

Briefly describe your project and its goals: (500 word limit)

Take Home is an archive, a gift, a publication, and a potluck. It promotes artists' interpersonal connections and incubates a moment. Like a potluck dinner, guests—in this case artists—are invited to contribute an item. Instead of food or drink, we seek art objects—although edibility is not prohibited. We—*Reality Club*—compile these objects into a publication—with enough copies for each participating artist and a selection of archives, libraries, and various other collections that are accessible to the public. *Take Home* is a project of the arts organization, *Reality Club*. Our mission is to work together with open minds and compassion to explore reality through the arts. Part of that mission includes constantly collaborating with similarly compassionate individuals and organizations. For *Take Home*, we are working with *The Menial Collection*—a Baltimore-based arts library and community research center. *The Menial Collection's* programming has a similar focus on smaller-scale connective interventions—such as their *BMORE BOOK DELIVERY*.

The idea for *Take Home* started forming in the summer of 2019 while on a *Reality Club Rare Book Tour* at the Spencer Reference Library. The library included the *S.M.S. (Shit Must Stop) Issue No. 1*. We—JC Franco and *Reality Club*—wanted to do something in a similar vein, but we had a lot of questions on how to proceed. Our research included meeting with Cory Imig of *Impractical Spaces* and hosting a hot pot dinner for a dozen artists. At the dinner—in between bites of kimchi and boiled mushrooms—the artists agreed that they needed something that differed from their regular commercial requirements. All of them had full time jobs—sometimes two or three—outside of their studio practice. They wanted to make art for each other without having to sell anything.

Since that dinner, JC Franco, Jacob Canyon, and I created a proof of concept—*Take Home Issue 000*. All three objects are interactive. We compiled 16 editions, one for every potential artist, and some extras to donate to libraries and individuals—one copy is in the collection of the Jannes Library at the Kansas City Art Institute; another has already found its way to Baltimore. We believe it is important to facilitate the inter-artist exchange and provide an opportunity for the work to be cared for and shared with the public. We also strive to document the work in a way that is easily shared over the internet.

With the Community Engagement Grant, *Reality Club* and the *Menial Collection* will be able to fund the first full issue of *Take Home*. Together, we can make something that responds directly to artists' desire to create something generous and compassionate, and we can share that work in a meaningful and accessible way—both during and after this pandemic.

Describe how your project will address the needs identified by the community. (300 word limit)

Take Home is for artists seeking out communal, generous connections with other artists—specifically in Baltimore and Kansas City for the first edition. At our meeting with Cory Imig and our artists’ hot pot dinner, we—JC Franco, myself, and the other nine artists—identified a desire to make work and connect with each other outside of our regularly occurring commercial endeavors. The artists wanted to make art like they did growing up—for themselves and their friends. *Take Home* responds directly to that need. In speaking with *The Menial Collection*, there is a similar need in Baltimore, especially during the pandemic.

Reality Club does not want to tell a community what is best for them, but rather we want to be a supportive member of that community. *Reality Club* meets these goals through our genuine collaborations with groups like *The Menial Collection*, our free and varied programming, and our efforts to support artists through connections and resources. We are very intentional about our process to accomplish these goals, and we strive to consistently listen with compassion to ourselves and others.

In other words, we had a very broad idea to make a publication of art objects. We then engaged in our front-end evaluation—asking a community of artists what they want from this publication. We shared a hot-pot with them in order to mimic the process of generosity and collaboration. Everyone had to work together in order to eat—just like the publication. From that exchange, we developed *Take Home*, and we continue to develop *Take Home* in collaboration with community partners. Like sharing a meal, we are bringing people together to provide them with a necessity—in this case art instead of food.

What are the expected outcomes?

Try to remember a moment in your life when you felt truly cared for—a time when you were safe, supported, and included. We expect *Take Home* to be a moment like that.

We want to support genuine, generous relationships amongst artists. This pandemic has shown us how important these relationships are to artists, especially in times of need. To do that, we want *Take Home* to be a professionally designed publication of meaningful art objects. We hope that every participating artist is able to experience the work in their issue of *Take Home*—time and time again—with connected support to their peers. We want the artists’ work to be cared for

and available to the public, so we are donating copies to libraries, archives, and other art organizations and individuals from all over the country—these include but are not limited to the Jannes Library, the Spencer Reference Library, *The Menial Collection*, Tarble Arts Center, the LaBudde Special Collections, the Pilipinx American Library, and the Decker Library.

We voraciously document the publications and share them on the *Reality Club* website. We are looking to the Davis at Wellesley's documentation of *S.M.S.* as an example of how to virtually document and present these materials.

We are also planning on engaging with the materials through curated exhibitions and programming—like the *Reality Club Rare Book Tour*.

How will you know if your project is a success? (100 word limit)

The best way to judge the success of our project is to communicate with the participating community. We have to ask participants how they feel about their involvement in *Take Home*, and we have to do so in a way that is open to criticism. Some examples of the questions we will ask ourselves and the participants are:

- Has there been any ongoing collaboration between the artists or cities?
- Have artistic practices shifted in meaningful ways?
- Was *Take Home* a safe space for artistic experimentation?

There is also the lived experience of being with someone and seeing their reaction.

Who will assist you in evaluating this work (community members, MICA students, faculty, or staff), and how? (200 word limit)

Everyone involved with *Take Home*—participating artists, organizers, and mentors—will contribute to its evaluation. This specifically includes myself, Jeffrey Cudlin (Professor of Curatorial Practice MFA), JC Franco, Jackie Milad (MICA staff and PT faculty), the participating artists, *The Menial Collection*, and José Ruiz (Curatorial Practice MFA Director). Our approach to evaluation will mirror our process to create *Take Home*. It will be inclusive and open to alterations throughout. It will include formal feedback—in the form of email questionnaires with short answer questions—and casual conversation. The intention is for *Take Home* to be an ongoing project—beyond this initial step. After the publication release, we will have a virtual community gathering where participants and organizers will share highlights and challenges from the production process as well as the intent of their individual contributions. This information will be used as an additional framework for the following publication.

How are you planning for sustainability of the project once this grant cycle is complete?

Take Home is a living project. Like other living organisms, it evolves over time, mutates, expands, contracts, reproduces and ultimately dies. The sustainability of *Take Home* will be directly linked to the people involved. Will there be more editions? Ideally, yes. Will there be opportunities for collaborations across cities, states, and countries? Certainly. The sustainability will come as a result of supported relationships, generous exchanges, and compassionate interactions. Future editions of *Take Home* could repeat the initial model or transform. These new iterations could play off of concepts from the first issue, utilize new forms of production—maybe a *Take Home* film festival, and bring a focus to methods of delivery—like *BMORE BOOK DELIVERY*. At some point, this pandemic will end—opening up the possibility of public programs. Workshops, exhibitions, library parties, and potluck dinners are just a few of the exciting post-pandemic opportunities.

Is there anyone else you are collaborating with? If so, please list.

- **JC Franco**, Artist, Organizer, Kansas City
- **Jackie Milad**, Artist, Mentor, Baltimore
- **Megan Pobywajlo**, Artist, Kansas City
- **Future Total Group**, Artist (Collective), Kansas City
- **Brandon Forrest Frederick**, Artist, Kansas City
- **The Menial Collection**, Community Partner, Organizer, Baltimore
- **José Ruiz**, Project Advisor, MICA, Baltimore
- **Jeffry Cudlin**, Project Mentor, Baltimore
- Baltimore artists to be identified by *The Menial Collection*.