



LIZ MILLER

MARCUS YOUNG

2011/12

McKnight Visual Artists

CHRISTINE BAEUMLER

ELIZABETH SIMONSON



MCKNIGHT VISUAL ARTISTS AT THIRTY: AN EXPERIMENT AND EXPERIENCE

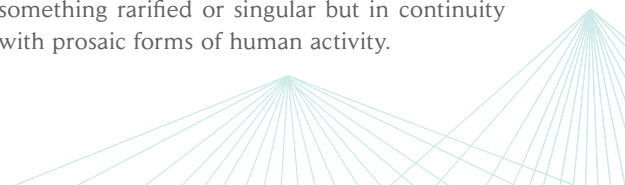
The word “Approved” is written on the front of the proposal. Written in black pen and underlined. Though undated, it bears the title “Proposal to the McKnight Foundation for a Program to Support Professional Visual Artists in the State of Minnesota.” Jerome J. Hausman, then president of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, was the project director. It was a request for three years of funding to support a program that would financially support eight visual artists and circulate an exhibition of completed works to four to six locations within the state. The program was one of the first of its kind in the country. It was ambitious. It was approved.

And thirty years later, the program and partnership are still in place. Christine Baeumler, Liz Miller, Elizabeth Simonson, and Marcus Young, the four recipients of the 2011/12 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Visual Artists, join an impressive array of 152 artists—“persons of high-level ability and creative talent”—who have won this prestigious fellowship. The four fellows faced stiff competition as they were selected out of a field of 224 applicants by a panel of art professionals comprised of Tumelo Mosaka, curator of contemporary art at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Colleen Sheehy, director of the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, North Dakota; and Kay WalkingStick, a New York City-based artist and professor emeritus at Cornell University.

Many program modifications have occurred since the first group of eight visual artists received fellowship awards of \$5,000 each in December 1981 and exhibited new work nine months later at MCAD Gallery before the show traveled to St. Cloud, Duluth, and Moorhead. Over the years the monetary awards gradually increased, and since 2001 the awards have been generously set at \$25,000. With the goal of enhancing the arts statewide and providing greater exposure for the McKnight fellows, traveling the shows within the state made good sense, but they proved difficult to coordinate with artists working in a wide range of media and often site specifically. By the 1990s the traveling component had fallen away, and instead with more frequency an arts professional of some renown was invited to conduct studio visits with the fellows. Sometimes that visiting critic or a local arts writer would pen an essay for the catalog (oftentimes more akin to a brochure) that accompanied the exhibition. Now that one visiting critic has expanded into three—one of whom is selected to write a substantial essay about each of the McKnight artists.

It is fitting—and quite serendipitous—that Mary Jane Jacob, who was one of the three jurors the inaugural year of the McKnight Visual Artists Fellowship, was invited back thirty years later to be one of the 2011/12 visiting critics and

the catalog essayist. In 1981 Jacob was chief curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and had already organized notable contemporary art exhibitions that showcased experimental art practices, women, and artists outside of the New York scene. Today Jacob is well known for a variety of groundbreaking exhibitions and public art projects that explore art outside the museum context. She is currently professor of sculpture and the executive director of exhibitions at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has published books and essays on a wide range of subjects, from artist monographs and anthologies about artist studio practices to Buddhism’s influence on American art. An inspiring conversationalist as well as a writer, Jacob visited the Twin Cities in early December and spent two full days talking with the artists about their past work and current projects. That time spent in dialogue with each artist has been transformed into one beautifully crafted essay of four parts. Each section—chaos, structure, consciousness, and practice—highlights a different fellow and is interwoven with references to the aesthetic theories of American philosopher and educator John Dewey, whose influential writings about art a century ago have shaped our contemporary understanding of the centrality of art to everyday living—not something rarified or singular but in continuity with prosaic forms of human activity.



The second visiting critic was Cathy Lebowitz, arts writer and senior editor at Art in America. Lebowitz, who has both a studio art and creative writing background, traveled to the Twin Cities in mid-March. It was Lebowitz's first visit to the state, where she was greeted by unusually beautiful weather, making her trip to Good Thunder—where Liz Miller lives—particularly lovely. Lebowitz also walked with Christine Baeumler around the rain gardens and watershed projects in east St. Paul that Baeumler has spent years helping to transform through her collaborative social art practices. Lebowitz's familiarity with a wide range of artists exhibiting nationally and internationally was a boon to all the McKnight fellows, as was her genuine invitation to have them come visit her in New York.

In the fall Tom Finkelpearl, executive director of the Queens Museum of Art, will be the final visiting critic. His varied background, which includes having served as director of New York City's Percent for Art Program, curator and program director of P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York City, and executive director of programs at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, makes him an ideal resource for these artists.

Although some parameters of the McKnight Artist Fellowships for Visual Artists have changed

over three decades, The McKnight Foundation's generous dedication to supporting individual Minnesotans has not. Artists who live and work in the state have always been the central focus of their artist fellowship program and the foundation's larger arts program in general. These artist fellowships are a celebration of talent, of vision, and of hard work.

