

GREG CARIDEO

TERI FULLERTON

JULIA KOUNESKI

BRETT SMITH

JONATHAN BRUCE WILLIAMS

Jerome  
Fellowship  
Exhibition

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2010/11

This catalog was published on the occasion  
of the exhibition for the 2010/11  
MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowships  
for Emerging Artists

September 30–November 6, 2011  
MCAD Gallery

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Essays by Jonathan Thomas

The Jerome Foundation generously supports this fellowship program.

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## INTRODUCTION

This 2010/11 fellowship year marks a special moment in the history of the MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowships for Emerging Artists, as it was thirty years ago that this program got its start. In July of 1980, Jerome J. Hausman, then president of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, submitted a proposal to the Jerome Foundation requesting funds “to develop a program that would be supportive of emerging visual artists—painters, sculptors, printmakers, photographers and other professionals in the visual arts.” The pilot project that Hausman proposed, and the Jerome Foundation’s board of directors approved, continues to thrive, having benefited nearly 150 artists in Minnesota at an early stage in their professional careers when financial and critical support of their work could make an enormous difference in their lives.

In addition to the Jerome Foundation’s unwavering support of emerging artists and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design’s dedication to administering the program, the fellowship’s longevity can be attributed to the consistent high quality of the artists who apply for the fellowship and are selected by an independent panel of arts professionals. And in this vein, the five recipients of the 2010/11 MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowships for Emerging Artists—Greg Carideo, Teri Fullerton, Julia Kouneski, Brett Smith, and Jonathan Bruce Williams—are stellar representatives of why this fellowship program will continue into the future. They, like their predecessors, have used the Jerome Fellowship year to push themselves intellectually, emotionally, and even physically. (You can read about Julia Kouneski’s lessons in horsemanship in a following essay.) What the culminating fellowship exhibition cannot encompass is the incredible growth—from the failures just as much as from the successes—that occurs over a year fully devoted to art making.

The fellowship program in which the 2010/11 Jerome fellows participated varies little from Hausman’s original program. In addition to monetary support (the artist stipend has doubled, from \$5,000 in 1981 to \$10,000 as of 2008), the three components of the fellowship still

include (1) technical assistance through the use of equipment and facilities of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design; (2) a series of three studio visits with visiting critics, dealing with works in progress by the five program participants; and (3) an exhibition of works by the five artists at the end of the program period.

Shifts in artistic practices, developments in technology, and a desire to broaden the applicant base have induced some modifications to the fellowship program. Several notable changes to the Jerome Fellowship were ushered in by my predecessor Kristin Makhholm: outstate artists are now permitted to apply (up until 2007, the fellowships were limited to artists living in the Twin Cities metropolitan area); all artists must apply online; the definition of acceptable artistic media has expanded to include new media; and one of the three invited art critics is now an emerging local arts writer who meets frequently with the fellows and pens substantial essays about their work for the catalog that accompanies the culminating exhibition.

These changes to the fellowship program have meant that more artists are applying for these coveted fellowships. In 2010, the five recipients faced stiff competition—the number of applicants rose to 322, an all-time high. The jurors who had the daunting task of reviewing so many applications and winnowing them down to an impressive list of semifinalists were Jane Blocker, associate professor of contemporary art in the Department of Art History at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; Oliver Herring, a Brooklyn-based multimedia artist; and Adam Lerner, executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver.

The 2010/11 Jerome fellows selected Jonathan Thomas, an independent art critic and curator based in the Twin Cities, to write about their work. Given the luxury of geographic proximity, they have met frequently and informally with Thomas, sometimes as a group and sometimes individually, often sharing meals as they discussed past projects and new developments in their work.

In addition to Thomas, the fellows had studio visits this past June with Christiane Paul, associate professor and graduate director of new media at the New School and adjunct curator of new media arts at the Whitney Museum of American Art. While it is daunting to share works in progress in less than two hours, the fellows were well prepared and Paul came away enthusiastic about their work.

The final visiting critic will be Clara Kim, who recently returned to the Twin Cities to become senior curator of visual arts at the Walker Art Center. The former director and curator of REDCAT in Los Angeles, Kim has also worked in curatorial departments at SFMOMA, the San Francisco Art Institute, and the Walker Art Center. In addition to talking with the fellows about their art installed at the MCAD Gallery, Kim will be conducting individual studio visits to learn more about where their work is headed once the fellowship year is over.

On behalf of the Jerome fellows and myself, I want to thank this year's jurors and critics, who generously gave of their time and expertise and provided the emerging artists the momentum they needed to advance in their careers.

Moving careers forward has been the funding priority of the Jerome Foundation, thanks to the constant and astute direction of Cynthia Gehrig, who has headed the Foundation since 1978. The board of directors has invested more than \$1.5 million into the MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Artists over the past thirty years. The Minneapolis College of Art and Design is incredibly honored to have partnered with the Foundation for three decades, a partnership that has at its core a common mission to encourage artistic growth and creative expression.

Also contributing to the long-term success of this fellowship program are the previous Jerome Fellowship program directors at MCAD: Diane Shamash, Julie Yanson, Brian Szott, Ann Kohls, Christine Daves, Diane Mullin, and Kristin Makhholm. I know the challenges and rewards of this position and am thankful they all did so much of the hard work before I arrived.

