

**THE LOUISVILLE ASSEMBLY OF VANGUARD ART (2001-2008):
FROM COLLECTIVISM TO COLLECTION**

By

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B.F.A., University of Louisville, 2001

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
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Department of Fine Arts
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A Thesis Approved on

August 5, 2008

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John Begley, Thesis Director

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Scott Massey

DEDICATION



This thesis is dedicated to the memory of the LAVA House,
the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art
Hellvus, and Mr. Bill.

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There is no way that I could have done such an extensive job on this archive if it wasn't for the encouragement and support of my "wifey", Hallie Jones, who has walked through nearly the entire LAVA experience by my side. I could never give enough thanks or praise to equal your role in inspiring me throughout the years. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis documents the construction of the LAVA Archive, dedicated to recording the life and legacy of the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art, LAVA, and its home, the LAVA House. As an example of an experimental alternative artspace, this artists' community was a major part of Louisville's underground counterculture up until its demise in a fire in winter of 2008. Here it is subject to multi-layered examination in the context of comparing past and current art making practices with LAVA's attempt to identify a new purpose for art in the new millennium. For six and a half years, the LAVA organization was an art collective that pushed into undefined territory, provided its members with an open format for experimentation across mediums, and promoted sociopolitical goals of social justice and equality.

This thesis and its attendant archive document LAVA's history, its operations and activities, and gathers its remaining artifacts--photos, video, websites, notes--all of which stand as evidence and support its story. The section called "About the LAVA Archive" discusses the collecting and archiving practices used and explains why the archive structure was chosen.

The work of documenting our culture, especially a collective creative underground legacy such as LAVA's, is vital to ensuring that a complete record of our times is available. To accomplish this conservationist task, this thesis addresses:

1. LAVA activities in context of art making practices in contemporary art world.
2. LAVA's story and significance.

3. The process of building the LAVA archive, from collecting to compiling important papers, photographs, video footage and other ephemera.
4. The research into the appropriate archival approaches, methods and standards needed to systematize these records and make them publicly available for research.
5. The structure established for organizing, inventorying and documenting the LAVA archive materials.

Since my own personal investment in this thesis project is complex, I want to make my multiple roles clear. I am, at once, a co-founder of and participant in LAVA, the organizer of this archive and the author of this document. The experience of wearing each of these hats as I completed this project has provided me insight into the process of documenting lives and relationships, events and happenings, and the difficult task of selecting objects and documentation worthy of inclusion into an archive, and finally working out an order that makes sense to those who will use the archive in the future.

The final products of this thesis are this document and the LAVA/LAVA House archive which will be donated to the Margaret M. Bridwell Art Library at the University of Louisville. I hope that my efforts in recording LAVA's life over the years and my bringing of this documentation to the University for observation, research, and enjoyment will inspire others to meticulously document other projects that too often disappear without a trace.

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Figure 1. *LAVA logo* by Bart Herre and Aron Conaway, 2002

“At the LAVA House we, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art, identified and even visualized ourselves as an “underground” force, as a pressurized subterranean mass, sitting below the surface of society at large. Our creativity, a fiery process of molten energy; we forged our materials to emerge at the surface, sometimes as a glowing river, sometimes in a major explosion. The underground was magical for us, as though we had Vulcan, the God of fire and creativity at our backs. ”

-Aron Conaway



Figure 2. *LAVA logo* by Aron Conaway, 2003



Figure 3. *LAVA banner* by Bart Herre, 2003

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“...we are dedicated and passionate emerging artists working together in a cooperative environment on very little resources. We have been a steady presence in the underground arts and music scene for years and have facilitated an environment that serves as a creative incubator for all forms of artistic expression: visual, musical, writing, performance, etc... We are trying to blur the lines and divisions between the different types of arts out there and to cooperate and integrate the arts under one roof with a common vision of promoting social change in our community. We are self-funded and are not a formal non-profit organization. We exist purely on our own drive and work together to engage the community in arts via participation. Most LAVA Artists rent private studios at the LAVA House and we have common areas for meeting and collaborating.”¹

¹ Excerpt of letter from Hallie Jones to *Courier-Journal* arts writer Diane Heilenman regarding LAVA and its then upcoming Spring Art Show, *Art for Evolution* on April 24, 2004, Digital LAVA Archive D1.03.

Forming this archive to represent, document and preserve the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art's existence has been a significant undertaking. While it may seem unusual (and counter-intuitive) for a subversive, spontaneous, ad-hoc organization to have extensive records and documentation of its activities over a long period of time, these records do exist. I assembled this archive to document this specific community's operations and its dedication to a counter-cultural arts ethos as an improvisational, collectivist experiment. This art group paralleled trends in concurrent non-commercial, alternative art spaces and practices worldwide, yet is one of only a small number of such spaces to establish an archive at this time. The following thesis lays out the reasons why the LAVA archive is worthy of preservation, documentation, observation, and inquiry.



Figure 4. LAVA House art and activity circa 2003.

This thesis project creates and explains how the archive came to contain artifacts that represent the activities, creativity and daily life that occurred at the LAVA House, as part of the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art organization. With the fire and demise of the LAVA House in the winter of 2008 came the end of a community, a way of creative life for several artists, the results of thousands of creative hours, and hundreds of artworks. Nonetheless, 26,000 images, objects, digital files, and other artifacts are contained within the archives, all organized to reinforce and support the group's theoretical underpinnings which are laid out in this thesis.



Figure 5. The material contents of the LAVA archive.

I begin this paper by identifying and accounting for LAVA's main philosophical and theoretical influences as well as the sociopolitical ideologies that influenced much of its artistic expression, collectivist operations and involvement in activism. The LAVA organization's operating style was similar to many organizations in the progressive

underground cultures of society and shared many of the same goals and ideologies in terms of its sociopolitical persuasion. Many within this culture work to disrupt the support structure of the power elite,² by attempting to challenge the public's perception of the status quo. Although highly critical of perceived social problems, many organizations and individuals within the progressive grassroots network also focus energy and resources towards improving local communities and work to strengthen relationships at the neighborhood level. The Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art participated in this underground network as its artists subscribed to the ideals and ethos that exist within.

LAVA's relationship with the local arts and music community and its connections to the rest of underground culture are discussed here to introduce the theoretical backbone of the group's foundations. This discussion and the LAVA theory chapter provide a deeper understanding of the group's nature and character in relation to its times, and enhance the meanings attached to the archival objects.



Figure 6. This number “2”, given no context, is likely to be considered random and insignificant. It needs a clear relationship to another objects or story to gain relevance.

The third chapter offers a narrative account of the group's history and activities. This series of synopses explains life at the LAVA House by recollecting the organization's evolution and growth, events and activities it hosted and participated in,

² “The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences.” C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford, 1956) 1.

resources it acquired and used, and its operating and decision-making functions. This information, in tandem with the LAVA photos, videos and papers in the archive, should allow one to imagine LAVA's life accurately.



Figure 7. This digital image, from the Digital LAVA Archive shows the LAVA House's front door at 927 Shelby Parkway. Seeing this relationship provides context for the number "2" on page 4, and exemplifies the importance of the LAVA Archive as a whole.

Lastly, and most extensively, I account for the archive's structure and the artifacts it houses, providing a map called the Summary Finding Aid for the LAVA Archive for viewers to identify and locate general archive topics and categories. Also, the Detailed Finding Aid of the LAVA Archive lists categories and descriptions of all the objects found in the collection to provide an overview of the collection, a history of the artists and organization, the collection's scope and content, arrangement, related materials, and a detailed description of the collection, all of which facilitate user needs. Methods of processing and the reasoning and purpose of my choices for the archive's structure in light of current archiving standards are discussed. Finally, future plans for the archive and materials, including a website outside the academic setting and other types of considerations, are addressed.

CHAPTER II

LAVA THEORY

A. Purpose of LAVA: Motivations and Mission

“LAVA, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art, is an artist collective focused on building a stronger community through networking organizations and creative individuals at the grassroots level to carry out positive social change. LAVA is headquartered at the LAVA House, an urban post-industrial warehouse converted into an artist’s live/work space. The LAVA House is a venue dedicated to supporting underground arts and music, providing an institution to foster and preserve the right of creative expression. LAVA encourages independent thought, and embraces diversity to enrich our community through participation in the arts.”- LAVA Mission³

The LAVA House was the space in which the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art conducted most of its business of art making, holding meetings, hosting art and music shows, showing political films, and producing other events and activities. Although the idea of starting an art organization and identifying a space preceded finding the LAVA House, it played a major part in giving the organization a chance to evolve and create freely. Experiencing the building’s 35-foot ceilings, open space environment, and its industrial wood and steel structure always inspired awe, as it was filled top to bottom with a postmodern mash up of artwork and expressed ideas—it was a canvas itself.

A look through the videos and photographs that display artists’ artworks and happenings at the LAVA House immediately lets the viewer know that The Louisville

³ This thesis and the Digital LAVA Archive are available to see at edt.louisville.edu (search for Conaway). Objects or digital media material referenced throughout this document are among those found in the Margaret M. Bridewell Art Library either in the archive boxes or online in the digital archive. Various versions of the LAVA mission statements and manifestos are available for viewing in folder D1.04 and D2.01/LAVA *Organization Word Files/ LAVA-a good mission statement*.

Assembly of Vanguard Art's intellectual foundation of counterculture attitude figured heavily into its activities. LAVA's politically oriented events and idealistic organizational writings make it evident that its mission was to impart an informal education in the political and social realities of the late 20th and early 21st centuries through the language of art, and to create a community around its ideals of art and activism.

Regardless of what political leanings or social attitudes its audience held, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art was producing confrontational work that challenged simple, conventional spectatorship. In studying the hundreds of artworks in the archive that were shown and created there, from Bart Herre's depiction of a *Bourgeoisie Woman*⁴ to Chris Chappell's *Protect*⁵ wheat paste posters depicting a peasant woman with a gasmask and a rifle, it is clear that its political agenda was incorporated into its art. It attempted to subvert the dominant paradigm of consumerism and complacency, by turning a looking glass at its audience's worldviews.



Figures 8 and 9. *Bourgeoisie Woman* by Bart Herre, *Protect* by Chris Chappell at the LAVA House, 2002

⁴ Bart Herre, *Bourgeoisie Woman*, Digital LAVA Archive: D1.01./All LAVA Photography

⁵ Chris Chappell, *Protect*, Digital LAVA Archive: D3.01/LAVA Artist Portfolios/Chris Chappell

LAVA was a part of an underground culture, and a rising alternative arts scene, which by definition exists outside of mainstream culture and is largely ignored by both the mainstream and the media, except for brief moments of entertainment. Despite this low level of near invisibility to the community at large, these underground cultures can be an influential force in the community by interacting with people and providing opportunities for people to think critically.

LAVA's ability to serve as a catalyst created a loose brand of organization for the group, which was empowering for a larger community. Saul Alinsky, the respected strategic organizer pointed out in his landmark book *Rules for Radicals* that, "Change comes from power, and power comes from organization. In order to act, people must get together. Power is the reason for being for organizations."⁶ LAVA's events drew large numbers of people, sometime reaching capacity volume, and all events were designed to inject a disturbance into people's everyday lives.

It is apparent when analyzing the group's undertakings that some degree of control and power was being sought. It desired to be an organized counterbalance to the forces of capitalism and neo-liberal economic agendas of the elite. In a sense, LAVA was a group of warriors confronting the status quo and protesting against a social system that it viewed as full of rigged politics and a public that accepted and supported the powerful military industrial complex—paradigms sold by the elite in the interest of the elite through propaganda and waging war⁷. Showing films such as Robert Greenwald's

⁶ Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Vintage, 1972) 113.

⁷ "They (the power elite) are now more powerful than they have ever been in the history of the American elite; they have now more means of exercising power in many areas of American life which were previously civilian domains; they now have more connections; and they are now operating in a nation whose elite and whose underlying population have accepted what can only be called a military definition of reality." C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford, 1956) 198.

scathing documentary *Outfoxed*, about the FOX News Corporation, along with thousands of simultaneous viewings around America.⁸ LAVA presented an anti-establishment opportunity open to all. This type of discourse was meant to cause increasing unrest and to leave visitors aware and knowledgeable about mainstream media's intentional manipulation of the masses. This was no imaginary enemy resulting from paranoia but a real problem, and LAVA members sought to educate themselves and their audiences in politics through books and film. One of the popular authors they read, Noam Chomsky, points out in *Profit Over People* that there is a well thought out "master plan" to control the masses—as he quotes Edward Bernays, the father of modern public relations, "...the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society."⁹



Figure 10. Film viewing of *Outfoxed* at LAVA House, a MoveOn.org sponsored event, July 18, 2003.

LAVA was not alone in the fight to publicize social justice issues, advocacy for the principles of equality, and work against mass public acceptance of the power elite. Its efforts joined a community of many organizations who were working and volunteering to collectively and creatively resist the wrongs observed in the world. One only need look at

⁸ This event was organized by MoveOn.org on July 18, 2003.

⁹ Noam Chomsky, *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (New York: Seven Stories, 1999) 53.

the *ForSooth*¹⁰ and *Louisville Defender* publications on the internet or at the *Louisville Peace Action Committee*¹¹ website to see that LAVA was not the only Louisville organization engaged in this cause.



Figure 11. *One Nation under God: Operation Shock and Awe*, by Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway with Thalon Hubbell, ForeCastle 2004, Tyler Park.

At Forecastle 2004, the Art, Music, Activism festival in Tyler Park, all LAVA's members contributed art to display for the day. One work in the exhibit, *One Nation Under God: Operation Shock and Awe*¹² by artists Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway with sound artist Thalon Hubbell, was an ominous net of desert/snow camouflage set with soldiers occupying whited out countries whose names had been crossed out. Hubbell created a montage of beeps from the checkout line at the grocery, machine guns and brief George Bush War-isms to create an ambience of war and consumerism. All of the park visitors were faced with this confrontational artwork, as it was necessary to enter this "zone" and pass through in order to use the tunnel between the festival's alternating performance stages. The artists' statement for this piece ended with the following:

¹⁰ *FORsooth (Fellowship of Reconciliation)* <http://www.louisville-for.org/FORSOOTHARCHIVES.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.louisvillepeace.org/LPAC.html>

¹² See Digital LAVA Archive Folder D1.01/All LAVA Photography1-Pre-Fire\Aron Conaway Photography\LAVA Events n Activities/ Forecastle 2004

“Handouts – literature about socially responsible companies and being an educated consumer. We would like to provide an explanation for those who need a little more discussion to understand the message. A “take-home” if you will, that explains how we can make changes and impacts on a personal level through the power of being an educated consumer and making wise purchasing decisions with our hard earned dollars.

Goal: The ultimate goal of the piece is to wake people up. We want viewers who interact with our art to realize the end results of globalization and our unsustainable way of life. We want people to prioritize people over profit and stand up against corporate greed that chokes diversity out. Presented here is a worldly image, barren, bleak, and uniformly whitewashed, intended to avert others from supporting militant, corporate domination and homogenization.”¹³

Such skeptical, confrontational themes and intense exhibition techniques that challenged viewers to critique their own position in regard to issues of imperialism was a radical approach to opening dialog with the local community. LAVA commonly put out art intended to tear through and sabotage the stability of its audience’s view of the dominant paradigm. Creating such powerful and important experiences is important to social well being and growth. Suzi Gablik makes the argument in her book *The Reenchantment of Art* that, “...individuals cannot be liberated from coercive social institutions as long as they retain the ideological world-picture that holds these institutions in place.”¹⁴

In contrast to the predictability of going to see a local band in a bar, LAVA’s public were invited into the LAVA House and in its creative studio complex were presented an experience that stretched far beyond simple music performance. The collective was cohesive in its desire to push the envelope to be, “A revolutionary

¹³ *One Nation Under God: Operation Shock and Awe* Artists statement, Digital LAVA Archive D2.01\LAVA Organizational Word Files\ Proposal for JCC Festival 2.

¹⁴ Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 23.

organizer [that] must shake up the prevailing patterns of their lives—agitate, create disenchantment and discontent with the current value, to produce, if not passion for change, at least a passive, affirmative, non-challenging climate,” as Saul Alinsky put it in *Rules for Radicals*.¹⁵ As photography and video in the archive demonstrates, the art shown in this non-traditional gallery and performance space aimed at pulling together a concerned community of visitors—people who would leave and take LAVA’s ideas out into the community. In many LAVA shows, visiting artists joined the call to arms to destroy the viewers’ blind trust in government, mainstream media and multi-national corporations.

At one point, Alan Abbot, writing for the Louisville Eccentric Observer (LEO), picked the LAVA House “Louisville’s Best Venue,” writing that “The LAVA House’s radical art parties and performances [are] hands down the best time in Louisville.”¹⁶ Abbot’s use of the word “radical” is significant. In conversation “radical” is thrown around as an expression of extremism or often times a generic adjective for positive agreement. However, the word is much more profound, as author Marilyn Ferguson argues in her book *Aquarius Now*: “The word radical comes from the Latin *radix*, meaning roots.... Radical doesn’t mean far out, it means far in. When we get to the radical, we get to the essence—to the root of the problem.”¹⁷ LAVA dug down to the root of social problems, and its efforts to do so were a conscious attempt to work outside the boundaries of the “established” art world. Viewing sketches, artworks and notes of the organization’s past unearths repeated challenges to the gallery system and commoditization of art.

¹⁵ Alinsky xxiii.

¹⁶ Alan Abbott, “LEO Writers’ Picks,” *Louisville Eccentric Observer* 12 Nov. 2003: 25.

¹⁷ Marilyn Ferguson, *Aquarius Now* (Boston: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2005) 28.



Figure 12. The *Louisville Eccentric Observer's* Reader's Choice Awards Issue 2003, Review by Alan Abbott.

In October of 2002, LAVA was a major force in helping to pull together Louisville's first outdoor art, music and activism "Carnival" called AlterNation.¹⁸ LAVA artists provided art, organized bands, and helped pull together political and social activist groups from around the city to participate in this day of constructive social and political critique. Fliers from AlterNation show that the day began with a "Race to the Bottom," a creative approach to addressing the ethics of globalization pushed by American corporations as they relocate to third world nations, i.e. where they pay miniscule wages, dodge environmental laws, and avoid the first world's human rights standards. LAVA provided a large anti-police state themed photograph display and a distressed 25-foot statue of liberty built of electrical conduit and other construction materials. These artworks were on display and set the tone throughout the day for sets of a dozen bands and the Squallis Puppeteers parading around the park in giant costumes. One carnival display featured a table of materials available to children and adults alike to create art on the spot and exhibit it that day at the park. Video shows that this outdoor, open space

¹⁸ AlterNation materials available in LAVA Archive Folders B1.20 and B1.21.

event was very laid back and accessible to the public. Many of AlterNation's activities were purposefully participatory so as to create a community and bring the audience into the creative experience, suggesting the freedom citizens have to be creatively involved in the community.



Figure 13. AlterNation sign and 25-foot tall *Statute of Liberty*.

After the September 11, 2001 attacks and the ensuing war on terror, with a segment of the population taking aggressive stances of martial patriotism and nationalist pride, the LAVA House provided a sanctuary of aesthetic alternatives to the jingoistic tone of the day. It saw its circumstances as eerily reminiscent of Hans Arp's description of the Great War. The founding member of the Dada movement in Zurich once said:

Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While the guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages and wrote poems with all our might. We were seeking an art based on fundamentals, to cure the madness of the age, and a new order of things that would restore the balance between Heaven and Hell. We

had a dim premonition that power mad gangsters would one day use art itself as a way of decaying men's minds.¹⁹



Figure 14. – Artists at work in the LAVA House.

LAVA too saw this madness, but instead of assuming the passive role of blocking the outside world out, LAVA's artists bravely identified the situation, refusing to let it fall from public attention and scrutiny. Their acts challenged the validity of unquestioning obedience to authority and nationalism or as social critic Hunter S. Thompson called it, "flag-sucking".

¹⁹ Oliver P Richmond, "Dadaism and the peace differend," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 01-OCT-07 http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-34351291_ITM 1.

In the dark and scary days after September 11, while the American government showed itself as a military state, another quote, one from the French philosopher Diderot in his *Encyclopede*, resonated in the LAVA atmosphere:

Everything belongs together in the human understanding; the obscurity of one idea spreads over those that surround it. An error throws shadows over neighboring truths, and if it happens that there should be in society men interested in forming, as it were, centers of shadow, even the people will find itself plunged into a profound darkness.²⁰

Just nine days after 9/11, in an airplane hangar, there was an art exhibit called *The Hangar Show* for which several LAVA artists had been preparing work to exhibit for weeks. In addition to the anxiety of being in a hangar while all of America's airplanes had been grounded and locked down, there were multiple eerie parallels between the events in New York and Washington DC and the art that LAVA artists had planned, were working on, or had completed at the time of the attacks.