And these four McKnight fellows are nothing if not talented, visionary, and hard working. I have been awed by the high-quality projects that each artist has pursued over the past year. For me, the quiet, personal “ah-ha” moments that their artistic work elicits have been most meaningful. They have been serious and playful, thought provoking and sensuous. Thanks to Marcus, I have experienced the magic of what he calls behavioral art, observing him as a living work of art on display at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and flying shared wishes on kites with my family and complete strangers at Harriet Island in St. Paul. Working with Christine on her ambitious tamarack wetland restoration project, which will transform the rooftop entrance to the main building at MCAD into an ecosystem once more prevalent in Minnesota, has instilled in me a profound appreciation for what she refers to as “making the invisible visible.” I have delighted in the nuanced, intricate, and generative worlds

that Elizabeth creates with materials as ordinary as tape, wire, and beads. These seemingly simple forms allude to and partially embody the complexity of life itself. And finally, the exuberance of Liz's large-scale pieces as well as her smaller, though no less engaging, mixed media drawings reinforces the feeling that every form is a potential carrier of meaning—formally and metaphorically. I agree with John Dewey's notion that art is most valuable as an agent of heightened experience—that it is best appreciated as experience itself. I have shared this experience this past year with these four Minnesota artists, down to the last crumb of blackberry pie and sip of tea.

Kerry A. Morgan

*Program Director, McKnight Artist Fellowships
for Visual Artists*

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The real work of an artist is to build up an experience that is coherent in perception while moving with constant change in its development.

— John Dewey, Art as Experience

CHAOS, STRUCTURE, CONSCIOUSNESS, PRACTICE

MARY JANE JACOB

Support for artists comes in many forms; some might say not enough, not frequently enough, not large enough...but that is another story. Support exists in Minnesota in ways that have never taken off in most places. The McKnight Artist Fellowships for Visual Artists is one such extraordinary example. But cultivating a practice as an artist is a continually dynamic process. So it takes more. The “real work of an artist” is not only to make a successful object or project but to make a work that takes the artist to another place in his or her art and feeds next outcomes—not just productively by leading to new works but generatively by making fertile the terrain of making, sparking new ideas, giving critical insights, raising doubts, prompting to go at it again....

What does support look like? What is required? The studio: for concentrating in quiet (as hard as that might be to achieve) or for making full tilt. An arts community: for the comradeship of like-minded people with whom you can dive right into the middle of a conversation and share a discourse. Critics: not the cranky or distant kind, not even so much professionals, but those persons who trigger ideas and make you go beyond. And for that leap, the artist needs another space, which is not so physical yet is all

the same palpable and real. That is a safe space, where clarity and confusion can cohabitate; it is the nebulous atmosphere of creative chaos where something as yet unknown can be tested, thought out, discarded, then picked up again. It is the space where art (or any creative act) can dwell for as long as it takes to cook a concept and get to that next stage. And in all of this, one needs the support of oneself, so that balance lost can be regained in the perpetual state of change that is the creative process. So the “real work of an artist,” we might say, is also the artist’s self, and the real value of the work of art is in leading others to find their real selves.

Experience lies at the heart of this enterprise: What experience brought artists to the point of making and, hence, particular artworks? What experience do they give to others? As a curator I have the privilege to enter artists’ studios, communities, and critiques, to see their works in progress, and to share their moments of self-reflection. That is what a program like the McKnight Visual Artists Fellowships also affords. So this writing is my self-reflection and an open letter of sorts to four artists with whom I have had the opportunity to share their spaces of making.



Liz Miller

Chaos. Liz Miller's studio is chaos, well, maybe clutter, of piled-up materials and folded-up earlier works, of works awaiting completion. This basement, shared with her artist-husband and located under a rural post office, feels compressed. So it is as if the process of creative chaos is visible, actual, in this low-ceilinged outpost. Emerging onto the street, one encounters a world Miller has made hers—not just by virtue of the studio's proximity to her home, so that art and life are connected and interchangeable, but also because this world is one with which Miller remains curiously engaged and delighted—the town of Good Thunder.



I can imagine no better name for her residence and workplace. Good Thunder: not only a good title for a work by Miller but words that could serve as the name for all she does.

A chaotic explosion of creativity: that was what it was to be modern, to look to the past and abstract what you needed from it, discard the rest, and with ferocious energy conquer and contend with the modern world. So the work of modernist action painter Clyfford Still was a natural model for Miller to recently pick apart and reconstruct. “The movements that are characteristically ‘modern’ are coming to a head in search for mutabilities,” John Dewey said in 1946 at the dawning of another new world. “Laws that once were taken to be fixed are changing.... But the idea of *process* is making its way into that which is known and the idea of operations into our account of how we know.”¹ From Miller’s process emerge chain-like constructions; they are nuclear chain reactions, the mushroom cloud, recombinant DNA. They evoke the natural world, the social realm, the technological, as she sources, for instance, storm radar imagery and computer graphics that are out-of-date even though only of the recent past.

Miller says of her near-overdose effect: “Visual bombardment can be enticing, but it can also leave one feeling slightly sick and overwhelmed.” And not unlike artists in Dewey’s time (as each age has its challenges of change), she says, “I comment on both the inherent failures and possibilities that result as we struggle with a world that is increasingly complex and multilayered.”

In her takes on the decorative patterns of centuries ago—well-crafted interior designs, weapons, or firearms—she employs a methodical process. Chaos has an order. Miller’s way of working takes her installations to a level of perfection that can only be achieved when one knows the source deeply, intuitively, and intelligently. Only then can the relationship between the references and final result be so masterful. Hers is a practice, not just a process.

With Miller’s move in 2004 to engage the wall, her collaged, Rorschach shapes became more fully three-dimensional. They also lent themselves to repetition. Folding them back on themselves or mirroring them in symmetrical, bookplate fashion, she creates new beings out of inanimate ornaments. Through duplication, the chaos of the cut shape is grounded, clarified, balanced. She creates systems around a single

shape multiplied that then leads to new shapes, and with this, the simplicity and directness of the individual abstracted shape are overtaken, and the whole gains greater dynamism. This forcibly plays with the viewer’s perception in ways that become bodily as well as retinal. It is no wonder that one of her sources was Japanese clothing, where the body shapes the otherwise flat garment—the contemporary couture parallel to Sassoon of the 1960s: it’s all in the cut!

