2017/18 Jerome Fellowship Exhibition Alyssa Baguss Josette Ghiseline Sarah Kusa Joshua McGarvey Lela Pierce

Alyssa Baguss

Josette Ghiseline

08 // 15

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Sarah Kusa

16 // 23

Joshua McGarvey

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Lela Pierce



Wish You Were Here (installation detail) 2017

Hand-cut wallpaper mural

12.5 x 63.9 ft.

Rochester Art Center, Rochester, MN

Machine Visions Made by Hand

When I visit Alyssa Baguss's studio, our conversation soon turns into play. Two tilted stream tables hold different types of sand. One is tan colored and feels pasty like ground-up chalk; the other is shiny black, granular, sharp-edged, and crisp. A thin stream of water runs through each of them. The tan sand absorbs much of the water before a meandering, shifting pattern forms. On the other table, water seeps through the gaps between individual grains of sand much faster. Channels form, then dam, before the water finds a different path and goes underground before bursting to the surface again. Baguss has rocks ready for us to use to manipulate both streams: soon, miniature rivers pool and cascade until they fan into deltas as they reach the end of their boxlike tables. Part science experiment, part topographical study, the work in progress absorbs us completely. The question of how people arrive at such interactive fascination motivates much of the artist's work: curiosity may just act as a gateway to wonder, inquiry, empathy, and care for the natural world.

The lines that rivers carve have long fascinated Baguss: in *Dead Reckoning*, she mapped a digital view of the Mississippi's river gorge in blue chalk. *Course* (2016) and *Meander* (2017) traced flow patterns on scrolls of hand-cut Tyvek: ghostly patterns formed by countless holes, a shape marked by absence. In her drawing practice, Baguss has long pictured landscapes and topographies

by removal of information, distilling complexity into sets of data points. Often, the resulting imagery conjures loss: fragments of placeless mountain ranges, grids paper-punched into spectral maps. But the work observes shifts in how landscape is perceived, represented, and navigated with dispassion. There is no judgment here, no melancholia, but an in-depth investigation of how intimacy with land—Baguss prefers "the outdoors"—has changed.

Scholars of such changes hail from many disciplines. Richard Louv diagnosed a generation of children with "nature deficit disorder."1 David Sobel coined the term ecophobia, a fear of home that describes both the powerlessness felt in the face of cataclysmic environmental destruction and the association of the outdoors with dangers ranging from pollution to insecttransmitted illnesses to loss of bearings.² We are a far cry from E. O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis, which proposed an innate love for living things.3 Glenn Albrecht and colleagues introduced solastalgia to name the distress brought on by witnessing man-made ecological decay.4 Widespread awareness of global warming and the ongoing sixth mass extinction, a.k.a. the age of ecocide, tends to produce distance, disengagement, and even dissociation from ecological concerns, so overwhelming is the crisis we face. Rather than join the chorus of laments, Baguss pursues a different direction: Can art help inspire ecological empathy?



Dead Reckoning (installation view) 2017

Plumb-line marking chalk on gallery wall

5 x 80 ft.

Soo Visual Arts Center, Minneapolis

Photo by Rik Sferra



Dead Reckoning (installation view) 2017

Plumb-line marking chalk on gallery wall

5 x 80 ft.

Soo Visual Arts Center, Minneapolis

Photo by Rik Sferra

Course (installation detail) 2016

Hand-cut Tyvek

7.5 x 30 ft.

Kiehle Visual Arts Center, St.Cloud University, St.Cloud, MN

Photo by Tim Wang





Course (installation view) 2016

Hand-cut Tyvek

7.5 x 30 ft.

Kiehle Visual Arts Center, St.Cloud State University, St.Cloud, MN

Photo by Tim Wang

Can digital technology, rather than sever us from the ecosystems we are part of, enhance awareness of just how connected we are?

Still rooted in drawing, Baguss's practice has grown to encompass interactive works that aim to create opportunities for engaging with the world. *Vitamin D: A Pep Rally for Spring* (2018) brought bodies deprived of sunlight for far too long together in the South Loop in Bloomington, Minnesota, to celebrate the imminent change of seasons. *Passing Messages* (2017) made use of the Walker Art Center's multitiered facade to transport messages by hand-propelled cables, and *Repeat After Me* (2017) presented participants with letterpress-printed notebooks for practicing cursive writing. What unites these projects is the way they forge connections: with each other, our surroundings, and our bodies. Besides, they cultivate attentiveness to how entangled bodies, actions, and environments are: sunshine prompts bodies to produce vitamin D; a walk in a park can help cognition and mental health; the additional processing that writing by hand requires benefits memory.⁵

If exposure to natural stimuli impacts bodies and brains, so does reliance on technology. Baguss explored this rela-

tionship in *Everything from Nowhere*. In her statement for the show, she asks: "How does our growing dependence on screens influence our expectations of the environment and our relationship with the natural world?"6 Increased use of digital wayfinding programs does more than modify expectations, though: our very brains are shaped by habit. More GPS use means less gray matter in the hippocampus.⁷ But digital wayfinding also conceptually alters perceptions of our place in the world. The user stands at the center of an endlessly customizable map. No longer do we have to find our place in the world. The world revolves around us in an ultraconvenient, digitally enabled version of anthropocentrism.⁸ Baguss, though, is not interested in one-sided arguments about technology. Her works sustain a complex relationship with digitality. What if technology could provide access points to the natural world? What if it allowed us to see what the naked eye cannot?

Johanna Zylinska explores this very line of inquiry in *Nonhuman Photography*. She considers photography "as a medium that slows down time and can teach us humans to look at ourselves and our environment differently." Nonhuman photography—that is, images obtained

Full Screen 2015

Colored pencil on paper

30 x 40 in.



through the capacities of seeing machines-"outlines an ecological model of perception as a more embodied, immersive, and entangled form of image and world formation." Rather than distancing us further, "nonhuman photography can allow us to unsee ourselves from our parochial human-centered anchoring, and encourage a different vision of both ourselves and what we call the world. .

. . It is also about reconnecting us to the current of life-and about making us feel alive, over and over again."9 Machine visions, then, may decenter human perception as the sole arbiter of the visible. The potential ethical implications of such machine visions are profound and may yet give rise to a new subjectivity.¹⁰ When Baguss repurposes seeing machines-a LiDAR scanner in *Treeline* (2017)¹¹—her hand remains an integral part of the image thus revealed. Her work embodies digital visions, insisting on a productive and complicated entanglement of binary code and muscle memory.

-Christina Schmid

Notes:

1. Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2008); Richard Louv, The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2011). 2. David Sobel, Beyond Ecophobia. Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education

3. Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson, The Biophilia Hypothesis (Washington, D.C.: Island Press), 1993.