As a powerful example of art's tendency to presciently precede life, one work used Diderot's words and painted them with roofing tar across over 300 square feet of architectural blueprints that had been quilted together.²¹ This was shown with the huge *Statute of Liberty*, made of building materials shown in figure 11. Also shown in the installation were: a quartered police car with a reflective "Emergency 911" sticker on its side; a shredded crucifix montage; and a painting of Manhattan that had been found in the trash 45 minutes after the towers fell to the ground. Two weeks before, Bart Herre created an upside down hanging roof with an American flag and a design taken from a bomber wing, showing bombs in rows (as if to count its kills) with the words

²⁰ As quoted in Melvin Lasky, *Utopia and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976) vi.

²¹ See LAVA History Calendar in LAVA Archive Folder B1.01 and Hangar Show in LAVA Archive Folder B1.20 for more details on these artworks.

“ABUNDANCE OF STRENGTH” painted at its bottom edge. LAVA artists Thomas Brown had created a pair of balancing figures that amazingly resembled a couple who had leapt from one of the burning buildings. Much of the art LAVA created was dedicated to exploration of similar themes to expose these “centers of shadow,” as Diderot put it.



Figure 15. – Art at the Hangar Show, Bowman Field, September 22, 2001.

In a complex way, LAVA’s audience was comprised of both its visitors and the artists themselves, as they were also bearing witness to their own manifestations. In a sense, the artist’s role at the LAVA House was comparable to that of an alchemist’s.

Artist Carol Becker explains that artists:

...are inevitably caught in such societal confusions because they are so often the ones who alchemize personal vision, give it shape, and place it, transformed, into the public arena. Artists also frequently take public concern... and work it through the self, demonstrate how it has affected them, and re-present it to the public, anticipating the debate it will encourage. It is often in this transition, transformation, and trans-substantiation into matter, as artists

attempt to move the idea or issue out from the self and connect it to society, that conflict arises.²²

Subversive, anti-war and anti-empire discourse were certainly not LAVA's sole focus. Daily life included community building activities as well: gardening, playing horseshoes, carefree art-making, small celebrations and parties, grilling and generally hanging out together, again evident in the photos and videos. The LAVA group had no expectations of its artists, who were free to do as they pleased in the warehouse. The intentions of the group continually evolved, yet a clear ideal to exist and thrive as a non-commercial entity of artists, attuned to the needs of both the individual and those of the group remained at its core. The collective consciously focused the center of its energies on the act of making art and felt that the simple expression of creativity was a revolutionary act in this age of mechanical reproduction. Artistic exploration and digging for a deeper purpose took priority over simply creating art for the market.

B. LAVA and Alternative Art Making Practices

In 1985 Suzi Gablik argued in her book, *Has Modernism Failed?* that in the advent of modern art, the original roots of the notoriously individualistic Abstract Expressionist movement were in actuality self-consciously dissident, and its artists were seeking autonomy from a modern society dominated by a love of property. She writes, "The original meaning of the term avant-garde implied a double process of aesthetic innovation and social revolt; it took the form of an estranged elite of artists and

²² Carol Becker and Anne Weins, ed. *The Artist in Society: Rights, Roles, Responsibilities* (Chicago: New Art Examiner 1995) 57.

intellectuals who chose to live on the fringe of society.”²³ A problem arose, however, when modernism in art evolved into the “failure” her book title suggested, by discontinuing this dissidence to become part of a commodity system. This critique is important to understanding modernist art history, but the book ends, problems unresolved, leaving much to be desired in terms of finding art’s higher purpose.

Later in 1991, Gablik predicted in another book, *The Reenchantment of Art* that “we will see in the next few years... a new paradigm based on the notion of participation, in which art will begin to redefine itself in terms of social relatedness and ecological healing, so that artists will gravitate toward different activities, attitudes and roles than those that operated under the aesthetics of modernism.”²⁴ Exactly a decade later, LAVA answered this call to action by basing its purpose upon these progressive ideas.

As LAVA pursued its art-making and explored art’s possibilities, a variety of thematic styles and ideas had surfaced and were apparent in the group’s expressive activity in multiple mediums such as video art, sculpture, painting, stone carving, and drawing, to name a few. LAVA artists soon noticed that a number of similar activities were occurring elsewhere in the world, as other artists too were creating messages to disrupt the monotony of the average citizen’s routine life. As LAVA searched out artists, like-minded spaces, and similar groups, locally and nationally, they became conscious of the fact that since the turn of the new millennium a quickly growing yet informal movement of innovative new approaches to art-making and art viewing had manifested itself. These practices, many of which had evolved out of graffiti and street art, were visible on WoosterCollective.com. Daily this site showcased subversive, innovative

²³ Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed?* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985) 22.

²⁴ Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 27.

graffiti and guerrilla artists working under tag name pseudonyms. Every week, dozens of original ideas and major innovations were viewed on Wooster by an untold number of artists worldwide, including LAVA. Street art and other alternative art-making practices were being widely adopted by these artists for their subversive communication capabilities. Graffiti could be seen all over the LAVA House, from aerosol murals, to stencils, to wheat pastings. Many talented artists came to the LAVA House to paint the outside walls, as it was an open environment for expression that may otherwise result in legal problems elsewhere.

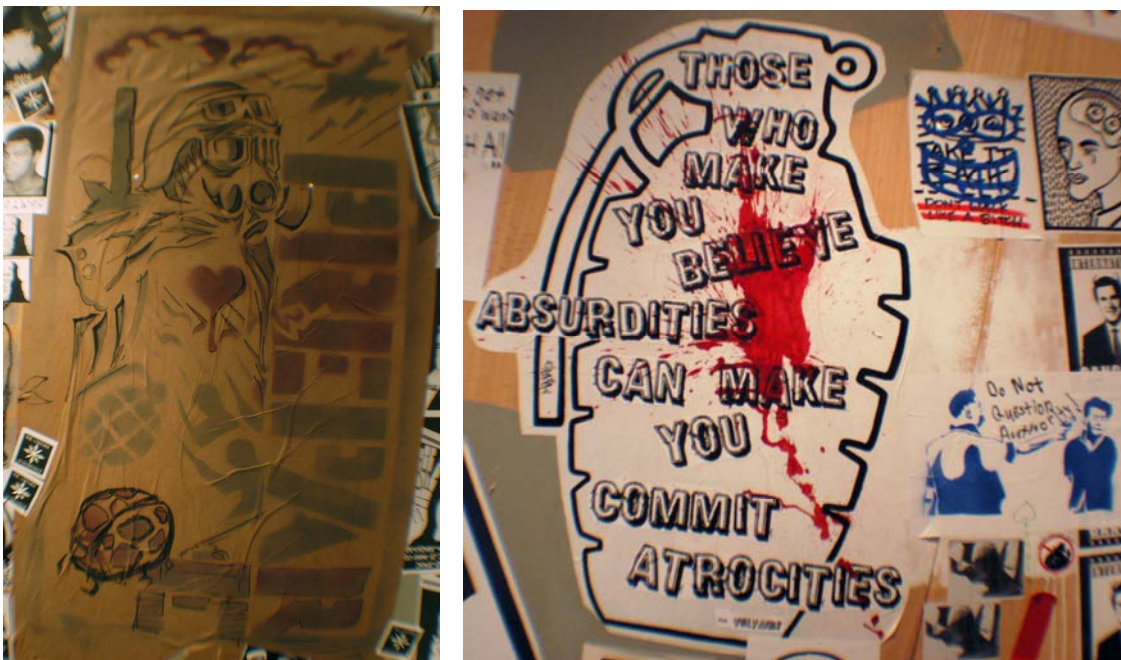


Figure 16. and 17. LAVA artist Chappell's *PREPARE*, LAVA artist under the name "Hearts" quotes Voltaire in a street art show.

Within a couple of years of this collective living, the LAVA artists began to seek out spaces that were functioning similarly to their own developing project. They visited one such place in Columbus, Ohio, but found no one there from whom to gather information or share ideas. LAVA artists Hallie and Aron had accidentally discovered a space called "The Ark" in New Orleans and videotaped it to show the other artists for

inspiration, but efforts to stay in touch were fruitless. On two separate road trips, visiting a dozen cities between Kentucky and the west coast, only a small number of like-minded venues or alternative spaces were identified. This isolation was somewhat discouraging, which left the organization feeling alone in its endeavors, considering the massive power of the social issues the artists felt they were up against.

This feeling of solitary confinement ended in May 2005 when several of the LAVA artists visiting Chicago happened upon a convergence festival called Version>05, whose mission was to celebrate, identify, discuss, and act while showcasing emerging, progressive trends in art, politics, technology and music. In their local publication, *Lumpen*, the event's founders explained that throughout the weekend, "We'll witness multiple possibilities for the future, and leave ready to act."²⁵ This was a landmark moment for the LAVA artists as they knew with certainty that were others out in their communities, making art and music to enrich their immediate cultural environment. It appeared that there was an "upswelling" movement in this progressive underground culture, completely independent from the commercial art and entertainment worlds.

In 2007, Chicago's Green Lantern Press published *Phonebook 2007/2008 An Annual Directory for Alternative Art Spaces* as a resource to bridge the gaps between various independent projects. The listings included locations, contact information and annual programming for nation-wide artspaces.²⁶ The publication of this book represents a culmination of the history of alt.spaces and a developing infrastructure that supports the process and ideas that LAVA sought to encourage. In *Phonebook* are listings for dozens

²⁵ Ed Marszewski, ed., "Version>Dark Matter," *Lumpen Magazine* 108, (2008): 49.

²⁶ Caroline Picard, ed., *Phonebook 2007/2008 An Annual Directory for Alternative Artspaces*. First Edition. (Chicago: Green Lantern, 2007) ii.

of spaces and groups around the country, allowing each an opportunity to inform others of its activities. The diversity of the organizations presented in the book makes it clear that there is no homogenous quality to these projects, yet a common thread of intentional effort to influence local culture runs through them all.

There are also a number of short essays included in this inaugural volume of *Phonebook* that initiate a discourse regarding the deeper issues surrounding this movement's beginnings, infrastructure, cultural work, underground libraries, art history, and the nature of alt.spaces²⁷ in general. One essay in the book, called "The Chance Loft-Party Encounter of a Sewing-Machine and an Umbrella, or Our Alt.Space Adventures in Chicago," by Version>05 Fest and *Lumpen* Magazine founder and editor Ed Marszewski with Matt Malooly begins:

"Creating an alt.space has become almost as popular as starting a band. And that's a good thing. This recent development can be seen as a generational response to the monoculturization of America, the democratization of art practices, the expansion of countercultural art worlds into everyday life, the intentional creation of a community or even the desire of some to start an art career. For some of us it's likely about all of the above and more."

Later the authors state that their own space's mission was:

"...to help build the parallel networks that compete against and/or simply ignore the Official Culture of commercial galleries and government, museum or academic institutions. In fact, we hoped these powers would become irrelevant under an onslaught of counterculture."²⁸

²⁷ "Alt.SPACE is an international, transdisciplinary network of self-organized, non-institutional research groups with the collective aim to explore artistic and other forms of cultural production through a variety of different media and through a wide range of contextual, theoretical and other approaches." E:vent Network.org. 7 Aug. 2008 <<http://www.eventnetwork.org.uk/online/artists/320>>

²⁸ Ed Marszewski and Matt Malooly, "The Chance Loft-Party Encounter of a Sewing Machine and an Umbrella, or Our Alt.Space Adventures in Chicago," *Phonebook 2007/2008 An Annual Directory for Alternative Artspace* (Chicago: Green Lantern, 2007) 83.

The majority of the spaces and groups listed in *Phonebook* describe themselves as heavily involved in topics of political philosophizing and criticism, the social aspects of culture, art-making, creativity and other countercultural activity, similar to many of the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art's interests and involvements. Taking into consideration the surfacing of these spaces in recent years and the enthusiasm and dedication the people running them exude, this network is likely here to stay and is apt to continue growing in numbers. With so many self-sufficient groups and spaces just now coming to light, the potential influence of this movement we are yet to see. With the positive reinforcement and strength in numbers, these cultural workers will surely find more innovative ways to collaborate and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their work as art makers, culture changers, and technological/ ecological innovators. As testament to this positive self-perception of their efforts and staying power, at least one other space besides LAVA, is making an effort to archive and preserve the legacy of its activities and the history of the organization.

Listed in *Phonebook* and evidently one of the grandfathers of many of the newer spaces listed, ABC No Rio is a well known group that has focused on art and activism since its inception in 1980. The biggest legacy of this space is that it has influenced and inspired dozens of projects. In fact, it was a significant player in the beginning of the BRYCC House, one of Louisville's alternative spaces and an important institution for the LAVA House's beginnings.²⁹ By following the alt.space directory and visiting ABC No

²⁹ BRYCC House co-founder Jamie Miller stated in an interview with the author that "When the BRYCC House was in the planning stages we already knew we wanted to model it on ABC No Rio. We wanted a youth/community center that had music shows but also art shows, a computer lab, and so on. Several, BRYCC House volunteers took a trip to New York City to meet with ABC No Rio organizers to ask them about their model of a community center."

Rio's website, one can find information on ABC No Rio's home page announcing news that in April 2008 they began organizing their organization's history by bringing in "Archivist Maneesha Patel to prepare for public use the materials in ABC No Rio's archive. These records include documents... "founding" documents; meeting minutes and planning/production notes; publicity and promotional materials; artist files; grant requests; correspondence; financial and legal documents; and documentation of events and activity. The material to be processed encompasses the period from 1980 to 2005."

Communities and organizations like ABC No Rio laid a foundation for activists, artists and groups like LAVA today. Yet, despite the fact that many utopian and experimental communities have existed for decades and even centuries before, the sheer scale of networking and interaction in this new progressive underground culture is unprecedented. This activity is largely due to the new millennium's nature of communications, particularly the internet and World Wide Web. With these new technologies, the LAVA artists were able to build their own websites to present themselves to the world of creative individuals and groups, as well as to research new possibilities for the culture.³⁰

On June 22, 2004, LAVA participated in a teleconference call with film maker Michael Moore that connected people across the entire United States. This event, organized by MoveOn.org had two goals: to get more people to see Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11* and to organize volunteers to register voters for the 2004 presidential election. Video communication was pulled up on a LAVA House computer and projected onto a large video screen for the full audience to see. A map on the screen showed all of the thousands of different "parties" as blips on a map. This feeling of being directly

³⁰ These LAVA websites as well as all the ones that mentioned the LAVA House over the years are in the LAVA Archives Folders D1.05, D1.06, and D1.07.

connected provided visitors to feel the satisfaction and sense of unity of being with like-minded people around the nation.³¹

The ability of ideas to flow so easily and quickly from one space to another, for artists and activists to have instant access to each other across long distances or have the knowledge to visit spaces in other cities as the LAVA artists were doing is profound. The social implications of a group's activities being able to inspire creative thought and impact society, either on a personal level or in the larger cultural scale, are inestimable.



Figure 18. *LAVA*, spray paint on oil, Art in the Garden, Victoria Gardens.

³¹ Video of this event is viewable in the Digital LAVA Archive D1.03.

C. Artifacts, Interpretation, and Personal Motivation

It's likely that if this archive of the LAVA organization and the LAVA House did not exist, that these objects would slowly find their way into trash cans, to the bottoms of boxes without context, or end up somehow ruined. Their significance as a group would be lost and it is likely that the history accounted for in this thesis would never be available. Perhaps the LAVA House would surface in conversational references and maybe would remain important in a few people's minds... until taken to the grave. This group of objects and this document provide a primary source for research in the fields of political science, art history, art-making, social anthropology, alternative culture and spaces, collectivist group-making and practice, archival practice, adaptive reuse of buildings, public art, community practices, and critical and curatorial studies.

These remaining LAVA artifacts represent an entire lifestyle, community, and creative process. They will provide inspiration for others to tap into the spirit that motivated their creation by the LAVA participants. The LAVA archive can inform others about how to perpetuate alternative lifestyles. It can aid others in creating an archive. Perhaps it can simply serve as a model for documenting creative practices. Regardless, LAVA's style of living artfully and communally can be seen as a corrective to the homogenizing influence of mass consumer culture and the self-destructive state of mind that serves this purpose. The education that LAVA sought to impart was aimed at countering destructive attitudes in our mass culture.

It may seem strange to some that certain odd items in the collection were included, but their presence represents LAVA's non-traditional and sometimes eccentric operations. One may wonder about a sign that states, "Do not draw on the bathroom

wall” until, looking at pictures, it was noticed that it was attached to a bathroom full of hundreds ‘writings on the wall.’ At first glance, one may see an insignificant piece of paper note with a phone number, a sloppy sketch of a building plan or a simple roll of toilet paper with a printout of some sort wrapped around it, but in all their “weirdness,” all of these materials reflect LAVA’s idiosyncrasies and inform its story. Inside the boxes, piles of various shows’ hand-bills demonstrate its guerrilla marketing tactics. A refusal to adhere to organizational norms is documented by the well thought out forms that were created, forsaken and never used. The LAVA personality shines through because of the inclusion of each of these artifacts in the archive.

To the user of these objects, both a broad view and a focused look at LAVA is provided by not only this document, but also by the Summary Documentation in the LAVA archive. The *Calendar of LAVA History* is a comprehensive overview of many daily operations and events executed by the artists and the organization. Looking at the written records, notes, videos, photographs and the artwork will provide additional insights into the character and mentality of the LAVA group that led to both its successes and failures. Personal notes and journals from the artists record information about their views, responsibilities, emotions, art ideas, and general personalities for the viewer’s inspection and reaction.



Figure 19. A small sample of the photographs that reside in the archive.

CHAPTER III

LAVA HISTORY: A Personal Narrative

A. Inspiration

Upon beginning LAVA's story, acknowledgment is due to several parties responsible for inspiring the initiation of what would evolve into the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art. The story of LAVA's coming-to-be started long before a building had been found. For example, in 1998 a space called 953 Gallery, in Louisville's Smoketown neighborhood, was the location for throwing underground local art and music parties. These events were important as they filled a void in Louisville's culture at that time. The city's underground music scene had recently witnessed almost all of its regular venues closing—long gone were the days of multiple shows a week with hundreds in attendance. When thinking of this dry spell, the importance of 953 Gallery's warehouse parties cannot be overstated. Simultaneously, this brand of mixing music and art was expanding into other spaces as well. For example, Mia Fredrick was collecting local art, and featuring it on the walls of the space she owned on Main Street between 1st and 2nd Streets.³² Activity like this provided a welcome alternative to the over-populated bar scene of Baxter Avenue, and it was an essential element to Louisville's long running and

³² Diane Heinleman's review of alternative showing spaces in Louisville said that, "Such high-energy enthusiasm started with the 20-something art crowd at 953, so-named for the studio space at 953 S. Clay St. There, invitation-only, late-night art parties — or "events," the preferred term — were pioneered in 1998. Nearly three years later, 953 shows signs of a more public awareness." Diane Heinleman, "Gallery gig: 'Hangar Show' at Bowman Field and Two Other Exhibitions Highlight Alternative Art Scene," *Courier-Journal* 16 Sept. 2001, Sunday ed.:I1+.

evolving creative culture. There is not enough space here to recognize all the important roles and individuals in this story.

Many looked forward to these social affairs and loved these impressive projects, but for me there was something missing. Although the 953 folks had had plenty of trouble with the police breaking up their events, I desired something even more challenging to people's perceptions, even something with a sense of danger. I had experienced two semesters at the University of New Mexico in 1998 and 1999, receiving a crash course in social activism and social awareness—something completely absent from my life in Kentucky. The only critical voice coming from youth and aimed at questioning the local and national status quo were *BRAT Magazine* and the BRYCC House (Bardstown Road Youth Cultural Center), both of which struck cool progressive/anarchist postures, but were also notorious for their stand-offish attitudes, leaving the place nearly unapproachable for visitors. Furthermore, the BRYCC House seemed to foster a certain anti-aesthetic quality and although it had an art collective, it lacked any cutting-edge art activity. Although I highly regarded both, as I longed for the fun, social aspect of the art rock scene and also the critical eye and voice of the anarchists at BRYCC house, I wanted more.

As I approached the end of my BFA degree at the University of Louisville in April 2001, I was concerned that we graduates would soon become isolated artists, with none of the support that we currently had. Then I discovered Suzi Gablik's book *Has Modernism Failed?* which one night inspired me to write a feverish manifesto. I envisioned a creative community adding support to local culture while also giving a home to progressive ideas and conversation. It would push past the failures of

postmodernism, bringing people to art and art to people, reflecting their lives back to them and thereby deprogramming and unconditioning the public mind. A community of artists was necessary to investigate new functions for art, and discover new ways to reestablish the artist's role as a relevant and respected participant in society.

I also wished to experiment with creative processes, explore the boundaries of applying an artist's vision and to uphold the notion that artists can make positive contributions to reinvigorate social development. In past centuries artists were highly valued and broadly accepted as relevant to cultural processes. The Renaissance and the Enlightenment both heavily relied on the vision of artists. Although I saw a number of artists thinking deeply, many artists in Louisville had become merely craft hobbyists or were imitating styles of the international art world. I envisioned an artistic Renaissance in Louisville.

Manifesto: a public declaration of intentions, motives, views

04-2001

I must surround myself with people who are ultimately dedicated to and devoted to pushing at the system and cutting the chords that allow for its puppeteering and manipulation. These aims will come through by the means of Art in its many forms and facets. Art will be the vehicle through which the group will take action and create revolt.