At the Minneapolis College of Art and Design I am grateful to work with President Jay Coogan, a leader like Jerome Hausman with another strong vision for the college and the wider arts community. Coogan has ignited the campus—students, faculty, and staff—since his arrival at MCAD in 2009. In the Office of Institutional Advancement, both Joan Olson, vice president of institutional advancement, and Kristine Wyant,

director of corporate and foundation support, have provided invaluable assistance and oversight. And over the past two years, I have benefited enormously from the wise counsel of Vince Leo, former Jerome fellow and vice president of academic affairs, and now director of graduate studies. His ability to nurture potential in everyone is a model for all.

The 2010/11 fellowship program would not have run so smoothly, from application process to final exhibition, without the excellent help of gallery assistants Nathan Lewis, Ashely Peifer, Mervy Pueblo, and Lea Sorrentino. The culminating exhibition at the MCAD Gallery would also not be possible without the talents of an amazing gallery crew—many thanks to Christopher Alday, Andrew Eikenberry, Jennifer Hibbard, Rachel Knoll, Brent Lehman, Katie Nelson, Tim Schweitzer, and Katy Vonk.

In the Office of Communications and External Relations, I am grateful for the support of Tabitha Aleskerov, Steven Candy, Heidi Christine, and Rob Davis. And I am forever indebted to Catherine Bicknell, Namdev Hardisty, Brent Meyers, and Emily Reile in DesignWorks, and to photographer Rik Sferra, who diligently and creatively provided a long-lasting record of the fellows and their artwork at a singular moment in time.

I am incredibly proud to administer a program whose mission, articulated thirty years ago, is to “support and encourage committed and capable artists to sustain their creative work.” I have worked with five such wonderfully committed and capable Jerome fellows this year. Thank you, Brett, Greg, Jonathan, Julia, and Teri.

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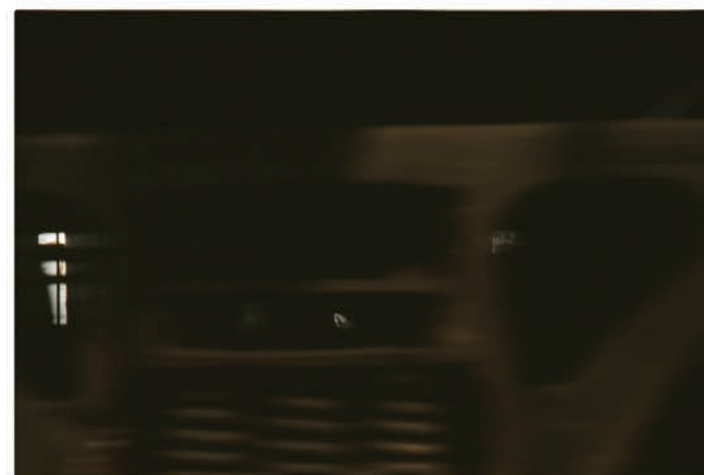
**Kerry A. Morgan**

Program Director, MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowships for Emerging Artists  
Minneapolis College of Art and Design

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# GREG CARIDEO



There is a theatrical pulse to Greg Carideo's practice. Sometimes this results from something sneaky, perhaps chicanery, as when, for example, he makes the stem of an apple tick like a clock to chart the time that it takes to perish, or when he photographs a glass of red wine tipped upside down on a bare mattress, without the hint of a stain. At other times, Carideo's stagecraft can be located in his predilection for props—such as the life-size photographs of animals or people that provide the backdrops, if not the characters, in some of his works. Sometimes he even sneaks in himself, a bit like Alfred Hitchcock walking through the frame in one of his own films.

Trained in the fine arts, Carideo works with a variety of forms, from sculpture and still photography to video and slideshows. He seems drawn to transitory and makeshift materials—like food, wine, paper, cardboard, even wind—with which he can develop a voice that is playful, and also provisional.

Consider, for instance, his video *Totem Pole*. Made during a residency in Iceland in the winter of 2010, *Totem Pole* sets up an ephemeral situation. As the video begins—it's a single take that lasts seven minutes—we see a carefully framed image of an electric pole that extends in the foreground from the grassy earth up through the center of the composition. A heavy wind brushes incessantly across the microphone,

and in the distance we can see choppy waters; we're near a shore. After a few seconds, Carideo enters the cold landscape from the left of the frame. He pulls a crumpled sheet of paper from the pocket of his coat and flattens it by pressing it against the pole. Once it sticks, held in place by the wind, we can see that it's a low-quality, black-and-white photograph of a woman's face. He then removes a handful of crumpled paper, presses a second beneath the first, and continues in this way until he establishes a stack of five images stuck to the pole, all faces, all black and white, all looking over their shoulders, all anonymous. They could be anybody. Each of the images was printed off the Internet—photography's warehouse, as it were—and as the video unfolds after Carideo leaves the frame, we watch these faces shiver against the wind. It's a waiting game. After a minute or so a first one flies away, and then, over the next several minutes they disappear, one by one.

What we confront here is a sculptural situation in which static images are pitted against the pressure of natural movement. This coupling of stillness and motion amounts to something like a structural tactic in Carideo's work; it also calls to mind George Baker's account of the way in which sequence-based photography can be torn between stasis and narrativity. By narrativity, Baker refers to

those techniques that sustain a readable discourse, involving duration, movement, and inevitably a certain sense of plurality. Stasis, on the other hand, involves signifying properties that are diametrically opposed to those of narrativity, encompassing primarily the petrification of motion, the freezing of time, and instead of plurality, the fixed or repetitive motif.\*

\*George Baker, "Photography Between Narrativity and Stasis: August Sander, Degeneration, and the Decay of the Portrait," *October* 76 (1996), 72.