4. Glenn Albrecht, Gina

Sartore, Linda Connor,

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Psychiatry 15 Suppl. 1(1): S95-98 (February 2007),

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5. For research on the benefits of "nature

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7. Jennifer Ackerman, The Genius of Birds (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), Nick Higginbotham, Sonia 219. 8. Hasan Elahi memorably made this point in his artist "Solastalgia: The Distress

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S0169204615000286. For

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Paul, 2017, https://www.

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from Nowhere, exhibition

"Attention, Students: Put

Sunday, National Public

2016/04/17/474525392/

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9. Johanna Zylinska, Nonhuman Photography (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 18, 8, 199–200.

> 10. Hito Steyerl, The Wretched of the Screen (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 24.

experience," see Gregory 11. LiDAR, which stands N. Bratman, Gretchen C. Daily, Benjamin J. Levy, for "Light Detection and and James J. Gross, "The Ranging," is a remote-Benefits of Nature Experisensing method. ence: Improved Affect and Cognition," Landscape

Josette Ghiseline

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Language Deconstructed no. 5 2016

Acrylic on twenty-three individual canvases

48 x 47.5 x 2 in.

Photo by Rik Sferra

Beyond Precious: Post-Minimalism's Ecological Turn

Josette Ghiseline's work shares much

Josette Ghiseline

with twentieth-century post-minimalism: an intense commitment to process and an endless curiosity to explore new materials. Then, as now, a visceral engagement with the provenance and physical properties of materials matters at least as much, if not more, than the final outcome. Process still is key. But the context of such gestures has changed dramatically in the decades since Robert Pincus-Witten coined the term: in Ghiseline's hands, postminimalism takes an ecological turn.

Stepping into her studio on any given day, a visitor might encounter tins and trays full of ongoing experiments with fungi and other organisms, whose life cycles yield some of the artist's materials. Semitranslucent skinsknown as "scoby," an acronym for "symbiotic culture of bacteria + yeast"float on pungent liquid. Puffy clouds of white mycelium sprout from organic substrates. Wooden slats covered in swaths of test fabric lean against walls and lie on all available surfaces. Ghiseline ventures far beyond the precious in her quest for unorthodox substances.

Her appetite for new materials notwithstanding, Ghiseline's creative practice is rooted in painting. Working on traditional rectangular canvases in the late 1990s, she realized that she was most interested in the narrow surfaces on the sides of her frames: unintentional marks gathered where paint spilled over the edge. Soon, the artist began constructing and assembling individually stretched, skinny, long frames to pursue the format further. Arranged horizontally or vertically, the slats combine into paintings with a decidedly sculptural sensibility. Her first foray into slat paintings culminated in Five Risers (2002), which echoes Donald Judd's iconic untitled wall sculptures. Yet unlike the industrially produced minimalist masterpieces, Ghiseline's risers are glazed by hand and reference natural growth patterns. Thus begins the artist's conversation with post-minimalism and, inevitably, minimalism.

In 1977, Pincus-Witten observed that "certain aspects of post-Minimalism are also readily seen to derive from Minimalism's essential reductive and analytical character."¹ Post then does not signify a clean break but leaves room for occasional continuities amid departures. Similarly, Ghiseline shares minimalism's reluctance to fetishize the artist's hand but does not embrace industrial production. Rather, her practice is steeped in an intense physicality. A series of silver paintings from 2015 to 2016 is a case in point: the artist stapled, scraped, drilled, sanded, and scratched the surface of each work to create uneven topographies that resemble watery surfaces where light breaks and objects are only partially visible. They shimmer with a metallic, semitranslucent sheen that veils and reveals seemingly



Caution Scrambled 2017

Acrylic on twenty-three individual canvases glued together with paint

48 x 47.5 x 2 in.

10 // 11

Language Deconstructed no. 1 2016

Acrylic on twenty-three individual canvases

48 x 47.5 x 2 in.

lcarus 2017

Acrylic, canvas, wood lath frames, house paint

35.5 x 34 x 1.5 in.

Josette Ghiseline





random enclosures of organic-looking debris. Some are sprinkled with rust red as if the work itself was oxidizing. The paintings read as objects whose textures could be found in minerals, frozen wetlands, and floating driftwood.

Recently, Ghiseline has turned from organic-looking and biomorphic marks that obscure her agency in shaping the work to incorporating materials made by living organisms. In 2017, she attended her first conference on biofabrication in Rotterdam. The field is driven not only by a quest for novelty but far more significantly by questions of sustainability: How can we harness materials less harmful to our environment? Could a shift in material culture help lessen the weight of humanity's ecologically catastrophic footprint? Thus, while she shares postminimalists' quest for new materials, a very different set of exigencies prompts and frames her investigations.

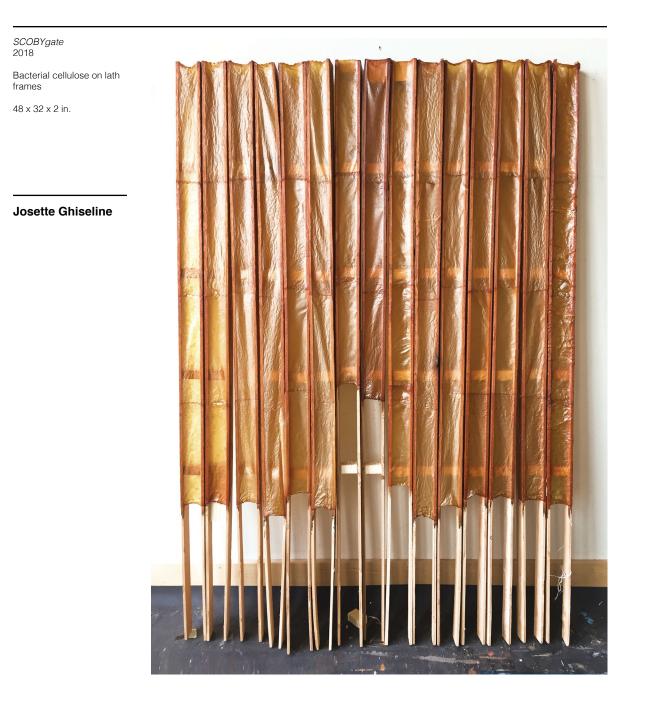
The first generation of post-minimalist artists, especially women, embraced

"methods and substances that hitherto had been sexistically tagged as female or feminine" and devalued.² Though male artists shared their interest in the relationship between the human body and a material,³ the relationship of post-minimalism to the women's movement "cannot be overly stressed." Artists like Eva Hesse, Lynda Benglis, and Lee Bontecou effectively opened "fine art's language up to what used to be considered mundane, vulgar, ugly, not refined enough for art."4 In Ghiseline's practice, post-minimalism's twin impulses to deconstruct and open up art's material language persist; the motivation for her material investigations differs. Exploring new materials is no longer a rebellion against the art world's problematic conventions but an urgent reminder of our collective role in ecosystems of various scales, from local to global.

