Vol. 3 — Fall 2021

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ALEJANDRO MACIAS
Don't Forget the Gloves, detail, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 in.
See p. 62.

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From the editor

Just breathe. Inhale... exhale... These words might be heard in a yoga class or read in a children's book. In recent years, the growing popularization of mindfulness has made society more aware of breath as a tool to manage mental and physical health, connect with one's body, and become cognizant of one's surroundings.

Breath is unconscious yet foundational to life. The last year and a half has revealed that breath is not always available to those who need it. Many people ill with COVID-19 were saved by or perished in need of oxygen machines. Breath has become associated with social and racial justice as protesters chant "I can't breathe." Further, suffocating wildfires throughout the West and Southwest are annual reminders of climate change and the preciousness of air quality.

Breath has become a symbol in contemporary culture for the value of human life and raises the question, who has the privilege to breathe easy?

The art works featured in this issue may be viewed through this lens, though the themes and concerns within extend broadly. Kellie Bornhoft's video *Sun Breathing* was taken during severe wildfires in California last year (p. 18), while Kristin Bauer's text-based installations in public places seek to create spaces for reflection and introspection (p. 24). Jung Min's "bodyscape" drawings depict female bodies in knots and entanglements, positions of restriction and power (p. 12).

This issue's curated series of artist profiles was juried from an open call by Julio César Morales, an artist, educator, writer, and senior curator at the Arizona State University Art Museum. You can find his remarks on the theme and some of the artists featured on page 37.

As always, if you enjoy this issue, I invite you to join the SWC Membership program! Members receive a print or digital magazine subscription (six issues per year) along with other perks like artist-designed merch, free or discounted event tickets, and more. To learn about our membership options and benefits, please visit southwestcontemporary.com/membership. If you've already joined us, thank you! Your membership helps make this publication possible.

Thank you for reading,
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publisher + editor

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Kayla Collymore (top), Donna Crump (below), *Hypoxia*, 2021.
Photo: Lucero Valle Archuleta, Lucero Photography.

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Bodyscapes and Hairscapes

Marcus Civin on the work of Jung Min

Kaksi is a masked character in traditional Korean performances representing brides as rosy, quiet, and devoted. For the Nevada-based artist Jung Min, who goes by MJ with her friends, Kaksi is a censor. Whatever modesty, respect, beauty, and obligation this character celebrates and enforces, MJ rejects. For her, true self squirms behind any mask: irreverent, messy, blue, full of frustration, dread, and existential hunger.

A counterexample to Kaksi emerges in Masaki Kobayashi's film *Kwaidan* (1964). In the film's fable-like first segment "The Black Hair," a poor Japanese swordsman leaves his wife, a weaver. She begs him not to go, says she will work harder than before, slaving for a better life. He hits her with the butt of his sword and goes off to marry into a wealthy family.

Remarried, though, he misses his first wife. And his second wife can see through him: she knows he remarried only for money. So, in time, he returns to his first wife, admits he is a fool, and asks for her forgiveness. Without showing any anger, she takes him back, says she is not worthy of his love, and blames his cruelty on poverty. He says they'll be together from now on—for lifetimes—and strokes her long hair. The reunited couple gets into bed together, but in the morning the woman is gone. All that remains of her is a skull and a bizarrely heaving mass of hair. The man tries to run, but the hair pursues him. An unlikely but effective avenger, the enraged hair flies through the air and attacks, preventing the man from retreating.

I am reminded of Marina Abramović's performance *Art must be Beautiful, Artist must be Beautiful* from 1975 where Abramović is armed with a brush in one hand and a comb in the other. She aggressively attacks her hair, roughly pulling the so-called beauty implements through it and repeating the blanket command, "Art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful." The repeated action is an angry rebuke and a calculated demonstration of the

Jung Min, *Beauty of Emptiness*, 2020, mixed media, 30 x 26 in.

Jung Min, *Bun II*, 2021, charcoal on paper, 40 x 40 in.

danger in pursuing shallow beauty. Like the black hair in *Kwaidan*, Abramović's hair becomes a character. It doesn't want to be aestheticized or lay quiet. It is outraged.

From an early age, growing up in Korea, MJ refused to be docile, accept established thinking, or conform to ridiculous beauty and behavior restrictions imposed on women. In a recent video call, MJ broke down the gendered and national terms of her personal history for me. She insisted, "I don't want to be the submissive girl," and "I'm not going to try to impress Korean boys or change myself to try to fit into Korean culture."

MJ is covered in tattoos. She has a devilish, sometimes raunchy sense of humor. She likes to interrogate taboos, and unlike most people, she often says exactly what's on her mind. Like the best people, she loves to eat. Searching for alternatives to Korean culture, she moved to the United States where she thought she would belong. But, she found the U.S. uptight, consumed with orthodoxies, omissions, and violence. In the U.S., she still feels like she's nationless, like she doesn't fit in. "I'm always in this middle ground," she explains, "I don't belong anywhere."

Yet, MJ doesn't necessarily think exclusively about her identity when she's at work in the studio. Recent works also address the shift in perception and emphasis on contemplative inquiry brought on by the pandemic. Works on paper are dreamlike and exaggerated, combining human hair and masking tape with charcoal or ink. MJ calls them bodyscapes. They might be hairscapes, too. In *The Beauty of Emptiness* (2020), a strip of standard-issue, general-purpose masking tape suggests the

"My philosophy is that we have to go through this. Right now, everything is colliding. Everything is exposed. This has to happen in order to find a balance eventually."

straps and the top edge of a kind of mask or blindfold interrupting a charcoal drawing of a woman's face and hair. The otherwise sticky straps of the would-be face-covering seem to float untied next to the woman's forehead, eyebrows, and on top of her thick, shoulder-length hair. The blank space of the lower half of her face feels strangely loaded, impossibly thick, perhaps referencing a suffocating material or condition. True to its name and intended function, the tape covers. It masks. But, something is wrong. Where is the tape coming from? Who or what controls it and why? The beauty and emptiness extolled in the title don't feel entirely positive when they hit the page.

Throughout MJ's body of work are nude self-portraits in which she extends, emerges from, or immerses herself in massive snaggles of long, black hair. In some instances, she appears to wring it out and yank it. In these works, she has come out from behind the Kaksi mask. Her hair is like "The Black Hair" or Abramović's hair. It covers her eyes, her face, drapes down over her torso, her legs, and passes her feet. Tangled with hair, MJ becomes as twisted as it is. Hair consumes her within an outlandish, seemingly endless enormity. It weighs down her head. In waves, it extends and extends.

Sometimes in her work, we see MJ stretch out her arms and decisively, triumphantly extend full fists of hair as far as they will go. In these cases, hair is strength, like Samson's hair of Biblical lore. MJ's hair is her lion's mane and her declaration of power. As she intertwines with it, loops of hair also spin and twirl all around her as if they are special limbs dancing at her command.

A series of five small self-portraits from 2020 titled *Tensions and Lines* incorporate charcoal and hair. The hair is at least twice as long as the figure. In some cases, it's longer. One of the pieces shows a double figure. The upper bodies of two hairy figures have sprouted from a shared waist. In another, the figure crouches down, her head covered and surrounded by a dramatic hairscape that seems to move as if she controls it with some kind of mind power. In another, her arms are raised up, her hips are thrust back, her chest forward. The figure is a triumphant dancer at the end of a rousing routine. Her arms and hands are extended


MD 2018

Jung Ming, *Vessel II*, 2020, charcoal on paper, 55 x 50 in.

OPPOSITE
Jung Ming, *Tensions and Lines IV*, 2020, mixed media, 11 x 9 in.

and enlarged. They have gotten stronger and grown larger from winning a struggle.

MJ describes the comfort she feels with some coarseness and distortion, "I'm not attracted to elegant women. I'm attracted to the grotesque body." She elaborates further on her sense that the world, in general, is in transition. She acknowledges that fear comes with any transition but underscores that the change, however gnarly, is necessary and a long time coming. "My philosophy is that we have to go through this. Right now," she says, "everything is colliding. Everything is exposed. This has to happen in order to find a balance eventually. For me, I have to understand I am always going to be uncomfortable, not fit in perfectly. However, I need to find beauty. I find beauty in contorted bodies. I find beauty in hair. I feel like that's what people need to do now too. Right now, so many things are colliding, and so many things are exposed. Ugly things are exposed. You have to find beauty, regardless."

I ask MJ what kind of music she listens to in her studio. She says that when she is feeling good, she listens to Buddy Guy. I put on Buddy Guy and imagine MJ in her studio, feeling good, facing a blank piece of paper, charcoal or brush in hand, surrounded by the photographic studies she makes of her hair and body. I hear Buddy Guy lamenting his mistreatment, a horrible job, the times when he got knocked around or shut out of the places he wanted to go. I imagine his guitar riffs scoring MJ's action as she marks the paper, hashing out the contours of a thigh, the bridge of a nose, or at the moment she starts to render masses of hair engulfing her. "Damn right, I've got the blues," Guy sings, "I've got them from my head right down to my shoes." ×


lump in the ribcage
tiny thaw at the edge
carve out that glacial till
seep the skin of it

Breathing with the Sun

Natalie Hegert on the work of Kellie Bornhoft

On September 9, 2020, Kellie Bornhoft awoke to a dark sky, the sun a mere orb of red-orange. Smoke from wildfires across the state of California and the Pacific Northwest converged with the marine layer off the coast and blanketed the Bay Area with a thick, nearly impenetrable smog. It became known as "the day the sky turned orange," and like many, Bornhoft went outside and documented the apocalyptic sky.[1]

"It was unreal," Bornhoft relates to me over a recent Zoom call. "The air was actually not that bad that day because the smoke was all stuck above the marine layer, which is what gave it that effect. So I went outside that day and was able to record video." Bornhoft's video *Sun Breathing* (2020) is the result, a grid of nine floating, tangerine-colored suns, variably bouncing up and down with a slight shake as the artist coughs. "What was so interesting to see at the time was how fascinating the sun was—you could stare directly at it, and it was this kind of toxic orange—so this video was a reaction to being able to stare directly at the sun," she says. Holding the camera against her chest, Bornhoft, who has asthma, recorded about thirty minutes of footage, looking up at the sun while attempting to breathe deeply, exploring the relationship between her "fascination of looking at the sun but also the impact that [the smoke] had on my body, which was changing my breath," rendering her unable to contain her cough. Bornhoft then condensed and stacked the footage into a grid to create a two-minute looped video, the suns becoming what the artist likens a "chorus."