On this note, consider *Hikers* (2011). Here the artist interpellates a peripatetic observer by presenting a series of ninety-one black-and-white photographs, all taped to the wall in a straight line. In the first image, a backpacker poses proudly against a field of white, leaning to one side with his hands on his hips. In the adjacent image, he holds this pose; our view of him is obstructed by the introduction of a second figure who stands in front. In the third, their positions are reversed; and in the fourth, another figure is added to what now amounts to a stack that multiplies and rearranges as we go. After an initial deception, we reevaluate what we see and come to realize, as we stroll past the images, that the people who are posing are in fact props. Like the figures in *Totem Pole*, the individuals in *Hikers*—all originally photographed while standing on a summit—derive from an Internet search. Only here, using cardboard as his support, Carideo has constructed them as life-size replicas that he then rephotographs in his studio. It takes us a moment to detect this strategy, and only when we move through space does it become clear. What keeps us going is the metrical logic (the durational logic) of the presentation of the poses, which permutes in its stacking like a rhythm.

Carideo likes to play games with the viewer, to involve us in the process of the work by summoning our skills at detection. By drawing on a theatrical synthesis of photography and sculpture, he structures his projects like puzzles (or jokes) that require us to slow down our perceptual habits—to look closely, to think twice—to understand the means, if not the rationale,

of their production. In light of the hurly-burly nature of the world we inhabit, there is something salutary at the heart of such a tactic, which may encourage us to wonder: to what additional ends could it still be put? *JT*



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Greg Carideo was born in 1986 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 2004, he began his studies at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Since receiving his bachelor of fine arts in 2008, he has been working on projects that incorporate traveling, pursuing artist residency opportunities, and searching for ways to support a full-time art practice. His work has been included in exhibitions in Denver, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Minnesota, and Iceland. And he has been selected for artist residencies at the Colorado Art Ranch in Salida; the Nes Artist Residency in Skagaströnd, Iceland; and the SÍM Residency in Reykjavík, Iceland. Carideo is a past recipient of the Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant, MCBA/Jerome Foundation Book Arts Mentorship, and the 2008 Ethel Morrison VanDerlip Award for MCAD graduates. He currently has a studio in downtown Minneapolis, where he happily spends much of his time.



Hikers, 2011  
Segment of ninety-one b&w laser print sequence  
Each image measures 5"x4" on letter paper



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# TERI FULLERTON



A year ago, Teri Fullerton produced a body of photographs called *Falling in Love at the End of the Universe*. These are portraits of people who were waiting for their parents, lovers, or children—all soldiers—to return from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the time, Fullerton's brother was fighting in Iraq, flying a helicopter on his second tour of duty. His absence brought a great deal of fear and anxiety into Fullerton's life. She became, as she puts it, a "news junkie." How, she wondered, could she translate this fear, or indeed any felt experience, into a material object like a photograph? She asked her brother to send her a picture, to help her comprehend his faraway reality. What she received was a haunting self-portrait of a man standing firm, his arms hanging at his sides, staring into the camera. The viewer discerns some folding chairs behind him, a few large duffel bags, and farther back, what appears to be a cargo truck. But all these details are difficult to determine, for what immediately distinguishes this image is the color, the way in which it dissolves in a hazy field of dark red, as if it were shot in Hades.

Fullerton says that the photographs she produced once she embarked on her project were not guided by any political intention. So instead of attempting to articulate a critique of what, by now, have become the longest wars in the nation's history, she instead attempts to adduce

their emotion burden. We sense this partly at the level of the pose. In one photograph, for instance, a woman stands in the middle of a snowy street, alone with her two small children, looking up at the sky, as if searching for an answer; in another, a shirtless man stands far away, behind the jagged branches of a barren tree with his back to the camera—dejected. On the left of the composition stands a woman (also obscured by a branch and turned away), who shoots her arm in his direction, as if scolding him, while a dog nips at her knee.

These images are emotive, to be sure. When viewing the series as a whole, one notices Fullerton's tendency to position her subjects deep within the image, in a pictorial space that seems to overwhelm them. This could be read, on the one hand, as a graphical procedure that stylizes her images with a degree of geometric charm. On the other hand, we can see that her subjects are overwhelmed by the space that surrounds them, and in that sense, *Falling in Love at the End of the Universe* goes some way in communicating her concern with the condition of vulnerability that unifies her practice.

Fullerton is currently developing a series of works that stem from her experiences with Internet dating sites, such as OkCupid and Match.com, where vulnerability is the name of the game. After work and school and friends and family, sites like these (there are thousands) are said to be the third most common way for people to meet. Based on the information that participants provide—habits, locations, occupations, desires—interactions are suggested by algorithms and apps. Once Fullerton established a dating profile of her own, the proposals started to proliferate. By this point she has

communicated with scores of men; her goal is to fall in love.

U

R 2 cool for words.

Really

Age difference, I know, but what the hell.

I'm either a very young 60 or an old 50, depending

On how you wanna look at it. Semi-sorta-retired

poet, artist, performer, vagabond, contented

Seeker.

Honest and kind.

Not many things are better than the good company

Of interesting people.

Love to converse with you.