In 2016, revisiting the format of the slat paintings, she devoted a series to deconstruction: *Language Deconstructed* references a Painting for a Low Table 2017

Acrylic, individual canvases

48 x 54 x 5 in. Dimensions and arrangement variable



painting from 1999 titled Language. Spontaneous mark making still drives Ghiseline's creative inquiry. In addition to biomorphic forms and patterns, the series incorporates urban signage. Language Deconstructed no. 3 scrambles the chevron pattern found on the back of fire engines. *Caution* Scrambled (2017) riffs on the pattern of black-and-yellow tape. In Language Deconstructed no. 5, the slat paintings complete their sculptural turn. No longer covered, the slender wooden frames are tightly wrapped in strips of fabric: torn canvas and canvas thread in *Icarus* (2017); elastic, reflective nylon ribbon in Stretch Deconstructed (2016). Thus undone, the paintings look wounded, fragile, like Icarus after his fall.

Their compromised structures suggest more than an analysis of material and form, especially as the artist introduces new materials. Waterproof nonlatex polyurethane, a fabric used in aeronautical engineering, partially covers a wooden scaffold. The fabric's smooth matte surface is at odds with the organic wilt of scoby skins adhering to another set of stretchers. Reminiscent of makeshift crutches, the wooden skeletons are stacked together, leaning against the wall and each other for support. Their humility and precarity are profoundly compelling. As threedimensional sculptural bodies, they push past representation and material analysis into a haunting, speculative space where no body exists in isolation but all are deeply, intimately entangled with each other and the world.

Christina Schmid

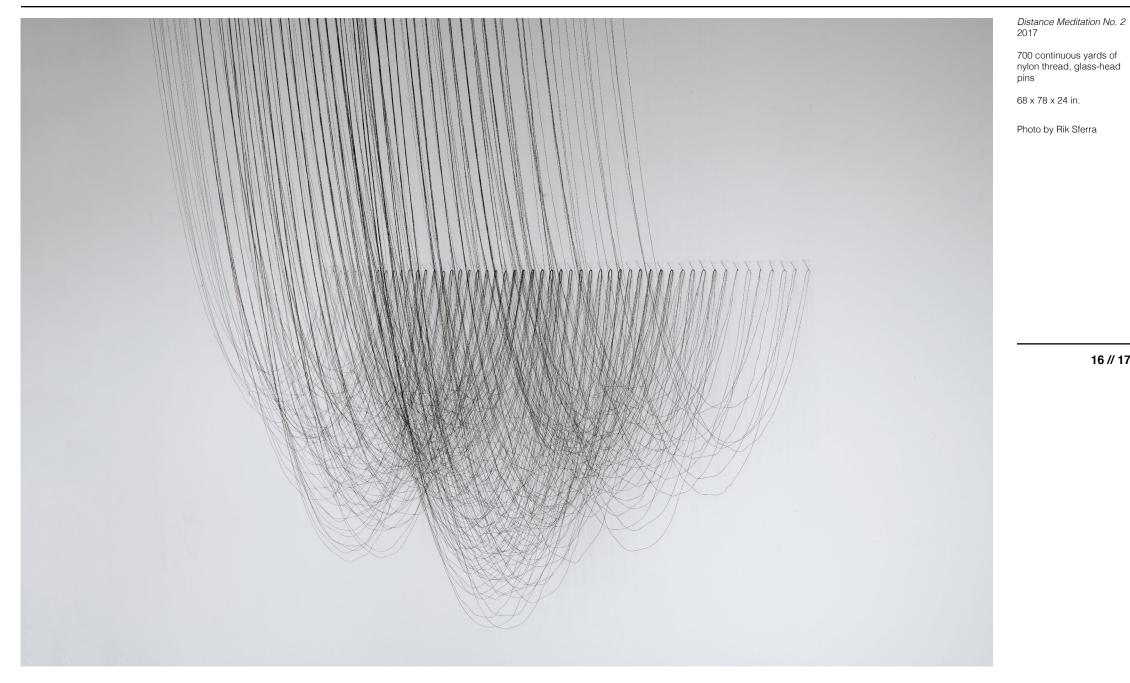
1. Robert Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism* (New York: Out of London Press, 1977), 15.

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2. lbid., 21.

3. Pincus-Witten considered Richard Serra's *Hand Catching Lead* (1968), a video of the artist's bare hand trying and failing to catch lead, the epitome of this "elementarist analysis of the physical properties germane to any given material"; ibid., 21.

4. Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," in *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: Dutton, 1971), 104.



Sarah Kusa

Acts of Undoing

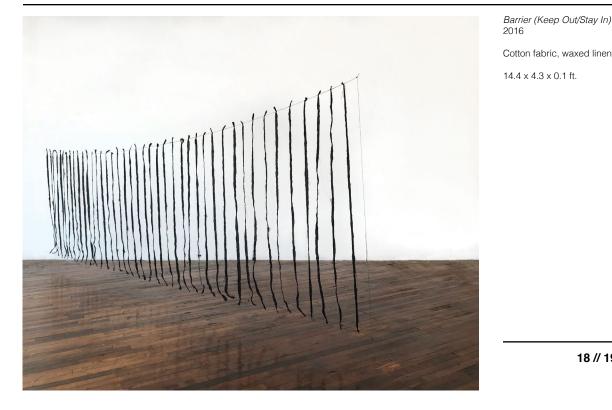
An exquisite fragility permeates Sarah Kusa's art. In Distance Meditation No. 2 (2017), a single thread, a third of a mile long, hangs suspended in graceful, drooping curves so delicate they respond to breath and movement, swaying, sashaying, before settling once again into their loose, gravity-induced geometry. Strips of torn black cotton, knotted into the flimsiest of barricades, divide a space in *Barrier (Keep Out/* Stay In) (2016): a form barely there yet asserting, ever so subtly, a dividing line. Kusa's work conjures a vulnerability not to be mistaken for naive innocence of the sort that balks at the possibility of pain, but a vulnerability that knows full well the risks involved in lowering one's guard and that still dares to shed the emotional armor we wear out of habit or by choice. A seemingly counterintuitive kind of courage is required for such intimate openness, a paradoxical pairing of affective attitudes that is a constant in Kusa's practice.

