



Big Box Redux: Your Town, Inc. opens with BBQ bash at Carnegie Mellon's Miller Gallery

Fri, Sep 19, 6-8 p.m.

Miller Gallery

Purnell Center for the Arts, Carnegie Mellon University

Gone are the handpainted wood and glowing neon shop signs of yesteryear, and here, there and *everywhere* are the plastic bubble awnings and massive logos of Big Box, USA. A new exhibition at [Carnegie Mellon's Miller Gallery](#) examines the complex impact that monolithic mega-chain store structures have had on our culture, psyche and planet since the 1960s.

Curated by brand new gallery director Astria Suparak, *Your Town, Inc.* features the work of author, artist and researcher [Julia Christensen](#), who spent six years studying the design, use and impact of imposing Big Box architecture, and is Henry R. Luce Professor of Emerging Arts at Oberlin College and Conservatory.

You religiously recycle your yogurt containers, you've heard of upcycling but what can one do with an abandoned Target? Discover how communities across the U.S. have creatively repurposed buildings abandoned by multinational corporations such as Wal-Mart and K-Mart, morphing them into purpose-driven properties like justice centers, megachurches, elementary schools, and flea markets (Parkway Center Mall, anyone?).

Organized by Carnegie Mellon's Miller Gallery, *Your Town, Inc.* features 80 photographs from Christensen's forthcoming MIT Press book, *Big Box Reuse*, as well as new installations that explore how communities are altered as they exist in the shadow of corporate real estate.

Don't miss the chance to step inside the *UnBox*, an architectural installation atop a parking lot, which was fabricated as part of a collaboration with students from Oberlin College and Carnegie Mellon. Modular, mobile and constructed from recycled materials, the *UnBox* will become an active community event site through the duration of the exhibition.

Asking *How can you reclaim power over the design of your town's future?*, the exhibition will host a series of engaging events aimed at mobilizing residents to think critically about, and actively participate in, the design of built environments.

This Friday, head to campus to celebrate the new exhibition for the Miller Gallery's "Hometown BBQ" bash. Also don't miss a Big Box reuse presentation and book signing with Christensen on Nov. 13 at 4:30 p.m., as part of Carnegie Mellon's University Lecture Series.