This is one page from Fullerton's book *modern day love letters*, all culled from her Internet correspondence. Some of the letters have led to dates, but more often than not, she says, her initial hopes are dashed by the actual encounter. First impressions can be misleading, and the desiring eye can see too much. After a point, Fullerton explains, a certain numbness sets in. This would explain her current series titled *Black Portraits*, based, as she puts it, on "the death of fantasy." Starting with the profile pictures of the men she has dated (desire gone awry), she enlarges them and then subtracts from our ability to identify what we see by saturating the image with black. Like closing our eyes, the black operates here as a means of minimizing information, as an act, perhaps, of self-preservation. What we can gather from the gesture, and what Fullerton's practice seems to argue, is that falling in love in the end—at the end—is something of a lonely business. *JT*



Teri Fullerton grew up in Lake Tahoe, California, where the Tahoe National Forest was her literal backyard. She completed a master of education in Portland, Oregon, and a master of fine arts at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She is currently a Minneapolis-based artist working primarily in photography and video. Her work has been shown in solo and two-person exhibitions in Portland, Oregon, at the Newspace Center for Photography, the Hawthorne Gallery, and HiiH Gallery. In addition, she has participated in group shows at the Photographic Center Northwest in Seattle, Washington; the Soho Photo Gallery in New York City; the Coalition for Photographic Arts in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Toledo Friends of Photography in Ohio; the DeVos Art Museum in Marquette, Michigan; Review Santa Fe in New Mexico; University Center Rochester in Minnesota; Px3 Prix de la Photographie in Paris, France; and locally at Burnet Art Gallery at Le Méridien Chambers Minneapolis; Slideluck Potshow Minneapolis; the Soap Factory; the Minneapolis College of Art and Design; and the Minnesota Center for Photography.




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okcupid!  
Wall detail  
Installation  
5'x6' approx.  
(in progress)  
*(top)*

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okcupid!  
2010  
Inkjet print  
6"x4"  
*(bottom)*



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# JULIA KOUNESKI



Imagine a summer evening in 2010. We're standing in a gallery at the opening of a group exhibition, surrounded by objects and people. Unless we look down at the gray wooden floor, we might miss Julia Kouneski's contribution, here but a patch of flesh. It's a cutout circle we see, maybe three inches in diameter, and what it frames is the palm of her hand. Beneath the floor, Kouneski stands on a structure and holds her arm above her head, pressing her hand flat against the ceiling. She holds it there for two and a half hours in a performance called *nice to meet you* (2010).

What a project like this indicates, on the one hand (since we're starting with one hand), is the way in which Kouneski positions the sensitive body at the center of her practice. Her work in sculpture and performance, and sometimes performance for video, is defined by physical communication and sensory perception. Here, in a durational performance of bodily exertion (presented with the economy of a poet), she exposes the softness of her skin to the unpredictability of spectatorial response: numerous people bent over to touch the flesh, and one person, strangely attuned to its erotic dimension, decided to give it a lick.

*Nice to meet you* also points to Kouneski's interest in lived experience, here structured

as a physical encounter between object (artist) and receiver (participant). These joint concerns in the body and experience are informed by Kouneski's research into the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark. Clark was one of the cofounders of the Neo-Concrete movement, which took shape in Rio de Janeiro in 1959. This was a group of artists and writers who conceived of the artwork as something organic, a *quasi-body* or *almost-body* (depending on the translation), which "can only be understood phenomenologically."\* What was key for Clark was that the objects she produced be alive, not inert (as they are today when protected by vitrines), that they operate as participatory vehicles for bodily experience.

In 2009, Kouneski traveled to Rio for a residency program that allowed her to dig deeper into the development of Clark's ideas. While in Rio, Kouneski met the artist Michelle Williams Gamaker, who was there to do research on Clark as well. A month later, the two artists took their shared concerns to São Paulo to perform *Scaling Copan* (2010).

In the heart of São Paulo stands architect Oscar Niemeyer's modernist monument to residential living, the Edifício Copan. The Copan Building is reputed to have the largest floor area of any residential structure in the world; with more than a thousand apartments stacked into thirty-eight stories, the soaring S-shaped structure has over five thousand inhabitants—it even has its own postal code. At five o'clock one April morning, Kouneski and Williams Gamaker snuck onto the ledge of the twenty-second story and slowly crawled along its length on their

hands and knees. *Scaling Copan* was a performance for video: over the course of twelve minutes, we watch as the two women proceed from foreground to background to foreground, carefully navigating the edge of the Copan's sinuous curve. No railing separates them from the risk of slipping over.

Prior to *Scaling Copan*, Kouneski and Williams Gamaker re-created some of Clark's seminal works as a way of understanding them through experience. As artists interested in the potential of somatic cognition, they were especially interested in Clark's "relational objects." These were objects—such as a plastic bag filled with air, a seashell, or a cushion—that Clark would place on people's bodies as a way of drawing attention to the boundary between self and other to the point that the boundary—a bodily sensation localized in the skin—seemed to dissolve over time. With *Scaling Copan* they sought to transfer the function of her relational objects onto the architecture itself as a way of exploring how sensations, which are localized in the body, can be articulated through the immediacy of physical contact.

Kouneski's most recent performance, *Kairos* (2011), extends her concern with physical communication and sense perception. *Kairos* is a term the ancient Greeks used to designate an opportune moment, a shape of time defined not by its chronological unfolding but rather by its qualitative nature; it is a time when something special can happen. Kouneski's *Kairos* is a durational performance, now presented as a video that begins with a woman (the artist) lying alone in a grassy

field, barefoot with black pants and a white button-up shirt. For the first minute, nothing seems to happen: birds chirp, a breeze moves through the trees in the background, and the artist lies so still that we wonder if she's dead (her eyes are closed). Suddenly, in the distance, a brown horse trots into the frame from the left, pauses to look, and then makes a circle. A white horse enters the frame as well, and the two horses linger together for roughly a minute, observing Kouneski with curiosity. Eventually two other horses join them and the four slowly approach the artist, smell her, nudge her, lick her, and eat the grass that surrounds her. One even chews a button from her shirt.

