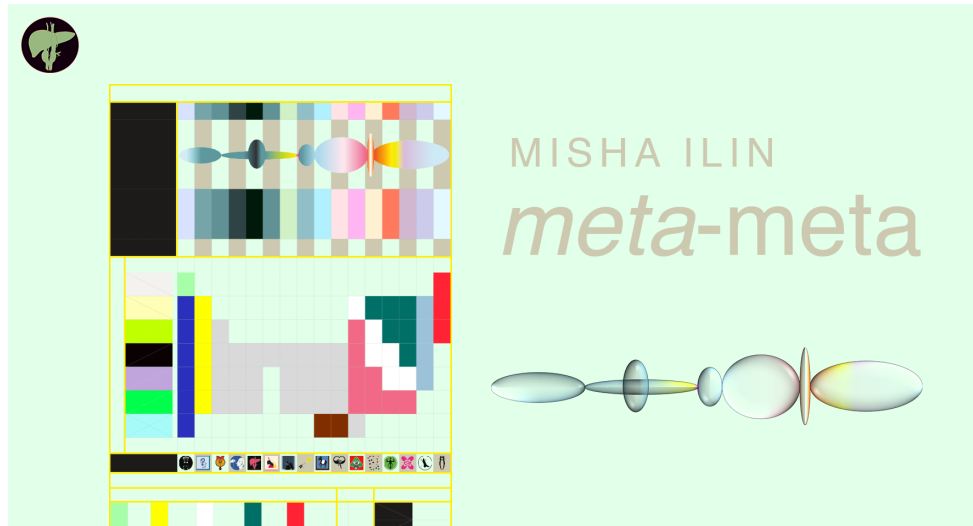




WASHINGTON PROJECT FOR THE ARTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Misha Ilin: *meta-meta*
October 14–November 18, 2023

(September 28, 2023) **Washington Project for the Arts (WPA)** is pleased to present *meta-meta* by DC/NYC-based artist **Misha Ilin** (he/him), with an exhibition on view **October 14 - November 18** at WPA's Project Space (2124 8th St. NW).

"How might instructions operate as both language and bureaucratic idiom? How can they be a repository for desire and power, with consequences beyond the symbolic and linguistic?"

meta-meta is an expansive interdisciplinary project, comprising a new book of the artist's instruction pieces (published by WPA), an exhibition, and a series of public programs and fresh experiments. The project, which was initiated at WPA through a research residency in 2021, engages the history and methodologies of artistic engagement with instruction-based practices (from Fluxus to Artificial Intelligence) to extend Ilin's ongoing investigation of modes of resistance to authority and control.

The *meta-meta* **Exhibition Opening & Book Launch** will take place **Saturday, October 14 from 7–9pm** at **WPA's Project Space**. [RSVP at this link.](#)

WPA's Project Space hours are Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 1–6 pm at 2124 8th St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.



meta-meta: Exhibition & Public Programs



Over the course of five weeks, *meta-meta* will unfold in WPA's Project Space, the same space where Ilin's inquiry began as an Artist-Organizer-in-Residence in 2021. In this space, Ilin will present a reconstruction of his residency in the form of an installation that will serve as a site for re-activations of his instruction pieces and a laboratory for new experiments.

meta-meta is accompanied by a series of public events that will situate Ilin's engagement with instruction-based practices within a broader context:

Thursday, October 26, 6-7:30pm: *Some People Press*/Harrell Fletcher and Ilin will host a workshop to develop new conceptual strategies for economizing social practice, mapping both tangible and intangible exchanges. [RSVP at this link](#). (via Zoom)

Thursday, November 2, 7-8:00pm: Ilin and composer **Joshua Coyne** will present a musical performance derived from an original score that will be recomposed by the audience in real time. [RSVP at this link](#). (WPA Project Space)

Friday, November 17, 7-8:00pm: Scholar and critic **Colby Chamberlain** will be in conversation with Ilin to discuss the organizing logic of the *meta-meta* publication and its design as a game manual for future activations. [RSVP at this link](#). (WPA Project Space)

All programs are FREE with RSVP. Full details about the exhibition and line-up of public programs are available on [WPA's website](#).