The artist is deeply interested in gestures and materials that allow for connotative tensions. When she ripped cotton fabric into the strips that now form Barrier (Keep Out/Stay In), the action was reminiscent of both symbolic gestures of grief and acts of violation: rending clothes as an expression of sorrow or furiously tearing garments apart as if they were the stand-in for, the second skin of the person attacked. Crumpled One (2016), a sculptural form wrapped in black fabric neatly pinned

into place, holds similar ambivalence: Does the wrapping support an injured body or bind a body into submission and conformity? Does the bandage convey an act of care or an exercise of power? Kusa consistently engages processes that pair an air of vulnerability with a hint of an ominous but amorphous threat.

Unequal Pair (2016) is a case in point. Two skeletal but still biomorphic forms in a palette restrained to only black and white face each other. The tone and terms of their implied interaction are uncertain. Are we witnessing an act of surrender? A curious probing as a prelude to a more intimate encounter? Both forms stand upright, their stark lines softened by fine threads hanging from their limbs, like tendrils extending into the space around them. Where does a body end? There is a surreptitious sensuality, a sly conceptual eroticism in Kusa's work. Forms and actions oscillate between taking and relinquishing control, asserting and yielding power.

At times Kusa's work shares a material vocabulary with post-minimalist artists such as Eva Hesse. In Hang-Up (1966), a bent metal rod juts out from a frame tightly wrapped in hospital bandages. Lucy Lippard, writing about Hesse's work early on, observes that "opposites are used as complementaries rather than contradictions; the result is a formal neutralization, or paralysis, that achieves a unique sort of wholeness."1





Barrier (Keep Out/Stay In) (detail) 2016 Cotton fabric, waxed linen

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Barrier (Keep Out/Stay In)

14.4 x 4.3 x 0.1 ft.

14.4 x 4.3 x 0.1 ft.

Sarah Kusa

Unequal Pair 2016

Cotton fabric, T-pins, wood, wire, used plastic bags

68 x 74 x 36 in.

Sarah Kusa





Crumpled One 2016

Cotten fabric, T-pins, wood, wire, used plastic bags

60 x 28 x 36 in.

But while Kusa shares Hesse's affinity for the limp and the pliable,² the opposites her work grapples with unfold in the process of making rather than the unexpected juxtaposition of materials: the gestures—wrapping, ripping, rending, binding—are where Kusa conjures opposites. How her materials are manipulated is key.

In *Chambers* (a work still in progress at the time of this writing), Kusa started with used cotton bedsheets. The bedsheets look thinned and softened from contact with human bodies. The material suggests intimacy but steers clear of autobiographical revelation. Instead, it acts as a reminder of what we as human

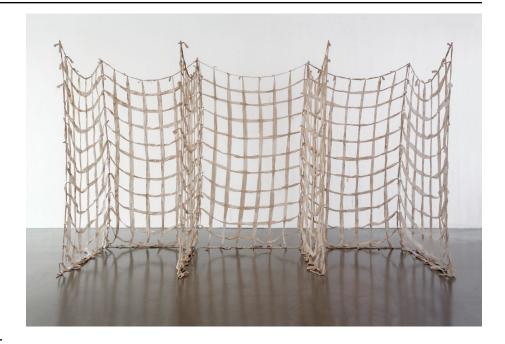
animals share: the need for sleep, that regenerative loss of consciousness that renders us utterly helpless for the duration. The sheets bear the memory of such vulnerability. Torn into thin strips and stained with homemade black walnut dye, the material is sewn into webbing that forms separate pens. They suggest structures designed for holding bodies, though ineffectively, given their partial openness. They hover in between a tentative promise of seclusion and imperfect imprisonment. The source of the stain comes with further connotations: black walnut trees secrete biochemical compounds that harm other plants foolish enough to try to grow in their shelter.

Chambers 2018

Used bed sheets, black walnut dye, thread

12 x 8 x 4 ft.

Photo by Rik Sferra





Segments 2018 Plaster, paper, wire 9 x 4.2 x 9 ft. Photo by Rik Sferra

Sarah Kusa

The droopy softness of Kusa's *Chambers* resonates with Lippard's assessment of the appeal of postminimalist textured surfaces: "even if they are not supposed to be touched, they are supposed to evoke a sensuous response. If the surfaces are familiar to one's sense of touch, if one can tell by looking how touching them would feel, they are all the more effective."3 Vision is reconfigured here from distant, dispassionate observation into a haptic sensibility that draws on the memory of handling fabric softened by use and activates the anticipation of what it would feel like to touch this particular configuration of fabric. Thus, Kusa's work is steeped in a haptic visuality,

based on what Laura Marks calls "a flow between the haptic and the optical":

That vision should have ceased to be understood as a form of contact and instead become disembodied and adequated with knowledge itself is a function of European post-Enlightenment rationality. But an ancient and intercultural undercurrent of haptic visuality continues to inform an understanding of vision as embodied and material. It is timely to explore how a haptic approach might rematerialize our objects of perception, especially now that optical visuality is being refitted as a virtual epistemology for the digital age.⁴

It may come as no surprise that Kusa describes her art as post-digital. Fiercely intimate, her work forgoes the smooth seductions of ubiquitous screens and instead offers the textured intricacies of touch, seen, imagined, and remembered. This oscillation between embodied vision based on recall and speculation introduces a peculiar sense of time to her sculptural forms. Nowhere is this temporality more apparent than in *Segments* (2018). Discarded parts of peculiar bodies form what the artist calls a "limbscape," a landscape made up of tubular white shapes that resemble broken remnants of ancient fossils, segments of long since wilted crinoids, bleached bones. Segments

is an aftermath: a body—bodies? undone. But their gnarly elegance once again invites the anticipatory intimacy of imagined touch, a far cry from disembodied distance.

-Christina Schmid

York: Out of London Press, 1977), 46. 3. Lippard, "Eccentric

2. Robert Pincus-Witten.

Postminimalism (New

1. Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric

Abstraction," in *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism*

(New York: Dutton, 1971),

Abstraction," 105.

Notes:

100.

4. Laura Marks, *Touch:* Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xiii.



Self Perpetuating Internal Rhythm (Chapter 6 from The Birth of Lilt Virile) 2018

Digital video still

Joshua McGarvey

Gallant Little Michael 2018

Short film still

Twisted Talismans: Sequins, Sweatpants, and One Dead Pony

Robert Falcon Scott's expedition to the South Pole ended in tragedy: beaten to the pole by Norwegian Roald Amundsen, Scott died in 1912 on the Ross Ice Shelf, a mere eleven miles from a depot his team had set up. His journals chronicle ice conditions and weather, mileage and frozen limbs, and are suffused with stoic determination and lofty sentiment. But the moment in this tale of failed conquest that most captured Joshua McGarvey's imagination was one of little consequence to the expedition's outcome. Scott's team traveled with ponies and dog teams, killing the ponies en route to feed humans and dogs. When the time came to kill one particular pony named Michael, Scott wrote an uncharacteristically involved eulogy: "Life was a constant source of wonder to him. No movement in camp escaped his notice." Scott remembers Michael's mischievous spirit and his habits of eating snow and gnawing on a halter fashioned to ward off snow blindness. "Each night, the arrival of the dog team sent him to bed with much to dream about. His master dreamed quite regularly too."1 This journal entry briefly cracks Scott's stoic and heroic facade and reveals another side of the man.