The group will be anchored in searching for the new function of art as we move beyond 2001. We must discover why we are creating and what our creations mean. Deep exploration and documentation of discoveries remain vital to the evolution of the group.

The group must clearly define itself in a unanimous, and coherent fashion. Commitment is integral to all transcendent efforts [and] the vitality of responsibilities lies within a context of taking initiative and providing for the group. Egos, although common in the artist, must be left at the door. Collaboration and contribution as well as communication are the underlying

themes, whether they are functioning in the context of individual work or in a team-oriented effort.

A space must be found in order to provide an environment to work in, to create freely in and to simply exist within. Environmental aesthetics are very necessary to consider when catering to the needs of the group. A common contribution of materials such as furniture/appliances must be reconciled and unless the space is evacuated, these material contributions become communal and non-possessed. Tools and machinery will remain the property of the original owner; yet the idea of sharing and assisting lie at the core of the collective.

The space will become a haven for Art and ideas, a place to bring ideas and openness. To build an aura of creative energy and intense productivity are the essence and goal of the entire effort. The project lies in a direction aimed at unconditioning the public mind. Money shall not become a dividing factor. This, above all, is the most crucial element to keep in mind. Work remains the property of the owner and will be respected and protected by all. The intent of the Art will be in terms of finding a way to bring the social aspect of the Arts back to life ³³

B. Initiation

Six weeks after drafting the manifesto, a space was identified in a vacant warehouse in Germantown, the heart of the city. Soon after that, I partnered with an old friend, Bart Herre, whose father owned the old building, and together we began recruiting artists and marketing the space, an empty 8,500 square foot shell. We wanted to lease it as both living and/or studio space. In the early months we invited friends over nightly, built structures, made art, partied, went to work, finally slept, and then did it all over again the next day. It felt natural to live freely in this huge, wonderful space, dreaming of the possibilities that lay before us. Shortly thereafter, the then-meager organization began accommodating events, local bands and arts groups. Through this early process, we

³³ Original handwritten version and later drafts of this manifesto available in LAVA Archive Folder B1.04.

scrapped and scrambled to keep afloat as we simply made do with what little we had. The manifesto simply served as a roadmap, giving us a general direction in which we wanted to head, despite the trials of having few resources. It sparked the assembly process of drawing artists, art, and culture to the warehouse.

C. Evolution and Operations

After first drawing in artists Thomas Brown, Matt Weir, and Dave Fry, then a few other talented young artists and the Squallis Puppeteers, we had a small number of meetings, and really turned on the heat. Bart, Thomas, and I organized, and quickly became the “Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art” (LAVA)—our space, “the LAVA House”. The LAVA House became our headquarters as our creativity and dreams for what the space could someday look like kept us excited and talking about ideas and sketching the possibilities on paper. The space was vital to our envisioning of new possibilities in the world. The more we worked in our studios and worked together to develop the space into a functional operation, the more we came to identify with and maintain a close relationship to the beautiful building. In many ways, the building and the group were one at heart, yet the organization belonged to no one person or space. The idea was that the organization would never be completely tied down to one space in terms of where we would work, so there was opportunity to move the LAVA energy outward. Although we were granted much freedom in the warehouse, the rental situation and relationship to the landlord was at times tumultuous.

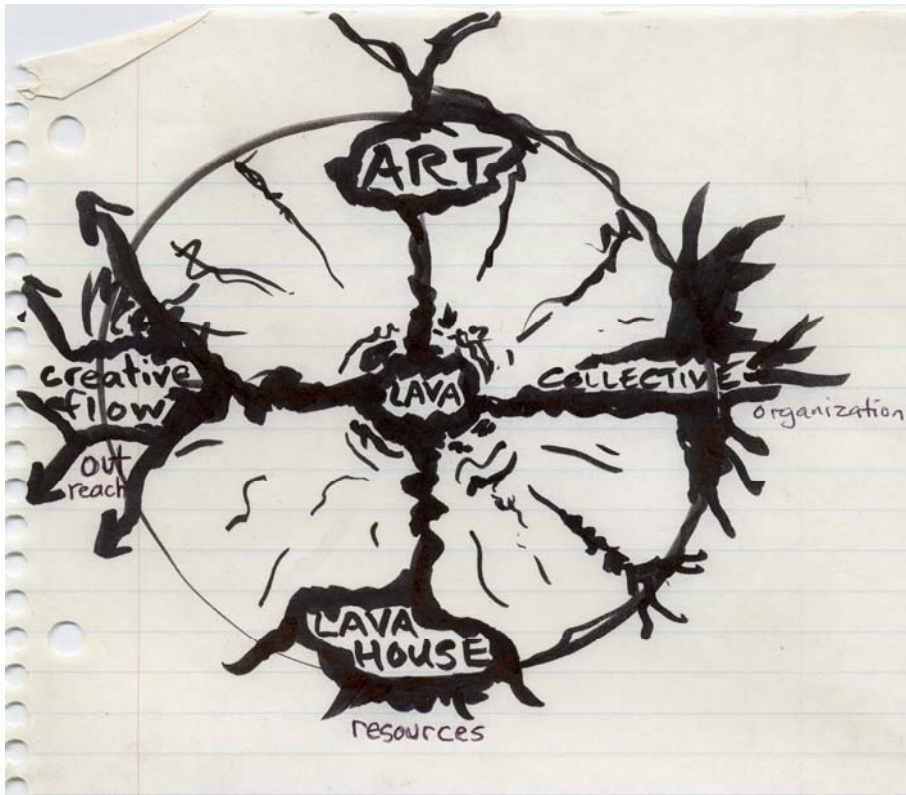


Figure 20. Sketch of volcano, from above, embodying the “Four LAVA Elements”- ART, the collective (organization), the LAVA House (resources), and creative flow (outreach), drawn August 2004 by Aron Conaway.

We continued diligently through our first year, financially struggling, but working hard. A core group of artists slowly arrived to rent space and express their artistic visions through the artists’ collective. In the beginning there was little in the way of equipment and tools; at the end there were nine private studios, storage areas, several thousand square feet of common area, many shared resources and tools, and three nice living spaces. Over the next several years we served the Louisville community as a venue for music shows, artist-organized exhibitions, and independent film screenings; as a meeting place for social action organizations and projects; and the group would work together to organize a number of shows as well as participate in others’ events across the city at large.

The manifesto evolved to be a more universal call to all of the LAVA members:

LAVA, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art, is an artist collective. Comprised of diverse individuals, we are dedicated to creating an inspiring environment for our community. We promote convergences of artistic efforts and push for an evolution in the Arts. We are Vanguard, and provide a sanctuary for the different and the challenging. We are dedicated to supporting the underground arts and music in Louisville.

We are ultimately devoted to finding alternatives to society's norms. We are counter culture and we invite all to move forward with us in evolving 'the collective experience'. We work to remind others that we all carry the power to change the way we perceive the world, thus being the means and power that will change the world. We are a peaceful revolution, focusing on evolution. Art is the vehicle by which we take action and revolt. We know that life is art & art is life. Through intentional communal living, we are changing the fabric of our own existence. We invite outsiders, like-minded or not, to come witness our experience of collaboration, hopefully inspiring us and also being inspired.

Having converged in 2001, at the turn of the new millennium, we are dedicated to giving meaning to Art's new and renewed functions. As artists, labor to discover why we are creating and what our manifestations mean. Deep exploration and documentation of our discoveries have benefited the evolution of the group.

Our commitment is indispensable to the entire experiment. Our responsibilities include taking initiative and providing for the group. These qualities push us forward to remain ahead of yesterday's news. Collaboration, contribution, and especially communication are major themes in our team effort. Most importantly we carry the willingness to lend a hand when another is in need.

We work in many facets on many projects. We are not bound by space, but exist in many areas and forms. We exist as a family and as individuals. Our personal efforts collectively make up a movement. We are only a small part of a larger story that will give rise to a world that only hope and positive thinking can produce. We network and cooperate with other individuals and organizations to weave the tapestry of tomorrow.

We understand that we can be a force of change. We wish for you to join us to do what you can in your corner, improving the world for the future.³⁴

At its largest, in 2004, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art comprised these twelve core members, who met on a regular basis to discuss activities and projects. They were:

- Chad Balster
- Joe Barlund
- Aron Conaway
- Michelle Glasnovic
- Bart Herre
- Chad Hayes
- Thalon Hubbell
- Hallie Jones
- Greg Martin
- Kristin Shelor
- Shannon Stelzer
- Willie Tash

Artists worked in various committees, focusing on large scale group projects, decisions were made collectively by a one-member/one-vote consensus process (although pragmatism sometimes required acting alone). The frequency of meetings varied from once every other week to twice a week, depending on how engaged and active the artists involved were feeling. There were occasional attempts to impart a regimen of order and standardization to the LAVA operations, but there was never consistent follow through. Forms for compiling information for upcoming shows were created; however, only one was ever filled out, as the individual artists preferred to do it their way. Despite this unpredictable order of operations, the creative activity was never compromised.

³⁴ Original handwritten version and later drafts of this manifesto available in LAVA Archive Folder B1.04

LAVA served as a creativity incubator; open to, embracing, and supporting all forms of creativity:

- Visual Art (various mediums)
- Music
- Performance
- Theater
- Digital Media
- Engineering
- Dance
- General Creative Experimentation
- Political Discourse

The Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art always functioned on multiple levels of activity and certainly never adhered to any one philosophy. LAVA's aesthetic and operating styles were inspired by numerous philosophies, movements, and schools, yet there was an unspoken foundation of DIY ethic that had come out of the punk scene. Whether we were designing fliers, distributing marketing materials, building structures, creating websites, or decorating the warehouse, we acted on intuition and, when necessary, educated ourselves on how to best accomplish any task at hand. This allowed us to learn, be efficient with our time and accomplish a great deal of work, despite limited financial resources. Much of this work was done as a group, challenging the concept of the individual as being more important than the group.

The organization never did become an incorporated entity over the years. At one point under the pressure of a mix-up regarding the name LAVA and a threat of appropriation of the LAVA acronym by the Louisville Visual Arts Network (VAN),³⁵ LAVA did fill out a "Doing Business As (DBA)" form once, and paid the fee to reserve

³⁵ Visual Arts Network (VAN) – Louisville gallery organization, attempted to appropriate the name LAVA for their organization. This caused some trouble. For more see, LAVA Archive Folder B1.13

the title. Beyond gathering, but then never filling out Articles of Incorporation paperwork and a short lived attempt to form a Board of Directors, we never took any other major steps to become a legal entity. The decision was based on two different reasons—one, the sheer amount of work and excessive number of hoops required to jump through to get non-profit status—and two, we perceived it a threat that might restrain us in our efforts to be outspoken critics on social and political topics.

D. Life

The warehouse's unique environment served several functions, not the least of which was the strong sense of community it engendered. It helped the artists avoid reclusiveness and fulfilled social needs for interaction and support, which interestingly, fostered inspiration among individuals in their creative processes. A healthy dose of friendly competition with other arts groups as well as between LAVA artists themselves was inherent and ultimately contributed to artistic growth. The close-quarters provided a forum for interaction with other artists and encouraged feedback, criticism, mutual admiration and respect. The presence of a broad spectrum of mediums and processes also led to a collective knowledge base.

Given that the artists at the LAVA House hadn't fully established art-making careers and, in many cases, were not commercially driven, the concept of "creative community" was the gratifying substance that bonded us and kept the experience fresh, exciting, and, as we felt, revolutionary.

E. Resources

Sharing was a major part of the LAVA community's ability to branch out and explore various mediums and techniques. LAVA House resident Bill Christie was usually on hand to lend his tools and vast knowledge of construction methods and knowledge to the LAVA artists.

Shared resources acquired and provided by the LAVA House included:

- Photographic darkroom
- Metal shop for casting and fabrication
- Stone carving tools
- Various power tools and saws
- Welding equipment
- Ceramics equipment and kilns
- Glass slumping equipment
- Small jewelry kiln
- Small scale glass-art studio
- Pneumatic tools and sand blaster
- Video production and multimedia computers
- High-speed internet access
- LAVA server network



Figure 21. Community metal working space in the LAVA House.

F. Events and Impact

LAVA artists worked together on numerous events, significantly enhancing the cultural life of the city. The collective curated frequent artist-organized exhibitions and group shows, theme and concept-based shows, combination art and music events, film screenings, and fundraisers. The activity at the LAVA House created an atmosphere of excitement and possibility that spread throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. A trailblazing fixture in the Germantown neighborhood, it arguably gave rise to many local businesses and organizations owned by young adults; the Atomic Saucer, the Pour Haus, Hope Mills Studios, Sojourn Church, The Healing House and Studios, and the Nach Bar.³⁶ It served as a meeting place for locals from across the city and out-of-towners alike, providing a welcoming venue for open dialogue and a respite from the bar scene and other commercial entertainment.

The Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art also worked with many other community groups and extended its creative reach by collaborating on events city-wide. Members worked on several festivals (AlterNation, Forecastle, Jefferson Community College (JCC) Arts Festival, and Victoria Gardens Art Show at St. James); public art projects (Gallopaloosa, Studio 2000, Heads Up Kentucky, Studio 2000, a Kentucky Arts Council-sponsored public art think-tank, and helped spearhead a drive for a city-wide Percent-for-Art policy); produced various art and music shows (Portland Festival Arts Building, Kentucky Theater Project, Swanson-Reed Contemporary Gallery, Louisville Visual Arts Association (LVAA) Water Tower Gallery, the Comedy Caravan, Nelligan Hall); spoke publicly about the LAVA effort (Louisville Public and Community Arts

³⁶ “Germantown,” *U R HERE Louisville, LEO’s Insiders Guide for Insiders* 2008: 18-19.

Group, Mayors Neighborhood Summit, Neighborhood Institute); and pioneered an attempt to relocate artists to Louisville's Portland neighborhood.

LAVA hosted and encouraged many emerging and non-commercial artists, musicians, performers, and other creative individuals; those seeking a venue for expression, access to affordable studio space, and tools to turn their artistic visions into realities. The LAVA House's activities added to Louisville's quality of life, making it a more interesting and desirable place to live and work.

LAVA's annual Halloween parties were planned months in advance so that hundreds of people could dress up in outrageous costumes and party hard in a non-commercial environment. These events were highly anticipated around the underground scene. There were a number of LAVA parties that hosted somewhere from 300 to 600 people each. During of these events, the space was open for free conversation in the midst of progressive, anti-war, environmentally conscious surroundings. Its activities i.e., film screenings, art openings, and acts of creative public protest—were sought out opportunities for Louisville's youth to gather.

Long before Iraq became an issue, LAVA was speaking out against the nation's reaction to the September 11th and the invasion of Afghanistan. Days after the buildings fell, there were stencils stating, "No More War" all around the city, put there by LAVA members in anticipation of the government's militaristic agenda taking hold of our national reality. Two months before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, LAVA organized a trip road trip to Washington DC to join tens of thousands in a huge anti-war protest.

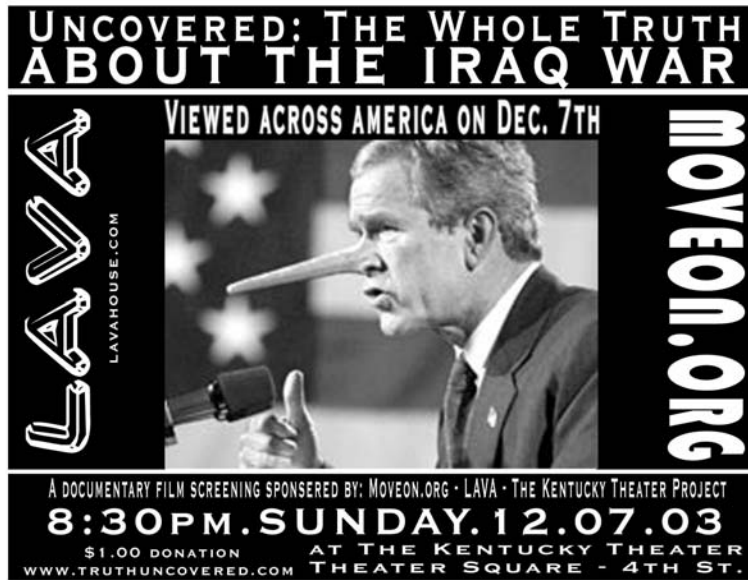


Figure 22. – Flier for LAVA and MoveOn.org film showing at Kentucky Theater on 4th Street.

We hosted films for the community ranging from MoveOn.org organized events and showings of *This is what Democracy Looks Like* and *The Fourth World War*, to art house films. Mostly revolutionary uprising and challenge to the capitalist system’s negative aftermaths were the topics of art and social dialogue. LAVA confronted environmental issues in its “Beauty and the Beast: Nature vs. The American Dream” show at the Kentucky Theater in 2003. LAVA’s moniker became “Art for Evolution”, as it saw an ideal vision off in the distance and strived to create discourse about how to get there.

All in all, there were approximately 20 art shows, around ten political events, and almost 30 music shows over the years at the LAVA House or in other places where LAVA mobilized events.



Figure 23. Art for Evolution Show card for April 24, 2004 LAVA Spring Art Show.

G. Phases

According to the current interests of the various members, LAVA existed in constantly evolving ways. Some would work solo, outside of the collective, while others would pursue activities outside the LAVA collective, then meet back in the middle to collaborate on new projects. There were major shifts in the organization also marked by distinct phases. In July 2003 several of the LAVA artists held four art and music shows at the Comedy Caravan in a partnership to record and distribute performances. The endeavor was titled “The LAVA House Art Project,” but didn’t pick up very much momentum. The individuals involved quickly lost interest and the project came to a halt.

In July of 2004, the landlord informed the group that the Fire Marshall had found the LAVA House in violation of city building codes and regulations, after which all events were prohibited on the premises. We promptly teamed up with the Portland Now! Neighborhood Association and throughout September and October cleaned up the Portland Festival Arts building on 34th and Northwestern Parkway for events. We didn’t expect, however, that this redirection would ultimately strain the collaborative nature of the core group and splinter it into various factions. Events continued to occur in Portland,

but only a few of the artists from LAVA dedicated themselves to moving in this direction.

Only one Portland event, a hugely successful Halloween Party of 2004, was considered an “official” LAVA House event produced by the group.³⁷ Over the next year, LAVA would occasionally appear in press and in gallery guides, but the communal spirit had fallen victim to inspections, permits and licenses (and resulting internal disagreements). For three years further attempts to rekindle that spirit in a new building or with new participants would fail for lack of financial resources. A major issue from the beginning was the issue of renting versus owning a space. Much of the instability and uncertainty might have been avoided by a collective ownership situation rather than a hierarchical one. The idea of setting up a condominium structure, where a building would be cut into slices for various artists to own would inform future projects for several LAVA artists in the following years.

As the LAVA collective dwindled in activity, we all went our separate directions. My wife, Hallie and I remained dedicated to the LAVA House, bought a nearby house and then a third of Nelligan Hall, a social club in Portland, while we nurtured our own artistic careers and pursued masters’ degrees. Artist Shannon Stelzer and Willie Tash moved out of the studios in 2005 and started the Green House Art Project. This project, which also supported artists and musicians, was on Frankfort Avenue for a period, then moved over to Bardstown Road in 2008. Kristin Shelor put her energy into the new Brick House on 2nd Street. Thalon Hubbell moved out and started a Bike Shop business on First and Market Streets. Greg Martin headed to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn to earn an MFA in Art. Bart Herre and Hannah Cameron cleaned up the living spaces and were making it

³⁷ See *Portland Anchor*, *LEO Magazine*, *photographs*, *video* for more details.

more comfortable for themselves to live there. Seed, a bike punk and glass artist/musician moved in during LAVA's final year and was having small get-togethers, which was by far the most lively activity of this phase. Mechanics Stuart Barr and Scott Belcher began an auto repair business, alongside the several artists who remained at the studios until the fire swept them away. Mr. Bill got his daily "Mr. Bill Special," which was a half pint of vodka (actually 2-3 a day), a pack of smokes and a scratch off. We are certain that Bill's carelessness caused the fire.

H. Facilities and Satellites

Although a haven for beautiful, fun, and inspiring creative life, the toughness of the LAVA House itself—broken glass, bitter cold, frequent trips to the circuit breaker, leaking roofs—was certainly considered by some to be a liability. The 130+ year-old building's structure had not been upgraded, much less maintained by the current owner at all. Artists had to occasionally tough it out, working around the roof leaks, the absence of heating or cooling, a constant slow drizzle of falling dust and debris, insects, poor wiring, exterior walls with gaping holes, and inadequate plumbing. Securing artists' property was never easy either, as visitors would invariably leave the entry doors open, exposing the space to curious neighborhood traffic at all hours. These problems do not even mention the lack of fire alarms, sprinkler systems, exit signs, and emergency lights. To top it all off, throughout the project, our landlord refused to enter into lease agreements with any of his tenants, leaving artists without an option to acquire renter's insurance. The unprofessional arrangement left LAVA artists in an extremely compromised position at times. However, it is important to note that we endured the situation for over six and a half years. Our dedication to the project and our resilience

(caused by default from our inability to find another space) allowed us to withstand the most intolerable environmental conditions.