Such making through experimentation, as Dewey observed of other creative actions in the world, is not random, not chaos at all, but an emergent structure that comes with doing directed by ideas. The work consciously emanates from the knowledge Miller possesses in her hand as well as mind. So the outcome is “the construction of a new empirical situation in which objects [in Miller’s case, her sources] are differently related to one another, and such that the *consequences* of directed operations [her art-making processes] form the objects that have the property of being known.”² These works, the product of sources that are entered and departed from, are transformed in identity and intent. They are something new, ready “for further interpretation; something to be thought about.” They are no what Dewey called

finalities, complete, finished, only calling for thought in the way of definition, classification. Rather, “they are indications, evidence, signs, clues to and of something still to be reached; they are intermediate, not ultimate; means, not finalities.”³

We could say this of all artworks, or at least of good art. But Miller’s is a keen exemplar where that “subject matter which had been taken as satisfying the demands of knowledge, as the material with which to frame solutions, became something which set *problems*...they set question marks instead of supplying answers.”⁴ So for Miller, making one work, in fact, frames problems and leads somewhere else. Her artworks are evolutionary, leading to the next, to the next object or installation, and also to the next question.

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Preposterous Cavalcade, stiffened felt and other mixed media, dimensions variable, installation view: Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 2011. Installation made possible in part thanks to a Minnesota State University-Mankato Faculty Research grant. Photo: courtesy of the artist.



Picturesque Evacuation Ploy, stiffened felt and other mixed media, dimensions variable, installation view: Redux Contemporary Art Center, Charleston, South Carolina, 2011. Installation made possible in part thanks to a Minnesota State University-Mankato Faculty Research grant. Photo: Shannon Di.



Recalcitrant Mimesis, stiffened felt and other mixed media, dimensions variable, installation view: David B. Smith Gallery, Denver, 2012. Installation made possible in part thanks to a Minnesota State University-Mankato Faculty Research grant. Photo: Paul Winner.

Elizabeth Simonson

Structure. Elizabeth Simonson's studio is in an office and light-factory building, and it suits her well. Her industrial materials seem at home, as do her less expected hermit crabs. The layered spaces of hallways form a transition from the street before one enters a hive of activity, the rectilinear frame-of-the-room that is her studio. Simonson structures an orderly environment, and she makes an art of structure, which extends from the seemingly mechanical to the imaginative organic.



She once shared with younger artists the value of having a studio: “The most important thing to do is to get a studio, no matter how big or small,” Simonson said. “This helps you keep your identity as an artist while you try to figure out how you are going to put bread on the table.” When you outgrow it, move on. Each phase of a career is a layer that accumulates throughout life, like the crab that takes on new form as it outgrows one shell house and, through various tries, assumes another.

All of Simonson’s work exists in material layers. It is grown more than made. A process-based art practice of generative systems, it is at once intellectual and physical. The intellectuality is clear from the conscious employment of systems, algorithms, and other defined means of producing forms. The physicality of her art is evident, for instance, in her rhythmically inflected parallel strips of masking tape or thin wire. Made on-site, her wall works follow the stretch and reach of the body of this former dancer. Repetitive, almost ritualistic, they are

executed in a highly disciplined, performative way. There is a rigorous intensity to her making, too, an absorption with materials launched into a process that once set in motion propels her forward. Thus, Simonson enacts her work in the making, and in the end the work becomes a manifestation of time.

But let’s not mistake this as mechanical in any way; let’s not give way to some dualistic mind/body split. Rather with each moment of the process, the hand is a thinking *and* a feeling tool. Just as Dewey asserted that there is “no such thing in perception as seeing or hearing *plus* emotion,” that “it is not possible to divide in a vital experience the practical, emotional, and intellectual from one another,”⁵ so the hand senses *and* knows, and with each motion executed Simonson projects new identities.

The systems of nature, which are the very material building blocks of life, are embedded in her art. These take especially evocative form with her newest sculptures using beads—these pellets of glass becoming components of cellular growth. So in her recent work *Instar*, which evokes the metamorphosis or mutation that occurs in stages of life until reaching full maturity, she uses a progressive act of building

to manifest each stage and joins them together, “going from a web-like structure into a chrysalis and then moving on beyond that.”

Her processes bring new phenomena into being, as she extracts from material existence the manifold meanings her references hold for her and in the world so that others can experience them. So Simonson’s works embody the “imaginative vision,” of which Dewey spoke, that “elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual.”⁶ But “to perceive, a beholder must *create* his own experience.”⁷ Simonson has a dedication to experience, producing works out of and for human experience, but she is also aware of and motivated by the transformative nature of experience—for these experiences are building blocks of life too.

But what of her shift from linear to organic shapes, from wall to open space, from black-and-white to color, from her linear drawings and wall installations of tape to beaded lines that intertwine and curl to make rounded forms? Is this a departure? In contemplating Einstein’s upending of absolute space, time, and motion, Dewey remarked, we gain a notion of relations of events. Relations “are the means of correlating





Current, music wire, 5 x 33 x 2 feet, installation view: Plane Space, New York City, 2004. Photo: courtesy Plane Space.

observations made at different times and places” connecting “the discontinuities of individualized operations and experiences into continuity with one another” to give them structure.⁸ What art does is enable us to see these connections.