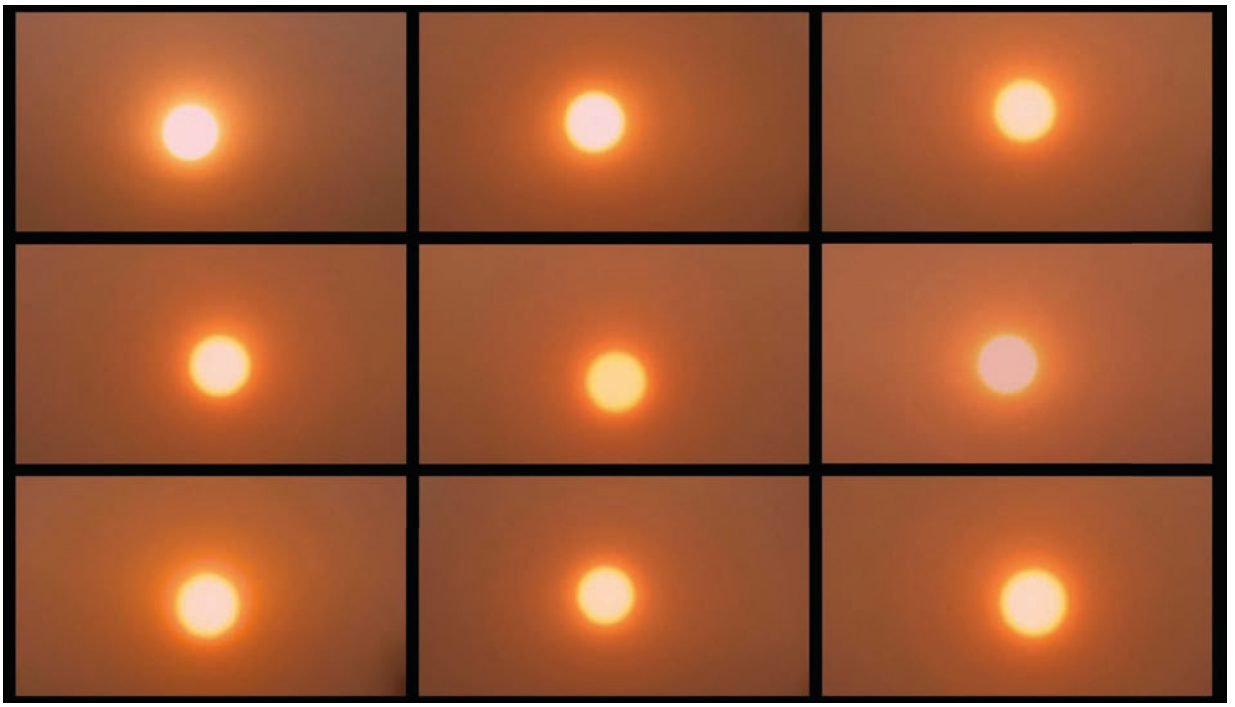
Watching *Sun Breathing* progress, I am struck by a chord of melancholia, a kind of despondent ache for the future, for the damage already done. The shaky suns, floating tenuously in their far-awayness, seem to extend only the most fragile of lifelines to an ailing planet. The apocalyptic orange sky over San Francisco was an event seared into collective memory during a year when everything felt like it was falling apart and when the future

Kellie Bornhoft, *Shifting Landscapes Static Bounds*, installation view, 2019, projected looped video, tarp, plaster, steel, bronze, found rocks, acrylic, wood, custom printed tape, printed book.

Plaque text:
lump in the ribcage
tiny thaw at the edge.

carve out that glacial till

seep the skin of it.



loomed with uncertainty. Bornhoft then asked me if I had lost power during the deadly deep freeze in February 2021 in Texas. I was lucky in that I'd only suffered frozen pipes but no power outages, but I am still struck by the fragility of the systems we rely upon, built upon foundations of avarice. "There's this kind of fire and ice of the last year," she says ruefully. "I think those moments are really important because we get caught up in the status quo," she continues. "There's science and there's data telling us that the planet is warming and we are moving towards disaster but it's not until we have those memorable experiences that it really saturates our psyche."

Bornhoft's grandmother always keeps a box of ice skates at her house near Kansas City, Missouri, for ice-skating on a nearby pond. The pond, however, has never frozen over during Bornhoft's lifetime—and yet the box of ice skates are kept, just in case. "The concept of generational memory is really important to the discourse of how we understand climate change, because climate change is so slow," she says. "My grandmother, who is almost ninety, may not recognize it, but she is able to remember a different ecosystem that she lived in, with different kinds of weather patterns that are unfamiliar to me. But without the box of ice skates [the difference] is not measurable, noticeable, or tangible."

In Bornhoft's book, *Shifting Landscapes Static Bounds,* published as part of her MFA thesis work at Ohio State University in 2019, she references Timothy Morton's concept of the "hyperobject," something that is so vast in temporal and spatial scale as to be incomprehensible to traditional ways of human understanding—climate change being the most significant example. "The issue is not the distribution of

Scan QR code for video.

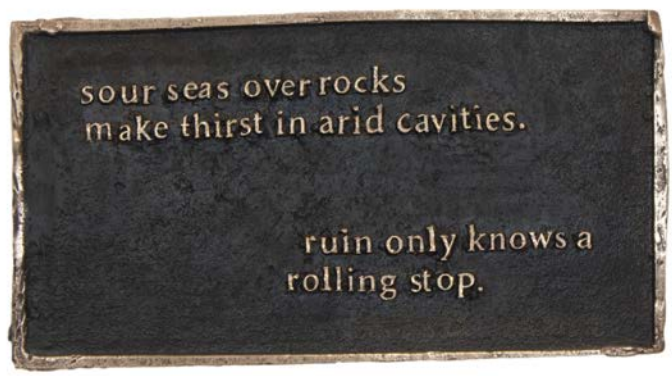
Kellie Bornhoft, *Sun Breathing*, 2020, looping video, 2:00.

OPPOSITE
Kellie Bornhoft, plaque detail from *Shifting Landscapes Static Bounds*, 2019, bronze, patina, 3 x 5 in. Set of 12.

information, it is the overwhelming affect of such information," she writes:

> The sickness of our environment is so sublime that we disengage from the facts to cope. News articles and data charts, if taken in, petrify. Headlines float upon the surface of my understanding but in their enormity they fail to saturate my being. This year California has had the worst fires in history. While some people may understand the depths of what another couple degrees Celsius warmer planet looks like, I find it hard to grasp.[2]

(2018-present), she uses forest-fire generated charcoal to take rubbings of the bark of native trees on public lands across the United States. In her two-channel video installation *Boundless Sediments* (2020), we see lines of poetry stamped in ocean sand and washed away by the waves, while Bornhoft alternately pounds a large rock of hardened plaster to dust or pushes it across a paved parking lot, leaving behind a marked trail as the stone slowly diminishes. "I'm really interested in how the materiality of the earth is transforming because of our human presence on it, and the damage that we are doing," Bornhoft says. "Two things that I try to approach in my work are the narrative of our relationship to the earth and its changing circumstances but also getting that physicality and tangibility is important to me."



Bornhoft's work collaborates with landscapes in the Southwest, as well as the West Coast, Midwest, and beyond, presenting both the long view—of geologic time, histories of colonization and resource extraction—and intimate perspectives in poetry and gesture. In developing the project *Shifting Landscapes Static Bounds*, Bornhoft visited national park sites in Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming, leaving behind bronze plaques bearing stanzas of her poetry and taking stones in return. In Bornhoft's drawing series *Burnishings*

Bornhoft's practice straddles sculpture, installation, video, and performance, but post-grad school, and as COVID closed shops and studios, she has been drawn to video, partly out of necessity but also for its narrative potential. "I think right now I have an itch to make more physical objects since I've been working primarily on video for the last couple of years.

Kellie Bornhoft
Boundless Sediments, 2020, 2-channel video installation, projection, plaster, wood, headphones, and enamel, dimensions variable.

OPPOSITE
Kellie Bornhoft, *Burnishings*, 2018-present, installation view, charcoal on paper, 126 drawings, 14 x 11 in each.

But I see the two really tied together: undulating, going in and out, woven together," she says. The day the shelter-in-place announcement was made for Santa Clara County, California, Bornhoft was installing *Boundless Sediments* at a gallery in San Jose. The installation remains shuttered, just as she left it, likely to finally open in the fall.

Bornhoft's latest video, still in progress and as yet untitled, juxtaposes the landscape—bodies of water, faults, and fissures—with her pregnant body. It was during that unprecedented fire season last year, with the sky cloaked in a blanket of smoke, when she learned she was pregnant. "A lot of [the rhetoric surrounding] environmentalism is 'for the future generation' or 'for our children's children' but there [needs to be] an accountability for where we are at right now," she says. "There's something so heteronormative about that narrative, that procreation is the goal. But really it shouldn't be so human-centric, it should also be for the plants, for the flora and fauna. It doesn't have to centralize a human legacy." In her work, Bornhoft draws attention to the tangible and material changes in our environment, so we can understand our impact while locating our relationship to our ever-shifting and always-changing planet. Our approach should be more grounded in "sensitivity and sincerity" to the world around us, she says. Perhaps, in that way, we can learn to shape the change, to draw the anthropocene era away from the apocalyptic. ×

1. Kelsey Rexroat, "The Day the San Francisco Sky Turned Orange," *The New Yorker*, April 20, 2021.

2. Kellie Bornhoft, *Shifting Landscapes Static Bounds*, 2019.


AND WE LOOKED
AND WE LOOKED
BUT WE COULD NOT
SEE

Creating Space to Breathe

Lynn Trimble on the work of Kristin Bauer

Alternative facts. The big lie. Fake news. They're all markers of the American zeitgeist, as propaganda continues its march out of the shadows. For years, multimedia artist and writer Kristin Bauer has been exploring language, communication, and propaganda. Now her work, and the questions it raises, take on new urgency.

Based in Tempe, Arizona, Bauer uses sculpture, installation, and paintings to prompt consideration of the roles words and images play in creating, driving, embracing, and amplifying ideologies and actions—including those that impact the ability of individuals and communities to breathe freely, both in a literal and figurative sense.

During a year heavily influenced by the Black Lives Matter movement and the COVID-19 pandemic, several of Bauer's installations created spaces for community members to breathe, even as other public work called out the patriarchy and white supremacy that prevents so many from breathing fully and freely.

In 2020, for example, Bauer created a series of text interventions for the storefronts of Phoenix women-owned creative spaces, and two text installations comprising her *Untitled Gestures* exhibition at Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, which continues through October 17, 2021.

An exterior piece at SMoCA reads "and a shared longing connects us." An interior piece reads "across an ever-shifting terrain." All were created in response to "the emotional and psychological toll of the pandemic." All convey a sense of hope and shared community.

By contrast, her 2021 *Dia/Chronic* banner installation at ASU Art Museum sets a darker tone, reflecting "the way language and meaning evolve, with a focus on the history of propaganda." Here she's taken "we have seen the enemy and he is us," a phrase that appeared on the first Earth Day poster, and layered it with "we have seen the enemy and she is us," an approach that calls to mind the perils of binary thinking.

According to her formal artist statement, Bauer "pursues a long-form aesthetic exploration of communication, influence, and collective ideological movement." She's worked with varying degrees of symbolism and abstraction to consider the ways human beings make meaning amid the shifting landscape of visual

Kristin Bauer, *Cautionary Tale (We Looked)*, 2018, auto wrap vinyl on museum bathroom mirror, dimensions variable. Collection of Mesa Contemporary Art Museum. Photo: Grey Shed Studio. Courtesy the artist.

culture, where perspectives are always impacted by personal and societal context.

The statement also affirms Bauer's "focus on deconstructing formal visual and written editing practices" and her "cross-disciplinary devotion to prompting introspection and dialogue." Tattered books strewn across a long table in her studio (with topics that include film, the poetics of space, choreography, and the formation of the Soviet Union) hint at her facility with interweaving a broad swath of historical and academic material.