I. Reuse and Recycle

The LAVA House experience led us to find creative ways to make things happen with little to no budget. All of our studio spaces were partitioned and constructed of second-hand materials, construction debris, or objects scavenged from the trash. Much of our art used these objects as a means of protesting wastefulness and to call attention to the concept of “reuse.” We often bragged about our ability to reuse a welcome cache of available resources, and it became an unintentional part of the collective’s identity.

J. The LAVA House’s End

A fire ripped through the warehouse at around 10:45 pm on January 26th of 2008. The building had stood for around 68 million minutes during its life and had seen an incredible, awe-inspiring amount of human activity in that time. After the enormous impact and mysterious attraction that it had, the LAVA House only took 30 minutes to come crashing to the ground, then lay smoldering for days. Nearly everything was destroyed beyond recognition as we artists and neighbors stood and watched helplessly. It was a tragic end to the building, and our friend Mr. Bill, who was heroically pulled out of the fire by tenant Scott Belcher, passed away the next morning from burns he suffered. LAVA residents Hannah Cameron and Bart Herre lost everything they owned and Seed’s dog Hellvus died in the fire as well. In all, eleven people were displaced, their lives turned upside down. In this time of need, the community reached out, held multiple benefits and helped in so many different ways. It is inevitable that from this great loss and death will come new creative life.



Figure 24. The LAVA House, January 26, 2008 and January 30, 2008.



Figure 25. Hannah Cameron, January 26, 2008.

K. LAVA in the Community: Inventory of Art and Music Shows

2001

Wed July 4th, *Independents Day*, Birth of 'Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art', 1st 'LAVA' Party at the LAVA House

Fri. July 13th, Opening for Zephyr Gallery *Photography Show*, Louisville Photo Biennial, Aron shows work

Wed. July 25th, *Studio 2000 Exhibition* 1:00-7:00PM @ Slugger Field, Bart Herre and Kristin Shelor show work by kids they instructed

Sat. Sept. 22nd, *Hangar Art Show*, Cardinal Wings Airplane Hangar, Bowman Field, Music: the Rachel's Organized by Skylar Smith (Autumnal Equinox) 6-10PM

Sun. Sept. 23rd, *Central Park Outdoor Music, Activism Carnival* at Central Park 1:00-6:00, Aron shows artwork (in 2002, this show was known as AlterNation)

Sat. Nov. 17th, Scorpio Fest III: King Kong and Bill McDonough at the LAVA House

Sat. Oct 27th, *All Hallow's Eve, First Annual LAVA Halloween Party* at the LAVA House – Joe Manning, the Humongous, Seluah, Clark, Dj Bill McDonough, School, City of Ghosts, others

2002

Tues. March 26th, *Strike City, the Swords Project, Scaramongo* at the LAVA House

Wed. March 13th, *What's the Mather?* 2 Episodes shot on new set at the LAVA House, featuring the Sloth Bowl, Aron and Bart and the LAVA House, Music : Antennae Now, Mr. Bill Christie as Dr. Yackinoff

Sat. Mar. 30th, *\$3 Starkiller, the Bitter Pills, Ivar Orn, Anonymous*, cops bust the show and *Starkiller* stops early, organized Aron and Christian Tonegawa

Early April, *What's the Mather?* 3rd Episode shot at LAVA House music by Icelanders

Sat. April 27th, *U of L Student Art League Show* at the LAVA House, Music: *Green Formica Table, The Lost Cadillac*, organized Mary Carothers

Fri. May 3rd, *Strike City and the Murdered* at the LAVA House, Jimmy LeVann photos and paintings of bikes and skaters, organized Tyler Trotter

Fri. May 17th, *Dub Narcotic Sound System, Half Seas Over, Tara Jane O' Neil, Da Hawney Troof, Snowsuit* at the LAVA House, organized Aubrey Bernier-Smith

- Sat. June 1st**, *Cheer Accident, Parlour, Arch* at the LAVA House. organized Tyler Trotter and Aron Conaway tickets made by: Bart and Aron
- Thurs. July 4th**, *LAVA House 1st year anniversary*, Music: Elecrolytes, Fluxtron, Sapat, Tim Conaway, Jon Cook, DJs Foursquare, Strangeloop, Logicide, Mint, Tig, Cosmic
- Fri. July 5th**, *Half Seas Over, An Albatross, Gravy Train, DJ Hawny Troof* at the LAVA House, organized Aubrey Bernier-Smith
- Fri. July 12th**, *Oops the Tour!, The Locust, Arab on Radar, Erase Errata, Lightning Bolt, Flying Luttenbachers, Combat Wounded Veteran* at the LAVA House
- Fri. July 19th**, *After-party for Starkiller, Strike City, Halifax Pier, Contra Show* at Headliners, Dub Band: *Mr. Romance and the Polyphonic Force* (later known as the Children) plays at the LAVA House
- Sat. July 27th**, *Cinemanonomous Film Show- 16mm Films, 15 Filmmakers + Music and performances by Heartbreak Cowboy Traveling Roadshow, Your Heart Breaks* – organized by & fliers Ryan Daly- color, Aron Conaway- b/w, also see photo in LOOK Gallery Guide for photo of Heartbreak Roadshow w/ flaming hoola hoop and banjo in LAVA House ad)
- Wed. July 31st**, *Dianogah, Instant Camera, Second Story Man, The Others* at the LAVA House-Organized Neil Dey
- Sat. Aug. 31st**, *Just for Kids, 32 Frames, the Novas, Scarlet Autumn, Kathleen Barbara*
- Fri. Sept. 6th**, *Kodan Armada, Emmanuel Nice, Scarlet Autumn, Haywire Act*, organized by Dylan Smither, flier Justin at Angry Blue
- Fri. Oct. 4th**, *Bonnie ‘Prince’ Billy and Faun Fables*, broken up by police and moved to Mia Fredrick’s “Museum” on Washington Street
- Sat. Oct. 12th**, ‘AlterNation’ – Art, Music and Activism Festival at Central Park, Music: *Strike City, the Children, Zion and the Uprising, Heidi Howe, The Man with the Golden Means (Joe Manning), Contra, The Metropolitan Gospel Choir, The Lady Foursquare, DJs Tease and Please, Dank One + 20 plus activist organizations-* Festival Chair: Aleve Douglas, electronic music organized by Hallie, Emceed by Kristin Shelor, art and some music and stage organized by Aron
- Sat. Oct. 19th**, *Art across the Line, U of L Student Show - Music by: Lullatone, Fashion Design: Tiffany Hargis*, organized: Shannon Stelzer and Greg Martin
- Sat. Oct. 31st**, 2nd Annual Halloween Party: Cover Bands, *The Cars, Nirvana, Iggy and the Stooges*

Tues. Dec. 31st, *New Year's Eve Bash at the LAVA House* (500-600 in attendance) - *Trans Am, Instant Camera, Irina + DJ Tease and Friends + Video by Shoot the Messenger*, Organized & Flier: Neil Dey

2003

Fri. Jan. 17th, 20 LAVA artists take group trip to *Anti-War March on Jan 19th in Washington, DC.*, organized A.N.S.W.E.R.

Fri. Feb 14th, '*Love and War: A Whole LAVA Love*' Art Show *Sapat, Frequency Being, Fringe Medicine, The Children* - Bart Herre's birthday party

Fri. March 21st, *SKL and PRDF (People's Republic of Delicious Food, performance)* at the LAVA House

Fri. March 28th, '*Art that Strikes You*' art show at the LAVA House, Manual High School, Brown School Photography Show, Music by *Manchuria* - Aron Conaway's birthday party

Fri. April 18th, Opening for '*Destruction of Nature: Beauty vs. the Beast*' Art Show at Kentucky Theater, All LAVA artists

Fri. April 25th, *Mercury Program, Instant Camera, Paper Lions* at the LAVA House

Fri June 13th, Erin DeVine *Performance "Art Star(ved)"*, at LAVA House as a benefit for LAVA House

Fri. June 27, "*The Element of Surprise*"-Louisville Photo Biennial Show, LAVA House

Thurs. July 17th, the LAVA House Art Project and the Comedy Caravan Bootleg Music Series: *Ron Whitehead & the Hillbilly Viking Apocalypse Revue, Chuck Roy and the New Family Comedy Experiment + Allo* at the Comedy Caravan

Thurs. July 24th, the LAVA House Art Project and The Comedy Caravan Bootleg Music Series: *Humongous, Big Kitchen* at the Comedy Caravan

Thurs. July 31st, the LAVA House Art Project and The Comedy Caravan Bootleg Music Series: *Nu Afikikoid Quartet, Serpent Wisdom and host Jesse Meyers of the Squallis Puppeteers* at the Comedy Caravan

Thurs. Aug. 7th, the LAVA House Art Project and The Comedy Caravan Bootleg Music Series : *The Summer Life, Jeremy Johnson and JK McKnight* at the Comedy Caravan

Fri./ Sat. August 8th- 9th, *Spontaneously Decided Subversive Behavior (SDSB)* including LAVA House artists, new film project in the works

Fri. Sept. 26th, *Blue Goat War, The Shooting Gallery, Autonomedia*, Gatewood – *Benefit for Gatewood Galbraith* moved from LAVA House to Comedy Caravan

Fri. / Sat. / Sun. Oct. 3rd – 5th, LAVA “*Art in the Garden*” at Shannon Stelzer’s house in Victoria Gardens

Fri. Oct. 31st, 3rd *annual LAVA Halloween Party* at the LAVA House, *Musique for Europeans, Shag Rock, Analog*, playing covers of *TRex, Nirvana, Roxy Music* - Video by *Shoot the Messenger*

Sun. Dec. 7th, LAVA and MoveOn.org movie showing “*Uncovered: The Truth about the Iraq War*” at the Kentucky Theater 8:30PM

Fri. Dec. 19th, *X-mas* party for LAVA artists at the LAVA House, 8:00

2004

Fri. Feb. 6th, *The Media*, LAVA artist Hallie Jones video showing in basement of Swanson-Reed Contemporary Gallery

Fri. Feb. 20th, LAVA artists Aron Conaway and Hallie Jones *As the World Turns* installation show opening at Swanson Reed Contemporary Gallery

Fri. April 2, *First Friday Gallery Hop*, Art by LAVA Artists Greg Martin, Shannon Stelzer and Aron Conaway displayed at Oscar Brown’s, curated by Shannon Video projected at Bike Depot by Aron

Wed. April 14th, *Gallopalooza Horse Preview Party*, Mellwood Arts and Entertainment Center (Bart Herre 2 horses, Shannon and Greg with SAL 2 horses, Aron and Hallie 1 horse)

Thurs. April 15th, Jefferson Community College (*JCC*) *Unity Arts Festival, Crossing Borders, Crossing Cultures* Hallie and Aron set up an installation and work LAVA booth with Bart

Sat. April 24th, ‘*Art For Evolution*’ LAVA House Art Show, Music: *am Sunday*

Fri. May 2nd, *Birthday Party* for Shannon Stelzer, Kristen Garness and Bill Storms at LAVA House– Music: *Waterproof Blonde, Evolucion, DJs Mischief and Honky Klown*

Fri. May 14th, ‘*Art that Strikes You*’, U of L Student Art League, Brown School, KCD, Music: *Manchuria*

Sat. June 19th, *Pavane Artist Social Event* at the LAVA House, 8:00

Tues. June 22nd, Michael Moore in MoveOn.org Political Action Town Hall Meetings,
Video Conference call at LAVA House

Sun. July 4th, *Independents Day: 3rd Year Anniversary Party* at the LAVA House

Sat. July 17th, 'Forecastle' Arts, Music, Activism Festival, Tyler Park, Forecastle After-
Party - LAVA House

Sun. July 18th, *MoveOn.org* showing of *Outfoxed* at the LAVA House

Sat. July 24th, Tony Miller for Congress Benefit Show, *the Children, the Gage Brothers,*
Slam Poetry, DJs, moved from LAVA House to Michael Murphy's Bar

Fri. / Sat. / Sun. Oct. 1st – 3rd, LAVA Art in the Garden at Shannon Stelzer's house

Sun. Oct. 3rd, LAVA artists Aron, Hallie and Bart all have work in *Round One Political*
Arts Show at Glassworks

Sat. Oct. 30th, 3rd Annual LAVA House Halloween Party on 34th and Northwestern
Parkway, music covers of *the Who, Nirvana, Joan Jett and Eminem + Badass*
80's Cover Band, 600 in attendance, \$2,700 at the Door, Bands paid, Portland
Festival paid, LAVA Paid

Fri. Dec. 31, *New Year's* show at the Portland Festival Building, Music: *King Kong, the*
Children and Kit Chaps hosted by Hallie and Aron

2005

Thurs. Jan. 20th, *Round Two, Political Art Show*, featuring several LAVA artists

Thurs. Feb 10th, *Faun Fables, Joe Manning, the Charmers* at Portland Church, hosted
by LAVA artists

Fri. Feb. 11th, *Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway* perform in the *LIVE performance series*
at the Louisville Visual Art Association's Water Tower Gallery with their
installation *One Nation Under God: Operation Whitewash* and participate in a
panel discussion afterwards

Wed. Mar. 30th, *No Neck Blues Band, Sapat, Parlour* at Portland Church

Fri. April 1st, *Surprise party* for Aron at new house next to LAVA House, LAVA and
friends in attendance

Tues. April 19th, *Faun Fables and Lucky Pineapple* at Portland Church

Sat. April 23rd, *Thunder Over Portland, Dead Meadow, Jennifer Gentle, The Children,*
the Meredith's, the Photographic@ the Portland Church

Wed. April 27th, Will Oldham, Sir Richard Bishop, The Cherry Blossoms @ the Church in Portland

Sat. Sept. 24th, *Kino! Louisville* Film Showing at Portland Church

Wed. Sept. 28th, *New Look! Gallery Guide* Released w/ LAVA and ear X-tacy ads

Wed. Oct. 5th, *Barbez, Ben Purdum*, at Portland Church

Mon. Oct. 17th, www.portlandcalling.org is born, officially separating the www.lavahouse.org site from Portland activity

Sat. Oct. 29th, 4th *Annual Halloween Cover Band Show*, Cover bands, *Rolling Stones*, *Nirvana*, *Biz-arch*, *Panda-llac*, *Hazil Adkins*, *Djs Jeff the Chef*, *Laylow*, *Narwhol* and *Sneed*

Fri. Nov. 4th, *Scott Carney and the Heavy Friends* at Nelligan Hall, an old historical North End Social Club, dating back to the 1930's, Hallie and Aron invest with several other partners.

2006

Sun. May 14, *Faun Fables, Phantom Family Halo, Litany's Last Call* – Nelligan Hall

June and July, '*Small but Weird*' show at Spalding University's Huff Gallery, organized by Kristin Shelor, partnership between LAVA and KYWAC KY Women's Art Collective

2008

Sat. Jan 26th, *Fire* destroys LAVA House

Mon. Jan 28th, *Benefit show* at 3rd St. Dive with *Bu Hau Ting* and *Downtown Brown*, an out of town band.

Fri. Feb 1st, *Large Benefit Event at the Barrett Bar*, for residents at the LAVA House. Organized by Bart Herre's best friends. Funds raised matched by Barrett Bar. Glassworks stated they would, they did not.

Sat. Feb 2nd, *Derby City Roller Girls LAVA House benefit*, Bout after-party at the Monkey Wrench, proceeds to the LAVA House.

Fri. Feb 8th, *Vampire Squid, Lucky Pineapple, Consume Consumer, the Glasspack DJs A.Bell, Sean John and Damo*, Pour Haus

Sun Feb 10th, *Free massages* for LAVA people by Anna Collins at Amazing Grace. *Hokum County Fiji Mermen, John Heywood, Joe Manning w/ Glen Dentinger and*

Nathan Salsburg, The American Freedom Machine, Wick's Pizza Benefit Event
moved to *Lisa's Oak St. Lounge* (Oak and Swan St., next to the LAVA House)

Thur. Feb. 21st, *My Darling Asleep w/ Guilderoy-Byrne & Nora, Ben and Eli*, Benefit at Flanagan's Ale House – very bad ice storm, smaller turnout, but good time

Wed. March 12th, *Rekindle Benefit Show* - Rudyard Kipling Dancers, Unique Performances, Tarot Readings, Silent Auction, Comedy, organized by Laurel Fleury

Fri. Feb. 22nd, *Art and Music Benefit Show* for LAVA in Huntsville, Alabama at a place called *Lowe Mill*. Organized by Evan Billiter

Sat. Feb 23rd, *Shannon Wright, Kings Sons and Daughters and Tara Joan O'Neil* at the 930 Listening Room, benefit for the LAVA House.

Mon. March 24th, *Louisville Arts Council LAVA Fundraiser* and memorial service - singers, poets, at the Henry Clay Building on 3rd St.

Sat. March 29th, *Glassworks - Kill Ville*, part of proceeds said to go to LAVA House, but never were given to LAVA

Fri. April 4th, *RE:ACTION*, Hallie and Aron have a show opening reception at Swanson-Reed Contemporary on Market St. Mostly focused on loss from the fire

Mon. April 7th, Reception for *Greg Martin's MFA show* at Pratt Art Institute, New York City

CHAPTER IV

ABOUT THE LAVA ARCHIVE

“It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what this will have meant, we will only know in the times to come. Perhaps not tomorrow but in the times to come, later on or perhaps never”

– Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*³⁸

A. Preserving the LAVA Collection

This thesis documents the preservation of the legacy of the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art and the artifacts that speak to its power. As is evident in the previous history section, LAVA played a significant part in the local underground culture and arts in Louisville. In this section the process of building and processing the collection will be discussed. The reasons for why collection was assembled and documented, relate to the there are three according to the Getty Institute’s *Introduction to Archival Organization and Description*:

- To facilitate users’ discovery of materials
- To establish the authenticity of holdings
- To satisfy administrative needs³⁹

As archivist for the LAVA collection, my intentions for gathering these objects were initially very simple. I felt a need to document the LAVA organization, and also find a safe place for the archive to reside without being lost or ruined and then forgotten.

³⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995) 27.

³⁹ Michael J. Fox and Peter L. Wilkerson, “Archival Organization and Description,” *Los Angeles: Getty Information Institute* 1998 2.

Initially I had no gauge for the time requirements for such an undertaking and no base of knowledge in archiving. I simply knew that I wanted to preserve the heritage of the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art and the LAVA House, form a collection and donate it for safekeeping.

I began by educating myself in methods and processes of archiving, taking note of the many considerations I was going to have to take into account; for example, what kinds of objects to look for, how to store them as they are processed, and how to create order out of all the chaos I was collecting. I read *Introduction to Archival Organization and Description* by Michael J. Fox and Peter L. Wilkerson, a publication that was “the result of the collaborative efforts of a distinguished group of archival practitioners and educators who have contributed their knowledge, insights, and experience.”⁴⁰ This book was indispensable for me, although at first I found it difficult to conceptualize and wrap my mind around how it was going to apply to the LAVA archive.

B. Gathering the Artifacts for the Archive

In 2006, I sorted through decades worth of my personal, broadly-themed, lifelong collection of various materials and eventually pieced together an initial LAVA House narrative based on old fliers, journals, and pictures in my possession. An anemic version of LAVA’s thick history was beginning to take shape, which inspired me to continue searching other places to see if a more substantial archive was possible. Once I determined it was feasible, I investigated the possibility of using the archive as a basis for fulfilling my thesis requirement. This would be particularly attractive if the Margaret M. Bridewell Art Library would house it.

⁴⁰ Fox ii.

A renewed effort to really troll through my collection, resulted in the addition of dozens of photographic negatives, video tapes and posters, hundreds of papers relating to various LAVA business. Over the years I had taken hundreds of photographs of events, people, art, activities, art and music shows, show preparations, studio life and the warehouse space at various stages of development and I gathered them together. For weeks in 2007 and early 2008, I spent time moving throughout the warehouse's studios in search of objects that represented significant parts LAVA's story. I took fliers, random organizational binders and other objects to scan and photograph with the intention of returning them after scanning. This ultimately spared many documents and objects that otherwise would have burned in the LAVA House's fire.

In mid-2007 I had drafted a letter to current and past LAVA House artists and participants, requesting they submit materials for the archive; however, the letter was not sent before the fire. As a result, many objects that would have been important additions to this archive were lost.

For weeks after the fire, I spent dozens of hours in the huge piles of rubble, digging and searching for artifacts. I found a pile of organizational papers, charred but legible, later retrieved a filing cabinet that had protected many more documents and some of Bart's art and drawings. This was key to filling a few gaps in the history I had previously been troubled by. Also, a photo album of LAVA art and events from over the years was found in the burnt out Red Room (LAVA living room) during the clean up. These irreplaceable artifacts were barely scorched in a fire that melted copper and bronze elsewhere else. Later, these materials were covered in Polyester film to be preserved in their delicate state, and then added to the other objects in the archive.



Figure 26. LAVA photo album maintained by Bart Herre from 2003-2008; found after fire, in the Red Room, which had burnt completely. Photos only charred at edges.

