

## **Interview, Audio: Rebecca Fons & Jack C. Newell on ‘Destroy Your Art’ in Chicago on Aug. 25, 2017**

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 24, 2017 - 11:10pm

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CHICAGO – In one of the more intriguing “happenings” in the Chicago scene, the husband and wife team of Rebecca Fons and Jack C. Newell are hosting “Destroy Your Art” in Chicago, on August 25th, 2017, at Lost Arts in the Goose Island neighborhood (details below). The evening promises a one-of-a-kind event.

“Destroy Your Art” will feature five filmmakers – Nick Alonzo, Shayna Connelly, Lonnie Edwards, Matt Hyland and Aemilia Scott – as they show their seven minute or less short films. After that ONE SHOWING, the films will be destroyed forever, never to be seen again. The concept challenges the notions of permanency, images, expression and our perception of what time means. Audience participants, and the filmmakers themselves, will be the only witnesses to the final products, before they are gone forever.



Friday, August 25th, 2017, in Chicago

Photo credit: DestroyYourArt.com

Rebecca Fons and Jack C. Newell are one of the most prominent art and film couples in Chicago. HollywoodChicago.com [last talked to Rebecca in May](#), [20] when her and her mother Marianne bought the “Iowa” movie theater in Winterset. She is the former Education Manager for the Chicago International Film Festival, and performs in local improvisation comedy. Jack C. Newell was [last profiled in November of 2016](#), [21] on the release of his feature film “Open Tables.” The prolific director – who is also the head of film, TV and digital at The Second City – is also working on the documentaries “42 Grams” and “How to Build a School in Haiti,” and is a facilitator of the “Wabash Lights” art installation in Chicago. HollywoodChicago.com talked to the couple on “Destroy Your Art,” in both transcript and audio.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** The concept of “destroying art” has roots with Claude Monet and is a feature of the Burning Man Festival. What makes your focus on filmmaking a prime candidate for the concept and theme?

**Rebecca Fons:** Destroying a completed film is not the first place we would go when thinking about the concept of ‘destroyed art.’ As Jack knows as a filmmaker, there are inherent costs in a film that is unique to its art... in time, money and energy. There are mechanics on the creation side, so we’re asking a lot of our filmmakers to destroy their work.

**Jack C. Newell:** If I was to put film in a Venn Diagram, it would touch art, entertainment and cultural specificity. When I heard your question, I was thinking of going back to the beginnings of the art form, with the Lumière brothers [early French filmmaker and inventors]. They did a film with a train coming into the station, and it made people run away, but now we see it and wonder what that was all about. That reaction doesn’t last, and it makes more sense in the time and place it was made. The thing that has happened since home video is that producers feel now they going for a film for the ages, to watch over and over again. Whether that is good or bad, it is interesting.

**Fons:** It’s very hard to make a film that provides entertainment and a timeless quality. What makes the Mona Lisa timeless, for example?

**Newell:** Probably the stories behind it.. that it was stolen, recovered, and became the most reproduced painting of all time. That fits into the film lore as well. Prestige filmmaking is fetishized, where it has to be the ‘thing.’ And what we’re doing at the event is ‘destroy your art, kill your darlings and nothing is precious.’ Let’s make a film, show it once, and see what happens.



**Fons:** To compare a painting to a movie, a new painting doesn't come with a trailer, or in the case of some films, a trailer before the trailer. [laughs] These days, there can be so much about it beforehand, it's hard to view it as a separate piece of 'art' or expression.

**Newell:** To further that point, once that you see a film, and you never see again, does it still 'exist'? Once the audience's eyes have seen it, does it need to go onto other formats? Once the opening weekend is done, it's all over. So we're just trying to play with all these ideas at the event.



Rebecca Fons & Jack C. Newell of 'Destroy Your Art'  
*Photo credit: Rebecca Fons*

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What was the origin of the idea? Who mentioned it to who, and which person was instrumental in taking the concept to the reality?

**Newell:** We don't know where the first idea came from, we've had it for awhile and it's just taken a couple years, and I think earlier this year I told Rebecca that we either need to do it or stop talking about it. We found the date in August, and got it together. The idea comes from a number of different sources... there is a festival in Seattle, for example, where normal people make porn. It's not about that subject, but more like crowd sourced, community filmmaking. It just happens once and goes away.

**Fons:** We know improvisation, and we like interactive art form in museums, so we've observed how that art impacts us. And Jack, as a filmmaker, also thinks about the life of his films. I worked at a film festival for years, and I would experience these amazing festival 'movies' and then never hear about them again. So the event plays with the idea of the life of a film.

**Newell:** The art here is the event and the experience, and my focus will be on the audience reaction. The reason we were motivated to finally do this is because showing a film once, then destroying it forever, is anathema to the filmmaking process. It's like, 'are you f\*\*king kidding me? I want to get this on Netflix, in the theaters, win an Oscar or at least put it on the reel.' We're taking all the business bullshit out of it, and asking the question, 'what would you create?'

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What kind of freedom does a filmmaker have when he knows something will be shown once, than destroyed forever? What expectation do you have regarding the works?

**Newell:** Broadly speaking, there are film endings that tie everything up and then there are endings that do the same thing, but leave room for possibilities. Those are the great endings, that leave you with a sense of wonder. There are filmmakers who excite the possibilities, and that is what makes this event fun – the possibilities. These filmmakers could possibly create the greatest thing they've ever done, and then it's destroyed. That's a movie right there.

**Fons:** There is total freedom on concept, and we thought about the first conversations with filmmakers, if we should even tell them to take a risk. All risk is different to different people. What may seem safe to me, may be a huge risk for the filmmaker, because maybe they're doing something out of their comfort zone. All the films are seven minutes or less, and has the attitude of that saying that's usually stitched on a pillow... 'dance like nobody is watching.'

**Newell:** Don't say that!

**Fons:** Well then, make a film as if it will never live again, because it won't.

**In PART ONE of the audio portion of the interview, Rebecca, Jack and Patrick make like NPR and talk about our society of images and what the meaning of it all is.**

**In PART TWO of the audio portion of the interview, Rebecca and Jack talk about their side artistic interests, their theater/film pursuits, and their surprising answers to the question about what films they would destroy, never to be seen again.**

*“Destroy Your Art” – hosted by Rebecca Fons and Jack C. Newell – will take place at 8pm on Friday, August 25th, 2017, at Lost Arts on Goose Island, 1001 North Branch Street, Chicago. For more information, including ticket purchasing, [click here](#). [22]*



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [24]  
Writer, Editorial Coordinator  
[HollywoodChicago.com](#)  
[pat@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com) [23]

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- Links:**
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