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ACTIVATE returns, exploring the alley as the “rec room of the block” on Thursday, June 15

Chicago Loop Alliance transforms Sullivan Center alley with ping-pong, pop-up barber shop, skate jam, and more

CHICAGO (May 11, 2017) — **Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA)** will hold its first **ACTIVATE** event of the year on Thursday, June 15 from 5-10 p.m. at Sullivan Center alley (enter on Monroe between State and Wabash). ACTIVATE transforms downtown alleys into creative exhibition spaces that bring artists and the public together for an evening of exploration, interaction, and celebration of the arts. Guests who RSVP in advance at loopchicago.com/activate will receive a complimentary drink ticket for beer, wine, or cocktail at the event, with additional beverages available for purchase onsite.

The 2017 ACTIVATE theme, *Off Street*, invites the public to explore the pulse of daily life that the alley embodies. Art and programming will focus on a different aspect of alley life for each event. The first event in the summer series, **Playground – The Rec Room of the Block**, explores the alley as a play space. Far more than a piece of infrastructure that serves practical functions, the alley is a gathering place—the “rec room of the block,” as architect Dan Weese says. Curators Missy Perkins and John Ibarra with Que4 Radio have created a lineup of activities and installations that evoke summertime alley fun:

- a **breakdancing battle** presented by Power Style Radio with mixmaster DJs Moz Definite and Illanoiz, emceed by Power Style Radio founder and host Kid Jungle
- **professional ping-pong players** (body painted by Hatek) ready to challenge the audience, courtesy of SPIN Chicago
- a **pop-up barber shop** with Rico Sepeda from Joe's Hair Studio
- a **skate jam** hosted by skater and youth mentor Junebug and Bucktown’s Uprise Skateshop

The event will also feature music by Ifficial Reggae Movement and the Four Star Brass Band; DJ and muralist Roho Garcia; Bare Strokes body painting with Dwight White, Marcus Sumrall, and Barrett Keithley; and a mural painted by Chris Orta and Jose Quezada.

CLA is working with architecture and urban design firm PORT Urbanism to amplify the experience of the ACTIVATE series. Their work includes a graphic and architectural element that forms a memorable, iconic entrance to the event as well as narrative graphics exploring how alleys shape our urban lives.

The other 2017 ACTIVATE events on July 26, August 24, and September 28 will explore the alley as the space where we discard (and discover!) trash; a channel pulsating with power lines; and a hideaway where we can cavort and misbehave away from the eyes of the street. Dates are subject to change. Specific location and event details will be posted two weeks prior at loopchicago.com/activate.

Over the past three seasons, ACTIVATE has generated nearly \$1.7 million in estimated economic impact to Loop businesses, with nearly \$1 million in 2016 alone. More than 47,000 people have attended ACTIVATE over the course of the series. "Linger Longer" is a program of exclusive offers and promotions to drive traffic to CLA business members before and after each event.

ACTIVATE sponsors to date include: School of the Art Institute of Chicago as presenting sponsor; PNC Bank, Lagunitas Brewing Company, Little Things, and CH Distillery as title sponsors; Vitacoco and RX Bar as event sponsors; and TimeOut Chicago as media sponsor.

About Chicago Loop Alliance

Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA), the sole service provider for Special Service Area 1-2015, creates, manages, and promotes high-performing urban experiences, attracting people and investment to the Loop. For more information, please visit www.LoopChicago.com.

About ACTIVATE

ACTIVATE is a series of pop-up arts programs that encourage visitors to see the Loop anew. ACTIVATE transforms alleys and other urban locations into creative exhibition spaces that bring artists and the public together for an evening of exploration, interaction, and celebration of the arts. Chicago Loop Alliance launched the initiative in 2014.

About Missy Perkins

Miss Perkins is a freelance curator, event coordinator, art consultant, and hip-hop advocate. Her support for Chicago's graffiti and street art scene enabled her to assist with sponsorship of Chicago's 2014 *Meeting of Styles*, an international network of graffiti artists and supporters. She became involved with non-profit arts organization *The Simple Good* and began to partner with John Ibarra from Que4 Radio, which led to the development of unique shows and block parties incorporating hip-hop culture, art, and world music. Que4 Radio hosts an annual block party and has participated in past ACTIVATE events.

About PORT Urbanism

PORT is a leading-edge design consultancy whose work focuses on the analysis, visioning, design, and implementation of new forms of collective space and the public realm, ranging in scale from plazas, parks, and public waterfronts to institutional framework plans and regional planning strategies. The practice synthesizes professional expertise in urban design, landscape architecture, architecture, ecology and urban planning in order to provide the hybrid model of design services necessary to negotiate today's complex public realm challenges.

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