In addition, I contacted people I had previously talked with that I had determined had significant documentation and arranged to pick up these materials. I also sent out a request as MySpace bulletins several times, asking for additional information or documentation. The MySpace bulletin was picked up and posted by *Velocity* blogger Peter Berkowitz. These efforts resulted in an additional 10 hours of video footage from other people, dozens of photographs compiled on CD-R, the tapes of the 911 phone calls from the night of the fire, and the newspaper coverage of the disaster. Also included in the final archive files is Kent Getsinger's video footage of the LAVA House fire. Getsinger also recorded all documented news footage of the fire.

A version of the earlier request letter was finally sent to the LAVA artists, participants and friends in Spring of 2008 asking them for:

- *meeting notes*
- *personal LAVA-related note*
- *photos*
- *video*
- *sketches*
- *plans*
- *correspondence / letters*
- *binders*
- *fliers*

- *digital computer files and documents*
- *computer files of fliers*
- *anything else [they could] think of!!!*

I asked each artist for the following documentation in order to create for them their own file and portfolio for the archive:

- survey
- a biography
- a resume/ CV
- portfolio of digital photographs of artwork
- testimonials
- a portrait photograph for web page
- a signed form granting permission to use their material

In the end, the artists' participation in compiling their own portfolios was varied; some responding, others not. If they did not respond, they can add whatever materials they like to the archive later. Several artists submitted their documentation, and these surveys, portfolios, CVs and other materials were incorporated into to the collection to allow users to see the kind of artwork that was produced at the LAVA House. I also came up with a number of survey questions for the artists to let them tell their own story and provide their own perspective on the LAVA experience. In these responses, they describe their views and times at the LAVA House, which provide more depth and relevant connection to the LAVA House experience than the objects do by themselves. They are a poetic part of the collection contained in the Artist Portfolio section of the archive DVDs. With these comprehensive sources included, the archive user will have an opportunity to become familiar with the art and artists of LAVA.

C. Organizing the LAVA Collection

The archive is broken down into two simple but different systems of organization:

1. according to the time period: either before fire or after fire and
2. according to spatial dimension of the object, either;
 - a. a tangible material object placed in archive boxes, scanned and filed digitally on Digital LAVA Archive
 - b. a digital file, without physical representation, stored on Digital LAVA Archive

After compiling everything into a single large group, all the archived objects were digitally scanned and photographed. After creating a facsimile for each object, they were placed into a particular category as a preliminary way of organizing the collection.

Collecting, recording and filing were the first three steps in organizing the archive.

Following are the category titles that were given for the objects' first round of order:

Before Fire (05/2001-01/2008)

Organizational materials:

Blank letterhead papers

PR/Marketing notes, fliers and other materials

Forms

Manifesto, original and later drafts

Meeting notes and minutes

History timetables

LAVA event notes and fliers:

Art shows

Music shows

Political events

Facilities

Rent history

Finances

Website files

Press– newspapers, internet coverage

Photography– paper, CD-Rs, DVD-Rs

Correspondence, internal and external

Contacts

Odds and ends – random

Personal LAVA-related notes from all members

AlterNation event planning notes and fliers

Logos

Maps
Outside projects of artists
Artworks and oversized items
Personal notes and realia from artists

After Fire (01/26/08–present)

Press Coverage
Photos
Video documentation
Fliers for benefits
Notes/correspondence
Meetings of organization
Personal artists papers
Documentary video footage
Mellwood: free studio notes
Art shows: fliers, cards
Outside project documentation
Finances

Digital archive categories:

LAVA artists' personal portfolios
PSD Photoshop files
Word document files
Digital photographs
Videos
Website
Digital fliers

The digital collection on Archive DVD contains approximately:

6,461 scans and photographs representing analog objects
7,579 digital photos with no paper prints
213 digital files (psd, doc, etc.) without paper printouts
2,952 various files in artist's portfolios
180 Flash video files
2,000 web files in artist's portfolios
6,497 other web files from LAVA websites and LAVA on the net
2,087 LAVA on the net, Post-fire
27,035 digital files in all

D. Processing the LAVA Artifacts

Making firm decisions about what to do with the items I had gathered to this point was necessary, as I needed some sort of way to determine an object's worth. As I went through the hundreds of various objects, I occasionally came to one where I was uncertain about whether to include or not. There were four conditions for which I considered omitting objects:

1. Minor relevancy: The objects relevancy to the LAVA organization, the LAVA House or the LAVA artist in relation to the LAVA House was a strict requirement for entry to the archive. This did not pertain to the LAVA artist's personal digital portfolios. All video and photographs at the LAVA House was captured and included, no matter how seemingly insignificant.
2. Too personal: If an object of my own was too personal, I struggled to decide whether to include it or not. This fell to personal choice. Other LAVA artists entries were not judged in this light by me as the archivist.
3. Too degraded: If an object was extremely important to LAVA and was at all recognizable after extreme damage from the fire, it was encapsulated in Polyester film and saved. If the object was not quite so important, then it was set aside and not included. Making the call on an item per item basis came down to simply deciding how important or how damaged the object was.
4. Redundancy: If there were multiple copies of an object, three of these objects were chosen and added to the archive.

At this point, after making a final decision about what to keep and what to omit, I needed to learn about encapsulating burnt objects, the proper storage materials, dealing with oversize objects, videos and digital photographs. I also had to make decisions about the type of finding aid to construct. Michael J. Fox and Peter L. Wilkerson, in *Introduction to Archival Organization and Description* suggested the following outline:

- Gathering and analyzing information
 - Conduct research in reference sources
 - Study contents of the collection
- Organization and arrangement
 - Organizing
 - Arranging
 - Housing
 - Conserving
- Creating descriptions in the form of inventory/registers⁴¹

There were several formats and types of objects in the collection that required special treatment beyond filing into a labeled folder. The following list addresses the actions taken for each medium in order to prepare it for the archive.

- **Film negatives:** scanned using a transparency film scanner and processed as digital files
- **Video tapes:** all LAVA House and LAVA footage captured from mini-dv tape, vhs tape, dvd-r onto pc computer as .avi file; cut to lengths less than 10 minutes; first rendering of clips converted to Flash Video at high resolution/ bit rate for inclusion onto University of Louisville server (standards meet University Library Guidelines); a second set of renderings to lower resolution for upload to www.YouTube.com/thelavahouse website; .avi files captured back to mini-dv tape
- **Signs and artwork:** photographed with studio lighting and kept in separate area because of large size
- **Binders:** each page scanned in and placed back into original position and order. Binders kept in original condition and placed directly into the archive box.
- **Fliers:** oversized fliers, photographed or scanned in pieces and reconstructed in PhotoShop then stored in area separate from boxes
- **Digital files:** filed into order that reflects the physical archive materials. Additionally, there are approximately eighteen thousand digital files in all, including pictures, words files and various other types of files, that are represented solely on DVD-R in digital format. Of those, there are approximately ten thousand five hundred digital files within various website archive digital folders. Note: websites cut images into tiny parts and reassemble them, so these files are small but numerous.

⁴¹ Fox 11-.

- **Oversized objects:** each object photographed and added to designated area
- **Burnt paper photographs:** scanned, added to a folder and sealed in polyester film
- **Burnt paperwork:** scanned, added to a folder and encapsulated in polyester film

Once these odd formats had been treated, they were broken into categories and logged into an inventory list, later to become the finding aids. This is an exact representation of the detailed finding aid that is included with the archive itself. This format is in alignment with the standards of inventory guidelines as dictated by the Getty Institute.⁴²

E. Archive's Intended Audience

There are multiple purposes and functions that this archive can serve. One reason for donating the archive to the library is to ensure that this significant part of Louisville's cultural heritage is not lost. Any student or researcher can use it to find information on the organization itself or on more finely focused projects such as the music history of Louisville during this period or even the posters of Louisville music events. A researcher could investigate the LAVA House as an example of an alternative artspace, as an underground node or even as a example of activism in the arts, political science, art history, archival practice, or critical and curatorial studies. The possibilities are wide open given the scope of this collection.

Another use for the LAVA archive and story is as a means of entertainment, giving a viewer the opportunity to learn about the LAVA house simply for curiosity's sake. The LAVA experience is vicariously accessible to the viewer, in a visit to the art

⁴² Fox 21.

library to see the materials, online through the libraries server, or by looking at www.thelavahouse.org, a website being built concurrently with writing this document and to be completed soon. This will make the LAVA archive accessible worldwide. A collection of photography, notes, stories and video amongst other things, provides a good idea of what life at the LAVA House was like for the artists and visitors there. This interactive tool will have a vast amount of information and space for visitors to explore.

More than other media, clearly the photography, the writing and video portions of the archive, in both the library and online forms will be the most comprehensive experience of LAVA and the LAVA House. By their nature of capturing emotion and dense verbal or visual information, these allow for the fullest interaction.

F. Explanation of Reason for Format/ Organization-Style Chosen

As the LAVA archive was being organized, my goal was to allow any viewer to be able to navigate the collection in a simple, intuitive way. Intended to offer an interactive experience, the archive's purpose is to provide evidence and information for a better understanding of LAVA's career, artworks, community, activities, and philosophies. I have consciously considered how the different parts work together to give rise to a 'big picture' of the LAVA's life.

My personal role in building this archive is unique, in that I already have a clear understanding, from direct experience, of how each of these objects relates to the LAVA organization, the artists, the LAVA House or any combination of the three. I understand the collection better than any at this point., so this is a perfect opportunity for the archive to be completed in a coherent and non-speculative fashion My organizing decisions were not based on working to understand the context of each object, as I am already

completely familiar with that. The logical approach for me was to use my previous knowledge of the LAVA organization and apply it to grouping common objects under common categories. I have realized that by having completed this task, I am avoiding later complications that would likely grow out of leaving the processing to another archivist. I am at once creating the archives' original order as well as its final order.

If further scholarly work is deemed necessary or a different theoretical framework seems appropriate as a means to understand LAVA and the LAVA House, the organization of the archive will permit that. My work is not meant to be a final word, the end of the building of the archive or the only valid interpretation.

I have been concerned constantly with communicating the story well, leaving the archival documentation to objectively support its presentation. I have gone to painstaking detail to make sure that there are multiple devices provided to lay out information. A number of LAVA timelines have been created in relation to various themes of LAVA's functions. I have created a simple inventory of events and dates (Inventory of Art and Music Shows, see page 49), a list of all the bands and dates that they performed at the LAVA House (List of Bands/ DJs, Place & Year Played at LAVA, see appendix A), and have provided several other angles on the activities of the LAVA organization and its participants. It is my hope that this will allow researchers to interpret the objects more fully than they would by seeing the objects alone.

At times my personal stake in all that happened at the LAVA House has been at odds with my goal of objectivity for this archive. While deciding which objects to omit, where the ones that stay will go, and divorcing myself of any emotions that surface, I have done my best to maintain the integrity of the archive. I believe that a simple,

straightforward presentation allows for a valuable and fascinating look at the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art.

G. The LAVA Summary Finding Aid

SUMMARY FINDING AID FOR THE LAVA ARCHIVE

Box	Folder	Contents
1.	1.	Documentation
	2.	Further documentation
	3.	Finding Aid for Archive DVD and Archive DVDs
	4.	LAVA Manifesto drafts and copies
	5.	LAVA Logos and map drawings
	6.	LAVA Marketing fliers, PowerPoint, letterhead
	7.	Facilities and other sketches
	8.	LAVA History timetables
	9.	Organizational documents and forms
	10.	LAVA Meeting notes and minutes
		A. LAVA Minutes– General notes
		B. Meeting notes– Aron Conaway
		C. Meeting notes– Bart Herre
		D. Meeting notes– Brenna Geary
		E. Meeting notes– Hallie Jones
	11.	LAVA Presentations notes
	12.	LAVA Website notes
	13.	LAVA/VAN-Visual Arts Network (VAN) name incident

14. ***LOOK! Louisville Gallery Guide* ads and related materials**
15. **LAVA Artists' correspondence**
16. **Inter-organizational correspondence**
17. **LAVA Contacts information**
18. **LAVA Signs and notes**
19. **Hangar show notes, fliers**
20. **AlterNation, notes, plans**
21. **AlterNation, continued**
22. **LAVA Show flier sketches and notes**
23. **Parlour, Cheer Accident, ARCH tickets, Trans Am wristbands**
24. **Forecastle after party handmade tickets**
25. **LAVA Flier originals**
26. **LAVA Art show fliers**
27. **LAVA Music show fliers**
28. **LAVA Political event fliers**
29. **Band set lists**
30. **LAVA Artists' business cards**
31. **LAVA Artists outside projects**
32. **LAVA Friends' projects**
33. **Portland shows**

34. **Kentucky Peer Advisory Network K-PAN – Kentucky Arts Council paperwork, Kentucky Museum of Art and Design, Paperwork for Articles of Incorporation:**
35. **LAVA Finances**

Box	Folder	Contents
2.	1.	LAVA binder 1, maintained by A. Conaway
	2.	LAVA binder 2, maintained by A. Conaway
	3.	LAVA binder, maintained by the LAVA House art project
	4.	LAVA binder, maintained by Brenna Geary for the LAVA House art project

Box	Folder	Contents
3.	1.	A Conaway- Personal sketch book with LAVA-related journals, art
	2.	Hallie Jones Artwork
	3.	Aron Conaway Artwork
	4.	H Jones and A. Conaway- Future facility plans
	5.	A Conaway-notes, to do lists, and phone numbers
	6.	LAVA dates in A. Conaway notes
	7.	A Conaway- Art sketches
	8.	A Conaway- Planning, visioning, brainstorming notes
	9.	A Conaway- Journals and notes
	10.	Shoot the Messenger
	11.	Hallie Jones– Journals, art ideas

- 12. **Hallie Jones– LAVA notes**
- 13. **Hallie Jones– Vision notes**
- outside of folders **A Conaway- Personal calendar planners 2001-2006**

Box	Folder	Contents
4.	1.	Post-fire 911 emergency calls and event records
	2.	Post-fire Media contacts
	3.	Post-fire Pictures, Bill Christie eulogy
	4.	Post-fire Meeting notes
	5.	Post-fire Benefit fliers
	6.	Post-fire Finances
	7.	Post-fire Letters and cards
	8.	Post-fire Mellwood Arts and Entertainment Center free studios
	9.	Photographs
	10.	Photographs – burnt
	11.	CD-Rs of photographs

Box	Folder	Contents
5.	1.	Press, Newspaper Articles, 2001-2008
	2.	Newspaper Articles, 2001-2008

ARCHIVE CONTENTS OUTSIDE OF BOXES

Oversize Flat Objects

3-Dimensional Objects

Artworks

Signs etc.

3-Dimensional Objects post-fire

DIGITAL FOLDER TITLES IN DIGITAL LAVA ARCHIVE:

D1.01 Photography, all pre-fire

D1.02 Photography, post-fire

D1.03 Videography, pre-fire

D1.04 Videography, post-fire

D1.05 Websites, pre-fire

D1.06 Websites, post-fire

D1.07 Websites referring to LAVA

D1.08 Audio, all

D1.09 Graphic files

D1.10 PSDs, Photoshop files

D2.01 Word Files, Organizational, marketing, all

D2.02 E-mails, post-fire

D2.03 Notes, documents, post-fire

D3.01 LAVA Artists PORTFOLIOS



Figure 27. Some of the large-sized objects sitting in our temporary studio at Mellwood Arts and Entertainment July 2008.



Figure 28. Four LAVA Archive boxes before donation to the library.

DIGITAL FOLDER TITLES ON DIGITAL LAVA ARCHIVE

The LAVA archive in boxes (folders with “B”) is mirrored by the Digital LAVA Archive, which adds purely digital files (folders with “D” are digital).

Below are listed all folders in the Digital LAVA Archive:

B1.01 Documentation	B3.01 Aron Notebook Hangar and LAVA
B1.02 Further documentation	B3.02 Hallie Jones Artwork
B1.03 Finding Aid for Archive DVDs, DVDs	B3.03 Aron Conaway Artwork
B1.04 LAVA Manifesto drafts and copies	B3.04 Hallie and Aron Future facility plans '05-'08
B1.05 LAVA Logos and map drawings	B3.05 A Conaway-notes, to dos, and phone nos
B1.06 LAVA Marketing fliers, PowerPoint, ltrhead	B3.06 LAVA dates in A. Conaway notes
B1.07 Facilities and other sketches	B3.07 A Conaway- Art sketches
B1.08 LAVA History timetables	B3.08 A Conaway- Plan, vision, bstorming notes
B1.09 Organizational documents and forms	B3.09 A Conaway- Journals and notes
B1.10 a LAVA Minutes- General notes	B3.10 Shoot the Messenger
B1.10 b Meeting notes- Aron Conaway	B3.11 Hallie Jones Journals, art ideas
B1.10 c Meeting notes- Bart Herre	B3.12 Hallie Jones LAVA notes
B1.10 d Meeting notes- Brenna Geary	B3.13 Hallie Jones vision notes
B1.10 e Meeting notes- Hallie Jones	B3.No Folder Aron Conaway, planners 2000-06
B1.11 LAVA Presentations notes	B4.01 Post-fire 911 emergency calls, event rec
B1.12 Website notes	B4.02 Post-fire Media contacts
B1.13 LAVA-Visual Arts Network name incident	B4.03 Post-fire Pictures, Bill Christie eulogy
B1.14 LOOK! Louisville Gallery Guide ads, rel mat	B4.04 Post-fire Meeting notes
B1.15 LAVA Artists' correspondence	B4.05 Post-fire Benefit fliers
B1.16 Inter-organizational correspondence	B4.06 Post-fire Finances
B1.17 LAVA Contacts information	B4.07 Post-fire Letters and cards
B1.18 LAVA Signs and notes	B4.08 Post-Fire Mellwood Arts studios
B1.19 Hangar show notes, fliers	B4.09 Old LAVA photographs
B1.20 AlterNation, notes, plans	B4.10 Burnt photos From LAVA Fire
B1.21 AlterNation, continued	B4.11 CD-Rs of photograph files
B1.22 Sketches, notes for show fliers	B5.01 Web stories, Newspaper articles, 2001-2008
B1.23 Cheer Accident show tix, Trans Am wrist	B6.01 Various oversize archive objects
B1.24 Forecastle after party handmade tickets	C(Below)----- Digital-LAVA files
B1.25 Flier Originals	D1.01 Photography, all pre-fire
B1.26 LAVA Art show fliers	D1.02 Photography, all post-fire
B1.27 LAVA Music show fliers	D1.03.Videography, all pre-fire
B1.28 LAVA Political event fliers	D1.04 Videography, all post-fire
B1.29 Band set lists	D1.05 Websites, all pre-fire
B1.30 LAVA Artists' business cards	D1.06.Websites, all post-fire
B1.31 LAVA Artists outside projects	D1.07 Sites referring to LAVA (House)
B1.32 LAVA Friends' projects	D1.08 Audio, all
B1.33 Portland shows	D1.09 Graphic Files, LAVA
B1.34 KPAN-KMAD grant papers, articles of inc	D1.10 PSDs, photoshop files
B1.35 LAVA Finances	D2.01 LAVA organization Word files, (all)
B2.01 LAVA binder 1, maintained by A. Conaway	D2.02 E-mails, post-fire
B2.02 LAVA binder 2, maintained by A. Conaway	D2.03 Notes Documents post-fire
B2.03 LAVA House Art Proj Binder	D3.01 PORTFOLIOS, all LAVA Artists
B2.04 LAVA House Art Proj Binder by Brenna G	

Figure 29. Screen shot of digital folders in the Digital LAVA Archive

H. Detailed Finding Aid for the LAVA Archive:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Overview of the Collection
- History of LAVA
- Scope and Contents of the Collection
- Arrangement of the Collection
- Related Materials

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Creator: Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art (LAVA) (Louisville, Kentucky)
Title: Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art Collection
Date: 2001-2008
Processed by: Aron Conaway, July 2008.
Access: unrestricted.

HISTORY OF LAVA

The Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art was founded in 2001 as an artists' collective to create art and rent studio and living space. LAVA was initiated as an improvisational organization where membership was informally based on meeting attendance and activities involvement; the space accommodated both LAVA artists and other artists and musicians who simply rented space. The assembly inhabited half of a warehouse in the German-Paristown Neighborhood in Louisville, Kentucky. This building was named the LAVA House by the organization. It was completely destroyed in a fire in the winter of 2008. The organization did not continue after the fire, but several members started similar projects and organizations.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The collection includes LAVA organization binders, show flier sketches and notes, meeting notes and minutes, Website notes, Kentucky-PAN (K-PAN), Kentucky Museum of Art and Design (KMAD), Articles of Incorporation., LOOK! advertisements, finances, internal and inter-organizational correspondence, marketing materials, organizational materials, history timetables, business cards, contacts, signs, artists' personal notes, CD-Rs, art, music show notes and fliers, AlterNation, event tickets and wristbands, band set lists, records of post-fire 911 emergency calls, Bill Christie Eulogy, post-fire meeting notes, letters and cards, LAVA manifesto, facilities and sketches, logos and map drawings, Portland shows, oversize objects, stencils, large show posters, 3-D objects, artworks, signs, artists' journals and notes, art sketches, newspaper articles, sketchbooks

In the LAVA organization, correspondence, keeping meeting notes and many other administrative tasks were informal and irregular. The majority of the organization's information was scrawled onto pieces of paper and kept in binders or drawers. Many of the objects within the archive might seem strange but carry significant roles in the archive as examples of LAVA's operations and activities.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE COLLECTION

Throughout the history of the LAVA organization, many files and papers were arranged loosely and in an unintuitive way. As a result of the lack of systems and coherent order, the arrangement of the objects in the archive is based on function within the context of LAVA. Categories house like materials and to the best of the archivist's ability are in chronological order within these groups. The only items not in folders and boxes are the digital files and oversize objects. The location of these materials is listed in the finding aid.

