

Jess Walters with Stephen Haske & Sarah Lawson: Paper Room

Dové Gallery at Second Street Gallery

July 7 - July 19, 2024

Creating art in community is a critical act of love and solidarity in the movement toward collective liberation. Since its inception, *Paper Room* has embodied this truth as a collaborative endeavor, and the exhibition serves as an example of what is made possible by communal effort and shared imagination.

It is a joy and a privilege to have been selected to exhibit at Second Street Gallery by Executive Director and Chief Curator, Kristen Chiacchia, and a special honor to be closing the 50th season for the gallery. We are grateful to the staff at Second Street who have been so helpful and supportive throughout the entire process of realizing this exhibition and for all the “behind the scenes” things they do to cultivate space for local creatives to share our work.

We are also incredibly appreciative of The Bridge Underground for providing us with accessible private studio space to collaborate on this exhibition together. To the staff, board, fellows, and members of The Bridge PAI, past and present, who witnessed our progress, donated materials, sat on our couch, took photos, listened to our rants, and encouraged our work along the way, we appreciate you endlessly.

Thank you to New City Arts Initiative for their unparalleled support of local emerging artists, including Jess Walters (Fellow, '22), Sarah Lawson (Research Resident, '22), and Stephen Haske (Artist Exchange '19). Special thanks to the NCAI volunteer community who came through to staff the Welcome Gallery so Jess could spend some of their Saturdays working in the studio.

Thank you to Virginia Humanities, The UVA Center for Health Humanities and Ethics, and the UVA Office of Diversity of Community Engagement for electing Jess as an inaugural Virginia Health Equity and Justice Fellow and embracing Paper Room as an aspect of their work to improve visibility of disabled experiences and accessibility of creative spaces.

A huge THANK YOU to all of the folks who participated in our paper sculpture Workshop to help us realize the Wake of Vultures installation of our dreams, and to everyone who donated mini zines to fill our cabinet; it takes a village, and we have the BEST village!

For capturing our works-in-progress and editing our teaser trailer into being, we thank Zach Keifer of Octillion Productions. For witnessing our growth from the start and offering a lovely testimonial and an abundance of support throughout the Paper Room journey we thank Sri Kodakalla.

We are also grateful to local businesses Scrappy Elephant and Circa for supplying interesting paper ephemera and allowing us to find the majority of our materials, tools, and supplies secondhand.

Finally, we want to extend the sincerest gratitude to our close friends and family who have supported us, physically and emotionally, as we have labored to bring Paper Room to life. We thank you for putting up with late nights, precarious stacks of books and magazines, extra furniture in cramped spaces, many Paper Room-centric discussions, and for your love and helping hands both inside and outside of the studio space.

With Love,
Jess, Sarah, and Stephen