



Good afternoon, and thank you for coming to the groundbreaking of M1, the new home of Manifest Center for the Visual Arts.

My name is Perin Mahler, and I am an exhibitor, supporter, and co-chair of the capital campaign here. I'm also an artist and educator in Los Angeles. I want to thank Manifest for supporting my career and that of literally thousands of other artists around the world.

Today I want to talk about quality. As an artist in L.A., I have the opportunity to see a lot of gallery exhibitions. While I'm often interested in the ideas represented, I'm also often disappointed in their execution. What is missing, I believe, is *quality*.

What is quality? It is a depth of focus and attention developed over years of education and practice. The results are a unification of art fundamentals that become the basis of experimentation and innovation.

And that is the kind of art that can be consistently seen in the galleries at Manifest. The international cadre of artists that have participated in over 500 exhibitions over the past 21 years since Manifest's founding are drawn here by its record of wide-ranging and high-quality shows. In addition to the students in the Manifest's educational programs, the entire city of Cincinnati benefits from this global sampling of contemporary art practice.

You can also see quality taking shape in the classrooms and residency studios here. As evidenced in the art on the walls upstairs, Manifest's educators advance students' visual literacy and problem-solving through direct connection to their subject, rather than through a digital camera and computer. This results in a visual intelligence that creates art of quality. As a university professor, I know all too well that this kind of education is often missing in academia, and therefore often missing from contemporary art in general.

I started my teaching career here in Cincinnati, alongside a young artist and teacher named Jason Franz, at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. At that time, the Academy was attached to the Cincinnati Art Museum. There, we used the examples of the past to foster the art-making of the future. This is the approach that Manifest takes today in their education and exhibit curation: a focus on quality that is the basis for new approaches. To go back even further in time, there was once something known as the Duveneck School, which was a style unique to Cincinnati. I believe that we are witnessing the evolution of what might be called the *Manifest* School. But instead of only local artists, this school is made up of practitioners all around the world, connected through the building you see taking shape here and united by a commitment to quality and innovation. Manifest is providing this gift to our great city, and their mission deserves your utmost support.

Thank you.

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