The binders and notebooks maintained by individuals in LAVA or by the organization itself remain in their original form and order despite the fact that their contents overlap with the contents of some of the folders. Objects partially destroyed by fire and still recognizable were removed from the charred folders in which they were found and encapsulated in Polyester film. Descriptions accompany a few objects in the collection to denote their significance to the LAVA organization or the LAVA House, but largely an object's context is distinguishable by its placement in the archives. The organizational timeline and events calendar cross-reference dates and activities of LAVA individuals and the organization at large.

RELATED MATERIALS

The LAVA archive includes several objects and records whose relation to the LAVA organization is not immediately obvious. They are materials that relate to the activities of individual artists and friends of the LAVA organization that were in the same social and artistic spheres as the LAVA artists.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Box	Folder	Contents
1.	1.	Documentation: <i>Summary Finding Aid</i> <i>Detailed Finding Aid for the LAVA archive</i> <i>Detailed Finding Aid for the Digital LAVA archive</i> <i>Finding aid for digital LAVA Artist's Portfolios</i> <i>Calendar of LAVA history</i> <i>Calendar of LAVA events</i> <i>Calendar of events including artists, bands, shows</i> <i>List of bands and artists that performed/ showed at</i> <i>LAVA House</i> <i>List of all publications/press coverage, paper and online</i> <i>for LAVA</i> <i>List of video and documentation</i>

2. **Further documentation:**
Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art 2001-2008:
From Collective to Collection (this document),
Master's Thesis by Aron Conaway
The Building of an Organization by Aron Conaway
Diagram of LAVA archive's website layout
Letter of request to LAVA artists, participants and friends.
3. **Finding Aid for Archive DVD and Archive DVDs:**
Finding aid for DVD archive

DVDs containing all digital photograph files from before
LAVA fire and after LAVA fire.

DVDs containing all video files from LAVA House and
LAVA organization, available for viewing with Flash Video
Player.

DVD with all jpeg and PDF files of scans and photographs
taken to represent analog archive materials.
4. **LAVA Manifesto drafts and copies:**
First written draft of manifesto by Aron Conaway, later
versions of LAVA manifesto copies printed from computer.
5. **LAVA Logos and map drawings:**
Sketches and drawings of many incarnations of LAVA logo,
map drawing used for fliers and website directions.
6. **LAVA Marketing fliers, PowerPoint, letterhead:**
LAVA marketing fliers, notes and planning for marketing
materials, copies of PowerPoint slideshow for
presentations with notes.
7. **Facilities and other sketches:**
Sketches, LAVA facilities, other subjects by Aron Conaway.
8. **LAVA History timetables:**
Timetables of LAVA's first 3 years, started by Hallie Jones
for KMAD Grant Application.
9. **Organizational documents and forms:**
Forms, documentation in relation to operations and other
materials that pertain to LAVA business.

10. **LAVA meeting notes and minutes:**
Notes taken by hand by individual LAVA artists and minutes transcribed to computer and printed out for organizational records.
 - A. LAVA Minutes – General notes**
 - B. Meeting notes – Aron Conaway**
 - C. Meeting notes – Bart Herre**
 - D. Meeting notes – Brenna Gheary**
 - E. Meeting notes – Hallie Jones**
11. **LAVA Presentations notes:**
Notes from Power Point presentations given at conferences, workshops, meetings by Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway.
12. **LAVA Website notes:**
Notes, diagrams and sketches created in planning stages of the LAVA website. See also large diagram on wallpaper in oversize objects.
13. **LAVA/VAN-Visual Arts Network (VAN) name incident**
Correspondence between LAVA and VAN
14. **LOOK! Louisville Gallery Guide ads and related materials:**
Samples, paperwork, sketches and notes pertaining to the LOOK! Gallery Guide. LAVA sponsored by Ear X-tacy and by Tony Boombozz.
15. **LAVA Artists' correspondence:**
Notes between LAVA individuals and notes left for artists at the LAVA House.
16. **Inter-organizational correspondence:**
Letters and notes to LAVA from other organizations.
17. **LAVA Contact information:**
Various sized scrap papers with phone numbers and names.

18. **LAVA Signs and notes:**
Signs posted around the LAVA House at various times for various purposes.
19. **Hangar show notes, fliers:**
Notes, fliers, contact list, newspaper article, correspondence for Hangar Show at Bowman Field Cardinal Wings Hangar Show.
20. **AlterNation notes, fliers:**
Notes, fliers, sketches, schedules for AlterNation Art, Music, Activism Festival at Central Park 2002.
21. **AlterNation, continued:**
AlterNation armband, bio-hazard party hat, Strike City promo CD-R with 3 songs, transparency acetate projected on overhead during Strike City set at AlterNation. Also see AlterNation tins in 3-d section.
22. **LAVA Show flier sketches and notes:**
Notes for development of upcoming shows and sketches of flier designs for later use.
23. **Parlour, Cheer Accident, ARCH tickets, Trans Am wristbands:**
Handmade tickets by Bart Herre and Aron Conaway, 2002, for Cheer Accident Show at LAVA House with receipt and note from Ear X-tacy ticket sales. Wristband for Trans Am New Years Eve Party 2002-2003.
24. **Forecastle after party handmade tickets:**
Tickets handmade by organization, stenciled and drawn on gesso-covered tickets from St. Joseph Picnic found in trash.
25. **LAVA Flier originals:**
Original versions of show fliers for photocopying multiple copies for marketing purposes.
26. **LAVA Art show fliers:**
Handbill size (1/4 page), half page, and 8.5 x 11 inch fliers for art events at the LAVA House. Used as promotional materials and handed out to public for advertising art shows.

27. **LAVA Music show fliers:**
Handbill size (1/4 page), half page, and 8.5 x 11 inch fliers for music events at the LAVA House. Used as promotional materials and handed out to public for advertising music shows.
28. **LAVA Political event fliers:**
Handbill size (1/4 page), and 8.5 x 11 inch fliers for political events and film showings at the LAVA House. Used as promotional materials and handed out to public for advertising political film shows.
29. **Band set lists:**
Set lists found after shows at the LAVA House.
30. **LAVA Artists' business cards:**
Business cards of LAVA artists.
31. **LAVA Artists outside projects:**
Art shows with LAVA artists' involvement but not that of the organization.
32. **LAVA Friends' projects:**
Show cards and fliers for events relating to LAVA friends.
33. **Portland shows:**
Fliers and notes relating to shows organized in Portland. Side projects of Aron and Hallie.
34. **Kentucky Peer Advisory Network K-PAN – Kentucky Arts Council paperwork, Kentucky Museum of Art and Design, Paperwork for Articles of Incorporation:**
Paperwork for LAVA's application to the Kentucky Arts Council for a K-PAN Grant, paperwork for Museum of Art and Design (Louisville, Kentucky) Grant, LAVA Articles of Incorporation.
35. **LAVA Finances:**
Financial records, check copies, receipts from the organization's operations bank statement. There is little order or continuity to these records. The account numbers have been blanked out for security reasons.

Box	Folder	Contents
2.	1.	LAVA binder 1, maintained by A. Conaway: <i>Various ideas, plans, to do lists, sketches, drawings, rent records, logo sketches, LAVA name brain-storming, equipment lists, studio layouts, organizational plans and notes.</i>
	2.	LAVA binder 2, maintained by A. Conaway: <i>Various ideas plans, to do lists, sketches, drawings, rent records, logo sketches, LAVA name brainstorming equipment lists, studio layouts, organizational plans and notes.</i>
	3.	LAVA binder, maintained by the LAVA House art project: <i>LAVA Binder kept by LAVA organization from July 2003- Winter 2004. Notes from organization. mission statement, questionnaires for artists c. 2003, darkroom plans, Comedy Caravan event planning, Art in the Garden planning, meeting notes.</i>
	4.	LAVA binder, maintained by Brenna Geary for the LAVA House art project: <i>LAVA Binder kept by Brenna Geary for LAVA organization from July 2003- Winter 2004. Notes from organization. mission statement, questionnaires for artists c. 2003, darkroom plans, Comedy Caravan event planning, Art in the Garden planning, meeting notes.</i>

Box	Folder	Contents
3.	1.	A Conaway- Personal sketch book with LAVA-related journals, art: <i>Sketch book with various LAVA-related materials from A. Conaway</i>
	2.	Hallie Jones Artwork <i>Small artworks by the artist from the LAVA House</i>
	3.	Aron Conaway Artwork <i>Small artworks by the artist from the LAVA House</i>
	4.	H Jones and A. Conaway- Future facility plans:

LIFT.45 business plan, notes and plans for new facility to be artist-owned—Artful-cility & Conveyer.

5. **A Conaway-notes, to do lists, and phone numbers:**
notes, to do lists, and phone numbers from Aron Conaway.
6. **LAVA dates in A Conaway notes:**
Various notes with informal notes that give indication of what happened on certain dates at the LAVA House. Content varies.
7. **A Conaway- Art sketches:**
Loose informal sketches by the artist. Varying content, mostly related to work at the LAVA House, studio work.
8. **A Conaway- Planning, visioning, brainstorming notes:**
Various plans and thoughts on paper for possibilities for LAVA House and for second facility. Lots of sketches and diagrams and lists.
9. **A Conaway- Journals and notes:**
Journals and notes kept by the artist.
10. **Shoot the Messenger:**
Collaborative work between Aron and Hallie falls under this name. From photography ideas to installations to video projection, the notes relate to the works of the artists.
11. **Hallie Jones– Journals, art ideas:**
Personal journals and art idea notes kept by the artis.
12. **Hallie Jones– LAVA notes:**
Notes by the artist kept in meetings and when not in meetings. Various planning and details.
13. **Hallie Jones– Vision notes:**
Various plans and thoughts on paper for possibilities for LAVA House and for second facility. Lots of sketches and diagrams and lists.

outside of folders **A Conaway- Personal calendar planners 2001-2006:**
Day planners kept by A. Conaway for six years, Covers many events, tasks and other LAVA related information and supports the events and history calendar. Many other peripheral projects and subjects are present in the planners.

Box	Folder	Contents
4.	1.	Post-fire 911 emergency calls and event records: <i>CD-Rs of 911 phone calls reporting fire, obtained by Leslie Barrass, given to Hallie Jones. Also records detailing first responders, times and codes for various responders.</i>
	2.	Post-fire Media contacts: <i>Business cards from media after LAVA House fire.</i>
	3.	Post-fire Pictures, Bill Christie eulogy: <i>Notes for eulogy for Bill Christy, by Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway, college ID card for Bill Christie and Navy Officers uniform decoration. Note taken by Aron Conaway of Bill's last requests, written circa 2002.</i>
	4.	Post-fire Meeting notes: <i>Notes and other papers relating to LAVA meetings convened after the fire to discuss money issues and the future of the group.</i>
	5.	Post-fire Benefit fliers: <i>Fliers and signs relating to benefit shows for the LAVA artists.</i>
	6.	Post-fire Finances: <i>Bank statements from after the fire, receipts from organizations and businesses- money received from benefits.</i>
	7.	Post-fire Letters and cards: <i>Letters, cards from friends, family after LAVA House fire.</i>
	8.	Post-fire Mellwood Arts and Entertainment Center free studios: <i>LOOK! Gallery Guide including Mellwood Studios, notes from Mellwood administration to LAVA artists, map of studios available for free to LAVA artists.</i>
	9.	Photographs <i>Photographs printed on paper from Aron Conaway's and Hallie Jones' negatives 2001-2005.</i>
	10.	Photographs – burnt <i>Photographs from album found in the Red Room (living room) of the LAVA House. Despite extensive damage to the</i>

room and cover of the book, the photographs are only charred on one edge of the frame.

11. **CD-Rs of photographs:**
CD-Rs with photographs and other files from artists and donors to archive.

Box	Folder	Contents
5.	1.	Press, Newspaper Articles, 2001-2008: <i>Louisville Eccentric Observer (LEO)</i> <i>The Courier-Journal</i>
	2.	Newspaper Articles, 2001-2008: <i>The Highlander</i> <i>Bejezus Magazine #10</i> <i>Louisville Eccentric Observer (LEO)</i> <i>The Courier-Journal</i>

ARCHIVE CONTENTS OUTSIDE OF BOXES:

Oversize Flat Objects:

8 Stencils
1 Sign
1 page of LAVA stickers
1 plexi scratched
18 11x17 show posters (chronological order)
2 T-shirts

3-Dimensional Objects:

2 AlterNation tin box prototypes
1 toilet paper roll show flier
1 LAVA House 20 penny nail
1 hot dog box with message (impression by K. Shelor)
1 YDS Pin-(Young Democratic Socialists)
1 Kodan Armada CD case with art on backside
1 coffee can lid with words, "Contributions – help us evolve"
1 linoleum cut LAVA logo

Artworks:

Asian Woman, Andy Cook, pen and ink drawing copy, c. 2002

Chair, Andy Cook, pen and ink drawing copy, c. 2002
Robert Fripp, Andy Cook, pen and ink drawing copy, c. 2002
Rachel Spitler, Andy Cook, pen and ink drawing copy, c. 2002
Confrontation, Bart Herre ,Intaglio Print, 6-2-2001
Big Brother wants to..., Aron Conaway, 11x17 wheat paste poster, c.2003
American Flag Lies Soldier, Hallie Jones, wheat paste poster c. 2003
American Flag Lies Tank, Hallie Jones, wheat paste Poster c. 2003
Jessica J at LAVA-1, Aron Conaway, charcoal on newsprint, c. 2001
Jessica J at LAVA-2, Aron Conaway, charcoal on newsprint, c. 2001
Hamartia, Aron Conaway, pen and ink, paper, staples, marker, 2000

Signs etc:

“Sign Up Sheet” – email list for LAVA show
 “Do not touch”- sign by Aron Conaway
 “Gallery Open Daily”- sign with stickers
 “The Humongous” -set list on cardboard
 Website planning diagram on wallpaper
 Large StarKiller show sign
 Lift.45-*Courier-Journal* newspaper stand insert
 Painting by Erin Devine during performance at LAVA House
 “Shame” stencil – from UL tuition increase protest meeting at LAVA
 “NO WAR” flag - Serene Conaway, for AlterNation
 Turn off Your T.V.”- sign, Hallie Jones for AlterNation
 “Mission of LAVA”- large dry erase board - sign
 Presentation poster board for events- LAVA- with multiple images
 Screen print posters - 1 Student Art League show 2001,
 1 art poster by Joel McDonald

3-Dimensional Objects post-fire:

1 fire line roll
 1 5-gallon donation bucket with sign
 1 grey sweater from Alan Canon with letter
 1 wood piece with contact information for Evan Billiter in Alabama
 1 photo frame with LEO cover from Glenn Herre

DETAILED FINDING AID FOR THE DIGITAL LAVA ARCHIVE:

D1.01 Photography, all pre-fire:

Thousands of digital photographs by various photographers. Varying content, space, events, daily life, artwork, etc. By far the largest collection of photographs are in the Conaway Folder

D1.02 Photography, post-fire:

Hundreds of digital photographs taken after January 26, 2008. Many photographs of the fire, the aftermath, object in fire, artists in new studios, benefit shows, etc.

D1.03 Videography, pre-fire:

Dozens of videos of music shows, art shows, political events, time lapse, the warehouse, casual life at the LAVA House.

D1.04 Videography, post-fire:

Video footage of the fire, from after the fire, interviews with the artists, footage of the clean up, etc.

D1.05 Websites, pre-fire:

Approximately 20 websites saved onto the drive. Clicking on the html icons will pull pages up. Contents include original LAVA House website and all pages included at various periods of the organization, show reviews, newspaper articles, comments about the space, etc.

D1.06 Websites, post-fire:

Includes dozens of websites talking about LAVA House fire and artists' situations, advertisements for benefit shows, how to help, thelavahouse.org website from immediately after the fire is also available. Extensive information about after the fire and the fire itself on this site.

D1.07 Audio, all:

All audio related to the LAVA House. Recording of instrumental jam from 2002, 911 audio from night of fire, demo from Strike City for AlterNation, audio recording of Songs of Mac by PAPA M originally played for artist at LAVA House. Phone messages with Bill Christie.

D1.08 Graphic files:

Various ad layouts and website graphics

D1.09 PSDs, Photoshop files:

Numerous graphic files from LAVA Scanning Party of photos and fliers. Many flier files.

D2.01 Word Files, organizational, marketing, all:

Nearly 150 work files from marketing copy, manifestos, artists' statements to email documentation. .

D2.02 E-mails, post-fire:

Emails from friends to Aron. Also correspondence with entire group of artists after fire.

D2.03 Notes, documents, post-fire:

Personal notes from meetings, notes to self from artists, contracts with Louisville Visual Arts Association and German- Paristown Neighborhood Association.

D3.01 LAVA Artists PORTFOLIOS:

Extensive files from various LAVA artists. Surveys from after fire, biographies, expansive art portfolios, CV/Resumes, personal journals and perspective on the LAVA experience, Folders for 20 artists listed. Artists have opportunity to add anything at any time to their folder.

I. The Future of the Archive

“By incorporating the knowledge which is deployed in reference to it, the archive augments itself, engrosses itself, it gains in auctoritas. But in the same stroke it loses the absolute and meta-textual authority it might claim to have. One will never be able to objectivize it while leaving no remainder. The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future.”ⁱ – Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever⁴³

I will be creating a website of the LAVA archive after completing this thesis in order to make the materials and their relationships accessible in a non-academic setting. Here it can serve as both an educational tool and as a source of entertainment. Its design will be more stylized and identifiable to the viewer as a LAVA entity than the university’s presentation of this thesis document. There will be videos uploaded to YouTube.com and placed on the website along with hundreds of selected photographs, artist portfolios, meeting minutes and all the other materials that are to be deemed interesting and public enough to publish online. The website will follow the sitemap illustrated on the following two pages and will look something like the illustration on the next page.

⁴³ Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” *Diacritics* 45.



Figure 30. www.thelavahouse.org homepage sample.

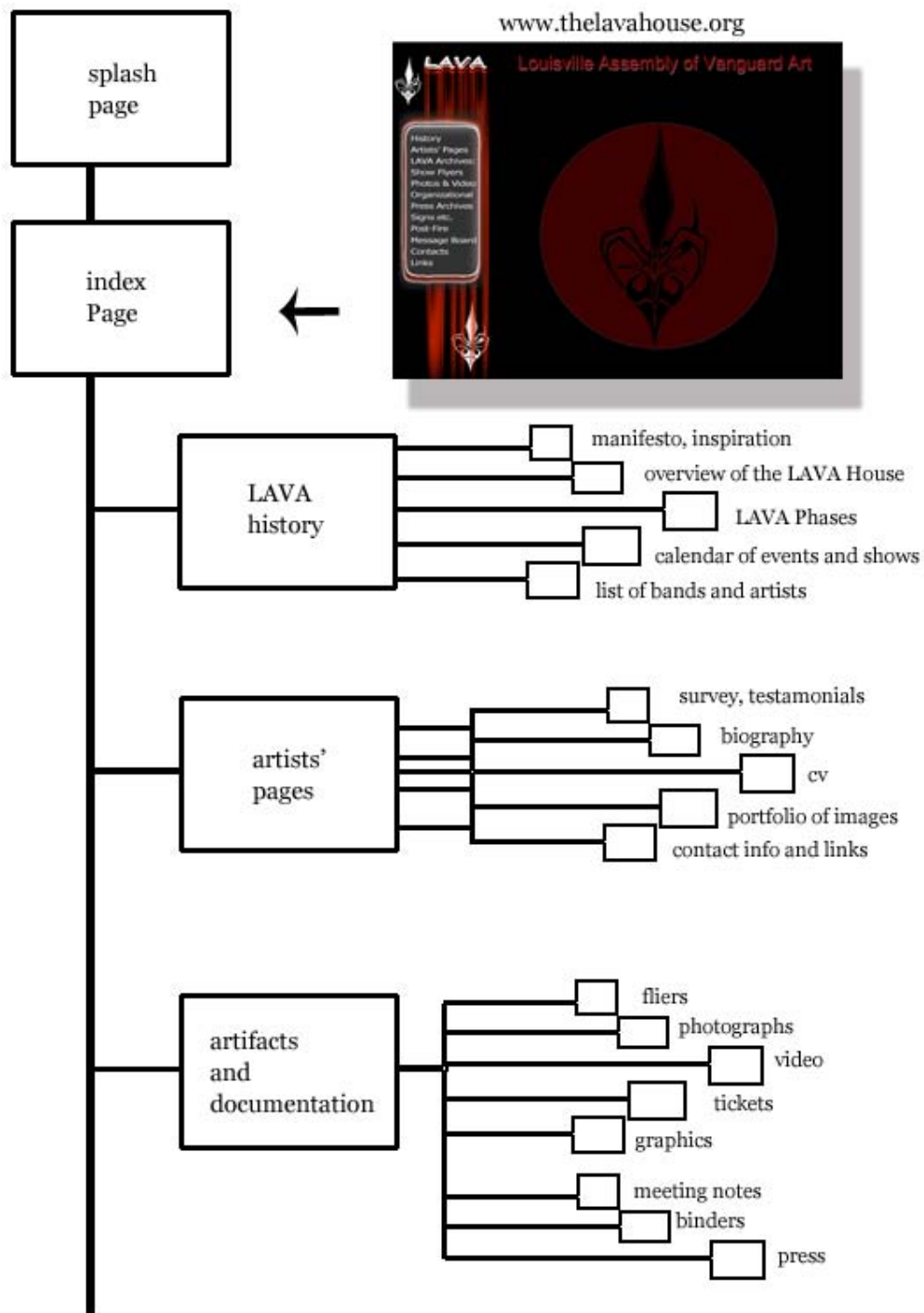


Figure 31. Diagram of LAVA archive site map (top).