As with her other work, Kouneski here presents a project—an experience—in which the body is at stake. The appeal of a piece like *Kairos* is the uncertainty that pervades it. We wonder, of course, what the horses might do. But we may also wonder what her body might do, what a body *can* do, when it relinquishes its physical control in this way. And this is the question that animates Kouneski's practice. What happens when we allow ourselves to be affected by the forces of other bodies, by the forces of our environment? What happens when we allow our senses to resonate with the otherness of the world? JT

*Scaling Copan*, 2009-10  
Video still, duration twelve minutes  
Julia Kouneski and Michelle Williams Gamaker  
(previous page)

\*Ferreira Gullar et al., "Neo-Concrete Manifesto," 1959, reprinted in Dawn Ades et al., *Art in Latin America: The Modern Period, 1820–1980* (London: South Bank Centre, with Yale University Press, 1989), 335. Exhibition catalog.



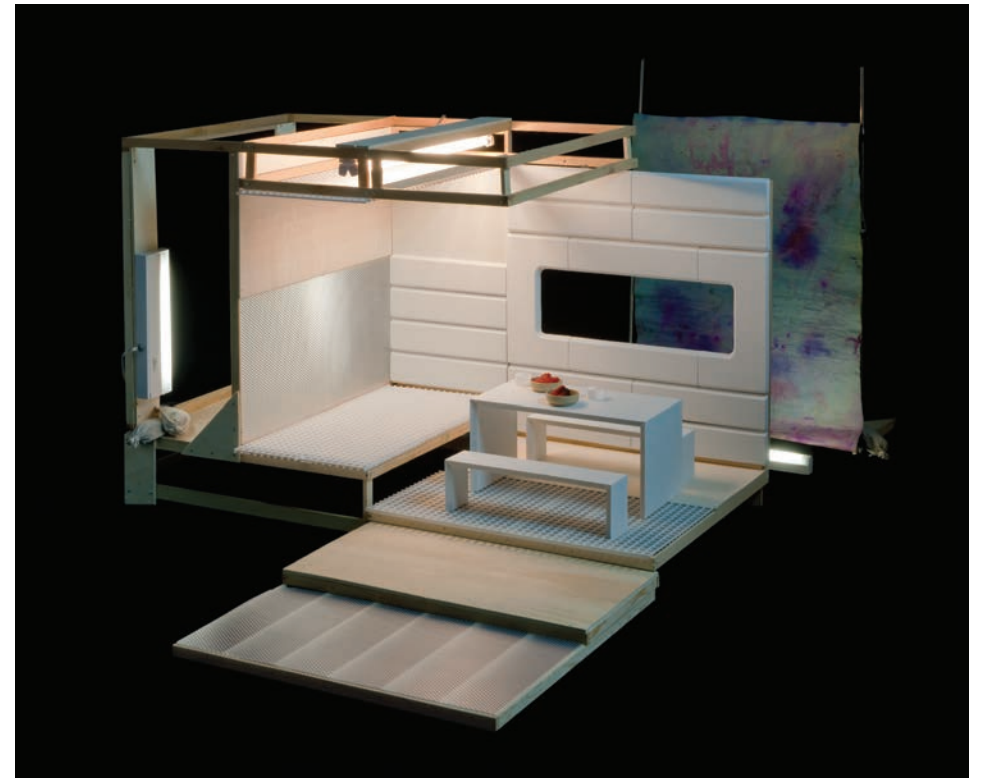
Julia Kouneski was born in Long Beach, California, in 1985, and grew up in both urban and rural Minnesota. In 2007, she received her bachelor of fine arts from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. In 2009, her artistic practice took her to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she participated in the artist residency *Capacete*, while researching the work of the late Brazilian artist Lygia Clark. As part of her practice, Kouneski has undertaken research in the form of physical training in dance, craniosacral bodywork, and, most recently, horseback riding. Her work has been exhibited in local spaces including the Minnesota Museum of American Art, the Soap Factory, and Art of This Gallery. Her collaborative work with Amsterdam-based artist and filmmaker Michelle Williams Gamaker has been shown throughout Europe in locations such as Museum De Hallen in Haarlem, the Netherlands; Centrum Contemporary Kultur in Berlin, Germany; and Wartesaal/Perla-Mode in Zurich, Switzerland. Along with the MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Artists, Kouneski has received support from the Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant.



Kairos, 2011  
Video stills, duration eight minutes

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BRETT SMITH



As an avid reader of fantasy, apocalyptic, and “neo-barbarian” science fiction, Brett Smith has a knack for imagining other worlds. His most interesting work as an artist, however, has its references planted firmly in our own. For instance, in his *Bunker/Ziggurat* installation of 2004, Smith puts his finger on the politics of fear and cataclysm that prevailed in the United States in the wake of 9/11. This was the uneasy time of the Orange Alert, when the government was going bananas. It was the time of the “Axis of Evil” and terrorist threats, a time when the Department of Homeland Security told people to stock up on duct tape, plastic sheeting, batteries, and bottled water to provide for themselves during possible chemical or biological attacks. It was a culture of martial values, in which a feeling of insecurity was difficult to escape.