Born in Minnesota, Bauer earned her BFA at Arizona State University in 2004 and her MA at Ottawa University in 2010. Early on, she did primarily paintings and other works rooted in autobiography. Detailed studies in art therapy and psychology prompted a shift in focus to the ways text and image impact how people interpret their own experiences and their environment. Bauer did some of her earliest text interventions at her Tempe home, using spaces from interior walls to the street-facing side of her garage door.

Bauer first showed text-based work at Eye Lounge, an artist-run gallery space in Phoenix's Roosevelt Row, where she's one of more than 150 artists on the impressive alumni roster. In 2012, she was one of seven Arizona artists to receive a prestigious artist grant from Phoenix Art Museum's Contemporary Forum. Her work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally, including the 2015 Transborder Biennial in Mexico and the U.S.

Typically she uses all capital letters in her work, favoring one particular font. In a 2020 interview with Steve Goldstein for KJZZ, Bauer explained that she prefers a font called Impact, which is prevalent in contemporary meme culture. At times her text and imagery

Kristin Bauer, *Untitled Gestures #4*, 2020, site-specific vinyl lettering, dimensions variable. Curated by Lauren R. O'Connell. Collection of Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. Photo: Grey Shed Studio. Courtesy the artist.

OPPOSITE
Kristin Bauer, *Dia/Chronic*, 2021, installation view, ASU Art Museum, dye sublimation eco inks on poly nylon banner. Photo: Grey Shed Studio. Courtesy the artist.

are crisp and clear, other times they're collapsed or obscured.

During the course of her career, Bauer has worked with a variety of materials. For many years, she created plexiglass cubes or panels, often stacking or arranging them to play off one another. Sometimes she layers two-dimensional plexiglass pieces mounted on floating shelves. Bauer says she enjoys working with translucent materials and mirrors in part because they bring in their surroundings, adding more layers of meaning and poetics.

In recent years, she's been working with feather flags, a vertical marker used in outdoor advertising, as well as strips of fabric she works on a sewing machine inside the studio space she shares with fellow artist and husband Emmett Potter. "I borrow from the methods of manufacturing and subvert them," she says, offering the example of banners and flags she imbues with sculptural properties.

"I like using banal materials that aren't usually looked at for their aesthetic appeal," Bauer explains. "I like to push the polarities of making them beautiful and bringing out a bit of the darkness."

Like many artists, Bauer says her practice has been heavily influenced by the isolation of pandemic life.

"A lot of the work has not had my hand in it, intentionally, for so long," she says. "That's natural when you're working with things that take place in a void, but when you're in the middle of something and it's happening in a rapidly shifting context, turning the lens inward is unavoidable." Several plexiglass pieces made during the pandemic reference full-length mirrors. Propped against a wall in her studio, one reads "time will tell" in large white letters.

Although some pieces reference what's happening in the political world and what that means on a personal level, Bauer's work isn't intended to be didactic. "My work reflects the energies that are out there," she says. "I don't focus on any particular political figure or issue; I like to look at the interrelation."

Bauer cites a diverse range of source material such as foundational social psychology, classical Greek culture, and her own poetry. Books stacked near her laptop computer include titles by Noam Chomsky, Allen Ginsberg, Audre Lorde, George Orwell, and Andre Perry. "I could use a line from a Patti Smith poem or a Stalin speech," she says. "There's an architecture to the letters when I strip them down."

For the 2019 group exhibition *In, On & Of Paper* at Bentley Gallery in Phoenix, she showed *Colossus*, a laser-cut Tyvek work reading "In a moment of sink or swim," which flowed vertically downward and spilled onto the floor. For some, it likely called to mind the famed Colossus of Rhodes sculpture considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. But the intrigue inherent in Bauer's work is the difficulty of pinning down exactly what she might be referencing at any given moment, which leaves viewers to construct their own associations and play with fresh interpretations.

Bauer also culls from family history and lore, including the German heritage that helps to explain her fondness for the Bauhaus aesthetic, reflected in her frequent use of the colors blue, red, and yellow. "I'm very influenced by mid-century print and design principles," she says. Bauer draws extensively from silent films, taking photographs as she watches them, then playing with the imagery. "I source a lot of things online in the public domain."

From board rooms to festivals, Bauer's work has been shown in myriad settings. Mesa Contemporary Art Museum in Arizona commissioned text interventions for two bathrooms, plus a board room where the door has text reading "from a different vantage point the glass ceiling becomes a floor." For *Cautionary Tale (We Looked)*, text on a full-length mirror in the men's room reads "and we looked and we looked but we could not

Artist performing with *Counter(Balance)* at Franconia Sculpture Park, Shafer, MN, for Alchemy + Intention: Summer Solstice Performance Art Festival, 2021. Photo: Panic Studio LA. Courtesy the artist.

OPPOSITE
Kristin Bauer, *Seek and Find, Wait and See*, 2019-2020, synthetic polymer pigment, cast acrylic, mirrored plexiglass, 47 x 17.5 x 3 in. Photo: Grey Shed Studio. Courtesy the artist.

see," a phrase rich with wry humor and implied social commentary.

For In Flux, an Arizona multi-municipality public art project, she created a piece called *Seen*, which coupled an adapted still image for the star of a 1918 silent film with art deco design and text reading "look up and see me" on a commercial building in downtown Tempe. For Bauer, it was a way to explore the "cultural and individual search for visibility."

In 2013, Bauer and Potter painted a collaborative mural across a cinderblock wall spanning more than forty feet, where the phrase "meet me in the middle" was set between vintage-style images of a man and a woman appearing to talk by telephone. In 2019, Bauer worked with Phoenix Art Museum to create a maypole-inspired interactive text-based installation for the Form Festival at Arcosanti.

Currently, Bauer is working on a four-part land activation titled *Reinventing the Wheel*, which is being realized on different solstice and equinox dates. With this work, she'll bring various approaches to "deconstructing White mythologies." She's also in the final stages of working on a book that will document and explore a portion of her work, which is scheduled to be released in September of 2022.

Her growing exhibition history is evidence of Bauer's comprehensive body of work, the ways her creative practice continues to evolve, and her gift for creating space where others can construct, find, and shift their own meanings. ×

Reviews

Bradley Kerl: Balm

May 22–June 26, 2021
Ivester Contemporary, Austin

Bradley Kerl's pictures are clearly made for and about looking. Whether they depict a tidy Italian garden, a cool sunset vista, or a jubilant mess of flowers, the Houston artist's brightly colored, carefully composed oil paintings catalog Kerl's gaze, and inevitably draw ours. Often structured around windows, mirrors, and phone camera views, each of Kerl's works springs from a quiet, prolonged look at the world. In his solo exhibition *Balm* at Ivester Contemporary, Kerl's pleasant pictures evoke a sense of calm and remind us that life sometimes contains something of the sublime, as long as we keep looking for it.

For example, *A Warehouse Window Sunset* (all works 2021) is just what its title suggests: a darkened warehouse window frames—for a moment—a passing, cottony pink cloud. It's a simple, even banal construction that also hums with pathos. And yet, Kerl's placid, even hand manages to draw something transporting out of the image without falling into cliche.

Kerl's canvases also increasingly integrate the influence of the artist's young children. At nearly seven by five feet, *Son, Sun, Lily & The Moon* is a meticulous copy of a drawing by Kerl's son in oil paint. The artist reproduces the original sketch's haphazard scribbles, planet stickers, and even the frayed edges of the notebook paper at a monumental scale. With it, Kerl softly pokes fun at art-historical gravitas while finessing an unexpected set of technical challenges.

Rainbow Sunset at The Carpenter is another *trompe l'oeil*. This time it's a piece of colored paper tacked to a corkboard. The corkboard's speckled surface has been rendered in funky, unblended marks that hint at the artist's quirky sense of humor. In both works, Kerl seems to have absorbed some of the freshness and liveliness of his kids' first sketches. Whether looking through a window or at a child's drawing, Kerl's paintings are a celebration of the meditative moments that occur when we pause to truly observe our surroundings. ×

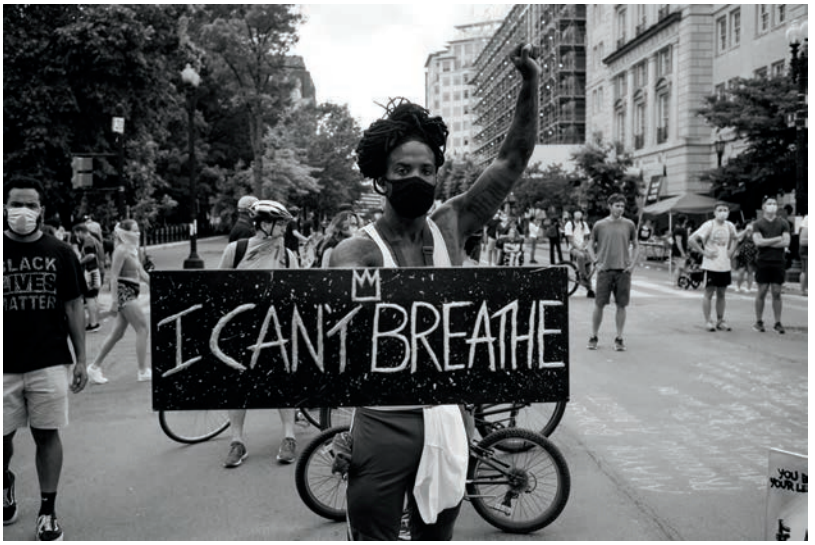
by Lauren Moya Ford

Bradley Kerl, *Son Sun Lily & The Moon*, 2021, oil on canvas, 80 x 60 in.

Bradley Kerl, *Shangri La II*, 2019, oil on canvas, 96 x 72 in.

Breath Taking

March 13–September 5, 2021
New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe



It's subtle before it grabs you.

Visitors to the New Mexico Museum of Art's *Breath Taking* exhibition—which displays more than forty-five wall pieces, sculptural installations, and video/sound works—might not initially notice the audio recording of a deep inhale-exhale playing throughout the room. Then it's inescapable.

The audible breathing could stir topical emotions, ranging from heavy (mortality, pandemic trauma) to beautiful (the sacred nature of the breath), especially when viewing works such as Frank Rodick's *Joseph (2004/09/26/00/15)*. At close range, the pigment print emulates geological formations photographed from space, but the picture takes a shocking and unexpected human form when seen at a stepped-back distance, depicting the artist's father taking his final planetary breath.

The exhibition, which examines breath from social, scientific, and metaphysical frameworks, had been in the making prior to the pandemic. Curator Kate Ware was able to pivot to encompass brand new works, such as Tony Mobley's powerful black-and-white photographs of Black Lives Matter and social justice protests in Washington, D.C. One of Jill O'Bryan's two drawings honoring George Floyd includes a somber blessing of holy dirt from El Santuario de Chimayó, Chimayó, New Mexico.

Sant Khalsa's *The Sacred Breath*, the source of the breath soundtrack (co-produced with David Scheffler), is an elaborate mixed-media installation toward the show's end. The piece, which contains chemistry flasks with primary elements and a prayer book, comments on the linked relationship between trees and humans.