Joshua McGarvey

In McGarvey's hands, the pony Scott remembered as "Gallant Little Michael" promptly turns into a character. Part antihero, part skittish wannabe lumberjack, clad in a coat resembling the attire of the royal court in St. Paul's Winter Carnival, *Gallant Little Michael* symbolically reenacts scenes from Scott's journey along the desolate wintry shore of Lake Michigan while a narrator's voice solemnly reads from the journals. The eulogy for a pony becomes a portal for other narrative possibilities, which cast small slivers of doubt on the underlying ideas of conquest, heroism, and masculinity. *Gallant Little Michael* (2018) is part homage—dedicated to McGarvey's mother's pony Princess part unreliable reenactment, where an absurdist bent meets affection for the source material.

Much of McGarvey's recent work unfolds from peripheral scenes that may seem of little consequence to an overarching narrative. The artist is fascinated, at times even haunted, by such moments and what they may reveal: other ways of looking at and being in the world, a momentary upheaval of the order typically taken for granted. What was supposed to make sense—a heroic pursuit, a tale of pathos and sacrifice-appears in a different light. In McGarvey's hands, enacting the story from the periphery capsizes the certainties it peddles. Some of his retold tales are wickedly funny, overthe-top irreverent; others are steeped in pathos and rich in iconoclastic absurdity. Though nothing is sacred, the work never stops with ridicule but playfully investigates subjects of morality, faith, and make-believe. The tone is affectionate, the style experimental.



Custom Humility Pants (detail) 2018

Used sweatpants, fishing lure, sequins

Photo by Rik Sferra



The goal is never to create another smooth illusion of the kind that begs us to suspend disbelief but to revel in the construction and constructedness of the stories we live by: what it means to be a man, a believer, a hero.

In his creative investigations, the artist's biography is fair game and frequently acts as source material. In a kindergarten production of "The Three Little Pigs" with the artist playing the pig who foolishly built his house of sticks, a young McGarvey suffered a mishap on stage: he wet his pants, which happened to be turquoise sweatpants. Since then, turquoise sweatpants have infiltrated his practice: he has sewn, gifted, worn, and modified them. Like Mark Manders, a Dutch artist whose work McGarvey appreciates, he schematically recreates mundane moments. Once "filtered through the gauze of deeply private associations," they take on the air of uncanny surrogates, "almost talismanic" and "at once uncomfortably personal and strangely impersonal."² The memory of humiliation and failure is not reconfigured into a tale of heroic overcoming but is key to grasping McGarvey's deep affection for the laconic outsiders and oddball misfits in his work.

This sensibility manifests in the still in-progress *Here Comes Jesus*, subtitled "a video series about the 30 years before Jesus left his parents' house." Inspired by a ninety-second scene in Mel Gibson's epic and not uncontroversial movie *The Passion*

Custom Humility Pants 2018

Used sweatpants, used tiedyed sock, turquoise fabric

Photo by Rik Sferra

Joshua McGarvey





Hope Chest 2018

Clothing rack, clothing (made/found/saved)

Photo by Rik Sferra

of the Christ (2004), each episode invariably ends in a moment of pure parody. The son of a United Methodist pastor, McGarvey has a characteristically irreverent approach to his source material born of intimate familiarity with New Testament stories. The artist recalls that the church played a central role in family life as a source of community, faith, and entertainment. When *The* Passion of the Christ was released, the congregation attended a screening. The scene that caught McGarvey's attention is anything but pivotal: Jesus invents a tall wooden table. Following the logic of Gibson's script, it is not enough that Jesus performs miracles, founds a new faith, dies burdened with all of humanity's sins before being resurrected—he also has to invent a tall table.

Part 01 is titled "WWJD": What would Jesus do?-a question turned into a popular acronym in the artist's youth. The episode riffs on the tall table scene and features both Jesus and his mother, Mary, draped in a blue-sequined shawl. They argue about the credibility of his invention: since no one believed her story of immaculate conception, would anyone believe him? The "enactors," McGarvey and Emma Crutcher-McGowan, improvise different versions of the altercation before the final act, in which McGarvey drags a folding table in front of the camera, ceremoniously unfolds its legs, props it upright, and raises both arms in a salutation of praise. This gesture repeats at the end of each of the colorfully titled episodes. "Penance Therapy Enacted-Resurrection and the Dire Wolf" (part 02) puts Jesus on the couch, his therapist draped in blue sequins, while a hapless potted plant plays a central role in "Pondering the Preservation of the Resurrection Tree" (part 04).

In his most recent video, The Birth of Lilt Virile (2018), McGarvey riffs on prom portraiture. In a cardinal-red setting, characters wearing personalized sock masks that feature the artist's face are birthed only to pose, outfitted with wrist corsages, in solemn portraits that strike a chord of vague déjà vu. Whether he draws on such rites of passage, Scott's journals, Gibson's take on the passion of Christ, lumberjack lore and roadside attractions, or childhood embarrassments, the underlying sensibility of McGarvey's practice remains constant: sincere gestures of affectionate irreverence paired with improvisational inquiry into why we believe, act, and pose as we do. His ceaseless on-camera experimentation in a studio that serves as stage, dressing room, and recording studio is reminiscent of Bruce Nauman's

late-1960s studio films. The emphasis does not lie on product but activity; the point is not to convince, seduce, or tell us what to think but to play, enact alternative stories, and always embrace absurdity to the point where any certainty is deeply suspect.

-Christina Schmid

Roma Publication 2 (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago and the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2005).

Lilt Virile - Head Shot Number 02 2018

Digital image

Dimensions variable

Joshua McGarvey



McGarvey consulted can be found at http:// www.gutenberg.org/ files/14363/14363h/14363-h.htm.

