

CANAL PROJECTS

SHANZHAI LYRIC

CANAL STREET  
RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATION

9/29/22-4/23/23

## **SHANZHAI LYRIC**

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[library residency]

Canal Projects is happy to host Canal Street Research Association, the fictional office of poetic research unit Shanzhai Lyric, for its inaugural library residency. Led by the artists Ming Lin and Alexandra Tatarsky, Canal Street Research Association is a nomadic project that operates out of underutilized Canal Street real estate, including vacant storefronts and office buildings.

Established in 2015, **Shanzhai Lyric** investigates global trade networks, informal markets, and the poetics of counterfeit goods. 山寨, or “shanzhai,” means “counterfeit” in contemporary Chinese usage, but translates literally to “mountain hamlet.” This makes reference to an enclave on the outskirts of empire where bandits abscond with goods to be redistributed among those on the margins. In 2020, Shanzhai Lyric founded Canal Street Research Association in an empty storefront on Canal Street, New York City’s counterfeit epicenter, using this site as a base from which to delve into the cultural and material ecologies of the street and its long history as a place that probes the limits of authorship and ownership.

Taking cues from Canal Projects’ restored “illuminated walkways” above the lower level library—the glass and cast-iron sidewalks designed in the early twentieth century to provide light to basement workers—Canal Street Research Association will explore the literal and metaphoric undercurrents of Canal Street, from basement factories, to counterfeit warehousing and escape routes, to the massage parlors and covert nightlife enabled by the clandestine activities of the street.

During their residency they will continue to build a living memory bank of the district through a constellation of hyperlocal stories, memories, and objects. In the library’s bookshelves, the artists are showcasing an assortment of books and objects that speak to the history of Canal Street and its vendor culture. Library furniture, designed in collaboration with Lars Fischer of

common room, invites visitors to participate in informal conversation.

From October 2022 to April 2023, Canal Street Research Association will also play host to a series of screenings and public talks, alongside office hours with the artists by appointment. The library is open for viewing and consultation by visitors during Canal Projects’ regular hours of operation (Tuesday through Saturday, 12–6 pm). Public-facing programs organized by Canal Street Research Association will address the currents of water, waste, and labor that underpin the long history and rich culture of Canal Street in both its ground and underground levels.



More research notes can be found  
[@canal\\_street\\_research](#)