Shaun Leonardo's *I Can't Breathe* is another work that rattles the core. Leonardo, in a video that shows the artist leading a self-defense workshop and performance, recites impassioned pearls of wisdom about love, identity, and how individuals can blossom when free from the clutches of fear. A Leonardo quote summarizes the exhibition that plays the long game of promoting quality existential questions and (perhaps) some answers.

"Nothing I teach you here will entirely save you," Leonardo says. "[I] open people up so that they can be themselves." ×

by Steve Jansen

Sant Khalsa, *The Sacred Breath*, 1992/2021, installation view, mixed-media installation. Courtesy the artist.

Tony Mobley, *Mike D., Washington, D.C.*, 2020, pigment print. Courtesy the artist.

Imminent Archive: George Bolster & Dong Kyu Kim

May 29–July 25, 2021
Rule Gallery, Marfa

In *Imminent Archive,* George Bolster and Dong Kyu Kim exhibit exquisite textile works that examine time, displacement, and the human search for home.

Bolster's *The Epic Territories of the Now Unprotected Sublime Latterly Titled American* is a jacquard tapestry that covers two gallery walls and depicts an image of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah. The piece is lush, gorgeous, and, yes, grand. The convoluted title of the piece hints at the complicated creation and ongoing political fight over this public land. Mounted on top of this piece are several smaller tapestries of the Allen Telescope Array—a field of large radio antennae in California built to scan the cosmos for extraterrestrial life. The combination of modern technology and ancient geology alludes to civilization's unquenchable desire for claiming space. Earth isn't enough; we must manifest our destiny beyond it.

Kim works with themes just as intrinsic to human experience but uses materials culled from his life that one might think banal—receipts, ticket stubs, wrappers. In *Consuming Memories*, he uses the jogakbo style—a traditional Korean quilting technique—to stitch together ephemera he collected from 2007 (the year he immigrated to America) to 2017. Kim is a fashion designer and the composition and color arrangement of these "scraps," as they are called in the press release, are delicate and beautiful. What results in these framed pieces is an attempt to summarize a newly Americanized life by "following the money." There is an uncomfortable humor to this work: recycling the physical detritus of everyday consumerism for the art market's.

Besides the similarities in their techniques and their focus on time (Bolster: eons; Kim: a decade), it is a deeper resonance that stirred me. Both artists immigrated to the United States and without knowing the circumstances that brought them here, there is a feeling of physical and temporal displacement in their work—one that syncs to the experience of visiting remote Marfa. In bringing these artists together, guest curator Jane Burke, a curatorial assistant at the Denver Art Museum, pointedly asks us how we got here (Marfa, America, Earth) and, further, reminds us that we are the living ancestors of future beings. ×

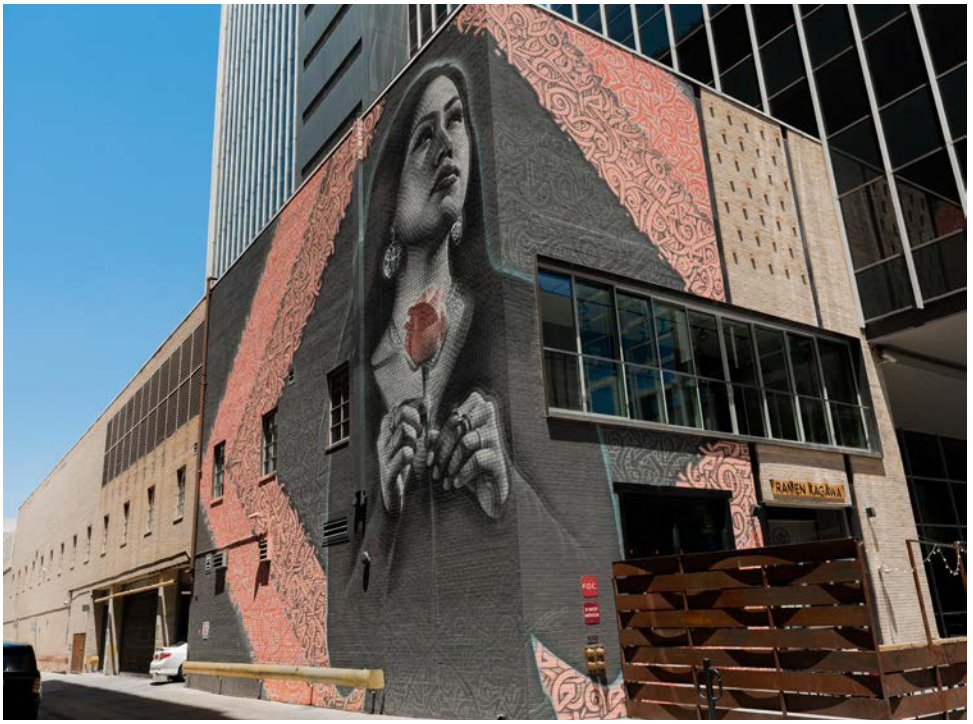
by Sommer Browning

Dong Kyu Kim, *Consuming Memories #11*, 2020, paper receipts, tickets, thread and microfiber cloths, 36 x 24 in.

George Bolster, *The Epic Territories of the Now Unprotected Sublime Latterly Titled American*, 2020, jacquard tapestry, 120 x 324 in.

Si'alik Hiosik / Morning Blossom

Downtown Phoenix



Thomas "Breeze" Marcus and Miles MacGregor ("El Mac") have been friends since their early graffiti days in and around downtown Phoenix in the mid-1990s. The two shared the same art mentor, Ishmael Duenas, and they both ended up members of the NG Graffiti crew. So when Breeze saw an opportunity for a *paid* mural gig come up in the same downtown Phoenix, he sent a link to El Mac and they jumped at the chance. NG is a graffiti crew solely because they started painting before the term Street Art became popularized and their roots are in traditional graffiti style.

Breeze and El Mac have worked together on small projects before but nothing on the magnitude of the new mural *Si'alik Hiosik/Morning Blossom*. The mural stands forty-five feet high by eighty-five feet wide and is located on First Avenue and Monroe—literally in the heart of downtown Phoenix. Their collaborations consist of abstract pattern designs by Breeze surrounding traditional portraiture by El Mac done in his signature style of repeating contour lines rippling out from the center in black, white, and shades of gray.

Breeze is a member of the Akimel O'odham tribe—the original inhabitants of the Phoenix area—and grew up on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. When he and El Mac discussed the project, they felt it was important to include a model who was also from the same tribe. The model they eventually depicted is the daughter of a family friend and neighbor of Breeze from the Salt River Community. "Phoenix has such a diverse and vibrant Native community but there is only one tribe that is the original inhabitants of this area and that was very important to us."

The young girl holds a solitary rose in her clutched hands and looks out over busy and bustling downtown Phoenix like a benevolent guardian angel. Her face offers serenity and strength to those who may be struggling daily on the streets underneath her proud visage. Inspired by Alphonse Mucha, Caravaggio, and Vermeer, El Mac's portrait masters the balance between dark and light, *sol y sombra*, while Breeze's abstract designs surround and protect her visually and metaphorically from the chaos of modern life—the Southwestern equivalent of Gatsby's eyes of Doctor Eckleburg. ×

by Joshua Rose

Thomas "Breeze" Marcus and Miles MacGregor ("El Mac"), *Si'alik Hiosik/Morning Blossom*, 2021, 45 x 85 ft. Courtesy the artists.

Voice-Over: Zineb Sedira

May 8, 2021–January 30, 2022
Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale

Centering the revolutionary power of culture, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art presents the first U.S. solo exhibition for Zineb Sedira, whose layered storytelling crashes through conceptual boundaries between the personal and the political to amplify the complexities of history, identity, memory, and resistance. The London-based artist was born in Paris to Algerian immigrant parents in 1963. In 2022, she'll become the first artist of African descent to represent France at the Venice Biennale.

Guest curator Dr. Natasha Boas anchors the exhibition with a new iteration of *Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go* (2021), a 2019 installation inspired by the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival of Algiers, where resistance to colonialism took the form of euphoric creative expression. The installation features four scenes, including a life-sized diorama of the artist's living room (*Way of Life*) filled with books, vinyl records, and other objects rooted in '60s counter-culture. Desert-related objects prompt consideration of Indigenous peoples, migration, and transnational identity in the Sahara and Sonoran deserts.

Both artist and activist, Sedira challenges viewers to reimagine the living room as a hub for revolutionary ideation and activity rather than an isolated escape from social injustice magnified by the pandemic, police brutality, and authoritarianism. Nearby, viewers see Sedira's video *mise-en-scène* (2019) made using found decaying film footage, which signals her facility for shifting narratives. Two short rows of seats allude to the fact that the museum site was formerly home to a cinema complex. Throughout, the artist suggests museums as sites of both oppression and liberation.

Additional works provide insight into Sedira's practice, which spans more than twenty-five years. A video triptych (*Mother Tongue*, 2002) highlights her embrace of storytelling as a way to connect cultures and generations. A dystopian two-screen projection with sound (*The End of the Road*, 2010) punctuates her subversion of documentary conventions.

By illuminating Sedira's ongoing journey with culture as resistance, the exhibition calls on others to co-create revolutionary pathways. ×

by Lynn Trimble

Zineb Sedira, *Way of Life*, 2021, part of the installation *Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go* (in four scenes), 2021, installation view, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, from the exhibition *Voice-Over: Zineb Sedira*, 2021-2022. Photo: Claire A. Warden.

KAYLA COLLYMORE + DONNA CRUMP

APOLO GOMEZ

SARA HUBBS

WEN-HANG LIN

ELLEN BABCOCK

STEFAN JENNINGS BATISTA

DANIEL HOJNACKI

ALEXANDRA LECHIN

ALEJANDRO MACIAS

JULIA C. MARTIN

DALLIN MAYBEE

JILL O'BRYAN

ROSALINDA PACHECO

AUGUSTINE ROMERO

BRENDA STUMPF

ROSSITZA TODOROVA

EVERTON TSOSIE

Inhale. Exhale.

We often take for granted the simple act of breathing, until, of course, it becomes difficult. When George Floyd was killed as his breathing was restricted while being held to the ground on May 25, 2020, social justice movements mobilized in an effort to stop and denounce the repeated killing of Black and Brown people at the hands of law enforcement. The simple act of breathing is necessary and unconscious, but only if we are lucky enough to have that breath travel both in and out. As some exhale at this moment when the pandemic is shifting, we are coming to terms that nothing will ever be the same as before. Questions are being drawn about what the future will look like and we wonder, will there be more cultural equity or a forthcoming reckoning? The artists in this issue of *Southwest Contemporary* magazine address our current cultural climate and offer a poetic and political reflection of the times while highlighting artistic practices in the Southwest.

Several artists address possible futures of intimacy, beginning with Kayla Collymore and Donna Crump's performance of bodies interacting. In their work, the dancers' actions are triggered by the events of the last year, embracing each other while covered in veils and face masks, representing both healing and resistance. Apolo Gomez's photographic portraits center around desire, dislocation of the artist's identity, and relationships with male-identified people through a queer lens. Sara Hubbs utilizes what she calls the "shelf-life of the female body" by exploring connections between consumer waste products and her own transgenerational relationships with her daughter and her mother. Her unique approach to sculpture brings together recycled materials with new approaches to glass-making, bringing a fresh perspective to how these objects embody notions of protection, care, and resilience.

