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# ANNUAL REPORT

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LATITUDE

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# Letter to the Community

During a recent staff meeting, I mentioned that 2021 will be as dynamic as 2020. In his infinite wisdom our Technical Director, Alex Wieder, reminded me that for our organization transformation was nothing new. 2020's changes may have been more intense than previous years but what is normal for Latitude is experiencing growth by navigating adaption. We took the trials, time, and unique situations provided by the pandemic to assess and emerge reconstructed. Changes to the user agreement and our volunteer program have occurred supporting healthy boundaries and broadening our community reach. Our educational offerings expanded online, accessibility components improved, and new positions are being created.

Months into 2021, we continue to wade through city updates and health concerns. Despite this, the staff adapts quickly and I'm incredibly lucky to work with individuals who have been so resilient. I also know we were fortunate to have expanded our board in 2019. Those new members under the leadership of Chris Markin then Kelli Connell held a successful fundraiser, filed our PPP quickly, and brought on two additional members. They met with me on Zoom monthly to help navigate increasingly difficult decisions. Their time and efforts will become visible in the months to come and I'm so thankful for their dedication to Latitude's mission. An element of 2020 that is easy to reflect upon is how many of you reached out to us. I want to personally thank our community of makers who continued to enroll in classes, donate, and use our Service Bureau. Thank you for your patience as we made decisions mindful of the health of staff, volunteers, and fellow lab users.

In bell hooks' essay, "Workers for Artistic Freedom," she states that "To truly champion artistic freedom we must be committed to creating and sustaining an aesthetic culture where diverse artistic practices, standpoints, identities, and locations are nurtured, find support, affirmation, and regard." At Latitude, this is what we will champion in the years to come. We've spent the last 9 years building and learning to be a more inclusive and welcoming space. Our mission drives us to continue providing affordable access and assistance to equipment for the creation of artwork and organize diverse programming. It has been an honor to be a part of this organization so that I could watch artists from all stages of their career create and learn alongside one another. So whatever may come, we're here, we are growing, and we can't wait to see you at the lab.



**Colleen Keihm**  
*Executive Director*



# LATITUDE CHICAGO



LATITUDE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Chicago, Illinois who maintains a community digital lab with high-end scanning and printing equipment, operates an artist in residence program, and organizes regular education & arts programming. Our mission is twofold: first, to provide affordable access to high end digital equipment and a production space for the creation of artwork, while offering artists and photographers technical assistance with this production; and second, to organize a diverse range of social, academic, and professional programming dedicated to the arts, including artists' talks, workshops, reading and critique groups, print swaps, and an ongoing artist in residence program.

**Description of the Organization:** LATITUDE is operated by a small staff and a number of volunteer Lab Assistants who receive ongoing lab access and training. The lab is an educational and arts production facility for hundreds of artists per year, and our related programming (e.g. talks, workshops, and panel discussions) attracts many more.

**Method of Accounting:** The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America.

**Revenue:** LATITUDE's income comes from Individual Contributions (15%), Foundation Contributions (4%), Government Contributions (4%), Service Bureau revenue (47%), DIY Revenue (25%) (10% decrease in 2020, and Workshop fees (5%) (down 5%). Individual Contributions include individual donations as well as revenue from our INPrint fundraiser. Within the Government Contributions, we are proudly supported by the Illinois Arts Council and the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). Foundation support comes from The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation. Service Bureau revenue includes printing and scanning for hire services. DIY revenue includes membership fees, ink costs, paper costs, and packaging fees. Workshops run monthly and the fees for each class vary based on production costs and instructor fees.



**In Kind Donations:** In 2020, LATITUDE accepted In Kind donations in the form of equipment donations.

**Fundraising and Development:** In 2020, the annual in person fundraising event was canceled and replaced by an online community slideshow due to the pandemic. The Zoom event helped lab users get in touch with those who were making work and looking for connections. In April, LATITUDE hosted a print fundraiser which raised \$11,000. The remainder of donations in 2020 came from individuals who support LATITUDE's mission.





**Expenses:** In 2020, LATITUDE's major expenses include personnel wages (56%), benefits for full time employees (2%), rent and utilities (12%), technology costs (5%), professional fees (9%), program expenses (11%), and dues (5%). In 2020, LATITUDE had three full time positions and two part time positions who experienced only 2 weeks of cutbacks thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program. Professional fees include accounting services and instructor fees for workshops. Program expenses for 2020 include the fees undertaken within the artist residency program and saw major cutbacks during the pandemic.