Such a connection exists because Simonson’s art depends on a sequential logic, a structure that allows for the continuation of making from start to resolution. Made unit by unit, they are at once methodical and magical. They evoke a continuum or growing equation, like the Fibonacci series, which creates in nature the nautilus. Her attraction to life-forms binds her many series with the same determination, just as she sees in nature’s operations one clear motivation: “creating structures that sustain their own survival.” In her work, as in nature, she copes, too, with change, incorporating accidental but inevitable mistakes, healing a section before her, then regrowing the pattern again into an evolutionary structure. She knows art and life have the capability to follow more than one route to achieve beauty. The wide range of Simonson’s practice, which accumulates new approaches over time and bridges the geometric and the biomorphic, gives us a greater view of the operations of nature. Each work is distinct and varied in shape and form, and all are wondrous in the way they situate themselves in the world.

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Skipping Stones, tape on wall, 8 x 40 x 1 feet, installation view: Gallery One at TractorWorks, Minneapolis, 2011. Photo: Rik Sferra.



Instar (detail), beads, wire, and fishing line, 25 x 11 x 15 feet (approximately), installation view: Walker Art Center Commission. Courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery, Minneapolis, 2011. Photo: Gene Pittman, courtesy of the Walker Art Center.

Christine Baeumler

Consciousness. It is perhaps appropriate that my meeting with Christine Baeumler did not take place in her studio, in a personal space, for the world is her working place, and the natural environment offers materials for art making. It was also true to self that we met in a museum too, because galleries are the other world Baeumler traverses.



In fact, one of her aims is to bridge the worlds of the real and artifice and to heighten our reading of both spaces, to enable them to inform each other, and with that to create greater consciousness. Inside and outside, the exotic and the mundane—all have their own place, all are connected and interdependent, all are vulnerable to forces that threaten their very being.

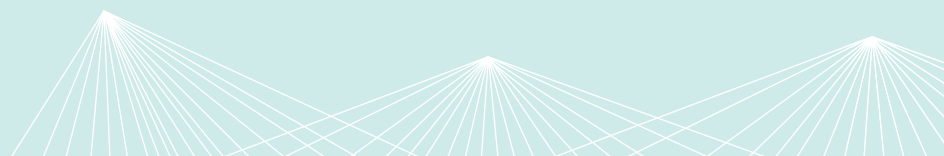
If we are more conscious, more mindful, what might the world look like? Baeumler thinks about this, but even more so she is *mindful* of this. She knows also that consciousness exists beyond the human mind and irrespective of us. There is an ethic in keeping this *in mind*—for the benefit of others. And if we are mindful, we know we are at peril. But Baeumler thinks not so much about the extinction of the human species as the extinction of *human experience*. On the one hand, this can be seen as the loss of opportunity to observe forms of natural life due to the diminishing diversity of species and their population numbers. On the other hand, it can refer to the numbing of human experience, the lack of care for it, or the replacement of the actual with the virtual.

Consciousness is a necessary building block for change. Take, for example, birds of the Amazon, just one group of species in peril that has been a subject for Baeumler. She encapsulated their recorded image in bell jars, projecting their living presence to heighten our perception of these beings in the world, which may someday, like others before them, only exist encased in museums. She gives her work power through the subjective, invested closeness of her own experience in such places. Then she brings that experience back home, where it enters her consciousness of environments closer at hand. Sharing her experience through her art with others, she seeks to bring their experience of their place in the world to a greater level of consciousness.

Having born witness to landscapes in different places in our world today, seeking to make them truly seen by others, Baeumler participates in a fundamental role of art and artists working for awareness of environmental issues, a role that she and others are making credible by their aesthetic and practical art actions. They desire that art motivate change, and even Dewey held out that hope nearly a century ago when he wrote, “The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art.”⁹

So making her case with her work is crucial for Baeumler. It is also possible! As Dewey said of art, “We understand it in the degree in which we make it a part of our own attitudes, not just by collective information concerning the conditions under which it was produced.... we install ourselves in modes of apprehending nature that at first are strange to us. To some degree we become artists ourselves as we undertake this integration, and, by bringing it to pass, our experience is reoriented.... This insensible melting is far more efficacious than the change effected by reasoning, because it enters directly into attitude.”¹⁰ So art, and particularly work like Baeumler’s, can make a difference, and that difference can be experienced deeply, in a way that even words cannot capture and convey.

What constitutes human experience, and why do we need to safeguard it? Dewey understood that when “perception replaces bare recognition,” then “there is an act of reconstructive doing, and consciousness becomes fresh and alive.”¹¹ This conception of conscious human experience sheds light on the connection between the making of art (what Baeumler does and offers for our experience) and our perception and appreciation of works of art (what we do in experiencing her art). “What is intimated to my mind, is, that in both production and





Double-Crested Cormorant, from the *Birds of Bogs and Wetlands* series, photo litho, oil and enamel paint on aluminum panel, 30 x 40 inches, 2012. Paula Marty, lithography assistance. Jennifer Menken, assistant curator of exhibits, provided access to specimens in the Bell Collection at the Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Photo: Renee Yamada.

enjoyed perception of works of art, knowledge is transformed,” said Dewey. “It becomes something more than knowledge because it is merged with non-intellectual elements to form an experience worthwhile as an experience.”¹² An experience is not only satisfying or even remarkable—“That was a great experience!”—but it also moves us.

