

# Flash Art



*"Eric Wesley/St. Louis," exterior view (2016). Courtesy of Bortolami, New York.*

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## Emma Fernberger on *Artist / City*

*Artist/City* is [Bortolami's](#) new program taking place in various locations throughout the United States. *Flash Art* spoke with the gallery's associate director, Emma Fernberger, about the pressures and rewards of the new initiative.

*What is Artist/City?*

*Artist/City* started in December 2015. We pair an artist with a space in an American city for a year. We're responding to the speed of the art world. Again and again, you ask an artist to make something for an art fair, it hangs in a booth for a few days, it is purchased by someone and then put in their home, their museum or, worse, storage. *Artist/City* attempts to slow things down.

*In Daniel Buren/Miami and Eric Wesley/St. Louis, what have these places allowed these artists to do?*

Buren's project highlights his career-spanning engagement with the stripe motif. Each iteration of his exhibition focuses on a different mode of artmaking, which would take eight years to present on our normal schedule. Wesley's project is about accumulation. He transformed a vacant Taco Bell in a St. Louis suburb into "The Bell." He'll be adding artworks for a year, as well as presenting happenings and performances. Working outside of New York also means cheaper rent, which is, of course, a concern.



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*What additional pressures does the yearlong duration generate?*

There's pressure to constantly change things up because of how short everyone's attention span is. But under what other circumstances would we be able to work in such depth on a single exhibition? They're intense collaborations; we're like co-conspirators.

*How do you navigate the slippery divisions between cities and provinces?*

So many shows primarily live on social media now, so people can see them from anywhere. We have an Instagram and a dedicated website, though I hope it motivates people to visit, say, Cahokia. The cities aren't chosen arbitrarily. Though temporary, the projects are committed to their host cities. Wesley lives there part-time — so he's sensitive to surrounding social conditions. Tom Burr is from New Haven, and much of his work hinges on autobiography and identity.

*What's next?*

The next projects are Tom Burr/New Haven, Nicolás Guagnini/San Francisco and Barbara Kasten/Chicago. Hopefully we'll extend it to artists outside our program. Each project has its own concerns and syntax — it's exciting to figure that out.

by Sam Korman