**Property and Equipment:** LATITUDE renewed their lease at Hubbard Lofts for three years. No major equipment purchases occurred during 2020.

**Notes on Financial Position:** In 2020, saw a 35% decrease in revenue due to the pandemic closures. The Service Bureau ran with a socially distanced staff enabling the organization to only be closed for 1.5 months however DIY was only available for 7 months in 2020 at 25% capacity. LATITUDE saw a dramatic increase in individual donations occurring at the beginning of pandemic closures. This allowed the organization to support staff and expenses despite the decrease in revenue. The organization received funds from the Paycheck Protection Program which helped with personnel expenses, rent, and utilities during months of closure. In 2021, LATITUDE will be prioritizing safe and healthy work environments during the reopening stages of the pandemic. The organization does not feel it is safe to have a large, in person fundraiser in 2021, therefore will be pushing back a year for a larger event. LATITUDE hopes to double Individual Donations through new campaign strategies and double their grants from government agencies. As equipment approaches its full depreciated value, the lab will see small but impactful technology changes. A Quick Print system will be purchased as an additional low cost, quick turn around option for Service Bureau printing and are researching new scanners to help support technology LATITUDE runs without replacement potential. To keep up with minimum wage increases in the state of Illinois, LATITUDE will aim to increase the wages of all employees.



## ***Notes on the year 2020***

LATITUDE started the year strong. The first artist in residence, Samantha Cabrera Friend, used their time to scan ferociously using the drum scanner and ended the month hosting the largest attended program the organization has seen to date. The discussion was titled “Your Friendly Neighborhood Archive” and highlighted artists who ran digital archives helping fill in gaps present in Photographic History. In February, Zoe Rain

printed images for the first time. As a commercial artist, they often saw their work in digital form on social media and in magazines. Their time at LATITUDE was spent editing, organizing, and printing their first physical portfolio. At full steam the lab welcomed w.d. floyd who hails from the South Side of Chicago. He used his first two weeks of March 2020 scanning the archive of Sumner School with the hopes of printing a show for that summer on the Piezography printer. Then March 16th came, as did closures, and almost two months of full remote work managing constant change.

Early into closures, LATITUDE began offering remote classes which featured our beloved staff, volunteers and board. Alex Wieder showed participants how to use this time at home to organize their hard drive and Shawn Rowe demonstrated ways to successfully light yourself for Zoom. Then came reading groups and critique groups with former volunteers Erin Miller, Roberto Nieves, and board member Nathan Miller. LATITUDE’s educational offerings were one of the ways the organization showed its resiliency during the pandemic.

For programming, LATITUDE hosted Zoom discussions to stay in touch with the community. Artists accepted for the 2020 residency agreed to host Zoom artist talks which included Nicole Mauser showing us her home studio, Colectivo Multipolar encouraged us to “Keep Dancing,” and w.d. Floyd shared a history of Black Photography often overlooked in addition to his images made on the South and West Side of Chicago. Later in the year and co-hosted with the DePaul Art Museum, artists Diana Solis and Silvia Malagrino shared their experiences being students in Chicago in the 1980’s. “Longevity: Art Practices for Queer Education Online” addressed queer pedagogy, diversity and inclusion as it relates to queer intersectionality, transparency, visibility, and building a long term plan beyond the online platform. The recorded panel featured Queer Caucus members Alejandro Acierto, Steven Frost, Dan Paz, and Oli Rodriguez and was supported by Colleen Keihm of LATITUDE. Closing out the year, “Reflections on Race and Contemporary Landscapes” was a series of online artist interviews culminating in a panel discussion that dissects the interconnectedness of race and interpretations of the landscape at large. Here, the term landscape could be thought of as a verb rather than a fixed entity; and interviewed artists Justin Favela, William Carmago, and Yvette Mayorga each offer unique perspectives on the built environment or landscapes of their own invention.

Administratively, LATITUDE’s Lab Director, Adam Schachner, left the organization at the end of 2020 and Keanna Rose Boyko accepted the role in December. All staff continue to be trained through Enrich Chicago’s “Understanding and Analyzing Systematic Racism” training and in 2020 staff, board, and volunteers met on Zoom to discuss equity.





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