Smith’s bunker, in turn, adduces the architectural language of defense. It was built with ninety mattresses stacked in the corner of a gallery, in a sprawling formation that resembled the stepping shape of a ziggurat. Visitors to the gallery were invited to climb the structure, which contained, up high, a tunnel that led into a hideout with pillows, a reading lamp, a bookshelf with sci-fi and political literature, a boom box, a few cassette tapes (punk music), some canned beans, and other emergency supplies.

If this project can be read as a symptom of the times—maybe a retort—it also amounted to something of a subversive playground, for beds are bouncy. Once assembled, Smith’s structure was akin to an inflatable palace that you would find at a fair or children’s party, the sort of joyous place where people can bounce, flip, and even make out.

This approach to rearticulating political culture is also in evidence in Smith’s *Barricade* of 2009, a small-scale work he developed after observing the peculiar nature of a May Day demonstration on a recent visit to Berlin. May Day (May 1) is traditionally celebrated as a day of political protest, a tribute to the fight for the eight-hour workday. When Smith was present for such an event in Berlin, in 2000, he witnessed a group of protestors barricading themselves into a church in what he describes as a festival atmosphere. Mounted with legible self-awareness, the maneuver felt like the performance of a cat-and-mouse game, he says, and it was nearly reductive in relation to its political heritage at that. What’s more, Smith explains, “it’s difficult for an action to be revolutionary when the conflict is scheduled in advance.” Smith’s *Barricade* reconstructs this titular structure of defense, a time-tested symbol of political rebellion. But he presents it at the scale of a model car (1:35) and thereby diminishes its function to the level of futility. This sculptural dividing line of plaster and basswood—a collection of miniature wheels, crates, rubble, road dividers, and other elements—was spread across the width of a gallery floor, and visitors were able to step over it with ease.

*Barricade*, 2009  
Wood, styrene, model parts,  
found object  
Dimensions variable  
(previous page, top)

Untitled (Film Set #1: Galley and Observation  
Deck, with the Anderson Nebula), 2011  
Wood, fluorescent lights, paper, styrene, fabric  
3'x6'x6'  
(previous page, bottom)

By using forts, toys, and models, and invoking conditions of fear and destruction in this way, that is, playfully and ambiguously, Smith’s formal vocabulary activates the domain of childhood at the same time that it establishes his ambivalent relation to the depressing complexities of contemporary political culture. Here it is worth considering Walter Benjamin’s argument that

when the urge to play overcomes an adult, this is not simply a regression to childhood. To be sure, play is always liberating. Surrounded by a world of giants, children use play to create a world appropriate to their size. But the adult, who finds himself threatened by the real world and can find no escape, removes its sting by playing with its image in reduced form.\*

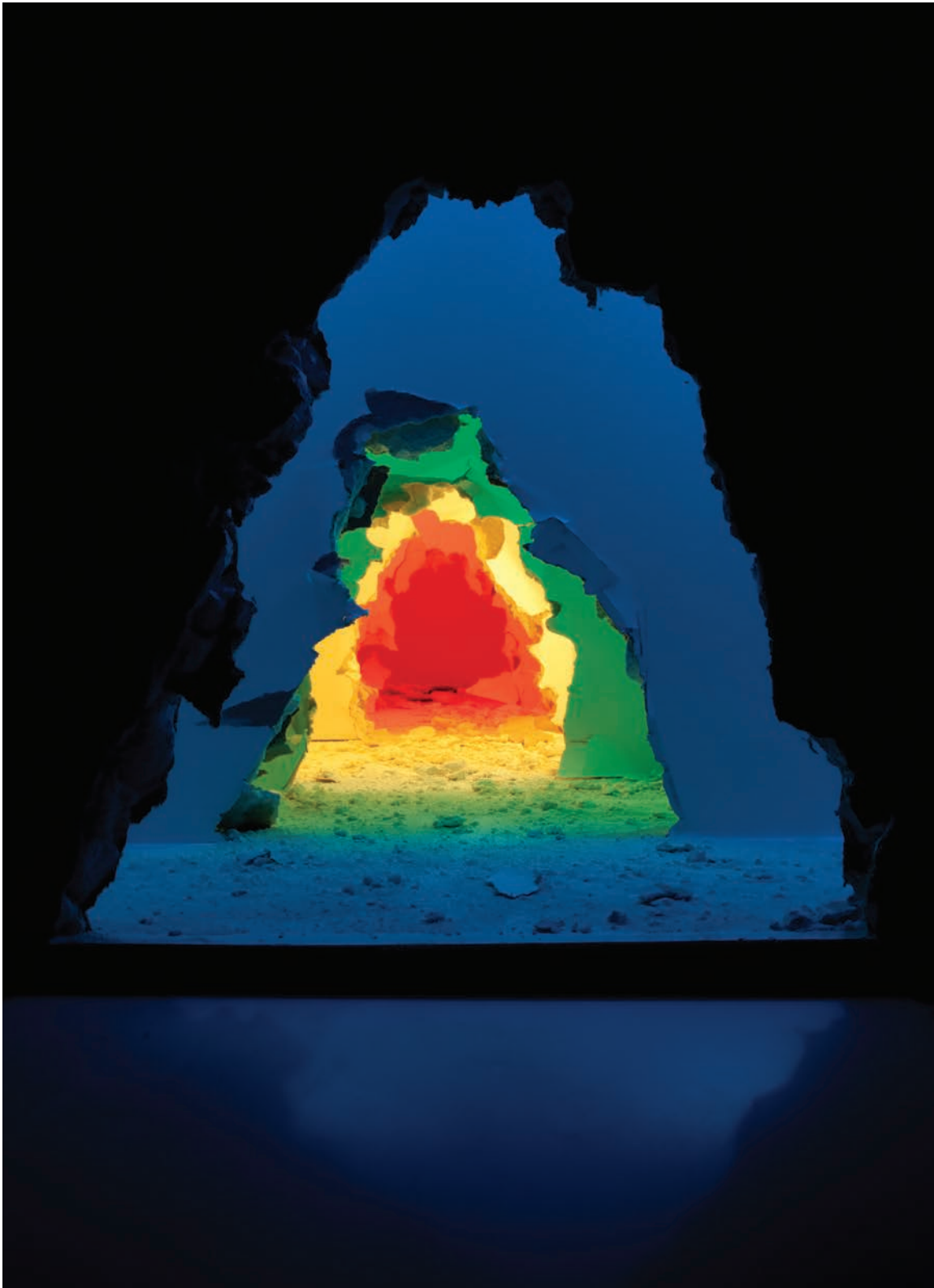
There is, in other words, a way of seeing these tactics as a means of mitigating certain conditions that could otherwise be unbearable—whether its the manipulation of our emotions by a politics of fear, or the scripted performance of destruction as a mode of rebellion.

