



## LOCATION

Boston Center for the Arts  
Mills Gallery, 551 Tremont St.,  
Boston, MA 02116

## OPENING RECEPTION & PERFORMANCE

January 17, 2025 | 6–9pm

## ON VIEW

January 18 – March 29, 2025  
1–6pm, Wednesday – Saturday

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Exhibition Page: [Waste Scenes](#)



Still from Maia Chao and Fred Schmidt-Arenales, *Waste Scenes*, 2024.  
Two channel video installation, 40:39 min.

# ***Waste Scenes* Deconstructs Trash and Capitalism in an Upcoming Exhibition at Boston Center for the Arts**

Through video, print, and performance, artists Maia Chao and Fred Schmidt-Arenales, in collaboration with curator Laurel V. McLaughlin, craft a bold response to neoliberal systems.

**December 9, 2024 (Boston, MA)** – *Waste Scenes* is a thought-provoking new exhibition by artists Maia Chao and Fred Schmidt-Arenales, offering a creative exploration of trash, value, and desire within the context of corporate culture and neoliberal capitalism. Created during their time in the Recycled Artist in Residency (RAIR), Chao and Schmidt-Arenales have gathered discarded materials from construction and demolition sites throughout the Tri-state region. Given access to this waste stream, Chao and Schmidt-Arenales collected objects, film, and audio from the trash piles to create a new two-channel video installation *Waste Scenes* (2025), accompanied by wall drawings, a print series, a movie poster designed with Kristian Henson, and a sound-based performance event in collaboration with Erik DeLuca and Mobius Artists Group’s Jimena Bermejo and Sara June for the opening.

The video installation *Waste Scenes* forms a call and response between trash and humans, often flipping the script between object and subject. Through vignettes it features performances with the Philadelphia Voices of Pride chorus, singer Dan Schwartz, and performers Bellisant Corcoran-Mathe and Parker Sera. The accompanying print series and wall drawings directly cite trash – real estate manuals, neurological textbooks, and puzzles featuring the “American West,” excavating corporate exploitation. Collectively, Schmidt-Arenales and Chao probe processes of material decomposition – collection, breakdown, and synthesization – as methods of artistic research to dismantle 21st-century neoliberal systems in tragicomic embodied experimentations. Through humor and provocative inquiry, the exhibition challenges the underlying values of corporate power structures.

**Acknowledgments:** The exhibition *Waste Scenes* is organized by Laurel V. McLaughlin in dialogue with the artists at the Boston Center for the Arts. The film *Waste Scenes* (2024) was funded by the Recycled Artist in Residency (RAIR), the Velocity Fund, Illuminate the Arts, the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation, and a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant.



## BIOS

**MAIA CHAO (ARTIST)** is an artist who works collaboratively in social practice, film, and performance. Chao has presented commissioned works for The Shed, MoMA Education, Mural Arts (Philadelphia), and most recently the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (DC). She is co-creator of *Look at Art. Get Paid.* at the RISD Museum. She has completed residencies at Pioneer Works, Queer|Art, and the Fine Arts Work Center, among others. In 2022, she was named a Pew Fellow and in 2023, she attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Currently, Chao is the Public Artist in Residence at the Times Square Alliance. Based in Philadelphia, Chao is a member of the art collective and DIY space, Vox Populi Gallery. She has taught at RISD, University of Pennsylvania, Moore College of Art and Design, and is currently full time faculty at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).

**FRED SCHMIDT-ARENALES (ARTIST)** is an artist and filmmaker. His projects attempt to bring awareness to unconscious processes on the individual and group level. He has presented films, installations, and performances internationally at venues including SculptureCenter and Abrons Arts Center, (New York), Links Hall (Chicago), The Darling Foundry (Montreal), LightBox and The Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia), Artspace (New Haven), The Museum of Fine Arts and FotoFest (Houston), Künstlerhaus Halle für Kunst und Medien (Graz), and Kunsthalle Wien (Vienna). His recent film *Committee of Six* is an official selection of the 2022-23 Architecture and Design Film Festival and was awarded a jury prize for best film at the 2023 Onion City Experimental Film Festival

**LAUREL V. MCLAUGHLIN, PHD (CURATOR)** is a writer, curator, art historian, and educator. McLaughlin is a Curator and the Director of the Collective Futures Fund at Tufts University Art Galleries. She has shared her scholarly and curatorial work in conferences ranging from Performance Studies International, Calgary; to the Universities Art Association of Canada Conference, Montreal and Toronto; the College Art Association, New York; and the Association of the Study of the Arts of the Present, Hong Kong, and she has published writing in *Art Papers*, *ASAP/J*, *BOMB Magazine*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Performa Magazine*, *Contact Quarterly*, *Performance Research*, *Women & Performance*, and *ASAP Journal*, among others. She recently co-edited the multidisciplinary reader *Tania El Khoury's Live Art: Collaborative Knowledge Production* (Amherst College Press, 2024). McLaughlin's curatorial work has been supported by the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, and the Dutch Consulate of New York, and she is currently undertaking a 2022 Andy Warhol Curatorial Research Fellowship for a forthcoming exhibition *How do you throw a brick through a window...*

## ABOUT MILLS GALLERY

**The BCA Mills Gallery** has been showing contemporary artists and curators from Boston and beyond since the mid-1970s. The Mills Gallery supports innovative exhibitions that connect artists with the community, peers, and resources providing a vibrant platform for new art in Boston. The Mills also presents signature exhibitions such as the Drawing Show and the Project Room Exhibition Series which features work by BCA Studio Residents who are part of a three-year residency in the BCA Artist Studios Building.

## ABOUT BOSTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

**Boston Center for the Arts (BCA)** supports working artists to create, perform, and exhibit new works; develops new audiences; and connects the arts to community, and has for over five decades engaged the creative community for public good. While the organization's physical residence is in the historic South End, BCA touches every part of Boston's cultural ecosystem. A leading force in the city's cultural community, BCA has supported thousands of individual artists, small organizations, and performing arts companies, who add depth and dimension to the Boston arts ethos. Through residencies and programming, BCA serves as an epicenter for an expanding cohort of artists working across all disciplines, and has catalyzed careers by providing fertile ground for experimentation and artistic risk-taking. To learn more about Boston Center for the Arts, visit [bostonarts.org](https://bostonarts.org)

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