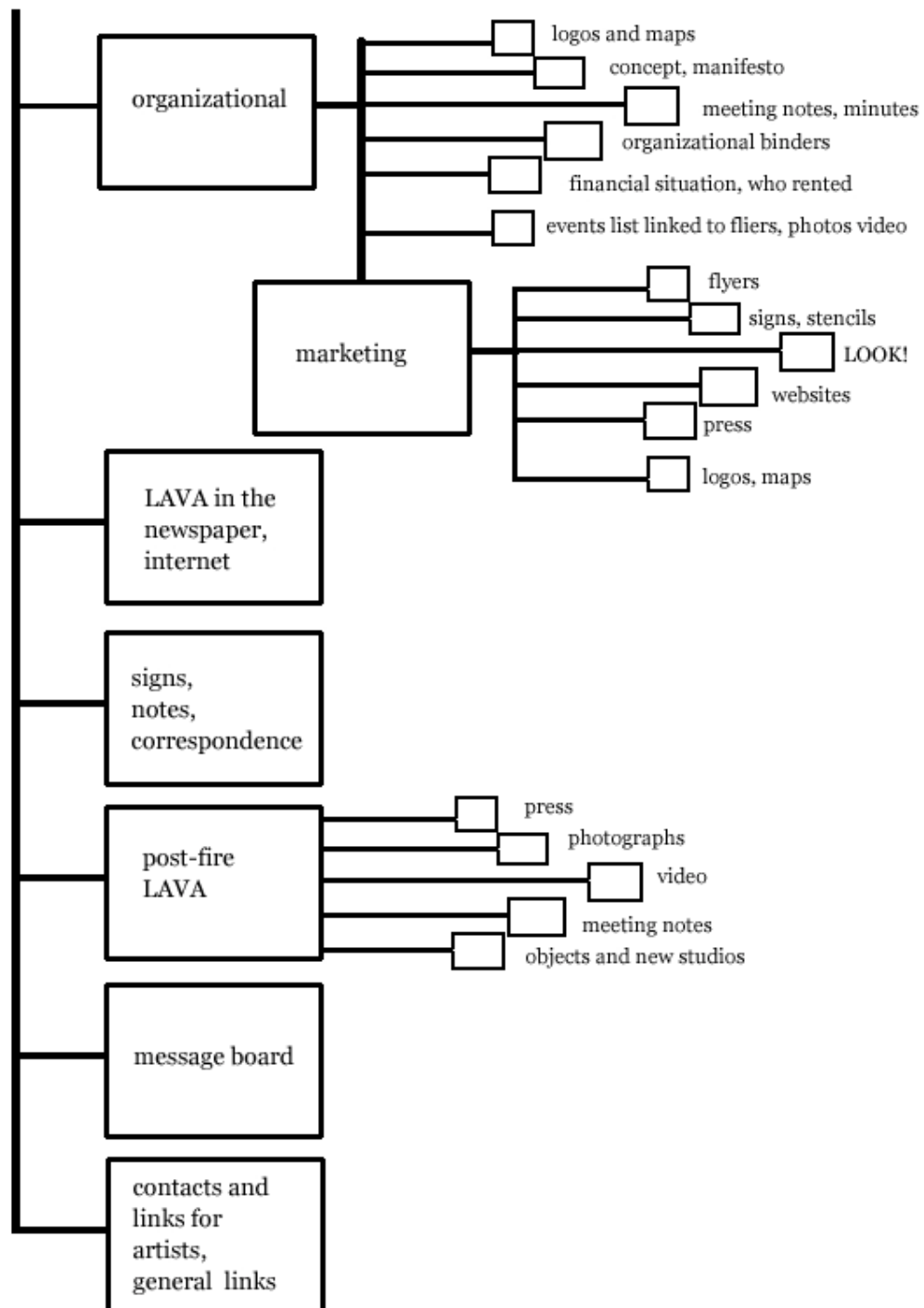


Figure 32. Diagram of LAVA archive site map (bottom).

Menu buttons for www.thelavahouse.org online archive:

- History
- Artists' Pages (with portfolios of art and personal documents)
- Artifacts and documentation
- Organization
- Marketing
- Press and LAVA net presence
- Signs, notes correspondence
- Post-fire LAVA
- Message board (open for public comments and memoirs)
- Contacts for artists and links

The process for creating this website will include:

- Selecting the best, most representative images of LAVA and LAVA House
- Dividing pictures by category, according to menu buttons listed above
- Optimizing all selected images
- Creating the entire site in blank pages according site map shown above
- Writing copy for all sections and pages
- Designing and entering final graphic design layout to all pages
- Inserting photographs, links and written copy
- Uploading the finished site to the server and pointing the domain there

J. Adding materials to the archive:

The LAVA archive has been created with the intention of allowing further development in the future. Space is available for the deposit of additional LAVA materials be they artists' portfolios, binders, photographs, videos or personal papers This will result in a fuller account of the LAVA.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Despite how unusual it is for a subversive, spontaneous, ad-hoc organization to have extensive records and documentation of its activities over a long period of time, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art realized those documents recorded important history and were worthy of preservation. Now this collection of media and materials document the organization and provide an opportunity for future in depth analysis of the group's multifaceted functions.

The video, photography, meeting notes, sketches, artworks, event fliers, and many other types of objects contained in the archive inform the viewer of LAVA's legacy. The characteristics of these objects are indicative of:

- LAVA's events
- meeting affairs
- artworks
- organization social and political alliances
- type of artists involved
- art-making ideas
- its artists' personal perspectives
- everyday live in its community

The extensive calendars of LAVA's history and events serve to fill in spaces between the objects in the archive and give context to its alternative cultural activities. These documents account for the timeframe in which the organization's events and public activity occurred, providing a clearer picture of the active organization.

This archive achieves the goal of documenting LAVA as fully as possible, by its completeness, size, and its structure as organized to reveal insights into the lives, activities and perspectives of those involved. The LAVA artists' surveys, biographies and portfolios allow users to gain a variety of perspectives and should help assess functions and activities that were the essence of LAVA. These records provide insights that are profoundly informative of the artists' views and experiences from within the walls of the warehouse. They transcend the physical quality of the archive's materials, and simultaneously provide meaning and context that would otherwise be lost. The documentation detail of the importance of the LAVA House and the organization to several in the community at large are provided through captured website testimonials and emails sent to the artists as well as collected sympathy cards after the fire. From the emotions running through these, it is apparent that the LAVA House was an important part of many lives.

The impact that experimental organizations such as LAVA (these underground spaces and communities) cause is difficult to gauge in any easily comprehensible way, but this thesis and archive attempts to begin to make this assessment possible. Successes and failures are ephemeral and personal, ultimately weighed personally by those who lived and endured the experience, as to whether they were painful memories to be forgotten or important lessons learned, but collectively (as the group was) these experiments deserve to be documented. In these dynamic situations, in the utopias we endeavor to build, where we create originally and dance madly in the face of homogenizing forces of contemporary culture, the truth is that we are still only human and act accordingly. The impact that a group of people has on a community may be

significant, no matter how brief its blaze of glory. The impact that the individuals in that group have on each other is even more at the heart of the matter. Those brave enough to approach the flame, gain the most insight.

In this spirit this archive remains as a testament and celebration of the life and times of Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art, the LAVA House, its many endeavors, and all the lives it touched.

CHAPTER VI

POST SCRIPT

Smoke Signals

A Message to LAVA's Brothers and Sisters in the Alt.Space Movement

If anything bonds the agents of our progressive alt.space/arts movement, it's that we all feel we're doing something important, worthy of our time. We put our creative lives into challenging ourselves and the society we're trying to impact, investing in a future we're trying to create. There is, however, a trait in our alternative culture that undermines our work's potency. Many of the projects, organizations and spaces that emerge within our alternative cultures tend to disappear as suddenly as they appeared, without leaving evidence about who they were, why they did their work and how they had operated. This ephemeral quality epitomizes our nature of living in the moment, yet leaves us in a difficult position. How will we ever amass enough momentum if much of what we have done is quickly forgotten?

To counter our fleeting nature, we need to be dedicated to documenting our collectives, spaces and activities and then making them accessible through media like the internet, books and magazine articles, and in fact, archives. Although it is counter-intuitive for ad hoc, improvisational organizations, to maintain a clear account that allows us to tell our story, it is vital to inspiring others who may someday create their own experimental spaces and countercultures. Without diligently recording our experiences

we cannot articulate the reasons for our events, or even prove that they happened. Most importantly, we need to communicate how vital this movement is to staving off homogenization and creating a richer way of life.

The absence of records leaves a hole in art history and discounts the activity of the active underground of culture and art. Preservation of this history through these documents can serve to inform and lay groundwork for new visions of creative organization. Providing information and context after navigating uncharted waters can allow others to go further and discover even newer territory. Our current movement must inform the future (and the present) of who we are, and why we're doing what we do. In this era of social restructuring, as we redefine art-making practices, art's boundaries, and its social functions, the history of art also grows and changes. Therefore, it's imperative to leave records of art's evolution, to chart its path through these changes.

I hope LAVA's ending will be a smoke signal of sorts, to remind others of the need for documenting progressive, independent underground cultures within the alt.space network. For the benefit of all, please keep and organize copies of your fliers, brochures, email blasts, meeting notes, whatever. Make video recordings of your activities and happenings. Photograph your art and the process of making it, as it only happens once and we need it to be visible. Keeping these collections as information and evidence of our lives will shed light upon an underexposed and under recorded area in the art historical lexicon, an area where many of our artists and groups need to be celebrated, encouraged and empowered.

Remember that the wise write their own history.

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APPENDICES

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A. List of bands/ DJs, place & year played at/for LAVA

2001

King Kong
Joe Manning
the Humongous
Seluah
Clark
Dj Bill McDonough
School
City of Ghosts

2002

Strike City
the Swords Project
Scaramongo
Starkiller
the Bitter Pills
Ivar Orn, Anonymous
Green Formica Table
The Lost Cadillac
Strike City
the Murdered
Dub Narcotic Sound System
Half Seas Over
Tara Jane O' Neil
Da Hawney Troof
Snowsuit
Cheer Accident
Parlour
Arch
Antennae Now
Elecrolytes
Fluxtron
Sapat
Tim Conaway
Jon Cook
DJs Foursquare
Strangeloop
Logicide
Mint
Tig
Cosmic

Half Seas Over
An Albatross
Gravy Train
DJ Hawny Troof
The Locust
Arab on Radar
Erase Errata
Lightning Bolt
Flying Luttenbachers
Combat Wounded Veteran
Mr. Romance and the Polyphonic Force (the Children)
Heartbreak Cowboy Traveling Roadshow
Your Heart Breaks
Dianogah
Instant Camera
Second Story Man
The Others
Just for Kids
32 Frames
The Novas
Scarlet Autumn
Kathleen Barbera
Kodan Armada
Emmanuel Nice
Scarlet Autumn
Haywire Act
Bonnie 'Prince' Billy (at The Museum, Washington St.)
Faun Fables
Dark String March
Lullatone
The Cars (Cover Band)
Nirvana (Cover Band)
Iggy and the Stooges (Cover Band)
Trans Am
Instant Camera
Irina
DJ Tease and Friends
Video by Shoot the Messenger

AlterNation, Central Park

Strike City
the Children
Zion and the Uprising
Heidi Howe
The Man with the Golden Means (Joe Manning)

Contra
The Metropolitan Gospel Choir
The Lady Foursquare
DJs Tease and Please
Dank One

2003

LAVA House

Sapat
Frequency Being
Fringe Medicine
The Children
SKL (Spiritual Krack Laboratories)
PRDF (People's Republic of Delicious Food)
Manchuria
Mercury Program
Instant Camera, Paper Lions
Musique for Europeans
Shag Rock
Analog
Video by Hallie and Aron

The Comedy Caravan

Ron Whitehead & the Hillbilly Viking Apocalypse Revue
Allo
Humongous
Big Kitchen
Nu Afikikoid Quartet
Serpent Wisdom
The Summer Life
Jeremy Johnson
JK McKnight

2004

LAVA HOUSE

am Sunday
Waterproof Blonde
Evolucion
DJs Mischief and Honky Klown
Manchuria

Michael Murphy's Bar

the Children

the Gage Brothers
Slam Poetry
DJs

The Portland Festival Arts Building - 34th/Northwestern

the Who (cover band)
Nirvana (cover band)
Joan Jett (cover band)
Eminem (cover)
Badass 80's (cover band)
King Kong
the Children
Kit Chaps

2005

The Portland Festival Arts Building - 34th/Northwestern

Faun Fables
Joe Manning
the Charmers
No Neck Blues Band
Sapat
Parlour
Faun Fables
Lucky Pineapple
Dead Meadow
Jennifer Gentle
The Children
the Meredith's
the Photographic
Will Oldham
Sir Richard Bishop
The Cherry Blossoms
Barbez
Biz-arch
Nirvana (cover band)
Rolling Stones (cover band)
Panda-llac
Hazil Adkins Cover
Djs Jeff the Chef, Laylow, Narwhol and Sneed

Nelligan Hall

Scott Carney and the Heavy Friends

2006

Nelligan Hall
Faun Fables
Phantom Family Halo
Litany's Last Call

2008

Post-fire Benefit Shows
Bu Hau Ting
Vampire Squid
Lucky Pineapple,
Consume Consumer,
the Glasspack
Hokum County Fiji Mermen
John Heywood
Joe Manning w/ Glen Dentinger and Nathan Salsburg
The American Freedom Machine
My Darling Asleep
Guilderoy-Byrne
Nora, Ben and Eli
Kings Sons and Daughters
Tara Jane 'O Neil
Shannon Wright
DJs Matt Anthony Woody on the Radio,
DJs A.Bell, Sean John and Damo

B. List of publications mentioning LAVA—magazines, newspapers

2001-2008

“Out of the Box, Squallis Puppeteers, Not Your Typical Troupe”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, LEO, Oct. 17, 2001

by Michael Jones, Photos Brian Bohannon

“LEO’s Writer’s Picks: Louisville’s Best Venue”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, Nov.12, 2003

By Alan Abbott

“Louisville Photo Expo 2003”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, July ?, 2003

By Jo Anne Triplett

“In Focus Photography Gets its Due in Expo’s Seven Venues”

Courier-Journal, Sunday, June 22, 2003

By Diane Heilenman

“Motif, Townsend and LAVA”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, March 24, 2004

By Jo Anne Triplett

“What’s Going On”

Velocity Magazine, April 21,2004

“We Saw You (Michael Murphy’s LAVA Show)”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, July 28, 2004

“Special Events, Art”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, April 21, 2004

“Art, music flow at LAVA House: Spring Party Tomorrow Offers Variety of Works, Golden Vibe”

Courier-Journal, Weekend Extra Friday, April 23, 2004

By Diane Heilenman

“LAVA House Moves its Haunted Show to Portland

Louisville Eccentric Observer, October 27, 2004

By Elizabeth Kramer

“Portland Festival Building To Host LAVA House Halloween Gala”

The Portland Anchor, October 2004

By John Owen

“Art Bop merges the art/music experience”

Louisville Eccentric Observer, December 1, 2004

By Stephen George

“Fest Share Space with Artists”

Courier-Journal, Weekend Extra Friday, April 23, 2004

By Sheryl Eden

"LAVA Art Show and Halloween Party a Success"

The Portland Anchor, January 2005

By John Owen

"Thunder Over Portland: Dueling Stages, Jousting Thunder"

Louisville Eccentric Observer, April 20, 2005

By Stephen George

"Six Pack: Live Music Venues (Portland Festival Building)"

Louisville Eccentric Observer, April 27, 2005

By Stephen George

"Late-Night Fire Destroys Apartments, Art Studios"

Courier-Journal, Weekend Extra Friday, January 27, 2008

By James Bruggers

"Fire Claims Artists' Father Figure: LAVA House Blaze's Cause Still Unknown"

Courier-Journal, Weekend Extra Friday, January 28, 2008

By Laura Ungar

"LAVA House Destroyed by Blaze"

Louisville Eccentric Observer, January 30, 2008

By Stephen George

"LAVA House Fire Gutted Building, not Artists Spirit: Benefits will Help Those Who Lost Everything Get Back on Their Feet."

Courier-Journal, Weekend Extra Sunday, February 3, 2008

By Diane Heilenman

Feature *"LAVA HOUSE: For Six-and-a-half years, the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art Lived in a Warehouse on Shelby Parkway that burned to ashes Last Month. Here, a Photo Essay"*

Louisville Eccentric Observer, February 6, 2008

By Stephen George

"Lending a Musical Hand: My Darling Asleep and others will Perform to Benefit LAVA House"

Courier-Journal, Weekend Extra Sunday, February 15, 2008

By Jeffrey Lee Puckett

"LAVA House Fire"

The Highlander, March 2008

Community Listing, RE:ACTION

Louisville Eccentric Observer, April 9, 2008

"Sculptor Ready for 'Rite of Spring' After Tragic Fire, He's Set for Show"

Courier-Journal, Central West Neighborhoods April 23, 2008

By Martha Elson

"Arts and Entertainment Staff Picks: RE:ACTION"

Louisville Eccentric Observer, April 30, 2008

By Jo Anne Triplett

C. LAVA House video documentation

VIDEO FOOTAGE INVENTORY OF THE LAVA ARCHIVE:

Date	Contents	Videographer
2001, 10-27-	City of Ghosts at Halloween Show– by:	Aron Conaway
2001, 10-27-	SCHOOL at Halloween Show– by:	Aron Conaway
2001, 10-27-	People at Halloween Show– by:	Aron Conaway
2001, - -	Spider vs. Roach 1 and 2– by:	Aron Conaway
2001, - -	LAVA Cleaning- Aron Cleaning Chad’s Room– by:	Aron Conaway
2001, - -	Metal for Aron’s art for Hangar Show– by:	Aron Conaway
2001 -	Rock-it at the LAVA House by:	Josh Mather and Dan Penrod
2001, 11-17 -	DJ Bill McDonough Scorpio Fest III at LAVA House	
2001, 11-17 -	King Kong at the LAVA House – by:	Kate Blodgett
2001, 11-17 -	King Kong Clips– by:	Aron Conaway
2002, - -	LAVA Meeting at LAVA House Red Room – by:	Josh Mather
2002, 04- -	What’s the Mather? Raw Footage 3 tapes – by:	Joe Ceidt
2002, 06-01 -	Parlour at the LAVA House – by:	Brett Holsclaw
2002, 06-01 –	LAVA’s crazy neighbors – by:	Brett Holsclaw
2002, 06-01 -	Cheer Accident at the LAVA House – by:	Brett Holsclaw
2002, 07-12 –	Arab on Radar at the LAVA House – by:	Kate Blodgett
2002, 07-12 -	Lightning Bolt at the LAVA House – by:	Brett Holsclaw
2002, 07-12 -	Lightning Bolt at the LAVA House – by:	Kate Blodgett
2002, 10-04 -	Bonnie ‘Prince’ Billie – The Museum, Washington St. – by:	A. Conaway
2002, 12- -	LAVA Meeting in the Red Room	
2002, 12-31 -	Trans Am, New Years Eve Bash– by:	Hallie Jones
2002, 12-31 -	Irina, New Years Eve Bash – by:	Hallie Jones
2002, 12-31 -	Instant Camera, New Years Eve Bash – by:	Hallie Jones
2003, - -	Vaginal Ashtray Band Practice at LAVA House – by:	Aron Conaway
2003, - -	Hallie Jones’ Art Video - Burnin’ – by:	Hallie Jones and Aron Conaway
2003, - -	The Ark in New Orleans – by:	Aron Conaway
2003, 10- 31-	Halloween Party People by:	Joe Ceidt part 1

