

## Summary of Amie Sell's residency at Studio 3325

The Studio 3325 artist-in-residence program at Grace Church of Logan Square was born out of a need to address a changing community. Currently, Logan Square and the hot-button topic of gentrification go hand-in-hand. The neighborhood has undergone many transformations and will likely continue to shift. Historically comprised of predominantly English, Scandinavian, and Polish families, the neighborhood shifted to be a home for many Latino families since the 1960s, and now attracts many artists and creative types. As the neighborhood continues to develop, affordable living space--as well as affordable studio space and other resources for artists--are vanishing. By utilizing a previously empty space within Grace Church, the artist-in-residence program was created as a step towards rectifying that situation and to join the many communities comprising our neighborhood.

Amie Sell's work was brought to our attention when her series, *Home Sweet Home*, was removed from the Milwaukee Avenue Arts Festival (now the Logan Square Arts Festival) because of its investigation of M. Fishman & Co., a major developer in the neighborhood and key player in the increase in cost of living in the area. While Amie is an activist as well as an artist, this body of work is the first to converge her knowledge of the shifting neighborhood with her art practice. The work consists of photographs printed on fleece blankets and hung like tapestries of buildings at the heart of illegal actions that have been taken against tenants and eviction scandals. Mark Fishman, the owner of M. Fishman & Co., was the chairman of the board of the host and sponsor of the event, I Am Logan Square, and demanded the works be removed from view.

Grace Church approached Amie soon after the works were removed from the festival and offered the church as an exhibition space and for her to be our inaugural artist-in-resident in the newly formed Studio 3325 program. We wanted the community to have another chance to view the *Home Sweet Home* series and to have a space to be able to discuss the greater issues surrounding the series. We also thought it was imperative that Amie have a space to pursue her work as an artist and activist beyond the series and offered her the studio for a three-month residency.

A selection of blankets were on display in the exhibition area of Grace during Amie's residency allowing members of the church and the community to engage with the images while she was in the studio embarking on a new body of work which explored more personal notions of "home." For one public program, Amie led a neighborhood walk around Logan Square where we learned the stories of injustices experienced by tenants in the buildings that are

the subject of *Home Sweet Home* as well the histories of the buildings and what action has been taken--if any--against the landlords and developers responsible for the displacements. Along with a grass-roots organization, “Somos (We Are) Logan Square,” Amie also organized a two week, 4-part panel series at Grace and other churches in the area to discuss the history, effects and embodied myths of gentrification and the changes Logan Square is facing as well as the actions the community may take to ensure their voice is heard.

One condition of the Studio 3325 residency is that the resident artist agrees to gift Grace with one piece of artwork at the end of the program for the church’s constituency to enjoy long after the end of the artist’s term. Amie went beyond just gifting Grace an artwork and instead created an installation in the windows of one of most frequented meeting rooms in the church for learning, conversing, and discovering. Amie photographed people who currently attend our worship services and scanned historical images from Grace’s archive. She printed the images on transparency material and then collaged and affixed them to the windows. This installation entitled, *Grace Church* (2015), references stained glass, a décor widely used in churches throughout time, to depict the shared narratives and communities that form a church. *Grace Church* acts as a record of the history of our building, our community, and our neighborhood for all to see. Amie’s work as both an activist and an artist is rooted in hope and preservation and we are honored to have her as our inaugural artist-in-resident, to have hosted an engaging public programming series, and to be the home of a vibrant installation piece that embodies those principals as part of the Studio 3325 Artist-In-Residence program at Grace Church of Logan Square.