

## Exhibition Essay

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Of all the roles art plays in our everyday lives, how art can transform any space into a home is among the most necessary. We are not really finished moving into a new place until we find new homes for our picture frames and trinkets. Public art in our streets and parks are handy landmarks or points of pride. Art activates us, grounds us, and binds us together. It encourages us to be more at home, with each other and ourselves.

Art on Sedgwick was founded from this belief that art brings us together and helps create a shared home. Old Town is one of the most racially and economically diverse neighborhoods in Chicago, where luxury developments sit right across the street from affordable housing. Art on Sedgwick serves as a creative home for the whole neighborhood, a space where we can all share experiences that spark dialogue. After over a decade of making art together, we are proud to host a literal homecoming featuring three artists who have taught classes here or lived in the apartment complex that houses this art center.

In this group exhibition, Teri Carson, Hannah Dykstra, and Consulea Johnson have brought together works that touch on how art interacts with the places we call home. Hannah Dykstra's in-progress graphic novel *A Total Work of Art* follows Edgar Miller, who built and decorated "handmade homes" in 1920s-30s Old Town for his fellow artists. Hannah showcases how Edgar's values of art and community as a way of life inspired the artists and civil rights activists who lived in his spaces and are a local legacy worth carrying forward in the present. Consuela Johnson's vibrant oil and acrylic paintings demonstrate a wide range of places and traditions she has learned from and found homes inside. The different shrines, goddesses, and idioms she represents are connected by what she calls an "Earthy presence." Teri Carson's

installation *Heartbreaker* uses crocheting to invoke the resilience of gendered grief in secret domestic spaces. Even when the fabric of a home has frayed and torn, the thread of our own sorrow can intertwine with others' heartbreaks as we continue to grow and love in our collective sorrow. All these pieces are reminders of art as a practice for realizing and extending our sense of home.

As part of the exhibition, we encourage you to collaborate by tying together a tapestry of the spaces you call home over a map of our community: where you live, work, eat, or play, where you meet with friends, where you relax alone—any space that inspires you.