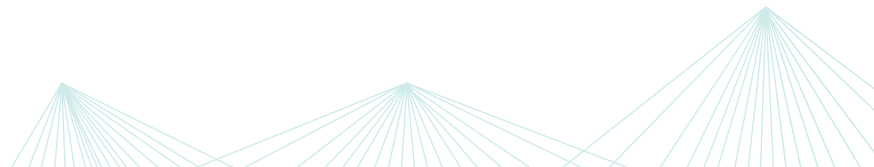
Baeumler was moved to work in neighborhoods, incorporating into her art practice the process of community collaboration beginning in 1994. She is now working on two watershed district projects that involve citizens and the attendant authorities. On all sides of this working equation, there is a need for expanding thinking—about what is art, about what a reclaimed or restored landscape might look like—and for being open. Such processes require a safe space for speculation and experimentation to lead to new solutions.

As the artist in residence for a forty-mile stretch of the Mississippi River, the Capitol Region Watershed District, Baeumler works in the landscape to redesign place; moving empathy into change, she creates an art that effectively

cares for the world. With *Reconstituting the Landscape: A Tamarack Rooftop Restoration*, she will create a bog ecosystem on the roof above the entryway to the Minneapolis College of Art and Design to evoke this endangered landscape necessary to support life, and to demonstrate another useful way to design a green roof. In each case the goal is for changed popular behavior so that such positive mechanisms can

become commonplace. These works show also what can be achieved if perceptions change. They forecast what the future could look like if we are conscious of what lies ahead.

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Reconstituting the Landscape: A Tamarack Rooftop Restoration, a project by artist Christine Baeumler in collaboration with Barr Engineer, Vice President/ Principal Kurt Leuthold and Barr Ecologist Fred Rozumalski. Entranceway to the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, 2012. Photo: Rik Sferra.



Reconstituting the Landscape: A Tamarack Rooftop Restoration (detail), a project by artist Christine Baeumler in collaboration with Barr Engineer, Vice President/Principal Kurt Leuthold and Barr Ecologist Fred Rozumalski. Entranceway to the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, 2012. Photos: Rik Sferra (above) and the artist (right).





Spectral Tamaracks, video still, 2012. Amy Waksmonski, video editing assistance. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Marcus Young

Practice. To meet in Marcus Young's home is to simultaneously get a view of his studio, for this loft apartment situated on Wacouta Commons Park in St. Paul overlooks a portion of the city he calls both home and studio. Since 2006 Young has been City Artist in Residence, thanks to Public Art Saint Paul's partnership with the city government, which also houses this position in its public works department. This job carries with it the freedom to match creativity with civic responsibility, and for this artist—who was born in Hong Kong and through sequential moves made his way to the Midwest—it is a way to belong.



Young's educational background was in conducting music and directing theater, and you can imagine how he would function in that arena as his long fingers pour tea and his hands become animated in conversation. But instead he chose to be a "behavioral artist" (seizing on the English translation of what the Chinese call "performance art") and perform life with those with whom he now shares this place, provoking the daily performance of their lives too.

Young's medium is social. Dewey also thought the material of aesthetic experience is human and so found that our experience with *art* "in being human—human in connection with the nature of which it is a part—is social."¹³ He believed art is an intimate and energetic way of aiding individuals to share in the "arts of living."¹⁴ For Young, "If intimacy means being open, being close and quiet, and paying careful attention, then yes, I like being that way with audiences. I prefer being with people to being with objects." Young's art of social interaction is purposefully directed toward changing perception of the everyday—one of the goals Dewey held for art. By

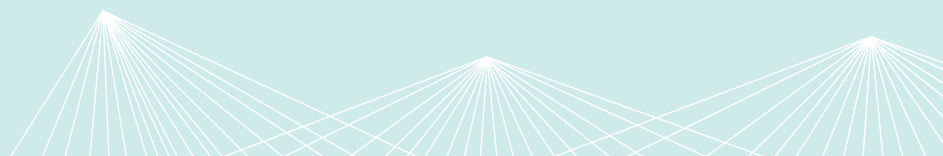
offering people some departure from the chaotic or routine moments of life, Young provides a chance to see the familiar in new ways. In fact, the ultimate aim of Young's art is the conscious practice of life. This is cultivated through practice that can take the form of structured activities and result in poems on sidewalks, kites in the sky, slow walking down a city street, or saying good night to others. Practicing each activity demands attention—look down at the sidewalk, look up at the sky, concentrate on your next step, share an intimate gesture with a stranger—and knowing fully your intention with each action so that you may have a full experience of yourself in that place and time.

For several years now Young has enacted a work titled *Don't you feel it too?*, which is silent, individual dancing (facilitated by one's headphones) in full view of others. But it is not just dancing to the music, it is—in the artist's words—"dancing one's inner life." It is as revealing of self as it is sharing self; coming to a personal inner peace through this motion, it is an offering too to others. While this work first took place during the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, its significance can stretch over time and space, as well as diverse persons. Importantly, this work embodies questions that are at the core of our existence

as we negotiate private and public identities and spaces. Yet defusing self-conscious timidity and charged political implications in a playful act, Young gives everyone alike a chance to settle into what is going on before them, to enjoy it, and to imagine themselves on either side of the equation (in this case, dancer-spectator). Thus, he affords the all-too-rare opportunity for us to have a sense a continuity and communication—albeit nonverbally.

Such practices of Young are rooted in practically serving others by engendering and sharing creative space. "We should regard practice as the only means," Dewey thought, "by which whatever is judged to be honorable, admirable, approvable can be kept in concrete experience-able existence."¹⁵ And if Young's study of the Buddhist practice of meditation provides him personal insight and inspires him to bring meditative actions out into the open, into the collective, social, and civic life, then perhaps it is not surprising that Dewey's interests, in part, sprang from that same source.

