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VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP RECEIVES \$20,000 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

ROCHESTER, NY (May 28, 2024) Visual Studies Workshop (VSW), is pleased to announce it has been approved by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for a Grants for Arts Projects award of \$20,000. Celebrating 55 years in operation, VSW is a Rochester-based nonprofit arts organization dedicated to experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts. This grant will support SEQUENCE BREAK//, an interactive exhibition featuring playable installations, performances, and demonstrations by five artists working in video games and emerging digital technologies. In total, the NEA will award 1,135 Grants for Arts Projects awards totaling more than \$37 million as part of its second round of fiscal year 2024 grants.

Jessica Johnston, VSW Executive Director shares: “Visual Studies Workshop is thankful for the support of the NEA for the upcoming spring 2025 exhibition SEQUENCE BREAK//. The exhibition features artists Nathalie Lawhead, Cassie McQuater, Philip Mallory Jones, Stephen “thecatamites” Gillmurphy, and the independent game collective Heart Street (Yuxin Gao, Lillyan Ling, Gus Boehling, John Bruneau). Each of these artists create interactive experimental bodies of work using video game tools and the language of play. Through BIPOC, queer, feminist, historical, anti-violence, and anti-patriarchal lenses, these artists challenge different aspects of the games industry as well as the larger cultural landscape.”

“Projects like Visual Studies Workshop’s exhibition SEQUENCE BREAK// exemplify the creativity and care with which communities are telling their stories, creating connection, and responding to challenges and opportunities in their communities—all through the arts,” said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. “So many aspects of our communities such as cultural vitality, health and wellbeing, infrastructure, and the economy are advanced and improved through investments in art and design, and the National Endowment for the Arts is committed to ensuring people across the country benefit.”

SEQUENCE BREAK// will be a four-month (March - June) interactive exhibition featuring playable installations, performances, and demonstrations by five artists working in video games and emerging digital technologies held in the Media Exhibition gallery at Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY.

SEQUENCE BREAK// will feature works by artists who challenge mainstream commercial video game culture through experimental play, radical aesthetics, and use of DIY, counter-capitalist methodologies. This exhibition will offer an in-person opportunity that is unique to the contemporary experience of gaming, while opening a broader dialogue with a virtual audience through streaming artist talks, workshops, and gallery tours. A detailed schedule of events is forthcoming. SEQUENCE BREAK// is curated by VSW assistant curator, Nilson Carroll.

For more information on other projects included in the NEA's grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

About Visual Studies Workshop: Visual Studies Workshop nurtures experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and builds community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies. VSW was founded in 1969 in Rochester, NY by artist and curator Nathan Lyons (1930–2016), and became one of the earliest independent, not-for-profit, artist-run spaces in the country. More than 50 years later, the organization's mission is reflected in its core programs: VSW Salon, Project Space Artist Residencies, and VSW Press. In support of VSW programs, the organization holds photography and moving image research collections and an art library for artists, critics and the general public to explore, research and reuse. [vsw.org](https://www.vsw.org)

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