The selected artists reflect a desire to help build and connect physical and emotional tolerance during our current time while also questioning our intimate relationships with one another.

—JULIO CÉSAR MORALES

Julio César Morales is an artist, educator, writer, and senior curator at the Arizona State University Art Museum. His curatorial work includes solo exhibitions with Superflex, Suzanne Lacy, Nina Beier, Iván Argote, Tania Candiani, Miguel Calderón, Claudia Peña Salinas, Yoshua Okón, Koki Tanaka, Jennie C. Jones, Miguel Angel Ríos, Pablo Helguera, and Liz Cohen. His own artwork explores labor, migration, and underground economies, and has been shown at the Lyon Biennale, the Istanbul Biennale, the Singapore Biennale, and Prospect 3, among others. The recipient of a 2020 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, his art is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Kadist Foundation, and others.

Kayla Collymore and Donna Crump

Houston, TX
IG: @kaycollymore
IG: @gooddance1984

by Tamara Johnson

Hypoxia, a gorgeous dance and video collaboration between Kayla Collymore and Donna Crump, begins with visceral thuds. The dancers' brown, masked bodies fall to the floor with disturbingly good impressions of lifelessness. While this introduction unequivocally makes reference to events of the last year, the rest of the piece celebrates respiration, recovery, and resilience.

"For me, movement and everything begins with breath," says Collymore, an accomplished dancer and yoga instructor. "Watching so many lives taken away on TV really started to sit in my body during the pandemic. I couldn't sleep."

"This project is like a reset, a cleaning of the slate," says Crump, a choreographer, dancer, actress, and director of Houston-based Good Dance. "We wanted it to feel like peeling away layers—a delayering of stereotypes, ways of feeling bound, all the tension from the last year." The piece does feel like a ritual healing.

The *Hypoxia* choreography emerged from improvisational movement research grounded in breath, interconnection, and response. The dancers are often in contact with their backs. This communicates strength and support, but it also says volumes about Collymore's and Crump's creative connection. Their timing is phenomenally synchronous, despite not being visible to each other. It looks like they've been dancing together for ages.

All the more impressive, then, that this partnership actually formed in 2020. The dancers met at a Brown Girls Do Ballet Calendar photoshoot last October and crossed paths months later in Houston, where they are both currently based. "The personal connection was magic," says Crump. "Art started pouring out of our relationship and we're continuing to move forward."

"I was not expecting this at all, especially during the pandemic," says Collymore. "Our movements complement each other. She's fiery, strong, feisty. I'm more like the flow. It's very yin and yang."

In addition to the organic, regenerative quality of the dancing, *Hypoxia* also makes meaningful use of video editing. There's a strong theme of interwovenness throughout the piece. Near the end of the video, the screen breaks into multiple view boxes, showing the dancers' entangled legs as they crawl purposively together. The visual effect creates spidery multitudes of tightly related bodies and directions.

Hypoxia continues to be a work in progress. The piece will be presented in September in Houston and New Orleans as a live, immersive, multimedia performance. The experience of seeing it in person is sure to be a powerful one. "We hope the audience takes away a sense of balance," say Collymore and Crump. ×

Scan QR code for video.

Hypoxia

Direction/choreography/performance by Kayla Collymore and Donna Crump.

Videography: Kamm Myers, Paradox Productions.

Production: Lolita Rodriguez & Martha Diaz, Collectively Classic.

Edited by: Kayla Collymore.

Kayla Collymore (left), Donna Crump (right), *Hypoxia*, 2021. Photo: Lucero Valle Archuleta, Lucero Photography.

Donna Crump (left) and Kayla Collymore (right), *Hypoxia*, 2021. Photo: Lucero Valle Archuleta, Lucero Photography.

OPPOSITE
Donna Crump (left), Kayla Collymore (right), *Hypoxia*, 2021. Photo: Keda Sharber, Images by Papillon.

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Apolo Gomez

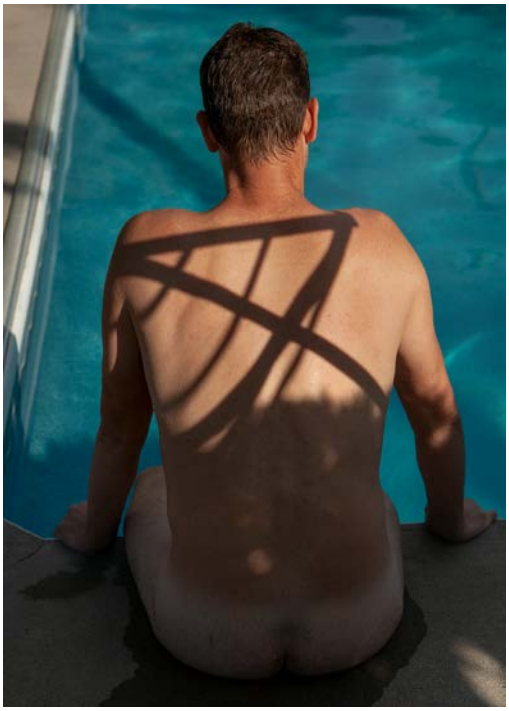
by Angie Rizzo

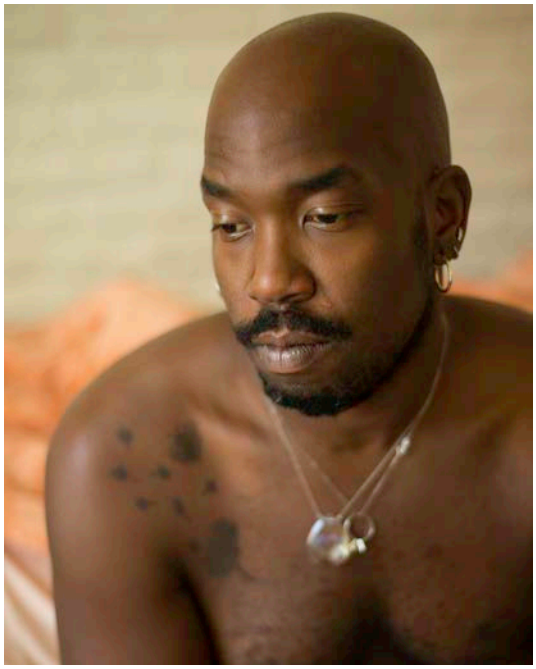
You Make Me Want to Be a Man by New Mexico-based artist Apolo Gomez is an exploration of masculinity, desire, and intimacy. The series of environmental portraits feature men in various states of dress and undress with a palpable sense of intimacy. The depth and nuance expressed by the pictured men challenge masculine stereotypes and embraces intimacy over sexuality.

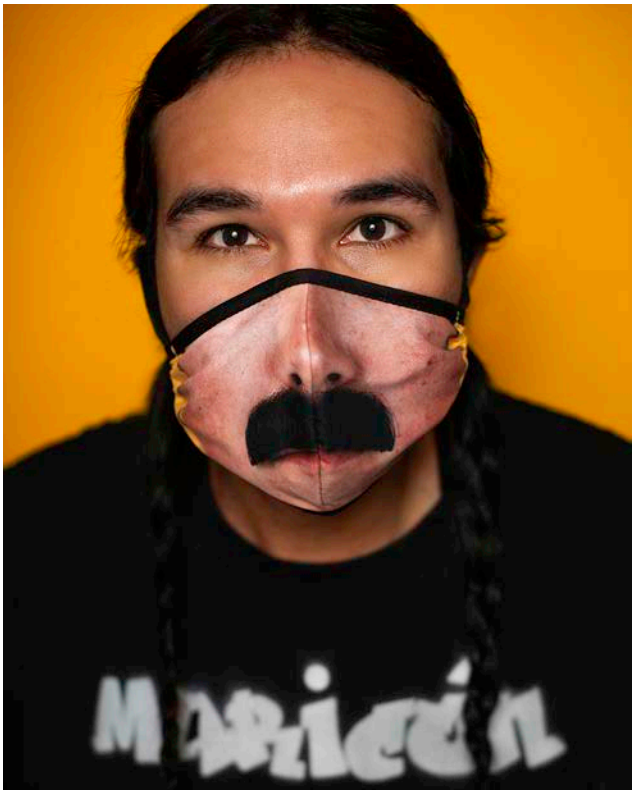
Audre Lorde wrote that Americans often mistake the pornographic for erotic in her essay *Uses of the Erotic: the Erotic as Power* from 1978, and therefore fail to recognize the depth and complexity embodied in the erotic. Gomez addresses the tension and perhaps confusion between sexuality, sensuality, and intimacy in his portraits, and like Lorde, embraces the erotic as a multiplicity of being. The men in Gomez's portraits are simultaneously masculine, sensual, intimate, and are engaged with an interaction of desire. Unlike pinups, these figures do not represent objects of desire but embrace the exchange of desire through gaze and touch. In one portrait, a man is nestled into a wall of ivy while he gazes into the lens. The leaves of ivy touch his face and body, which appear to elicit a sensual pleasure. In another, a man is seated in an interior setting and in the background are embroidered pillows, signaling a familial past. He squeezes his thigh near the knee and the pressure marks of his hands are visible, while his intense stare is focused on the photographer/viewer. These are complicated images that go beyond the sexual to visually describe the nuance and character of Gomez's subjects.

In a continuation of Gomez's exploration of masculinity, he turns the camera on himself resulting in a conceptually layered image. The studio photograph utilizes lights and a backdrop and the props include a mask with an image of a handle-bar mustached face and a T-shirt that reads "maricón," which means "faggot" in English. The self-portrait self-consciously pieces together identity and legacy, providing the viewer with insight into the person to whom all those desirous gazes were originally focused. ×

Apolo Gomez, *Brian in the Garden*, 2020, archival inkjet print. Copyright Apolo Gomez. Courtesy the artist.







Apolo Gomez, *Tamon*, 2020.

Apolo Gomez, *Homage to Cathy and Joey (self-portrait)*, 2021.

OPPOSITE

Apolo Gomez, *Poolside with Luke*, 2020.

Apolo Gomez, *David*, 2020.

Apolo Gomez, *Taylor*, 2020.

All images: archival inkjet print. Copyright Apolo Gomez. Courtesy the artist.

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Sara Hubbs

by Lauren Tresp

Sara Hubbs is intimately familiar with breath's capacity to be expressive, communicable, and life-giving—qualities of breath we've collectively reckoned with over the course of the last year and a half. Working frequently in blown glass, which uses breath to create various shapes and forms, Hubbs's sculptural works and installations examine concepts of value, temporality, and care.

Hubbs's blown-glass sculptures begin with source materials that are deeply embedded with human values while also intrinsically valueless. Children's toy packaging is at once coded with the love and care involved in gifting and the excess and wastefulness of plastic toys that end up in landfills once they've been forgotten. Plastic food packaging provides sustenance with invaluable convenience that is matched by the ease with which it is tossed away. From assemblages of these raw materials, the artist creates plaster molds and then uses breath to inflate molten glass into slouching, bulging, and gleaming forms and vessels. Some of the objects become zombie-like in their glassy refusal to die. Others are voluptuous and effulgent, with shapely lumps and folds of skin.