The everyday is an important canvas. Perhaps many would challenge this, seeing the proper location of art to be the theater, concert hall, or museum. But this is exactly what Dewey thought. He felt that with the advent of museums





Don't you feel it too? is the practice of freeing your spirit through dancing your inner life in public places. It is purposeful self-embarrassment, mind-body study, gentle protest, "do-it-yourself" public performance, and aspiring spiritual technology. This ongoing practice premiered on the streets of St. Paul during the Republican National Convention in 2008. Photo: courtesy of STARTRIBUNE/MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL 2012.

a common fallacy arose that there is a “separation of art from the objects and scenes of ordinary experience.” Thus, for this philosopher, we were left with the problem “of recovering the continuity of esthetic experience with normal processes of living.”¹⁶ He called for a return to the origins of art—in daily life; he looked to wisdom traditions, cultural and philosophical, to lend depth to his thinking about art as a broader, essential form of life, of art as experience.

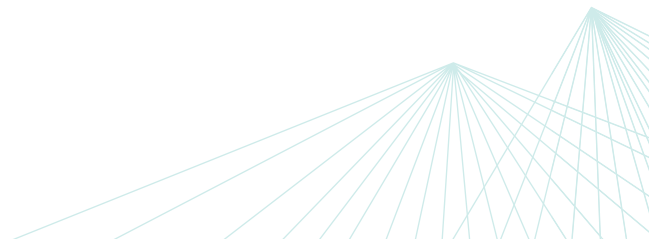
For Young, this means returning to “direct human interaction because it is how I find my basic goodness.” His work has a function; it is a way for others to find and share goodness. It may be a moment of calm, a sense of unity with the world, or an insight, but there is always the possibility for self-reflection. What an uncommon but productive city service!

Young has said, “My work transforms ordinary daily behavior into spiritual and aesthetic practice aspiring to become new myth for the common person.” So for all the everyday realities that are the substance of Young’s art, he also looks beyond. In a world reimagined, he aspires to lessen fear and increase inner and community peace. His goal: to bring about balance. Young speaks of our present-day society as imbalanced,

with material accomplishments but poverty of the immaterial, inner life. He contemplates: How do we encourage openness with others with whom we share society, this place, our time? How do we cultivate creativity for personal well-being, social and planetary survival? Dewey asked this of philosophy: “How shall we employ what we know to direct the formation of our beliefs about value and how shall we direct our practical behavior so as to test these beliefs and make possible better ones?”¹⁷ Young asks this of art: How can we address “the serious crisis that we are strangers in the terrain of our own inner lives?” Can we solve this together by “performing experiential research on ourselves and teaching each other based on our own findings?”

The arts of life, for Dewey, were the way that we as human beings could communicate and participate in the world together. They embodied the essence of life and reaffirmed the values by which we live together. Moreover, they had a civil purpose: “Civilization is uncivil because human beings are divided into non-communicating sects, races, nations, classes and cliques.”¹⁸ With his dance project, Young offers this instruction: “Practice meeting your fear, hesitation, doubt, awkwardness, closedness, and practice knowing the underlying happiness, joy, courage, acceptance, and openness. Take responsibility for practicing your own happiness.”

By offering people some departure from the chaotic or routine moments of life, Young provides a chance to see the familiar in new ways. In fact, the ultimate aim of Young’s art is the conscious practice of life.





The Lullaby Experiment invites people to explore together the soft mystery of slumber while being sung to lovingly through the night. Within a live pianissimo concert of love, the ritual is a striving for peace and rest, a remembrance of affection, and a submission to one's inner nature. Premiered at the Walker Art Center, 2011. Photo: Travis Spangler.



With nothing to give, I give myself is a behavioral form of living in a museum. The practice is to give one's most precious possession—life—temporarily to the art collection, to be present around the clock, and to sit, walk, work, and be in silent retreat. Premiered at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2011. Photo: Amanda Hankerson.



Everyday Poems for City Sidewalk re-imagines St. Paul's annual sidewalk maintenance program by integrating poetry into the Department of Public Works' standard system of replacing broken sidewalks. Since 2008, the program has created 480 installations of a growing collection of 36 poems. Photo: Mike Hazard; poem: Pat Owen.

ESSAY NOTES

1. John Dewey, Introduction to *The Way beyond "Art": The Work of Herbert Bayer*, by Alexander Dorner (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1947), 9.

2. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, vol. 4, 1929, John Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 70.

3. *Ibid.*, 80.

4. *Ibid.*

5. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934; New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 55, 56.

6. *Ibid.*, 359–60.

7. *Ibid.*, 56.

8. Dewey, *Quest for Certainty*, 117

9. *Ibid.*, 360.

10. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 348.

11. *Ibid.*, 54.

12. *Ibid.*, 302.

13. *Ibid.*, 339; *italics are mine*.

14. *Ibid.*, 350. A main theme for Dewey in his masterwork *Art as Experience* was the power of art, when understood as experience, to connect people and to bridge cultures. In each instance we retain our individuality yet at the same time widen ourselves, and thereby gain a sense of community and continuity. To explain this, he draws upon the definition of the verb civilize: “‘to civilize’ is defined as ‘to instruct in the arts of life and thus to raise in the scale of civilization’” (350). Now in our postcolonial world, civilization and to civilize raise all kinds of questions, but let’s look at where Dewey was taking this thought in his time: “Instruction in the arts of life is something other than conveying information about them. It is a matter of communication and participation in values of life by means of the imagination, and works of art are the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living” (350).