2. James Rondeau, *Mark Manders: Isolated Rooms.*

1. The document

Notes:



Lela Pierce

Desiring against the Assemblage That Made Me

Where does a body end? "I can lose my hands, and still live. I can lose my legs and still live. I can lose my eyes and still live. I can lose my hair. evebrows. nose, arms, and many other things and still live. But if I lose the air I die. If I lose the sun I die. If I lose the earth I die. If I lose the water I die. If I lose the plants and animals I die. All of these things are more a part of me, more essential to my every breath, than is my so-called body. What is my real body? We are not autonomous, self-sufficient beings as European mythology teaches. . . . We are rooted, just like the trees. But our roots come out of our nose and mouth, like an umbilical cord, forever connected with the rest of the world."1

The body, rooted and connected, the body displaced and marked by trauma, the body as an intimate instrument of expression, as source of joy, as teacher: the body is at the heart of Lela Pierce's art. From there, her practice grows organically into different directions: yoga, performance, and dance; visual art that combines figurative drawing with geometric designs; and a material and conceptual inquiry into social, historical, and place-based ecologies our bodies are part of. Much of her work across different media shares a meditative, contemplative process that trusts the body to guide the hand. At times, Pierce chooses materials based on their symbolic and visceral resonance before letting them steer her making. But always, whether her work responds directly to the political urgencies of the moment or not, her practice is rooted in a keen sense of place: Whose land do we stand on? How do our bodies relate

Lela Pierce

to this place in the here and now while honoring the memories it holds? What do we hear when we really listen to a place?

Pierce's work with invasive species connects many of the threads that weave through her practice. She grew up outside Stillwater, Minnesota, where she has spent hours digging up buckthorn, a shrub brought over from Europe in the mid-1800s. Buckthorn chokes indigenous growth and degrades habitat.² Its roots, says Pierce, resemble nappy hair. Repeatedly they have found their way into her installation and performance projects. In 2016, responding to the fatal shooting of Philando Castile, Pierce used buckthorn roots to build a shelter. In 2018, a thick tangle of the roots served as a headpiece in a performance sketch titled Invasive Species.3 Conceptually, the artist considers invasive species as a metaphor for settler colonialism: "Settlers are not immigrants. Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies."4 Pierce places her practice in the ongoing efforts to decolonize land and decenter European intellectual history.

Decentering has taken different shapes in her artwork. Her studies with Ananya Chatterjea pushed against a Eurocentric grasp of contemporary dance. When she was working with Rosy Simas, traditional forms of movement and technique gave way to improvisation and somatic experiencing. In her visual art, Pierce draws on women's cultural



Invasive Species (performance still) 2018

Red Eye Theater, Minneapolis

Photo by Aaron Rosenblum

Invasive Species: Buckthorn (for Philando Castile) (installation detail) 2016

Buckthorn roots, wire, silk fabric

Soap Factory, Minneapolis

Photo by Samantha Sang

Invasive Species: Buckthorn (for Philando Castile) (installation detail) 2016

Tulle fabric, paint, threads

Soap Factory, Minneapolis

Photo by Aaron Rosenblum



Lela Pierce



Invasive Species: Lupine (detail) 2017

Lupine seedpods, wire, paper, thread

practices and folk art. Invited by her parents' Indian yoga teacher, she lived in northern India on and off for seven years, where she learned Madhubani painting. Traditionally, women make the paintings collaboratively, in a home and for ceremonial purposes. In the 1980s, the style's geometric patterns attracted collectors from Europe and North America. Historically such interest has often jeopardized the continuity and integrity of the indigenous practice, but in the case of Madhubani painting, the traditional form has flourished alongside local production for an international market.⁵ Pierce found affinities between Madhubani patterns and Ukrainian folk art, a tradition she researched because of genealogical ties to the Lemko region. A third thread of biographically motivated visual research leads to Ghanaian and Senegalese patterns. She is eager to validate these forms, long overlooked and excluded by European accounts of art.⁶ In the process, the authority to define art is radically decentered and reclaimed.

Yet the purpose of Pierce's interventions is not to critique and then expand the system of fine art. The point is a deeper transformation. "We cannot stay in the work of critique, but we must go through critique to get to the work," writes la paperson. "I am, and maybe you are too, a produced colonialist. I am also a by-product of colonization. As a colonialist scrap, I desire against the assemblage that made me."7 Desiring against the inheritance of colonialist violence that includes cultural appropriation, distortions, erasures, and a skewed hierarchy of values has made Pierce very deliberate in the choice of her materials and visual vocabularies. Her turn to ancestry and autobiography is part of a spreading tendency among artists to construct authority and establish a sense of cultural ownership via identity. Yet Pierce is also keenly aware of the potential risks involved: to fetishize and essentialize culturally contingent identities, to confine, to restrict, and to police making.

Her art responds to the complexities of these cross-cultural currents. Her drawings, often framed by geometric borders reminiscent of both Madhubani, West African, and Ukrainian designs, show bodies in a state of becoming. They transform into snakes, share *Mescocosmos (Nagavidya)* 2018

Pen, gouache, paper

36 x 25 in.

Photo by Rik Sferra



energies invisible to the naked eye, and encounter other beings, human and nonhuman alike. Often, the bodies are brown and female to evoke what Pierce calls "a non-essential woman of color identity." Always, the bodies are profoundly connected-to place, history, and each other. They might be colonialist scraps, displaced and diasporic, but they are searching for ways to be that are connected to the land without usurping the special bond that is indigeneity. Caught in a tempestuous present fraught with nativist origin stories, at a time when bodies are profoundly unequal, they dare desire different futures.

After all, not all non-native plants are invasive: on a residency in Sweden, the artist encountered non-native lupine. Much beloved by the Swedes, lupine remediates soil and thus helps other plants thrive. In North America, Native people dubbed the common plantain white man's footsteps, so reliably did it follow in the settlers' wake. The plant remained "a foreigner, an immigrant," until the people learned about its gifts. In due time it became naturalized, "an honored member of the plant community." "Being naturalized to place means to live as if this is the land that feeds you, as if these are the streams from which you drink, that build your body and fill your spirit. To become naturalized is to know that your ancestors lie in this ground. . . . To become naturalized is to live as if your children's future matters, to take care of the land as if our lives and the lives of all of our relatives depend on it. Because they do."8

-Christina Schmid

Notes:

2018.

1. Jack Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals* (New York: Autonomedia, 1992), 145–46.

2. See the website of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: https:// www.dnr.state.mn.us/ invasives/terrestrialplants/ woody/buckthorn/index. html.

"In the Footsteps of S. Lela Pierce, *Invasive Species*, performance as part of *Quick + Dirty #3*, a series curated by Sam Johnson and Kristin Van Loon, Red Eye Theater, Minneapolis, May 14,

6. Larry Shiner, The

Press, 2001).

43, xxiii.

University of Chicago

7. la paperson, A Third

(Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 2017),

8. Robin Wall Kimmerer,

University Is Possible

Invention of Art (Chicago:

4. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1, no. 2 (2012): 6, https://decolonization. org/index.php/des/article/ view/18630.