Each of these sculptures retains an embodied-ness that is drawn out by the artist's installations in which the objects play off of one another. In *Of The Horizon* (2021), three blown-glass forms are set into a (coffin-like) bed of black sand, like mutant anemones at the bottom of the sea or creatures of an alien desert. In *Las Fashionistas* (2019-21), a vessel (*Body 4 Lyfe*) strides futilely forward on anchored steel legs, while its companion, *Fall Flat On Your Face*, has done just that and lies defeated—but at least it lies on a luxe bed of faux fur.

It comes naturally to speak of these objects as characters. They act as corollaries to the human body, riddled as it is with its own questions of societal value and perishability. "During COVID, both breath and intergenerational care became my focus. Home-bound with my school-aged child while my husband cared for patients at the hospital, I struggled to care for my sick mother from afar, restricting my breath around the people I cared for and guarding them against the breath of others," she writes in her artist statement. "Blowing glass, sweating through the repetitive movements, learning to handle larger quantities of hot glass on my own, became my way to resist society's expectations of my use-value and the shelf-life of the female body." In the face of restriction, helplessness, and new lines drawn around "essential" work, Hubbs developed a more intuitive grasp of her materials and methods. She breathes life into these sculptures and—somewhere between animated and fossilized—they teeter provocatively on the edge of life-giving and laying waste.

The installation *Tending the Garden (*2021) verges toward the former. In it, a gravel bed is dotted with vases—some conventional, some colorful and wonky—each holding a green sprig of Baja spurge. Her title conjures Voltaire's melancholic Candide, who vocalizes the best possible attitude in a world full of trash, pain, and distortion: "we must cultivate our garden" if we are to keep going, keep breathing.

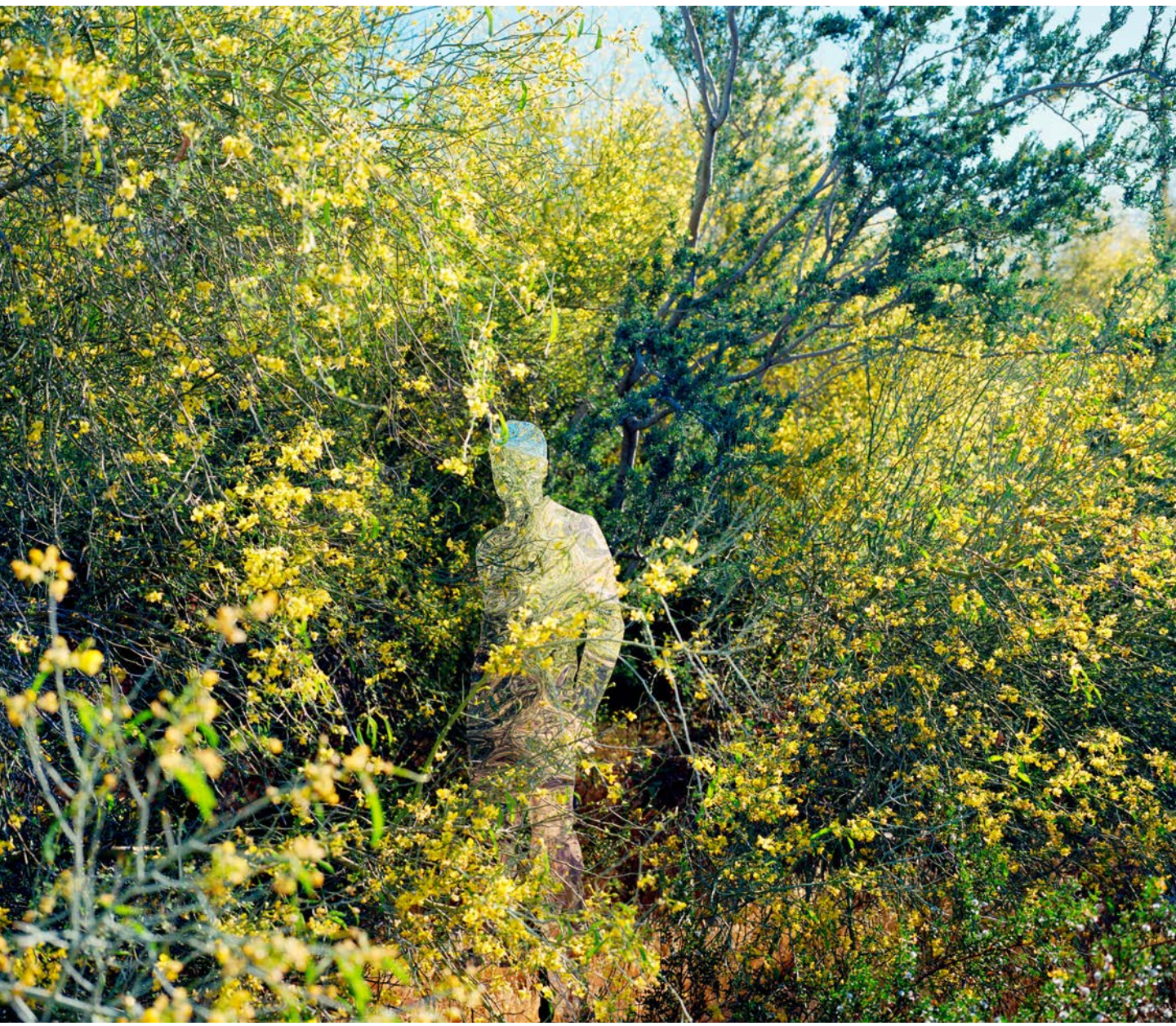
Sara Hubbs, Tending the Garden, 2021, mold-blown and hand-blown glass, aquarium rocks, sprigs of Baja Spurge, 38 x 72 x 56 in.

P. 48
Sara Hubbs, *Las Fashionistas, Body 4 Lyfe* (left) *Fall Flat On Your Face* (right), 2019-21, mold-blown glass, re-bar, faux fur rug, 58 x 72 x 30 in.

P. 49
Sara Hubbs, *Tending the Garden*, detail, 2021, mold-blown and hand-blown glass, aquarium rocks, sprigs of Baja spurge, 38 x 72 x 56 in.

Sara Hubbs, *Of The Horizon*, 2021, mold-blown glass, aquarium sand, steel, 16 x 18 x 44 in.

All photos: Cassidy Araiza.



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Wen-Hang Lin

by Steve Jansen

Like many photographers and photography lovers, Wen-Hang Lin "discovered" the United States and camera work through Robert Frank's influential *The Americans*. The photography book, first published in 1958 and featuring an introduction by author Jack Kerouac, is often seen as the pivotal mid-century statement for photojournalism and fine-art black-and-white imagery.

Nearly thirty years ago, Lin, buoyed by Frank's groundbreaking work, moved from Taipei, Taiwan to the States to pursue photography studies. "I knew there was only one place I wanted to study photography," writes Lin about his discovery of *The Americans*. Lin eventually earned an MFA from the Ohio State University and a BFA at Arizona State University.

In 2018, the Mesa, Arizona-based artist started an ongoing series called *And I Wander* that he says acts as a visual metaphor for his struggle to assimilate as an immigrant.

"It captures the vast, luminous landscapes of the Arizona desert, whose natural features—yawning blue skies and lush yellow and green flora—are dreamily reflected on the surface of a nebulous humanoid figure, which waxes and wanes in visibility between images: sometimes clearly differentiated against and occasionally hidden within its environment," Lin writes. "Yet this chameleonic presence is never fully incorporated. Balancing the 'yang' of these landscapes' tranquil stillness is the potent melancholy 'yin' of this solitary figure: conveying my unreconciled yearning for a sense of belonging in America."

In another way, the body of work, inspired by André Kertész's *Distortions* series, comes across as an experimental photojournalistic exploration of Lin's self-identity, particularly in *Dancing in the Breeze*. The 2021 color image buries Lin's enigmatic shadow self within a straightforward shot of desert shrubs and a palo verde tree.

"I cut out carnival mirrors to resemble my own silhouette and then place them within the landscape to function as my metaphorical surrogates," Lin explains. "A figure is concealed to varying degrees within each image, depending on its relation to the camera and immediate environment. If foreground and background unite perfectly, visual continuity is maintained.

"It appears to merge with its surroundings; if not, this continuity is ruptured to surreal effect, making the hazy human form evident," continues Lin, who photographed *And I Wander* on six-by-seven and six-by-twelve-inch medium format cameras. "While the figure's rippling depth appears to be a digital effect, it's entirely the result of my analog process." ×

Wen-Hang Lin, *You said hello, and I was yellow,* 2020, chromogenic print, 24 x 30 in.

P. 54
Wen-Hang Lin, *You sit with me in my silence,* 2021, chromogenic print, 24 x 30 in.

P. 55
Wen-Hang Lin, *Stealing me from reality,* 2021, chromogenic print, 24 x 30 in.

Wen-Hang Lin, *Secrets no one knows,* 2019, chromogenic print, 24 x 30 in.

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Ellen Babcock

Ellen Babcock, *Oracle*, 2018, watercolor and pencil on paper, 50 x 36 in. Photo: Zac Travis.

Ellen Babcock, *Pinkeye*, 2021, watercolor and pencil on paper, 36 x 36 in.

OPPOSITE
Ellen Babcock, *Flounder*, 2021, watercolor and pencil on paper, 43 x 36 in.

Ellen Babcock's varied creative practices draw inspiration from a panoply of materials and processes and range from sculptural installations and collaborative public projects to large watercolor and pencil works on paper.

"This exploration in paint and drawing has been happening sporadically for many years—I consider it a meditation on humanness influenced by spiritual traditions of non-dualism I first encountered in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the early 1990s. Like many, I had drifted to the desert to seek spiritual meaning and solace. To start these paintings, I make a very loosely controlled gesture with watery paint, an event that births colors, shapes, and paper undulations that then become the context for coaxing out a pencil drawing, often only visible upon close inspection. These pencil drawings are usually figurative in some way—eyes or hands, very tentatively and lightly drawn. I often think about pareidolia—the tendency to see faces in abstract form—as an example of the mind's inclination to identify with its own thoughts rather than more simply with the state of just being."

Ellen is an associate professor of art practices at the University of New Mexico and the founding director of Friends of the Orphan Signs, an organization that places public art in abandoned road signs. The FOS project *Reviver* won a 2013 Americans for the Arts Public Art Year in Review award, and her recent watercolor painting, *Oracle*, won a juror's award at the 2021 Crocker-Kingsley biennial exhibition. Ellen has exhibited in numerous California and New Mexico venues, including Southern Exposure in San Francisco and the Center for Contemporary Arts and New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe. ×

Stefan Jennings Batista

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Stefan Jennings Batista is a visual artist and educator. His mainly photographic practice broadly explores intersections of place, identity, and belonging often with an emphasis on visualizing the mysterious and uncanny within the everyday.

"These photographic excerpts from my series *Tiny Ocean* are fragments, reconstructed observations, and personal visions exploring the mysteries of life, death, nature, and humanity. The imagery implements subtle symbols from 19th-century scientific exploration, spiritual symbolism, and space-age subliminal vistas in order to probe the voids between the empirical and the divine, temporary and infinite. Desiccated cactus specimens appear as human lungs; hands contain star fields and ancient fossils that made our air long ago. Murky pools reflect light within vast primordial landscapes, eliciting visions of early life taking its first breath.