15. Dewey, *Quest for Certainty*, 26.

16. *Ibid.*, 4, 9.

17. *Ibid.*, 34–35.

18. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 350.

LIZ MILLER

Liz Miller's large-scale, mixed-media installations and works on paper have been featured in solo and group exhibitions regionally, nationally, and internationally. Her work has been shown in one-person exhibitions at Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, South Carolina; 1708 Gallery in Richmond, Virginia; David B. Smith Gallery in Denver; the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program Gallery at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Mercer Union in Toronto; and Haas Gallery at Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. She has shown in recent group exhibitions at the Gallery of Contemporary Art at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; the Union Art Gallery at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Soo Visual Arts Center in Minneapolis; Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minnesota; and Gail Floether Steinhilber Art Gallery at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh.

Miller received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is a recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, an MCAD–Jerome Foundation Fellowship, three Artist Initiative Grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, and residencies at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, Nebraska, and at Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, South Carolina. Miller's work has been featured in *art ltd*, *Art in America*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Daily Serving* and is included in two books: *Nature: Inspiration for Art & Design* (Monsa, 2008) and *Tactile: High Touch Visuals* (Die Gestalten Verlag, 2007).

Miller lives and works in Good Thunder, Minnesota, and is associate professor of Drawing/Foundations at Minnesota State University, Mankato.



ELIZABETH SIMONSON

Elizabeth Simonson is a visual artist who explores aspects of nature, algorithms, and imperfect systems through her use of everyday found materials such as tape, wire, fishing line, beads, and tiles. A graduate of Hunter College's MFA program, Simonson originally moved to New York from her native Minneapolis to pursue a career as a professional ballet dancer with the Feld Ballets New York. Her familiarity with time-based performance art has informed her exploration of sequentially based installations that at times take weeks to construct and are often ephemeral. One system may involve covering a wall or room from ceiling to floor with consecutive rows of tape. Each successive layer conforms to the imperfections of the previous row, whereby a subtle crease evolves into a voluminous shape. Another process may involve following a mathematical pattern through the organization of handmade or fabricated units, such as beads or wire. The enormous task of both building and attaching the units (at times as many as twenty thousand) underscores the complex relationship between a rigid, predetermined system and the limitations of the material and the maker.

Simonson's work has been shown in numerous public institutions including the Walker Art Center; the John Michael Kohler Art Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin; the Krannert Art Museum in Champaign, Illinois; the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts; and the Austin Museum of Art, in Austin, Texas; and in addition, in galleries in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and New York. Simonson's work can be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Goldman Sachs, Hunter College, and, most recently, the Minnesota Dance Theater, her alma mater in dance.



CHRISTINE BAEUMLER

Christine Baeumler explores the power of art to increase awareness about environmental issues and to facilitate direct ecological action. Research has taken her to the Northern Australian and Amazon rain forests, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Galápagos Islands. Her current work focuses on the tamarack bogs in Minnesota. By portraying worlds removed from daily experiences yet impacted ecologically by people's actions, the multimedia installations offer viewers a glimpse into these compelling, fragile, and often invisible worlds.

As a publically engaged artist, Baeumler works collaboratively with community partners to reclaim ecosystems through the revitalization of degraded urban spaces. Baeumler is currently serving as the Artist-in-Residence in two local watershed districts under the auspices of Public Art Saint Paul. She is also working on The Pollinator Playground, a community garden, orchard, and nature play space at an elementary school in Fargo, North Dakota, as part of the Plains Art Museum's Defiant Garden series.

Baeumler's work has been exhibited regionally, nationally, and internationally, including projects in China and Germany. She is currently a member of PLaCE, a consortium of academic research centers in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States that focus on a site-specific practice; and Mapping Spectral Traces, an international group of scholars and artists who work on projects that "map" the unacknowledged pasts that structure present-day social relations.



Baeumler is an associate professor in the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and has a BA in Fine Arts from Yale University and an MFA from Indiana University. She is a recipient of grants from the Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, and Bush Foundation, and of three Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grants. She has recently been named a Scholar of the College in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota.

MARCUS YOUNG

Marcus Young creates behavioral art in the form of personal practice and collective experience. Attending to an inner and social life played out in public spaces, within institutions, or across systems of the city, his work invites individual commitment, public involvement, and transdisciplinary collaboration. Young's recent work includes *Don't you feel it too?*, an ongoing mind-body experiment and aspiring spiritual technology of dancing one's inner life in public places, started in 2008; *Everyday Poems for City Sidewalk*, a process of integrating printed poetry into Saint Paul's Department of Public Works' standard methods of replacing broken sidewalks, thus slowly turning the city into a large book of poems; and *With nothing to give, I give myself*, a work of living in a museum in silent retreat.

Young received his BA in music from Carleton College and his MFA in theater directing from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. He is a recipient of awards from the Bush Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, New York Drama League, and Franklin Furnace. His performance, video, and theatrical work has been shown nationally and internationally, including in Minnesota, New York, London, and Beijing. Young founded the behavioral art studio Grace Minnesota in 2009 and has been Saint Paul's City Artist in Residence, a program of Public Art Saint Paul, since 2006.



