In this article I explore how socially engaged artistic practice draws upon hybridity as a methodological approach advancing social justice. Through the case study of Theaster Gates’s To Speculate Darkly (2010), a project commissioned by the Chipstone Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and shown at the Milwaukee Art Museum, I consider how socially engaged practice mobilizes continually shifting notions of postcolonial hybridity to help museums make meaningful symbolic reparations toward equality and inclusivity. The research is based on interviews I conducted with Gates and with the director and the curator of the Chipstone Foundation. The article will demonstrate that, with hybridity, artists have the potential to subvert hegemonic power structures and to inspire reconciliations between museums and communities. While such reconciliations generally involve complex processes with no clear end point, the evolving concept of hybridity is an effective vehicle to foster pluralistic institutions, cultural organizations characterized by practices built upon shared authority, reciprocity, and mutual trust. Theaster Gates refers to the methodology of hybridity as ‘temple swapping’, an exchange of values between seemingly unlike groups, in his case the black church and the museum, to explore their interconnections and relational sensibilities. Temple swapping, I aim to show, is a valuable metaphor through which to examine socially engaged artistic practice and its implications for museum ethics.
Gates's social practice work began amateurism and anti-market sentiment, alongside with refurbishing buildings on Chicago's South Side and hosting cultural occasionally anti-state politics. events, which subsequently grew into the Rebuild Foundation, a non-profit. Lowe's stake in these questions is as the founder of redevelopment agency with satellite projects in Omaha and St Louis. In his account, this class differential is well-meaning socially engaged artists towards plugging the strongly racialised in the US and frequently presents the gap in providing social services where they risk endorsing the problem of white social practice MFA graduates launching logic of austerity. Theaster Gates. As his retrospective opens at Fondazione Prada in Milan, we look at the man who's been redefining the role of the artist in the 21st century – from anthropologist to urbanist and activist. By Christian Viveros-Fauné. Great art, according to the American poet Emily Dickinson, is what makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up. For Gates – who is more concerned with what it means to be an artist in the world than what it signifies to be a black artist in America – the answer was clear. He would, in the guise of an artist-curator-activist, serve different kinds of communities as an artistic 'bridge'. Predictably, Gates turned the building on Dorchester Avenue into a haven for cultural activity.