***meta-meta*: Publication**



meta-meta: book of instructions by Misha Ilin (2023)

Published by Washington Project for the Arts

Including correspondences with: **Harrell Fletcher, Hannah Higgins, T. Jean Lax, Raphael Rubinstein, Alexandro Segade, and Constantina Zavitsanos.**

The centerpiece of Misha Ilin's project residency at WPA is the publication of *meta-meta: book of instructions* (2023), which delves into the artist's utilization of instructions as a medium, tracing its evolution from his initial explorations of strategies of care through his ongoing research into human responses to environments of excessive authority and control. The book, which functions as both documentation and a game manual for future activations, consists of a curated selection of 65 (out of more than 800) instructions, arranged variously by theme, affect, and project through a Table of Contents that mimics the design of a periodic table.

The arrangement of the book and its contents draw parallels to the tradition of artist instruction books such as Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit* (1964) and more contemporary endeavors like Hans Ulrich Obrist's and Boltansky Brothers' *Do It* project (1993 to present). The book traces the evolution of instruction-based artworks, from a simplistic means of audience engagement caught in the dichotomy of submission and control, to a potent form of personal resistance and reclamation of agency in response to the inherent tension within this duality. Furthermore, it explores the linguistic capacity of instructions to serve as forms of knowledge and experience, thus articulating the emerging relevance of this medium as a main means of communication with language models and machine interfaces.

meta-meta: book of instructions is annotated with edited transcripts from a series of correspondences and conversations between Ilin and experts in various fields, each exploring different topics relevant to the artist's interests in instruction-based work. These experts include artists **Harrell Fletcher**, **Alexandro Segade**, **Constantina Zavitsanos**, poet and writer **Raphael Rubinstein**, curator **T. Jean Lax**, and critics and scholars **Colby Chamberlain** and **Hannah Higgins**. These exchanges cover a range of topics that explore the role of instructions as a tool for creativity, communication, and control—across performance, politics, bureaucracy, and pedagogy.

meta-meta: book of instructions by Misha Ilin (2023)

Published by Washington Project for the Arts

Softcover, Smyth-sewn binding 9.25 x 6.5 in.

132 pages

[\\$50.00 \(Early Bird Pricing: \\$42.50\)](#)

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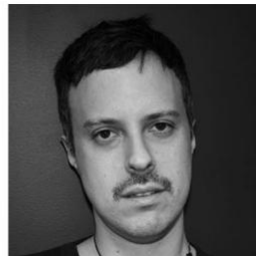
Misha Ilin: About the Artist



“Several years ago, I left Moscow to pursue my life as an artist in the US, becoming what is termed a ‘culturally relocated person’—one who abruptly yet voluntarily relocates to the West. Born in Protvino, an off-the-map research city in Russia, and summering in Mordovia, a place known more for its prisons than scenery, I realized that the quiet orderliness of Protvino and ubiquitous penitentiaries of Mordovia became more than just receding footnotes in my life narrative. These facts of my biography—random yet rhythmic, mundane yet uncanny, closed yet infinitely open—taught me to see beyond the apparent and seeded my artistic interest in humanity's reaction to environments of overwhelming control.”

Misha Ilin (he/him) studied art at the National Center for Contemporary Art in Moscow. In 2016 he moved to the United States to pursue his art career and received his MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in 2019. Misha has recently exhibited at M+B Gallery, Los Angeles; the kitchen, Berlin; Modern Art Museum, Shanghai; and Washington Project for Arts, DC, among other venues. Misha is a current fellow of the Hamiltonian Fellowship, DC. He lives and works in New York. mishailin.com

meta-meta: About the Project Contributors & Participants



Colby Chamberlain (he/him) is faculty in residence at the Cleveland Institute of Art and previously taught art history at the Cooper Union and Columbia University. His scholarship has appeared in publications including *ARTMargins*, *Art Journal*, *caa. reviews*, *Grey Room*, and *October*, and he contributes frequently to *Artforum* as a critic. His book *Fluxus Administration* is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press.