Smith also operates as an enabler of collective experiences. In 2010, for instance, he was one of the key players in a collaborative project called the New Land of Milk and Honey. This was a fictive commune in western Wisconsin that was populated by new-agey artisans who celebrated the fruits of harmonious living. Inviting people to participate in a mode of “creation without destruction,” commune members presented their work in a colorful extravaganza of “knitting, electronic sleep, lay/tectonic farm acceleration, synesthesia, painting, solar wave exchange, prenatal learning, cryptoceramics, enlarged creativity, and chronobiology.” Attracting hundreds

of people to its events with a pop-cult appeal, the New Land of Milk and Honey displayed optimistic alterity and spoke the language of inclusion. Whether its cheery promises are sustainable (or retrievable) remains to be seen. *JT*

\*Walter Benjamin, “Old Toys,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, 1927–1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 100.





Brett Smith was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1977. He received a bachelor of fine arts in industrial design and a studio art minor from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburg, graduating in 1999 with University Honors and College Honors. After earning his degree, he was awarded a fellowship through the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program and studied at the Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee, Germany. Smith's most recent sculptural and installation-based work engages the audience through its scale and inadvertent interaction. He currently resides in Minneapolis and has participated in local group shows at Art of This Gallery, the Soap Factory, Soo Visual Arts Center, and the Walker Art Center. He has been the recipient of a Minnesota State Arts Board Artists Initiative Grant for Media Arts/New Media and has gratefully received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Jerome Foundation. Additional multidisciplinary projects include set design and construction for film, music, and dance productions; jewelry and fashion lines; store interior design and installation; and commissioned furniture design.

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Dungeon Crawl, 2010  
Wood, lights, sheetrock  
2'x2'x6'  
Photography by Rik Sferra



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JONATHAN BRUCE  
WILLIAMS



Jonathan Bruce Williams is an artist who invents possibilities for photographic devices. Working with cameras, lenses, projectors, and light, he converts old technologies into new tools that he can use to investigate the system of photography and its apparatus. Whether manifested as a still photograph, an animation, or a film installation, his work demonstrates the potential that still resides in the outdated, and in that sense his practice can be read as a rebuttal to the consumer logic of the digital doxa. For the viewer, his works can produce a sense of wonder; for the artist, they are generators of subsequent thinking.

A spirit of experimentation thus drives Williams's practice. At the level of production, he often begins by devising unique mechanisms, such as a set of camera clubs that are rigged to take pictures from their perspective as someone juggles them in the air. There is also the Unified Field Camera: a spring-loaded camera that produces images of its own activation in stereoscopic 3D. These are but two examples of the tools that he invents, and both point to the reflexive nature of his artistic research. Here photography operates as an event, as the performance of a tool that documents its own application. What we see in the print, in turn, is an image that internalizes its own becoming, which it stages for the viewer like a technical demonstration of newfound capacities.

Williams has an affinity for analogue procedures, and when he is not constructing devices like those described above, he prefers to shoot on a large-format camera. Many of his projects, in fact, revive materials and techniques from photography's early history, whether that involves glass plates or a process such as an emulsion lift in which a negative is left in water for a number of days until the emulsion—a light-sensitive coating of silver gelatin, which contains the image—begins to separate at the level of surface structure, thus decomposing the illusion of the image so as to emphasize its objecthood (see *Latticed Window #4*, 2011). In other words, Williams is concerned with articulating the *material* properties of photography, from the machines that are used to produce images to the physical properties of the images that are produced. The same could be said about his engagement with film.

In *Light and Color* (2010), Williams deployed three 16mm projectors, a smoke machine, ten Fresnel lenses, and a single film (an instructional film called *Light and Color*) that spun through the projectors on an intricate looping system, so as to transform a long, cavernous room into a cinematic environment. There were no images here, and no screens. The work was shaped, instead, by the plasticity of light itself—colored light passing through a system of suspended lenses that sculpted its trajectory, thus transforming a film into something voluminous and three-dimensional, something that viewers were compelled to *touch*.