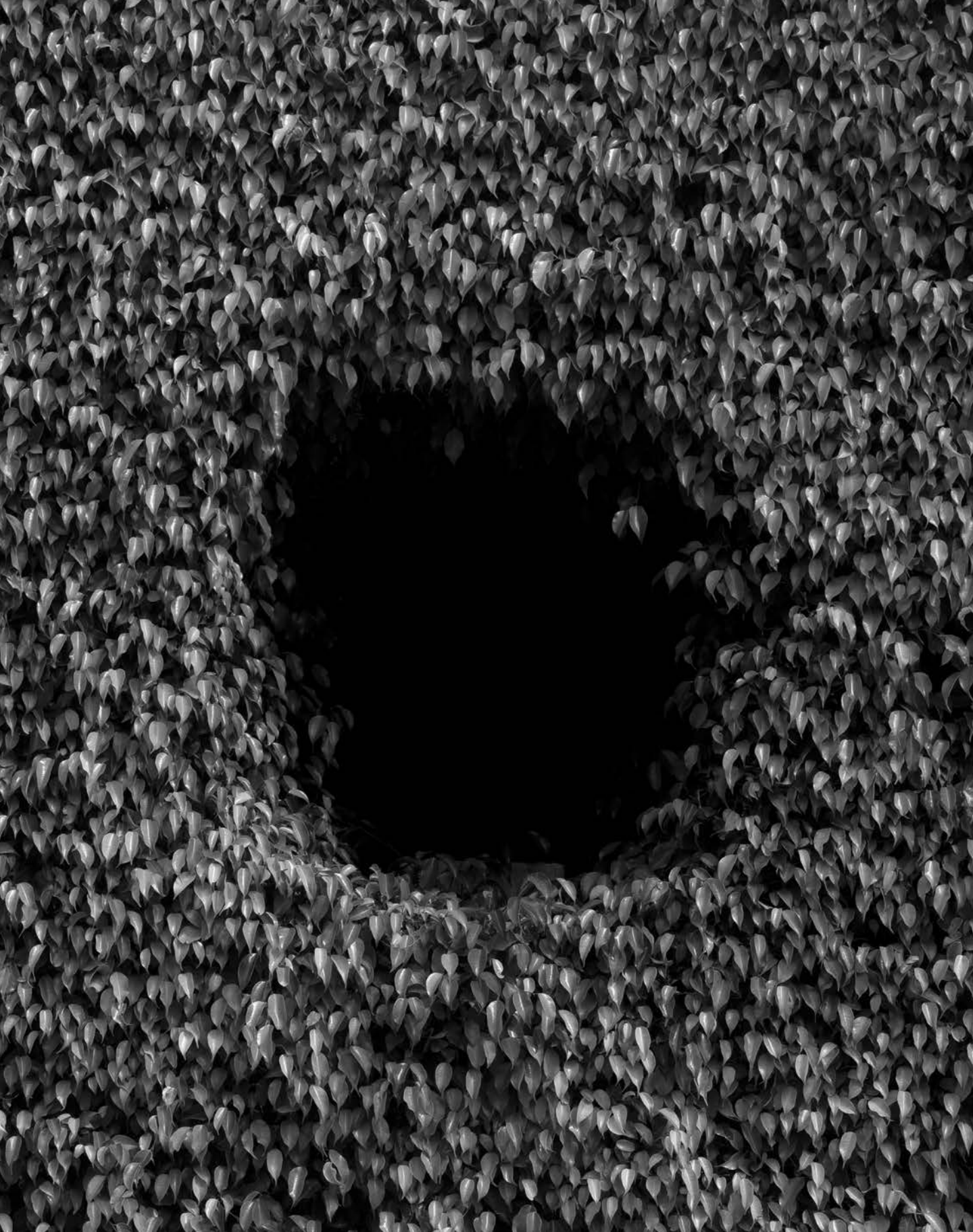
Tiny Ocean is a visual sci-fi meditation on the mysteries of what life is, where it could come from, and what connects us all. We are all star stuff, we all breathe the same air, we are all fragile."

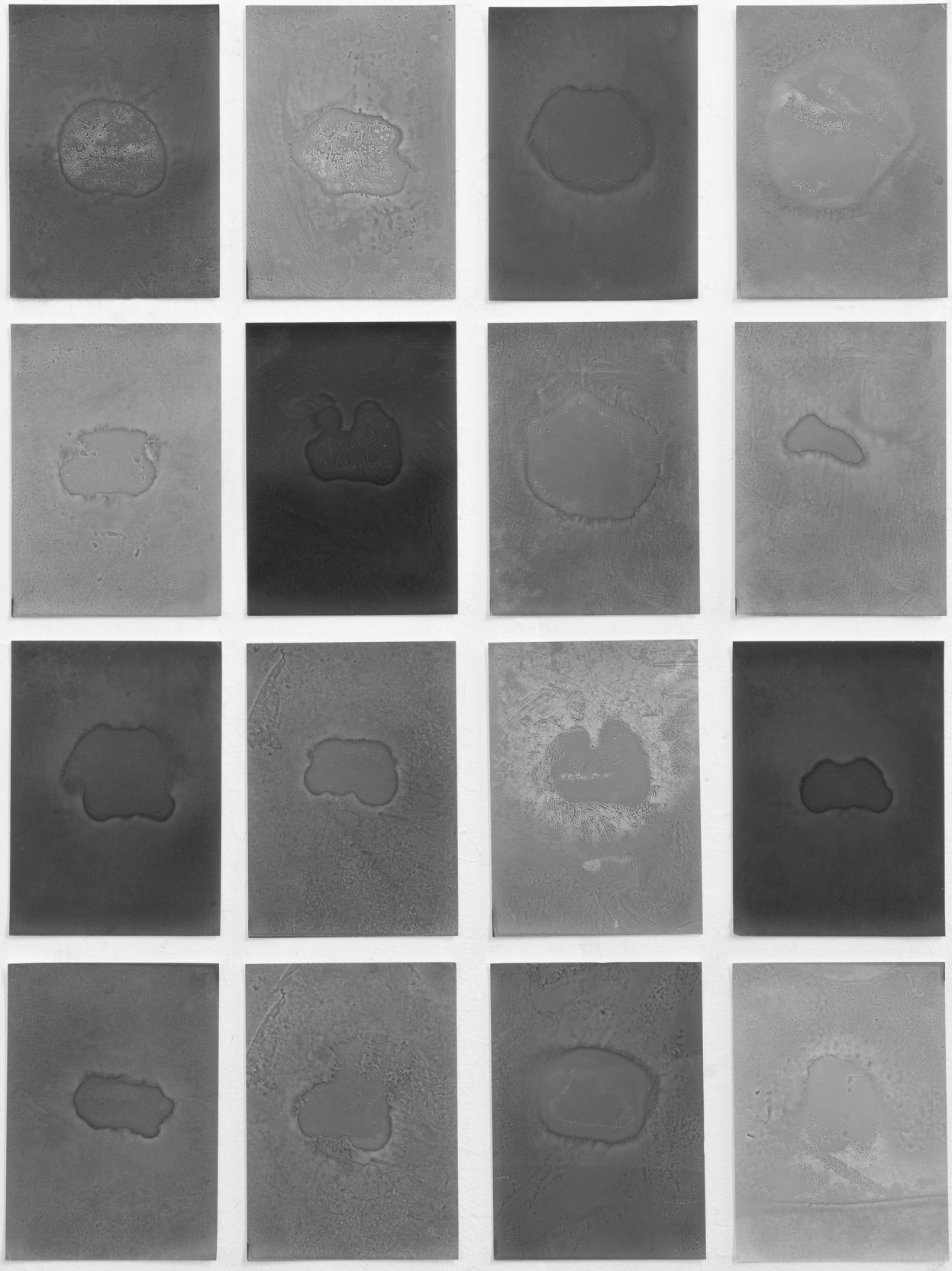
Batista is faculty of photography and two-dimensional art at Central New Mexico Community College and has received degrees in art from the University of New Mexico and the Ringling College of Art and Design. His work has been featured in exhibitions, publications, and projects across the United States and abroad. ×

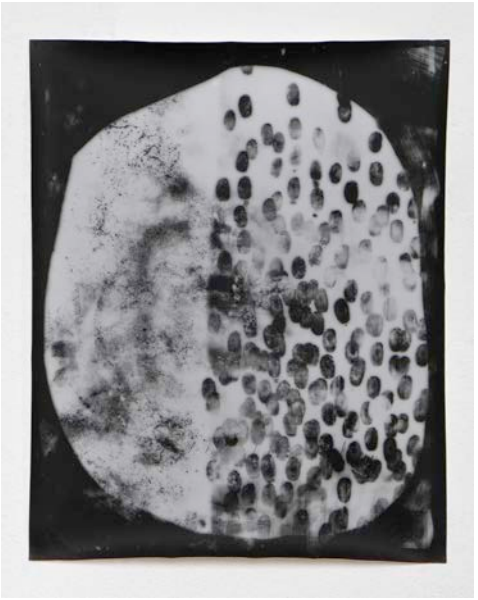
Stefan Jennings Batista, *Paleocene Plant*, 2020, film photograph, archival pigment print, 24 x 24 in.

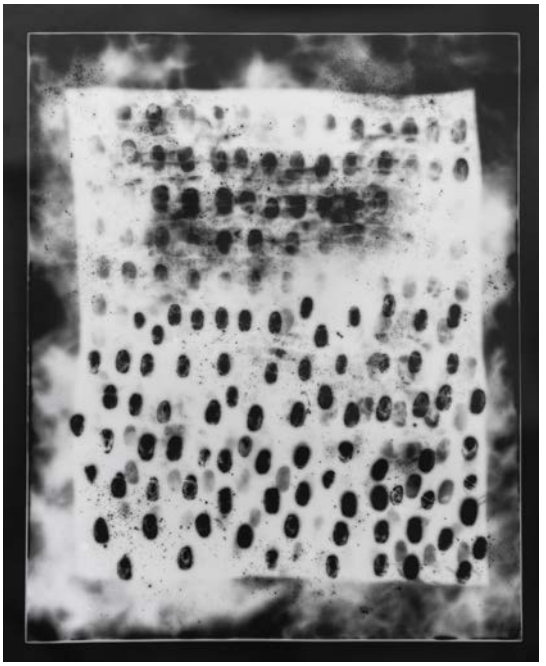
Stefan Jennings Batista, *Tiny Ocean*, 2018, digital photograph, archival pigment print, 20 x 20 in.

OPPOSITE
Stefan Jennings Batista, *Airway (Hedgehole)*, 2017, digital photograph, archival pigment print, 24 x 20 in.









Daniel Hojnacki

Albuquerque, NM
danielhojnacki.com

birds + Richard, Albuquerque

Daniel Hojnacki, *Body Index (V)/an attempt at finding the balance between my body & breath*, 2021, unique silver gelatin print, 20 x 16 in.

Daniel Hojnacki, *Body Index (I)/body as volatile ash [or a vessel for time keeping]*, 2021, unique silver gelatin print, 24 x 20 in.

OPPOSITE
Daniel Hojnacki, *Index of My Breath to Let me Know I am Still Here*, ongoing series of unique silver gelatin photograms recording the artist's breath upon frost on glass, 7 x 5 in each.