Joshua Coyne (he/him) is a composer, arranger, violinist, and music director based in New York. Known for his command of music and broad versatility both onstage and off, he enjoys developing multi-disciplinary projects that combine musical genres as well as vocal, instrumental, dance, and spoken word performance. His work has been featured at the Kennedy Center, The Sculpture Center, and the Socrates Sculpture Park.

Harrell Fletcher (he/him) is a Portland, Oregon based artist and educator who likes to go on walks and collect wild mushrooms. He's been creating participatory art projects for over twenty-five years, including collaborations with Miranda July and Jens Hoffmann. His work was included in the 2004 Whitney Biennial and is held in the permanent collections of MoMA, NY; SFMOMA, San Francisco; and SAIC, Chicago.

Hannah B. Higgins (she/her) is a Professor in the School of Art and Art History at UIC and founder of the interdisciplinary BA in IDEAS. Her books include *Fluxus Experience* (University of California Press, 2002) and *The Grid Book* (MIT, 2009). With Douglas Kahn, she co-edited *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of Digital Art* (University of California Press, 2012).

Thomas (T.) Jean Lax (they/them) is a curator and writer specializing in black art, queer study, and performance at the Museum of Modern Art. A native New Yorker, Lax holds degrees in Africana Studies and Art History from Brown and Columbia Universities and is a PhD candidate in Performance Studies at NYU where they are working on a project about mothers.

Raphael Rubinstein (he/him) is Professor of Critical Studies at the University of Houston and a New York based art critic and poet. His blog *The Silo* won a Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant and received a Best Blog Award of Excellence by the International Association of Art Critics. In 2002, the French government presented Rubinstein with the award of Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters.

Alexandro Segade (he/him) is an interdisciplinary artist whose projects propose speculative group identities through performance, video, and installation. His group, My Barbarian, had a 20-year survey exhibition at the Whitney Museum in 2021. He is the author and illustrator of the graphic novel *The Context* (Primary Information, 2020), and Assistant Professor in Visual Arts, at University of California, San Diego.

Constantina Zavitsanos (they/them) works in sculpture, performance, text, and sound have been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum, New Museum, Artists Space, The Kitchen, Participant Inc, and Performance Space, New York. With Park McArthur, they wrote *Other Forms of Conviviality*

(Routledge), and “The Guild of the Brave Poor Things” in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (MIT Press).

About WPA

ART THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

through collaboration, experimentation, and advocacy

Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) is a platform for collaborative research and project development, organized by artists.

All WPA projects are anchored by a central question that guides ongoing collaboration and experimentation through residencies organized across three stages of development, collectively referred to as ***Project as Practice***. The three stages of *Project as Practice* include: *Research & Development (R&D)*; *Presentation & Publication (P&P)*; *Iteration & Expansion (I&E)*.

In addition to *Project as Practice* residencies, we provide exclusive opportunities for DC-area artists in two program areas that support experimentation with new project ideas and provide dedicated financial support for project research and presentations:

- **Open Call: RFP for Artists**
- **Wherewithal: Research & Project Grants**

WPA was founded in 1975 by Alice Denney and, over the past four decades, has presented thousands of projects and events, including internationally recognized exhibitions, publications, performances, lectures, workshops, symposia, screenings, public art works, and more. Nearly every major visual artist in the District between 1975 and today has had some connection with WPA. Additionally, WPA has welcomed hundreds of extraordinary artists and curators from outside the area, creating an expansive creative community with far-reaching impact. After renewing its mission in 2018, WPA has carved out a new identity with a national and international scope, while simultaneously uplifting values of collaboration, experimentation, and inclusivity in all of its programmatic and operational activities.

Supporters

WPA is supported by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Hickok Cole; National Endowment for the Arts; William S. Paley Foundation; Greater Washington Community Foundation; Goethe-Institut; Emily Hall Tremain Foundation (EHTF); Eaton Workshop; Terra Foundation

for American Art; The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation; JBG SMITH; Willkie Farr & Gallagher; Squire Patton Boggs; Brookfield Properties; DAVIS Construction; Jair Lynch Real Estate Partners; HITT Contracting; Eaton DC; and many other generous foundations, corporations, and individuals. WPA is supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.