

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOS Color Code 2020
launches at the H&R Block Artspace
September 15 – November 3, 2020



Kansas City, Mo. (September 15, 2020) — Celebrating 20 years of artists, art, and ideas in 2020, the H&R Block Artspace continues its commitment to dynamic and timely public art projects with *SOS Color Code 2020*, an exterior installation on the façade and lawn of the Artspace, September 15 through November 3, 2020.

Chicago-based artists and designers Luftwerk and Normal have created a series of flags that transform the international sign of distress into a sign of solidarity and connectedness. Combining the universal language of Morse code with color theory, this installation stands as a call for humanity, solidarity, and a willingness to help one another during times of crisis.

When the international distress signal SOS was adopted in 1908, its easily recognizable and unique code produced aural unity, a sense of calm in life or death situations. As SOS began to be incorporated into popular culture, it took on textual inference, such as Save Our Souls, Save Our Ship, or even Save Our Succor. Visually, the pattern forms the letters S (three dots) O (three dashes) S (three dots) allowing it to remain an effective visual distress signal, an ambigram that can be read upside down or right side up. As the world adjusts to new norms in challenging times, reconsidering how language, objects, and symbols, and even color can help us find stable ground and safety no matter where we are, *Color Code* expands Luftwerk's inquiry by investigating color as a system of language and symbols, and a marker of emotion.

SOS Color Code 2020 Partner Sites

Beginning on September 15, the International Day of Democracy, and remaining on view through the U.S. Presidential Election, November 3, the *SOS Color Code* three-flag installation is being presented simultaneously at twelve partnering sites across the nation including Cleve Carney Museum of Art, Glen Ellyn, IL, CNL Projects & Art-In-Place, Chicago, IL, Elmhurst Art Museum, Elmhurst, IL, H&R Block Artspace at the Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO, Luftwerk, Chicago, IL, Mattress Factory Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, Minnesota Museum of American Art, Saint Paul, MN, The National Public Housing Museum, Chicago, IL, Normal Studio, Chicago, IL, Sarah Skaggs Independent Curatorial Projects, Chicago, IL, and the University of South Florida Institute for Research in Art | Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL.

The Artspace's presentation of *SOS Color Code 2020* coincides with *A Flag That Flies Large Enough*, a community installation on the Kansas City Art Institute campus, beginning October 26 and organized by the KCAI Center for Contemporary Practice inviting students, faculty, and staff to create and present flags that symbolize their beliefs and

vision. The Artspace's installation of *Color Code* also features a series of campaign lawn signs that spell out the full SOS Morse code signal.

About the Artists

Luftwerk is the artist collaboration of Petra Bachmaier and Sean Gallero. With space as their canvas, they transform environments into immersive experiences. Since founding in 2007, Luftwerk has amassed a significant body of work ranging from site-specific installations to experimental projects that interpret data. In each project they are interested in the abilities of how light and color can be utilized to shift perception and enhance experience.

<http://luftwerk.net/>

Normal is a multi-disciplinary graphic design practice based in Chicago. Normal believes thoughtful design and collaboration strengthens our collective knowledge and defines new ways of seeing, communicating and experiencing the world. Normal is Renata Graw, Tim Curley & Noël Morical. <https://thenormalstudio.com/>

For More Information

Visit the [Artspace website](#) for a free downloadable *SOS Color Code 2020* poster and coloring poster as well as additional information on how to vote early and vote by mail in the upcoming U.S. Presidential election.

Follow the **#SOSColorCode** hashtag on Instagram.

Scan this QR code with your smart phone camera for information on how to vote this November.



About the H&R Block Artspace

In 2020, the H&R Block Artspace at the Kansas City Art Institute celebrates two decades of innovative exhibitions, conversations, public programs, and commissioned projects that explore the artists, art, and ideas of our time. Engaging, educating, and inspiring the next generations of artists, designers, and culture workers since 1999, the Artspace continues its commitment with *Artspace 20/20*, a 20th anniversary series of exhibitions and public programs that draw on its generative history by reengaging artists and curators with whom the Artspace has previously collaborated, while also introducing new and emerging creative professionals. The *Artspace 20/20* season of programs is supported by the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, Margaret Silva, Missouri Arts Council – a state agency, Boulevard Brewing Company, and private contributions.

About the Kansas City Art Institute

Founded in 1885, the Kansas City Art Institute is one of the oldest and most respected art and design colleges in the United States. Located at 4415 Warwick in Kansas City, Mo., KCAI is a premier private, fully accredited four-year college of art and design awarding the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 13 majors. KCAI's mission is to prepare gifted students to transform the world creatively through art and design. Learn more at www.kcai.edu.

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20/20 Celebrating
20 Years
of Artists, Art, Ideas