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ADMINISTERED BY THE MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

2010

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Cameron Gainer
Aaron Spangler
Andréa Stanislav

2009

Michael Kareken
Aldo Moroni
Carolyn Swiszc
Piotr Szyhalski

2008

Jennifer Danos
Janet Lobberecht
Margaret Pezalla-Granlund
Megan Rye

2007

Stacey Davidson
Andrea Carlson
Megan Vossler
Amy DiGennaro

2006

David Bartley
Gladys Beltran
Jan Estep
Chris Walla

2005

David Lefkowitz
Suzanne Kosmalski
Aaron Van Dyke
Jay Lance Wittenberg

2004

Ana Lois-Borzi
Rollin G. Marquette
Erika Olson
Joe Smith

2003

Bruce Charlesworth
Alexa Horochowski
Robert Patrick
Christopher Santer
Jenny Schmid

2002

Julie Buffalohead
Valerie Jenkins
Chris Larson
Margaret McGee
Martin Meersman

2001

Brian Frink
Freddy Muñoz
Kathryn Nobbe
Anne Sugnet
Amy Toscani

2000

Patricia Canelake
Jean Humke
Barbara Kreft
David Rathman
Bruce Tapola

1999

Harriet Bart
Stacey Davidson
Colette Gaiter
Clarence Morgan
Chris Allen-Wickler

1998

Thomas Cowette
Stuart Mead
Todd Norsten
Robert Perkins
Kay Ruane

1997

Daniel Bruggeman
Shana Kaplow
Jeff Loehlein
Rod Massey
James Ockuly

1996

Philip Barber
Arlene Burke-Morgan
Frank Gaard
Daniel Kaniess
Shannon Kennedy
Mike Lynch

1995

Terence Accola
Diane Katsiaficas
Thomas Rose
Linda Rother
Rochelle Woldorsky
Mara Zoltners

1994

Suzanne Kosmalski
Barbra Nei
Judy Onofrio
T.L. Solien
Bruce Tapola
Steven Woodward

1993

Bruce Charlesworth
Colette Gaiter
Jeff Millikan
Melba Price
David Rathman
Lynn Wadsworth

1992

Doug Argue
Frank Big Bear
Kate Hunt
David Lefkowitz
Rik Sferra
Judith Yourman

1991

Andy Baird
Brian Frink
Herb Grika
Shana Kaplow
Mark Ostapchuk
Scott Seekins
Lauren Stringer
James Tanner

PAST RECIPIENTS

1990

Linda Christianson
David Dick
Carole Fisher
Seitu Jones
Michael Mercil
Viet Ngo
David Peltó
Richard Posner

1989

Virginia Bradley
Richard Brewer
Lisa Cicotte
Susan Fiene
Daniel Kaniess
Timothy Miske
James Ockuly
Randy Reeves

1988

Scott Brennan
Remo Campopiano
Patricia Canelake
Rosa Kittsteiner
Carrie Pierce
Brian Roehrdanz
Amy Sabrina
John Snyder

1987

Frank Gaard
Terry Hildebrand
Gendron Jensen
Kathy Hemingway Jones
Walter Jost
Mike Lynch
Zoran Mojsilov
Aldo Moroni

1986

Bruce Charlesworth
Lou Ferreri
Brian Foster
James Kielkopf
Ken Moylan
Rosalyn Schwartz
Kaveh Shakikan
T.L. Solien

1985

Doug Argue
Dorit Cypis
Georgiana Kettler
Lance Kiland
Suzanne Lacy
Andrew Leicester
David Madzo
William Raaum

1984

Matt Brown
Ronald Dahl
Ken Feingold
Fred Hagstrom
Jacqueline Kielkopf
Philip Larson
Scott Seekins
Stanley Shetka

1983

Kinji Akagawa
Barbara Kreft
Bruce Charlesworth
Frank Gaard
Mike Lynch
Daniel Mason
Mary Walker
Peter Williams

1982

Steven Beyer
Leif Brush
Cork Marcheschi
Aldo Moroni
Tom Rose
Stan Shafer
Scott Stack
Leonard Titzer

It is a continual honor to work with the generous, knowledgeable, and exuberant women who make the Arts Program at The McKnight Foundation function so well. Thank you Laura Zimmermann, Sarah Loven, and Vickie Benson for making all of the various fellowship program directors feel that their ideas and concerns are always welcome and for making individual artists the centerpiece of their programs.

At the college, I want to thank Jay Coogan, president, and Karen Wirth, vice-president of Academic Affairs, for their support of this fellowship program.

Many other staff members have spent considerable time making the different aspects of the program run smoothly: Joan Olson and Kristine Wyant of Institutional Advancement; Brock Rasmussen of the Facilities Department; Tabitha Aleskerov, Steven Candy, and Rob Davis of the Communications and External Relations Department; Catherine Bicknell, Brent Meyers, and Nicole Summers of MCAD DesignWorks; MCAD Gallery installation crew Brandis Conroy, Jennifer Hibbard, Brent Lehman, and Katy Vonk; work study students Christopher Alday and Colin Marx; MCAD Gallery assistants Nathan Lewis, Ashely Peifer, and Mervy Pueblo; and our most diligent and able photographer, Rik Sferra.

KAM



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RECONSTITUTING THE LANDSCAPE: A TAMARACK ROOFTOP RESTORATION

This project, by artist Christine Baeumler in collaboration with Barr Engineer, Vice President/ Principal Kurt Leuthold and Barr Ecologist Fred Rozumalski, could not have been possible without the help of many individuals and companies.

Assistance provided by Richard A. Grobovsky, president, AMBE LTD.; Bob Englund, crew foreman, Sela Roofing; Dan Scheel, estimator/project manager, Sela Roofing; Mike Evenocheck, sales manager, Prairie Restorations, Inc.; Leslie Kelman, cistern fabrication, and Brock Rasmussen, associate vice president, facilities, MCAD.

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