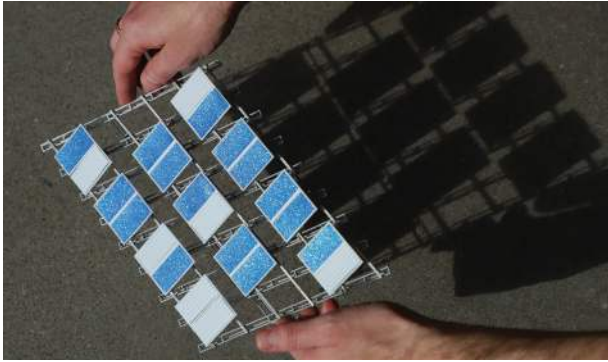


# *Light Gauge* Materials & Applications x Craft Contemporary Courtyard 2025

June 21 – October 12, 2025



LOS ANGELES- Commissioned and produced by Materials & Applications, *Light Gauge* is an installation by the architectural design and research practice Departamento del Distrito that functions as a zone of performance, encounter, and cooling, mediated by two photovoltaic space frames that levitate above the Craft Contemporary Courtyard. Informed by adaptable industrial systems and network thinking, this temporary intervention addresses questions surrounding energy and infrastructure in Los Angeles, exploring the policies, technologies, and architectures that enable self-determination.



The intervention is organized by two distinct zones: twin photovoltaic space frames positioned above the courtyard and an open, flexible ground plane below. Working with the courtyard's north-south axis, photovoltaic modules are arranged due-south to provide shade for zones of collective occupation while generating all power required for public programming. At the community scale, *Light Gauge* is concerned with local strategies of renewable energy production and distribution that aim to increase the accessibility of essential resources. A cooling center serves as the installation's primary public program. Panels provide shade. Fans generate a subtle breeze. Energy is free.



The project addresses Craft Contemporary's 2025 Summer thematic on the element of air through two concepts: "air mass" and "air temperature." Air mass, or the air mass coefficient, is commonly used to characterize the performance of solar cells. It defines the relative distance that sunlight travels through the Earth's atmosphere to reach any given point, and the relationship of this path to solar energy potential. The temperature of the air is also indelibly linked to sunlight. Sunlight heats the Earth's surface, which then heats the air above it through conduction. *Light Gauge*, in addition to producing its own solar energy, acts as a cooling device. The intervention supports a series of panels that capture sunlight from above, while simultaneously shading and cooling a community space below.

Images:

Departamento del Distrito, *Light Gauge*, image of model, 2024. Courtesy of Departamento del Distrito.

The M&A x Craft Contemporary Courtyard is a partnership between Materials & Applications and Craft Contemporary. Each summer since 2021, M&A transforms Craft Contemporary's courtyard into a venue grounded by a public work of experimental architecture. A series of summer events brings architects, artists, and storytellers together into dialogue, with renewed focus on urban environments and community engagement. *Light Gauge* aims to activate an interest in the overlooked materiality of our energy infrastructure, bringing together expert and non-expert publics in conversation about shared resources in Los Angeles's design and material culture.

"*Light Gauge* addresses the assembly, aesthetics, and experiential possibilities of current-day energy infrastructure," says M&A Director Kate Yeh Chiu. "Beyond just offering a space to cool down, the project responds to existing resource distribution systems and prompts audiences to consider resource sovereignty at the community level."

Beginning in June 2025, Craft Contemporary will present a series of exhibitions and invite makers through its residency program to interpret the varied interactions between craft and the natural elements: air, water, earth, and fire. *Light Gauge* is part of the first group of projects that explore the qualities of air and its relations to energy and community space.

Exhibitions that follow at Craft Contemporary will highlight sustainability, accessibility, and connect visitors to the universal rhythms of the Earth. Significantly, these exhibitions will tell a new story of Craft in a contemporary world as we work together to heal global wounds through creativity and making.