5. Lynn M. Hart. "Three Walls: Regional Aesthetics and the International Art World," in *The Traffic in Culture*, ed. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers, 127–50 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Lela Pierce

Alyssa Baguss



Alyssa Baguss's practice explores mediated natural environments through drawing processes and participatory public programming. She is a visual artist and arts program director working out of Minneapolis. Baguss is a 2015 and 2017 recipient of a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant, and her work has been exhibited in the Twin Cities and regionally, including at the Burnet Gallery, Soo Visual Arts Center, Minnesota Museum of American Art, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and Rochester Art Center.

alyssabaguss.com

Josette Ghiseline



Josette Ghiseline is an abstract painter who uses mixed materials and alternative working methods to question conventional ways of making paintings. Her artworks invite the viewer into a dialogue about how humans process visual information. In 2017, she began growing bacterial cellulose and mycelium in her studio and incorporates these materials in her current artwork. Ghiseline received an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University, and in 2012/13 she studied future materials for design at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London. She was awarded a 2016 Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant and a 2017 Jerome Travel and Study Grant. Her active interest in emerging materials and an emphasis on grown bioplastics took her to two conferences, the 2017 EKSIG: Alive. Active. Adaptive. in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and the 2017 Biofabricate conference in Brooklyn, New York.

josetteghiseline.com

Sarah Kusa



Sarah Kusa creates sculpture and installations that explore tensions between vulnerability and power, searching out intersections where the two coexist, however precariously. Her mixed-media artworks are rooted in abstraction and use a spare material language to ask questions about connection, protection, and resilience. Ephemeral in nature, her work takes forms ranging from abstract bodies, to three-dimensional drawings, to pliable boundaries made to influence the viewer's own body. Materials and gestures are central to Kusa's work, packaged in imperfect handwork that underscores a vulnerable sensibility. Kusa has exhibited her work throughout the United States and was awarded two prior grants: a Jerome Foundation project grant in 2015 and the McKnight Next Step Fund in 2012. She has participated in residencies at Ragdale in Lake Forest, Illinois, and MASS MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) in North Adams, Massachusetts. Kusa currently lives and works in St. Paul.

sarahkusa.com

Lela Pierce



Lela Pierce is a visual artist and dancer born and raised in the St. Croix River valley. Her installation work addresses the intelligence found in nature and the countless teachings it offers to those who listen. Her paintings attempt to map ancestral healing through experienced and imagined confluences of energy in and outside of the corporeal body. Influenced by several folk aesthetics traditionally practiced by women, Pierce is interested in situating herself as a non-Eurocentric, nonessentialized woman of color art maker. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Soap Factory in Minneapolis and Kultivera in Tranås, Sweden. Pierce holds a BA in studio art from Macalester College and has shown her artwork internationally, in India and Sweden, and locally at several Minneapolis venues. She would like to acknowledge the complexity of doing her work primarily in Minnesota on colonized land of the Dakota people.

lelapierce.com

Joshua McGarvey



Joshua McGarvey uses his art-making processes to reflect on and confront perceptions of progress and heroism. Often seeking associative relationships between the emotional experiences that arise from actions and objects, McGarvey reorients the information surrounding an object as a means of analysis or mundane commentary. A recurring theme in the artist's work involves a series of 107 child-sized, turquoise sweatpants McGarvey made to commemorate the time he peed his pants on stage in kindergarten. He received his BFA and MA from Ball State University in Indiana before moving to Minneapolis to complete an MFA at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. McGarvey was a 2015 Art(ist)s on the Verge fellow and received a 2017 Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant for his short film *Gallant Little Michael*. He has had solo exhibitions at Defibrillator Gallery in Chicago and at the Soap Factory, Yeah Maybe, and Island Gallery in Minneapolis.

joshuamcgarvey.com

deputy director of the California African American Museum in Los Angeles; Yasufumi Nakamori, former curator of photography and new media at the Minneapolis Institute of Art; and Bently

Spang, a multimedia artist, writer, and curator based in Montana. Given the onslaught of data-driven, guantifiable outcomes that are used to determine the value of education

Imagination + Dedication + Potential =

Time and Opportunity. A simple formula,

one that has been working since 1981 to

provide imaginative, dedicated emerging

artists who demonstrate great potential

with the time and opportunity to exper-

iment and take risks. For almost four

decades, the Jerome Foundation has

artists that make possible what might

fellowship recipients-Alyssa Baguss,

Josette Ghiseline, Sarah Kusa, Joshua

of 180 Minnesota-based artists who

have won this prestigious visual arts

McGarvey, and Lela Pierce—join a group

fellowship administered by the Minneap-

olis College of Art and Design (MCAD).

The 2017/18 fellows were selected from

a competitive pool of 249 applicants by

three arts professionals: Naima Keith,

been generously funding fellowships for

otherwise not have been. This year's five

and professional preparation, we are extremely fortunate that the Jerome Foundation continues to invest in artists with the expectation that they will continue to use their imaginations freely and to make objects and environments that make us laugh out loud, think deeply,

enact change, and never cease to wonder. Alyssa, Josette, Sarah, Joshua, and Lela do that and more.

Thanks to the generous funding from the Jerome Foundation, these working artists have had time to experiment, to make mistakes, and to try again. Over the past year, the fellows have had the opportunity to invite more people into their spheres of influence and to expand their networks of supporters. For example, the five fellows selected Christina Schmid to be their local critic and catalog essay writer. Schmid is a Twin Cities-based writer and scholar whose keen insights and ability to tease out the salient aspects of our artists' work keep her in high demand as an art critic; she also wrote the essays for the Jerome recipients who were fellows in 2008/09 and 2015/16.

In addition to meeting with Schmid, the fellows have the chance to schedule studio visits with individual local curators over the course of the fellowship year, and in early November they will visit with Diana Nawi, an independent curator who has been an associate curator at the Pérez Art Museum Miami and was a juror for the McKnight Visual Artist Fellowships in 2016.

It is always an honor to work with the leadership team at the Jerome Foundation. Many thanks to Eleanor Savage, program director, and Ben Cameron, president, who have worked tirelessly to reimagine funding opportunities for early career artists while maintaining a firm commitment to the local arts organizations in Minnesota and the five boroughs of New York City, which are dedicated to providing artists with much-needed tools and specialized support.

Closer to home, MCAD has also been responding to new challenges and opportunities in the arts and larger job market. It is heartening that even as the fine arts risk being relegated to more "nonessential" aspects of an education, at MCAD they are not. I see the ongoing support of the Jerome Artist Fellowships as evidence of art's utility and importance. The Jerome Fellowship exhibition and panel discussion are always highly anticipated and well-attended fall events at our college. It means a great deal that Jay Coogan, who is leaving MCAD after nearly a decade at the helm of the college, has been a stalwart advocate for the fellowship program. Likewise. Interim President Karen Wirth and Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs Jim Burke are proud to host the fellowship and make so many facilities and staff available for use and consultation.