In conversation, Williams compares his daily practice to a strip of 16mm film. Every day is like

a single frame in motion, he says, and from one day to the next you might not see many changes. But eventually there's something equivalent to a cut, when something more dramatic happens in the studio and the work heads in a new direction. The significance of this comparison for the artist lies in the fact that film burns when it stops in the gate—when you stop inventing, he says, you get burned, so you have to keep going.

More recently, Williams has been exploring ways to present his work on the computer screen by engaging a technical process indigenous to its digital arena. The animated GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) has proved to be one solution. One of his first experiments on this front extends his research by mobilizing photography's foundational tension between production and reproduction. About a year ago, someone gave the artist a broken photocopier. A photocopier is a machine whose sole reason to exist is to reproduce, free of any creative intentions of its own. The broken machine that Williams received could no longer perform this function, but before it died completely it produced—rather than reproduced—about one hundred unique images that resembled Rorschach inkblots. These images were registered in the blind, as it were, when the machine could not see anything on its surface—and so it hallucinated. Williams then rephotographed these images with his large-format camera, scanned them, and stirred them to life as an animation that resembles something electric, maybe epileptic, in its freneticism.

Photography's future is uncertain, and many have speculated on its supposed endgames. But

of course “photography” has been in a state of transformation from the moment of its birth, and its death is anything but accomplished. What Williams demonstrates from project to project is the productive potential that can be found in its history. What he shows us, as an inventor, is how its neglected promises can still be retrieved as the basis for its new beginnings. *JT*



Jonathan Bruce Williams was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1985. He received his bachelor of fine arts in photography from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 2008 and was awarded a 2009/10 Minnesota State Arts Board Artists Initiative Grant. His photographs have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, and he wrote an article titled "The Seventh Seal of Cinema" for the Minneapolis-based publication *Art Review and Preview*. In a stroke of luck, while pulling up floorboards in a hundred-year-old house, he discovered a stack of photographs and negatives left by a family that had lived there half a century before.




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Latticed Window #4, 2011  
Silver gelatin print, 20"x24"

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PAST  
RECIPIENTS

2005 Janet Lobberecht  
Megan Rye  
Angela Strassheim  
Dan Tesene  
Megan Vossler

2000 Santiago Cucullu  
Alexa Horochowski  
John Largaespada  
Gene Pittman  
Cristi Rinklin

1995 Robert Fischer  
Anne George  
Stephanie Molstre-Kotz  
Todd Norsten  
Carl Scholz

1990 Andy Baird  
Mark Barlow  
Keri Pickett  
Ann Wood  
Christopher Wunderlich

1985 Betina  
Judy Kepes  
Peter Latner  
James May  
Lynn Wadsworth

2009 Steven Accola  
Caroline Kent  
Tynan Kerr &  
Andrew Mazorol  
Tony Sunder

2004 Michael Gaughan  
Kirk McCall  
Abinadi Meza  
Lisa Nankivil

1999 Amelia Biewald-Low  
Jason S. Brown  
James Holmberg  
Anne Sugnet  
Inna Valin

1994 Terence Accola  
Mary Jo Donahue  
Jonathan Mason  
Karen Platt  
Elliot Warren

1989 Lynn Hambrick  
Vince Leo  
Stuart Mead  
David Pelto  
Alyn Silberstein

1984 Doug Argue  
Remo Campopiano  
Timothy Darr  
Audrey Glassman  
Robert Murphy

2008 Evan Baden  
Barbara Claussen  
Kirsten Peterson  
Benjamin Reed  
Lindsay Smith

2003 Tamara Brantmeier  
Lucas DiGiulio  
Jesse Petersen  
Matthew Wacker  
Troy Williams

1998 Amelie Collins  
Brad Geiken  
Rollin Marquette  
Don Myhre  
Thor Eric Paul

1993 Mary Esch  
Damian Garner  
Shannon Kennedy  
Linda Louise Rother  
James Whitney Tuthill

1988 Phil Barber  
JonMarc Edwards  
Jil Evans  
Dave Rathman  
George Reboloso

1983 Jana Freiband  
Janet Loftquist  
David Madzo  
Jeff Millikan  
Steven Woodward

2007 Matthew Bakkom  
Monica Haller  
Colin Kopp  
Liz Miller  
Rosemary Williams

2002 Joseph del Pesco  
Helena Keeffe  
Charles Matson Lume  
Justin Newhall  
Grace Park

1997 Jean Humke  
Carolyn Swiszc  
Amy Toscani  
Cate Vermeland  
Sara Woster

1992 Angela Dufresne  
Tim Jones  
Chris Larson  
Andrea McCormack  
Shawn Smith

1987 Michelle Charles  
Leslie Hawk  
Paul Shambroom  
Viet Ngo  
Diana Watters

1982 Jane Bassuk  
Frank Big Bear Jr.  
Laura Blaw  
Matt Brown  
Kevin Mangan

2006 Ernest A. Bryant III  
Brian Lesteberg  
Cherith Lundin  
Monica Sheets  
Marcus Young

2001 Jay Heikes  
Markus Lunkenheimer  
Alec Soth  
Peter Haakon Thompson  
John Vogt

1996 Therese Buchmiller  
Todd Deutsch  
Celeste Nelms  
Mara Pelecis  
Mike Rathbun

1991 Hans Accola  
Sara Belleau  
Colette Gaiter  
Franciska Rosenthal Louw  
Annette Walby

1986 Christopher Dashke  
Gary DeCosse  
Jennifer Hecker  
Michael Mercil  
Randy Reeves

1981 Ricardo Bloch  
Bruce Charlesworth  
Alison Ruttan  
T.L. Solien  
Scott Stack

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