*Light Gauge* is generously supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the California Arts Council, LA County Department of Arts and Culture, and the Rice University Scholarly and Creative Works Subvention Fund, as well as generous partnerships with Solarpunks, Nous Engineering, Rohn Towers, and Talley.

Graham  
Foundation



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## SUMMER SOLSTICE OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, June 21st, 2025

12-5 PM

Celebrate the beginning of summer and the opening of our Summer/Fall exhibitions: *Ether: Aromatic Mythologies*, *the air we share*, *IAO Olfactory Storylab Maker-in-Residence*, and *Light Gauge*. During these uncertain times, we want to open our doors to everyone working in and supporting the arts in Los Angeles. This event is free and open to the public, and all are welcome. Enjoy the new exhibitions, drop-in crafts, summery refreshments, and the arts community!

# Craft Contemporary

*5814 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90036*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 26, 2025

CONTACT  
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Craft Contemporary is an art museum whose purpose is to reveal the potential of craft to educate, captivate, provoke, and empower. Craft Contemporary achieves its mission by exhibiting the artists of our time who favor craft materials and processes. We give a voice to local, emerging, and mid-career artists whose works are overlooked. The museum strives to achieve equitable access through free and low-cost programs, and the inclusion of multiple teaching artists from communities throughout Los Angeles who offer unique art-making workshops, K-12 school programs, senior adult workshops, and art talks. For more information, visit [www.craftcontemporary.org](http://www.craftcontemporary.org).

LOCATION: 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

ADMISSION: \$9 for adults; \$7 for students, teachers, seniors; free for Craft Contemporary members; FREE admission every Sunday

HOURS: Monday - Tuesday: Closed

Wednesday - Sunday: 11 am to 5 pm

First Thu every month: 12 - 8 pm

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## BIOGRAPHIES

**Departamento del Distrito** is an international design and research practice operating between Mexico City, Mexico and Houston, Texas. Founded in 2017 by Francisco Quiñones and Nathan Friedman, the office specializes in public, residential, and curatorial projects. The work of Departamento del Distrito is guided by the following core principles: binational representation of language, culture, and history specific to Mexico and the United States; an expanded view of architecture that considers the many social, political, and technological relationships between people and things; and the design of futures that are alternative and diverse. A steady engagement with research—be it archival, typological, or material—allows the office to expand upon local sites of interest, linking them to geographies, time periods, and subjects that reach beyond their immediate bounds. Projects by Departamento del Distrito have been exhibited internationally, including shows at the National Building Museum (Washington, D.C.), Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam), arc en rêve (Bordeaux), Museo Numismático Nacional (Mexico City), Whitehouse (Tokyo), and the Graham Foundation (Chicago). The practice was an official contributor to the 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial and received the 2022 Architectural League of New York Prize.

**Francisco Quiñones** (Mexico, 1986) is a practicing architect in Mexico City and Adjunct Professor of Architecture at Universidad Iberoamericana. His research on the evolution of mid-century modernism in Mexico has been published in the series En-Medio, supported by the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA), and in Columbia University's Avery Review. He holds an MArch II from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design and a BArch from Universidad Anáhuac.

**Nathan Friedman** (USA, 1986) is a practicing architect in Mexico City and a Professor in the Practice at the Rice School of Architecture. Friedman is a former editor of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Thresholds, and his writing has been published in Art Journal, Log, Scapegoat, and Manifest. He holds an MS from the Department of History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Art at MIT and a BArch from Cornell University.

**Materials & Applications (M&A)** is a Los Angeles-based organization pursuing a public, participatory, and just culture of experimentation in architecture. M&A presents new ideas in architecture and art through built installations and critical programs. Through exhibitions and programs that are always free to attend, M&A seeks to cultivate public life around spatial experiments that prompt reconsideration of our past, present, and future built environment.

### Websites:

[www.deldistrito.com](http://www.deldistrito.com)

### Social Media Handles:

Instagram: @deldistrito

Facebook: @deldistrito

Twitter: @\_deldistrito

eer culinary venture Meat My Friends, where their passion for fermentation, dumplings, and storytelling converge.