The writing and evaluation of this fellowship program could not happen nearly so easily or so well without the good work of Kate Mohn, MCAD's grants and projects coordinator. The DesignWorks team of Kayla Campbell, Frances Fuller, Paul Hudachek, and Dylan Olson-Cole ensured that Christina Schmid's words and the visual work of the fellows look good on paper. The catalog also benefited from Rik Sferra's photographic talents, which put the fellows' faces and artwork in the best possible light, and Mary Keirstead's stellar editing, which made the text clean and in conformity with Chicago style. The college's Communications and Web Communications Departments of Tabitha Aleskerov, Ann Benrud, Steven Candy, Rita Kovtun, and Josie Steen do an incredible amount of behind-the-scenes work to facilitate all aspects of the fellowship year, from the application process to the final exhibition promotion.

Thanks to the always awesome MCAD Gallerv installation crew of Madison Bruner, Michaela Chorn, Zoe Cinel, Kendall Dickinson, Sarah Evenson, Pader Fang, Anna Fredlund, Julian Howley, Hannah Olson, Sara Suppan, B Tate, and Suyao Tian, who with care and precision make the Jerome exhibition look so good. Finally, a special thank-you to Fellowship and Gallery Coordinator Melanie Pankau, whose excellent artistic and people skills come into play every day to the benefit of so many.

> Thank you all, for being part of my village.

Kerry Morgan

Program Director, Jerome Foundation Fellowships for **Emerging Artists**

2016	Nikki J. McComb Kelsey Olson Edie Overturf Jovan C. Speller Amanda Wirig	2006	Ernest A. Bryant III Brian Lesteberg Cherith Lundin Monica Sheets Marcus Young	1996	Therese Buchmiller Todd Deutsch Celeste Nelms Mara Pelecis Mike Rathbun	1986	Gary DeCosse Christopher Dashke Jennifer Hecker Michael Mercil Randy Reeves
2015	Star Wallowing Bull Emmett Ramstad Holly Streekstra Lindsay Rhyner Samual Weinberg	2005	Janet Lobberecht Megan Rye Angela Strassheim Dan Tesene Megan Vossler	1995	Robert Fischer Anne George Stephanie Molstre-Kotz Todd Norsten Carl Scholz	1985	Betina Judy Kepes Peter Latner James May Lynn Wadsworth
2014	Miranda Brandon Regan Golden-McNerney Jess Hirsch Sieng Lee Jason Ramey	2004	Michael Gaughan Kirk McCall Abinadi Meza Lisa Nankivil	1994	Terence Accola Mary Jo Donahue Jonathan Mason Karen Platt Elliot Warren	1984	Doug Argue Remo Campopiano Timothy Darr Audrey Glassman Robert Murphy
2013	Kjellgren Alkire Pao Houa Her GraceMarie Keaton Robin Schwartzman Nate Young	2003	Tamara Brantmeier Lucas DiGiulio Jesse Petersen Matthew Wacker Troy Williams	1993	Mary Esch Damian Garner Shannon Kennedy Linda Louise Rother James Whitney Tuthill	1983	Jana Freiband Janet Loftquist David Madzo Jeff Millikan Steven Woodward
2012	Susannah Bielak Amanda Hankerson Michael Hoyt Melissa Loop Lauren Roche	2002	Joseph del Pesco Helena Keeffe Charles Matson Lume Justin Newhall Grace Park	1992	Angela Dufresne Tim Jones Chris Larson Andrea McCormack Shawn Smith	1982	Jane Bassuk Frank Big Bear Jr. Laura Blaw Matt Brown Kevin Mangan
2011	Richard Barlow Gregory Euclide Lauren Herzak-Bauman Alison Hiltner Jehra Patrick	2001	Jay Heikes Markus Lunkenheimer Alec Soth Peter Haakon Thompson John Vogt	1991	Hans Accola Sara Belleau Franciska Rosenthal Louw Colette Gaiter Annette Walby	1981	Ricardo Bloch Bruce Charlesworth Alison Ruttan T.L. Solien Scott Stack
2010	Greg Carideo Teri Fullerton Julia Kouneski Brett Smith Jonathan Bruce Williams	2000	Santiago Cucullu Alexa Horochowski John Largaespada Gene Pittman Cristi Rinklin	1990	Andy Baird Mark Barlow Keri Pickett Ann Wood Christopher Wunderlich		
2009	Steven Accola Caroline Kent Tynan Kerr/Andrew Mazorol Tony Sunder	1999	Amelia Biewald-Low Jason S. Brown James Holmberg Anne Sugnet Inna Valin	1989	Lynn Hambrick Vince Leo Stuart Mead David Pelto Alyn Silberstein		
2008	Evan Baden Barbara Claussen Kirsten Peterson Benjamin Reed Lindsay Smith	1998	Amelie Collins Brad Geiken Rollin Marquette Don Myhre Thor Eric Paul	1988	Phil Barber JonMarc Edwards Jil Evans Dave Rathman George Rebolloso		
2007	Matthew Bakkom Monica Haller Colin Kopp Liz Miller Rosemary Williams	1997	Jean Humke Carolyn Swiszcz Amy Toscani Cate Vermeland Sara Woster	1987	Michelle Charles Leslie Hawk Paul Shambroom Viet Ngo Diana Watters		

About the Jerome Foundation

The Jerome Foundation, created by artist and philanthropist Jerome Hill (1905–1972), seeks to contribute to a dynamic and evolving culture by supporting the creation, development, and production of new works by early career/ emerging artists.

The foundation makes grants to early career artists and the nonprofit arts organizations that serve them in the state of Minnesota and the five boroughs of New York City.

Values

The Foundation's core values, which we strive to model in our practice as grant-makers and to support in our grantees, are:

Diversity

We consciously embrace diversity in the broadest sense. We support a diverse range of artists and organizations, including but not limited to those of diverse cultures, races, sexual identities, genders, generations, aesthetics, points of view, physical abilities, and missions. We support a diverse range of artistic disciplines and forms, created in a variety of contexts and for different audiences.

Innovation & Risk

We support artists and organizations that explore and challenge conventional artistic forms.

Humility

We work for artists (rather than the reverse) and believe that artists and organizations are the best authorities to define their needs and challenges—an essential humility reflective of Jerome Hill, our founder. The artists and arts organizations we support embrace their roles as part of a larger community of artists and citizens and consciously work with a sense of purpose, whether aesthetic, social or both.

jeromefdn.org

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The Minneapolis College of Art and Design educates individuals to be professional artists and designers, pioneering thinkers, creative leaders, and engaged global citizens.

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Essays by Christina Schmid

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