2003, 10- 31- The Stooges Cover Band Halloween at LAVA House by: Joe Ceidt parts 1
 2003, 10- 31- Nirvana Cover Band Halloween at LAVA House by: Joe Ceidt parts 1
 2003, 12-07 - LAVA & MoveOn.org showing of Truth Uncovered KY Theater– by: AC
 2004, - - Aron and Hallie Gallopalooza Time-lapse 1 – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, - - Aron and Hallie Gallopalooza Time-lapse 2 – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 04-14 -- ‘Art that Strikes You’ SAL, Brown School/KCD –by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 04-14 -- ‘Art that Strikes You’ Music Manchuria— by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 04-15 – LAVA at JCC Unity Arts Festival – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 04-24 - ‘Art for Evolution’ 1, Music: AM Sunday by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 04-24 - ‘Art for Evolution’ 2, Music: AM Sunday by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 06-02 - Pavane Artist Social at LAVA House – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 07-24 – Michael Murphy’s, Tony Miller Benefit – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 10-29 - The Who Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Brett Holsclaw
 2004, 10-29 - The Who Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 10-29 - Nirvana Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Brett Holsclaw
 2004, 10-29 - Nirvana Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 10-29 - Eminem Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Brett Holsclaw
 2004, 10-29 - Eminem Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 10-29 – Joan Jett Cover Band Halloween in Portland – by: Aron Conaway
 2004, 12-31 - The Children in Portland New Years – by: Aron Conaway
 2005, 01-01 - King Kong in Portland New Years – by: Aron Conaway
 2006, - - Aron Conaway Studio – by: Aron Conaway
 2006, - - Chris Chappell Studio – by: Chris Chappell
 2007, 09- - Tour with Liz Kramer – by: Aron Conaway and Hallie Jones
 2008, 01-26 - LAVA House Fire 1 – by: Kent Getsinger/ Aron Conaway
 2008, 01-26 - LAVA House Fire 2 – by: Kent Getsinger/ Aron Conaway
 2008, 01-27 – LAVA House News Broadcasts – Recorded by Kent Getsinger

VIDEO NOT INCLUDED IN ARCHIVE AT TIME OF PUBLISHING:

2002, 10-12 - Strike City AlterNation by: Tyler Trotter

2002, 10-12 - Contra AlterNation by: Tyler Trotter

2002 10-04 - Faun Fables at the LAVA House

2003, - - Big Kitchen Practice at the LAVA House – by: Aaron Fitzgerald

2004, 10-29 - Halloween Video from Bennett Duckworth

2008, - - Post-fire footage of rubble and life after fire

2008, - - Interviews with LAVA artists by Lew for documentary

Video still coming and will be available at www.thelavahouse.org

D. Website content/sections and details

www.thelavahouse.org

HISTORY:

Manifesto and Inspiration

Description: An overview of the Experience

Explain studio rental concept

Incarnations and Phases of LAVA/LAVA House:

On Shelby Parkway:

Original Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art

Shows, studios, residence

The LAVA House Art Project

A Return to the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art

Post-Fire Marshal – no shows; studios and residence only in warehouse

In Portland:

Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art – Shows only

Post Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art:

Bike Depot, Lift .45, Green House Arts Project, Brick House, Artful-cility,

Conveyer, Nelligan Hall, Fort Future

Fire:

Aftermath and future of artists and residents

Calendar of LAVA history

Calendar of events

List of bands and artists

LAVA ARTIST'S PAGES:

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS:

Artist's personal notes, sketches, etc.

Biography

Resume

Shows list

Portfolio of artworks

Artist portrait

Survey for each person covering:

Other projects during LAVA and plans post-LAVA

Thoughts on LAVA... artist's perspective

Personal perspectives on anything else

Links to whatever artist's want on their page

DOCUMENTATION and REALIA:

Fliers
Tickets
Website
Graphics
Meeting Notes
Binders
Video: shows, parties, tours, studios, life at LAVA, random
Photographs: space, shows (art/music), artists/artwork, general images, studios,
life, Bill, random objects from LAVA House

ORGANIZATIONAL:

Concept, mission and manifestos
Stories about LAVA
Meeting notes
Letterhead
Binder, etc.

- early brainstorming, etc.
- later notes

FINANCIAL:

No real records included
Describe situation and arrangement
Who rented

EVENTS: List of all

Art shows
Music shows
Art and music shows

MARKETING:

Fliers
Logo
Signs
LOOK!
Websites
Press coverage

PRESS:

LEO
Courier-Journal
Louisville Magazine
Bejeezus

Online Spottings

SIGNS/NOTES/CORRESPONDENCE

POST-FIRE LAVA:

PRESS: *LEO*, *Courier Journal*, *Louisville Magazine*, *Bejeezus*, Online Spottings

PHOTOS

VIDEO: News and Personal

MESSAGE BOARD: Open for public comments, testimonials, memoirs

ARTIST CONTACTS AND LINKS

LAVA / LAVAHOUSE ON THE WEB:

Official Archive Site: <http://www.thelavehouse.org>

MySpace page: <http://www.myspace.com/thelavahouse>

YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/thelavahouse>

E. Letter of request: LAVA artists, participants and friends

Dear LAVA Artists, Participants and Friends,

I am working on a **LAVA/LAVA House Archive** that will be housed at the **Art Library at U of L** for my Master's Thesis. I started this project long before the fire, and regret not sending this letter (which has been modified) sooner.

At this point, I am facing serious deadline. My entire written thesis and all archive materials must be turned in to the University by August 7th. This means I have about 3 weeks to collect, process, and file your materials, making this a very time-sensitive issue.

The major point I want to make is this: **I need your submissions by Sunday July 6th**. This is your opportunity to give feedback and provide materials that will describe your roles and perspectives at the LAVA House. It is your chance to represent yourself as an artist and/or participant in the LAVA House's historical record/archive. If you do not turn things in, be assured that your information will not be published and your legacy will not be documented. I do not intend to omit anything, so please get your information to me by the deadline. A list on the following page details the types of information and documents I am requesting. If you have questions, please e-mail me: aronconaway@hotmail.com

I am creating this archive for several reasons. The biggest one being that organizations such as the *Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art* come and go all the time, and usually leave nothing but scattered memories and a lost history. I believe we all pulled together an ambitious project and did our best to succeed. Although we were not a long-lasting institution, the entire project was an experiment that accomplished much and provided lessons and opportunities for us all. Our records and stories will contribute a body of academic documentation that can inspire others and help guide them if they choose to attempt a similar endeavor.

The LAVA experience, the happenings, the activities, the space, were pretty well documented with video, photos, fliers, and other mediums, which I have been hunting down and compiling for months. I know I have not uncovered everything and there is likely a lot more out there that should be included. If you can think of anyone who has anything please ask for their help in contributing.

I have done my best, through years of notes, to write the best account of the history of the place that I could. I am going to send you a calendar so you can check it out, and if there are any dates you feel are important to add, (such as your personal art shows, meetings or events that you had at the LAVA House, like birthday parties, meetings etc,) please add the dates in red (must be in red!!!), email the document back to me and I will add your info to the final draft. I have not included a proportionate amount of involvement for all participants because I don't know everything, so inform me, and your story will also be included.

I also have piles of papers and other objects with a digital copy of each that'll be added to the collection at the Art Library. I am asking for your help through contributions and donations, to give the most accurate account of what happened at the LAVA House. I will about get a digital copy made of everything, so don't worry about that.

I would like to collect and add:

- *meeting notes*
- *personal LAVA-related note*
- *photos*
- *video*
- *sketches*
- *plans*
- *correspondence / letters*
- *binders*
- *fliers*
- *digital computer files and documents*
- *computer files of fliers*
- Anything else you can think of!!!

If you don't want to part with your physical objects, please scan or photograph them (put 'em on a disc) or allow me to help do that.

***For the **Art Library's Collections**, I would like to create a portfolio for each LAVA artist with the following **PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION** (Remember you may never get another chance to do this in your lifetime)

1. **Survey.** I am including several questions for you to answer, which will be added to your file.
2. **A Biography** about you, but in 3rd person
3. **A Resume/ CV**
4. **Portfolio of digital photographs of your artwork** photos of your artwork over the years,
5. **Testimonials**, contribute your perspectives about the organization and the studios at the LAVA House
6. **A Portrait photograph for your page**
7. **I need you to sign a 'permission for use'** for your artwork and notes to be in the archive, so I will get that document to you ASAP. Your work will only be published once in a LAVA House archive website, in the actual thesis document, and in the Archive, all with the Artist's credit given. I will email this as soon as I draft it or get it.

Remember this stuff will be added to the archives and will be there for a long, long time.
The better this thing comes together the better we will all look.

I am creating a website to post the archive, where people can see fliers, video, photographs, meeting notes, etc. and post memories and contribute remaining photos and video that are out there.

Email me with questions or suggestions
EMAIL ME AND WE CAN ARRANGE FOR PICKUP/ DROP OFF

Remember: THE DEADLINE is Sunday July 6th
Mark your calander!!!

Thank you and I hope you are as excited about this as I am,

Aron
(aronconaway@hotmail.com)

Survey/ Questionnaire:

Please fill out the following, to be added to a background portfolio for each artist/participant/community member. If you can, please spend some time thinking about these questions and try to be honest. This is *your opportunity* to leave a legacy in an academic setting as an artist and/or participant at the LAVA House.

Your Name:

How did you first hear about the LAVA House? What led to you going there?

- Where were you were before you had space at the LAVA House?
- What were the dates when you began and ended your time at the LAVA house?
- What did you do during your time there?
- What type of art/ music/ activity were you doing?
- In your perspective, what was the mission of the Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art? What was it about?
- Why did you decide to be a part of the organization/ project?
- What are you doing now? What current projects?
- What are you planning on doing with your future?
- Has the LAVA House influenced you at all in what you are doing in your life now?

What do you remember about the story? What are your favorite stories about the LAVA/LAVA House?

CURRICULUM VITA

ARON PATRICK CONAWAY

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Louisville, KY 40204
(502)758-8338
aronconaway@hotmail.com
www.aronconaway.com

EDUCATION

AND TRAINING:

Masters Program in Critical and Curatorial Studies
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
2004-2008

Artist Educator Training Program
Kentucky Center for the Arts
2004-2008

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Concentration in Photography
University of Louisville, KY
2001

National Student Exchange
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
1998/1999

CCSA Study Abroad Program
Kings College, London, England
Summer 2000

Society for Photographic Education
Tuscan, AZ; Cincinnati, OH; Savannah, GA
1999/2000-01

ART

EXHIBITIONS:

2008

Terrastock Festival
Mellwood Arts and Entertainment Center
Live video projection

Development
Zephyr Gallery

Live video projection

Shopdropping Card Project

New York City

Illustration

RE:ACTION

Swanson-Reed Contemporary Gallery

2 person show multi-medium

2007

Through their Eyes

Speed Museum

Community photography project

The Uninviting

Louisville Photo Biennial

Mellwood Arts and Entertainment Center

Dig

The Ground Floor Gallery, Glassworks

Installation

Pulp Funktion

Glassworks

Mural

2006

Turning Trash to Treasure

OVCE—Miami of Ohio

Sculpture

Ignite

The Ground Floor Gallery, Glassworks

Installation

Louisville: Then and Now

University of Louisville Photo Archives Gallery

Photography

Documenting Dissent

JB Speed Art Museum

Photography

Shop Dropping

New York City

Illustration

Visual Aids, Postcards from the Edge

James Cohan Gallery, New York City

Illustration

2005

Sprawl

Photography Exhibit

Swanson Reed Contemporary Gallery

Hope For Homeless

Permanent Installation of Gallopalooza Horse in

Wayside Christian Mission Art Gallery

One Nation Under God: Operation Whitewash

Louisville Visual Arts Association, Louisville Water Tower

Performance and Installation

Round Two: Political Art Show

Glassworks

Sculpture

BRICK House Benefit

Bike Depot

Photography

2004

Political Art Show Tri-State Invitational

Glassworks

Sculpture

10 X 10

Glassworks

Video short

Art Bop

Frankfort Ave. Third Friday Gallery Hop

Sculpture

ForeCastle -Art, Music and Activism Festival

Tyler Park

Installation

Art For Evolution

LAVA Spring Invitational Juried Show

Installation

Gallopalooza Sidewalk Derby

Brightside Project/Coalition for the Homeless

Sculpture

As the World Turns

Swanson Reed Contemporary Gallery

Installation

2003

Destruction of Nature: Beauty vs. the Beast
Kentucky Theater
Sculpture

The Element of Surprise : Annual Photo Invitational
city-wide, multi-gallery participation, LAVA House
Photography

A Whole LAVA Love
Art inspired by Love and War
LAVA House, video

2002

The Staring Contest
Louisville Film and Video Festival -Video Derby
Baxter Theater, short video

AlterNation-Art, Music and Activism Festival
Central Park
Sculpture, photography, installation

Student Art League- Show Your Arts
LAVA House
Photography

Art for the Animals
The Clifton Center (The Shamrock Foundation Annual Fundraiser)
Photography

Permanent Installation
Well of Spirits Restaurant & Bar
Photography

2001

The anti-War Carnival
Central Park
Photography

Hangar Show
Bowman Field Cardinal Wings Hangar
Installation

Biennial Photography Invitational,
Zephyr Gallery
Photography

Bachelor of Fine Arts Thesis Show
University of Louisville
Photography and sculpture

'UPC', Unknown Photographers Collective
953 Gallery
Photography

Toy Camera Show
University of Louisville SAL Gallery
Photography

2000

International Study Abroad Photo Exhibit
International Center and Red Barn at University of Louisville
Photography

American Standard Photo Show
former American Standard Toilet Factory, Louisville, Kentucky

Invitational Student Art Trade
Herron School of Art and Design, Indianapolis, IN
Photography

Student Art Show
Covi Gallery, University of Louisville
Photography

1999

Small Metals Show
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
Juried: Connie De Jean
Copper sculpture

PUBLICATIONS:

2008

Velocity, 'Trash to Treasure'

Louisville Eccentric Observer, RE:ACTION Staff Picks

Louisville Eccentric Observer, RE:ACTION show card

Art in America, Artist/ Gallery Listings

Courier Journal, 'My Darling Asleep and others will perform to benefit LAVA House'

Louisville Eccentric Observer, Cover Story for February 6, 2008

Courier Journal, 'Lava House fire gutted building, not artists' spirit'

2007

Courier Journal, Weekend Extra, Shotgun Fest

Louisville Eccentric Observer, The Uninviting, Bill Carner

Louisville Eccentric Observer, T'What?

Velocity, T'What?

Courier- Journal, The Uninviting

2006

Louisville: Then and Now, Photography

Speed Museum Webpage, Photograph Posted for
Documenting Dissent

Louisville Eccentric Observer, Louisville: Then and Now

Louisville Cardinal, Dissent : Art From the Street

Louisville Cardinal, Computer Art

Louisville Eccentric Observer, Percent for Art Program

Courier-Journal, 'Left Bank Portland : The Hope Mills Building Studios'

Courier-Journal, 'Louisville Then and Now Book Review'

2005

Courier-Journal, 'LIFT .45'

Velocity, 'WXBH'

Louisville Magazine, 'Brick by Brick : WXBH'

Louisville Eccentric Observer, April 20, 2005, 'Thunder Over Portland:
dueling stages, jousting Thunder'

The Guide, Spring issue, 'LIVE Performances'

Literary LEO, Third Place Award, Feb. 9, 2005

Courier-Journal, Arts & Leisure: LIVE Series, Sun. Feb. 6, 2005

2004

The Guide, Fall issue, 'Artist Statements'

Portland Anchor, October Vol. 31, No. 1

Louisville Eccentric Observer, October 27, LAVA House article

Courier-Journal, December 2, Metro section

Louisville Eccentric Observer, March 24, 2004, Show Review,
As The World Turns, Swanson Reed Contemporary Gallery

2002

Courier-Journal, Saturday October 11, 2002

Courier-Journal, Sunday July 22, 2001

Entropy, Brushfire Artist Collective Magazine, drawings

TELEVISION:

2008

WAVE 3

WHAS 11

WLKY 32

ART

COLLECTIONS:

2008

The Deutch Bank Collection

The Makers Mark Collection

2007

Bryce Hudson Collection

HONORS

AND AWARDS:

2005

Kentucky Alliance Community Action award – for volunteer work
to establish a Louisville low power FM radio station, 92.7
WXBH

Third place award, Traditional Photography
Literary LEO, 2005

Second place award in video category
10X10 Art Show, Glassworks

1996-2001

Trustee's Scholarship Award
University of Louisville

Honor's Program
University of Louisville

2000

First place, *International Center Photography Contest*
Judged by Suzanne Mitchell

Center for Cooperative Study Abroad Scholarship-\$500
University of Louisville International Center

1996, 1998-1999

Dean's List
University of Louisville

1996

Eagle Scout Award
Boy Scouts of America

CURATORIAL
WORK:

2008

Street Art Show
Gallery NuLu, Louisville, KY

2007

T'What?, Photography Show
Gallery NuLu with Hallie Jones and Lori Beck

2005-2006

Gallery Assistant to John Begley
Covi Art Gallery, University of Louisville

2006

Curator *Dissent: Art from the Street* Poster Show,
Covi Art Gallery, University of Louisville ofL

Assistant to Curator Bill Carner for
Documenting Dissent Photo Show,
JB Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY

Assistant Curator to John Begley
Alma Lesch Retrospective Exhibit
Covi Art Gallery, University of Louisville

2005

Internship, initiation and assembling
Louisville Punk Music History Archive
University of Louisville Photo Archives

Cataloguing of *Artist Books collection*
Margaret M. Bridewell Library, University of Louisville

2004

Assistant Curator to Delinda Buie,
Christmas Books from the Collection of Frank R. Abel
Rare Books Archive, University of Louisville

2003

Curator, *Beauty and the Beast: Nature vs. the American Dream*
Art Show, Kentucky Theater

2001-2005

Curation/installation, multiple art/music shows
LAVA House Gallery, garden party, Portland, Lou.

2001

Co-Curator/installation of artworks
Well of Spirits, Bardstown Rd.

HONORS &
AWARDS:

2005

Kentucky Alliance Community Action Award
For volunteer work for establishment of
Louisville low power FM radio station, 92.7 WXBH

1996-2001

Trustee's Scholarship Award
University of Louisville

Honor's Program
University of Louisville

2000

Center for Cooperative Study Abroad Scholarship-\$500
University of Louisville International Center

1996, 1998-1999

Dean's List, University of Louisville

1996

Eagle Scout Award, Boy Scouts of America

COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT:

2008

Lost and Found: Photography and Poetry by Families from Meyers
Middle Community School
Speed Art Museum and Meyers Middle School Family
Exhibition at Speed Art Museum

2007

Through their Eyes Speed Museum and Hazelwood Elementary School
Family Photography and Writing
Exhibition at Speed Art Museum

Co-organizer/graphic design
First *annual Germantown Shotgun Fest*

2006

Volunteer in WXBH Radio Collective
Brick House Community Center

Volunteer at Louisville Science Center
Thunder Over Louisville – kids event fundraiser

Volunteer in Kids Art Tent
LVAA Boat Race Party Fundraiser

2005

Arts Kentucky volunteer to initiate a Percent for Arts Program

Volunteer Installer LVAA/ U of L Annual Art Auction

2004

Neighborhood Institute Graduate
Louisville Community Design Center/Center for Neighborhoods

2002-2004

Volunteer Art Installer and
Video Projectionist/ Technical Assistance
AlterNation and Forecastle - Art, Music, Activism Festivals

2006-present

Co-Director Metal Committee, Board of Directors
Ohio Valley Creative Energy

2006

Board of Directors
Brick House Community Center

2001-2005

Co-Founder/Artist/Collective Member
Louisville Assembly of Vanguard Art

2002

Art Director, Music Organizer
AlterNation

2000

3-day volunteer
Society For Photographic Education Conference, Cincinnati, OH

WORK
EXPERIENCE:

2007-2008

Assistant to Sculpting Artists Dave Caudill and Guy Tedesco
Photographer at the Speed Museum – Family Fun Day, Bring Your
Dog Day, Summer Camp – Non-Darkroom Photography, Speed-
Hazelwood Elementary Project, Speed-Meyers Middle Project

Audio Tech/Camera Operator- Churchill Downs Simulcast Productions

2002-2005

St. Joseph's Children's Home /Treatment Facility
Residential Youth Worker, 1st, 2nd, 3rd shifts

2000-2001

Staff Photographer
Inferno Magazine, Hip Hop Magazine

Staff Photographer
Louisville Cardinal, University of Louisville Newspaper

1999-2002

Brown Brothers Cadillac
Nighttime Security

2000-2001

Sculptor, Metal Worker
Eagle Sign and Design

1998-1999

Film Projectionist
Century Rio 24, Albuquerque N.M

1997

Biology Teacher / Art Instructor / Faculty
Summerbridge Louisville 1997, Division of Americorps

1996-1998

Tutor/ Assistant Coordinator
AVID Program, Jefferson County Public Schools

WEBSITES

MAINTAINED:

www.aronconaway.com
www.myspace.com/aconaway
www.thelavahouse.org
www.portlandcalling.org

(with Hallie Jones)
www.shoot-the-messenger.net
www.myspace.com/artcoup
www.hallieandaron.net
www.twhat.net
