks Greener  
Because it's Fake*

2. Ellie Richards  
*Shoveling Maze*

3. Ellie Richards,  
*Wrench Painting*

4. Ellie Richards,  
*Square Impression*

5. Ellie Richards,  
*Filligree Tape Measure*

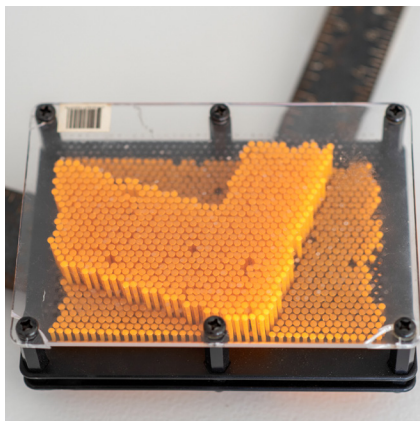
6. Ellie Richards,  
*Book Block Study Stack 1*

7. Melissa Sclafani,  
*SEESAW*

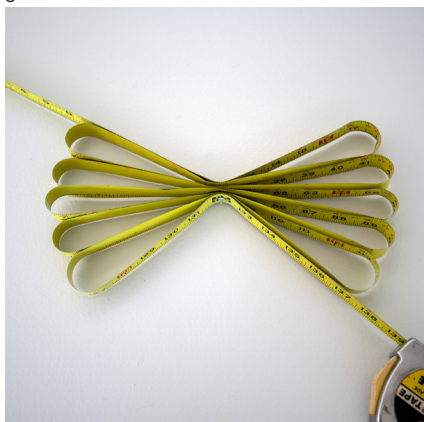




3



4



5



6



7

# MELISSA SCLAFANI



Melissa Sclafani,  
*Pick You Up, Pull Me Down (Pull Through)*



Melissa Sclafani,  
*Playground Pattern 1*  
*Playground Pattern 2*  
*Playground Pattern 3*  
*We Go Round and Round and Round We Go*



Melissa Sclafani,  
*Stick, Sticky, Stuck, Unstuck*

## About Melissa

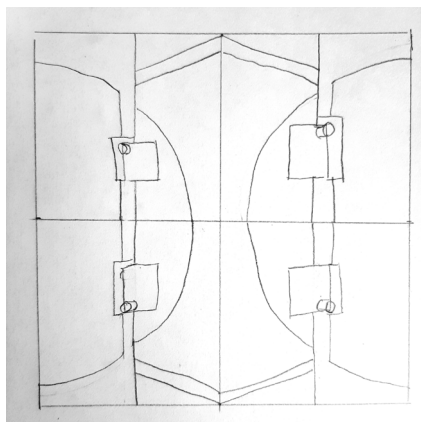
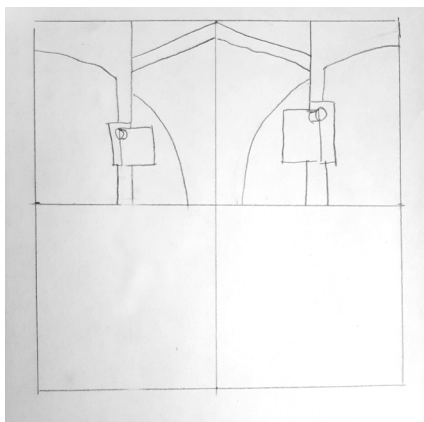
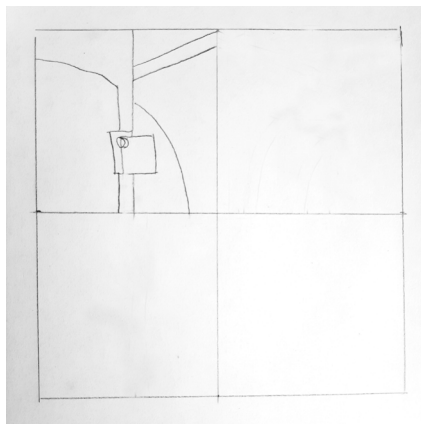
Melissa Sclafani is an Assistant Professor of Sculpture and Gallery Director at Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO. She received her BFA in sculpture from SUNY New Paltz in 2009 and her MFA in Sculpture and Post-Studio Practices from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2018. Ms. Sclafani's work manifests in sculpture, installation, and performance, often integrating all three together. She uses her backgrounds in traditional sculpture techniques, journalism, and gender studies to generate relationships between labor-intensive processes, interaction, and social constructions. She is interested in creating work that sparks conversation, getting herself and the viewer to think more, talk more, work together, and hopefully, do more.

Sclafani has participated in residencies and exhibitions across the country including NURTUREArt in Brooklyn, NY; Museum of Boulder in Boulder, CO; Wayfarers in Brooklyn, NY; Franconia Sculpture Park in Franconia, MN; Salem Art Works in Salem, NY; The Contemporary Artist Center in Troy, NY; Elsewhere Studios in Paonia, CO; and MoMAZoZo in Carrizozo, NM. She is currently preparing for a residency in Marfa, TX this summer.

# PLAY PROMPT 4

## Find the Pattern

Draw a grid of at least 4 squares on a piece of paper. Make a frame with your hands, close one eye, and look through the frame to isolate a shape in the space around you. Study it for thirty seconds, and then draw it in the top-left square of your grid using simple lines. Repeat that same drawing in the rest of the squares, flipping the orientation each time to create a mirror image.





Melissa Sclafani, *Untitled (Chainlink)*

## PLAY PROMPT 5

### Walk the Line

Go outside. Take a three minute walk, changing direction every 30 seconds. When the three minutes have passed, see if you can exactly retrace your steps.

Bonus: have a friend trace your steps with one color of chalk as you do your first pass. For your second pass, put a blindfold on and have your friend trace your path with a different color. Take your blindfold off at the end to see how different your paths are!



# PLAY PROMPT 6

## Hop, Skip, and a (High) Jump

Devise the most impressive game of hopscotch. You have five minutes to plan and five minutes to create your course. If playing with a partner, you must switch courses when it's time to demonstrate.



Melissa Sclafani,  
*Textured Map #1*  
*Untitled (Chainlink)*  
*Clash / Conform*  
*Textured Map #2*  
*Grip Strength*  
*Stick, Sticky, Stuck, Unstuck*

Melissa Sclafani, *Falling Time, Fall in Line*





# EXHIBITS THAT PLAY WELL TOGETHER

## ONCE UPON A PLAYGROUND



Image Credit: Brenda Biondo, Miracle Lifetime Whirl, Hudson, CO 2011; color photograph, 28 1/2 x 20 in.; Courtesy of the artist

**April 6 - May 25**  
**Tues-Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 1-5pm**  
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