

Organized into eight chapters, Bass's solo exhibition at Knockdown Center, *The Book of Everyday Instruction*, is organized by Alexis Wilkinson and it reveals a great deal of the artist's process. It comes across as a caring display of projects that remain human-scaled and accessible, even if they're laced with the often-cool conceptual language of contemporary art. The show's unique, book-like format, started as a joke, Bass recently explained to Jillian Steinhauer in an interview published by Temporary Art Review:

I work really slowly, and there's this weird misperception that I work fast. So I thought, when I was conceiving of this project: What if I say I'm doing a book, when people were like, "what are you doing next"? If I'd say, "I'm working on a book," people would just leave me alone, because we have this framework where a book takes a really long time to produce.

That decision, which is a clever way to navigate the goal-oriented thinking that dominates conversations in the New York art community, reveals a bigger interest in a slow reading of relationships, as if she is building trust with the viewer as much as she does with her subjects and maybe herself. In the same interview, and another she did with Jessica Lynne for *Bomb* magazine, she is frank about what she doesn't know. It may be a matter-of-fact response, but in an industry often dominated by artist-hero myths, it feels unfamiliar. What do we seek, she seems to ask with a Yoda-like simplicity. The puzzle of knowing is central to the conversation.

Chapter One

Chapter one, which is titled "you me together," documents 11 interactions with people who invited her to be a proxy for people who would normally enact the actions with a partner. Created during a residency at Spaces in Cleveland, Bass walked into scenarios where she was required to share a bottle of wine, walk a dog, and go to a movie with people who were initially strangers she encountered through her professional network or a Craigslist posting. The work in the gallery is archival, incorporating the residue of these events, including photos of significant components of the interaction. The display presents the whole process in a manicured way that suggests a homey respite — like walking into a well-designed Airbnb apartment, knowing it was prepared for your arrival. That atmosphere is evoked partly by the non-exotic flowers placed in old bottle vases throughout the Knockdown Center's gallery spaces. Whether set on podiums or on the floor, they introduce an intimacy to the pristine white space, suggesting a carefully considered placement that whispers life into the galleries.