Daniel Hojnacki is an Albuquerque-based photographer. His practice strives to show the passage of time by creating accumulated acts of capturing the temporal and unseeable. Using the natural world as his source of inspiration and analog photographic techniques, Hojnacki seeks out visceral and tangible responses to the photographic print.

"This series of work investigates ways of recording the fleeting moments of my body and breath to challenge what is able to be 'stilled' and captured in a photograph. I use analog processes of photography to make visible that which is ungraspable. These works are records; vessels of timekeeping in which my breath, body, and spit are frozen within. The darkroom is a place of meditative reflection, one where I am in perpetual motion yet in the act of creating moments of quiet stillness.

Using a 19th-century photographic technique called cliché verre, I apply soot to large pieces of glass with a candlewick. The smoke becomes a delicate, volatile negative. I can then 'draw' upon it with my body and breath. I relate this material's process back to the body, how our breath is an invisible residue of ourselves. I use my materials as containers to slow down the invisible passage of my body. I use cameraless techniques to create records of momentary acts of suspension."

Hojnacki is an MFA candidate at the University of New Mexico where he is currently a photography instructor. Hojnacki has spent many years of his career as a photography educator for youth and nonprofit organizations in his hometown of Chicago. Since moving to New Mexico, Hojnacki has developed experimental online photography courses during the COVID pandemic with the Harwood Art Center. ×

Alexandra Lechin

Houston, TX
IG: @vibrating_lines

Alexandra Lechin is a Venezuelan-American multidimensional, multimedia artist. Her work focuses on anxiety and how her practice can pacify, transform, and become an emotional energy source, creating moments of internal reflection through wonder and play. Repetition, routine, and ritual are major elements of her practice. Each piece is her instinctual response to self-soothe during times of emotional unrest.

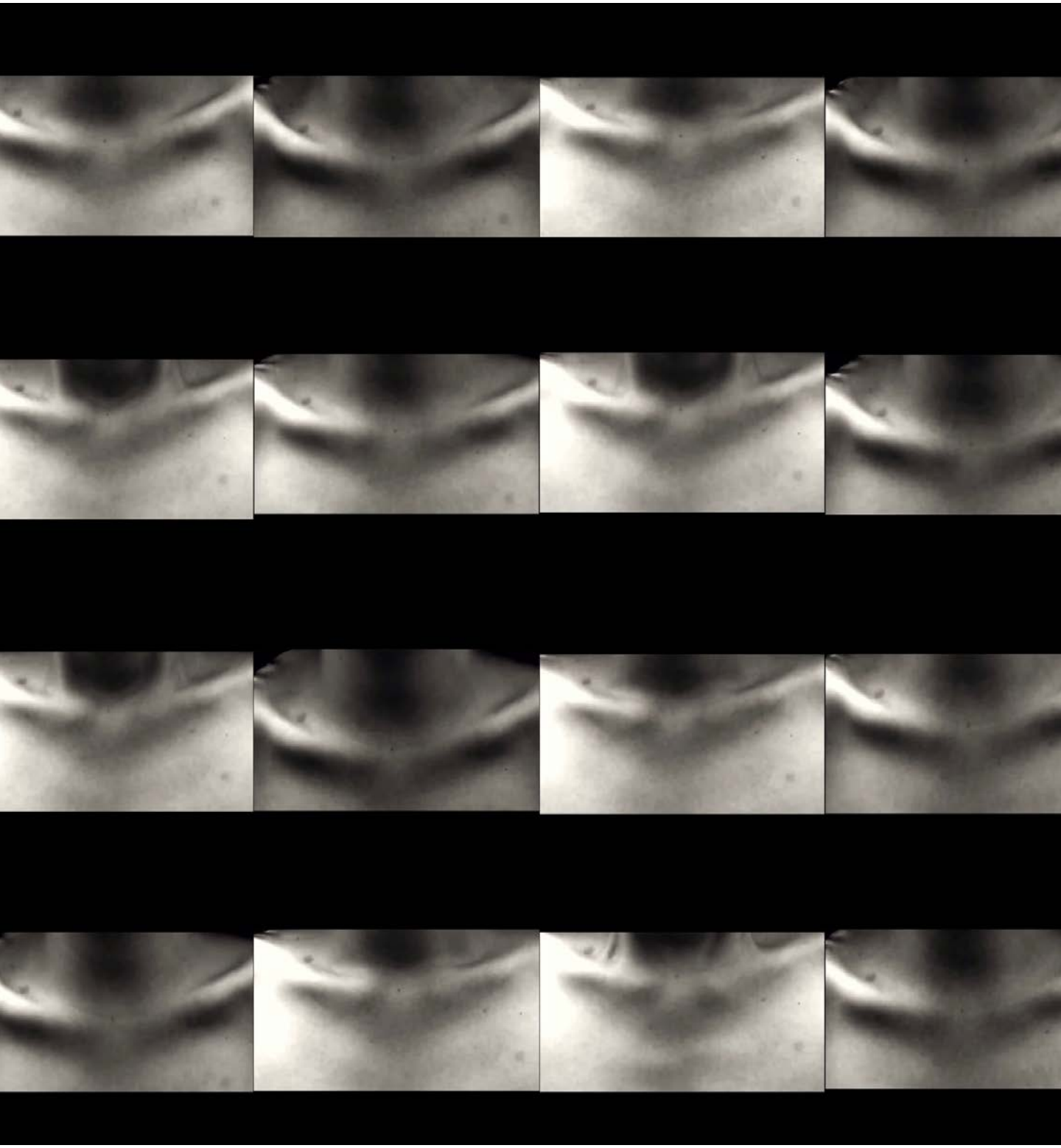
"I have lived with anxiety and get panic attacks that take over like a tidal wave, and the isolation of the pandemic intensified these episodes. But my art is my outlet. The video performance in *Panic Attack* is a representation of my experience during a panic attack. The video expresses the rising and falling of my chest with the sound of my breath fighting the panic. It brings the viewer with me as I push through.

Breath is the only constant in our lives, the only thing we have from the moment we're born until the moment we die. It is also reflective of our state—whether you're sad, scared, angry, making love, anxious, nervous, in pain, or laughing—the way you breathe changes. By learning how to control your breath, you can control your state. In *Panic Attack*, the viewer is witness to my changes in breath, and therefore my emotion."

Lechin recently graduated from the University of Houston with a BFA in sculpture. She has work on view at the Holocaust Museum Houston through October 17, 2021 and has had work displayed at Gspot Gallery, Project Row Houses, the Blaffer Museum, and Sabine Street Studios. She is a recent recipient of a scholarship for a clay workshop at the Penland School of Craft. ×

Alexandra Lechin, *Red Thread of Fate*, film stills, 2018, 03:51 video, red ribbon, white linen, patience. Written and directed by Alexandra Lechin, filmed and edited by Lisa Bridges.

OPPOSITE
Alexandra Lechin, *Panic Attack*, film still, 2017, 00:43 video, breath and anxiety. Recorded and edited by Alexandra Lechin.




UD
GHT
BUSCH

Tucson, AZ
alexmaciasart.com
IG: @alex.macias.art

Alejandro Macias

Alejandro Macias, *American*, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 66 x 54 in.

Alejandro Macias, *I Traded a River for Mountains (Departure & Arrival)*, 2021, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 30 x 60 in diptych.

OPPOSITE
Alejandro Macias, *Nopal en la Frente (con Bud Light)*, 2021, oil and acrylic on linen, 58.5 x 46 in.

Alejandro Macias's work is driven by his Mexican-American identity and the current social-political climate. Raised in the Rio Grande Valley, his body of work addresses themes of heritage, immigration, and ethnicity, which are set in contrast to his critical engagement with the assimilation and acculturation process often referred to as "Americanization."

"My most recent work brings to light a number of topics that not only reflect my own humanity as a Mexican-American, but a wider range of borderland, Latinx, and contemporary societal issues. I draw my inspiration from many Chicanx activists and two-dimensional artists who have addressed and propelled issues of identity, assimilation, repression, civil rights, immigration, and cultural misconceptions to a broader audience.

Originally from Brownsville, Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border, and as a current Southern Arizona resident, I often think about the conflict and merging of two cultures. My conceptual ideas point out the struggles and dangers of the assimilation process, which can be seen as erasure of history, heritage, and culture."

Macias received an MFA in two-dimensional studio art from the University of Texas-Pan American in 2012 and a BA from the University of Texas at Brownsville in 2008. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Since 2016 he has been the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions including residencies at Centrum in Port Townsend, Washington, Vermont Studio Center, Chateau d'Orquevaux, the Studios at MASS MoCA, and the Wassaic Project. He currently serves as an assistant professor at the University of Arizona School of Art in Tucson. ×

Julia C. Martin

Phoenix, AZ
juliacmartin.com
IG: @juliacmartin

Julia C. Martin is a photographic artist whose work deals with the themes of mortality, ephemerality, and time. Many of her prints are made by hand using historical or experimental processes.

"In the land I see time. It changes and evolves slowly, gradually. Things remain the same for years, centuries; yet there are moments of ephemerality. Working in the desert grasslands of Southern Arizona, I become innately aware of the cycles of life and death surrounding me. With each breath, I become aware of my own mortality.

I photograph the land to reveal the inherent beauty of these subtle moments of ephemera. I also explore my own relationship with the land. Being in this place of life, death, and rebirth, I long to be a part of that cycle. When I die, I want my body to become part of the earth, to grow new life. To become a part of the whole.

My work is tactile and delicate. I use elements of grass in the work and every piece is meant to give a sense of the place. The pieces have movement and the passing of a body breathes life into them, as the wind gives the grasses life. The tactility in the work is reminiscent of the tactility of the land. I want to immerse myself fully into the land through the process of making."

Originally from Golden, Colorado, Martin received her MFA from Arizona State University and her BA from Montana State University. She has worked at institutions such as the Santa Fe Photographic Workshops and Aperture Foundation. She has exhibited nationally and has had work published in *The Hand Magazine* and *Cyanotype: The Blueprint in Contemporary Practice* by Christina Z. Anderson. In 2020, she received an honorable mention from the Julia Margaret Cameron Award. ×

Julia C. Martin, *Becoming the Land*, 2021, archival pigment print on silk habotai, 50 x 100 in. Photo: Bradley Smith.

OPPOSITE

Julia C. Martin, *Tactile*, 2020, archival pigment print, 30 x 20 in.

Julia C. Martin, *Strata*, 2020, archival pigment print, 20 x 20 in.

Julia C. Martin, *Between That Earth and That Sky, I Felt Whole*, installation view, 2021, archival pigment prints on silk habotai, 90 x 50 in each. Photo: Bradley Smith.

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Dallin Maybee

Dallin Maybee, *Resilience*, 2021, mixed media, Czech gas mask, 13/0 glass cut beads, ermine skins, rooster hackles, brass thimbles. Courtesy the artist.

OPPOSITE
Dallin Maybee, *Pestilence*, 2020, mixed media, Czech gas mask, 13/0 glass cut beads, ermine skins, rooster hackles, brass thimbles. Courtesy the artist.

Dallin Maybee (Seneca and Northern Arapaho) is a multimedia artist working in a variety of forms, including dance, beadwork, oil painting, jewelry, illustration/ledger art, and carving. Inspired by his culture and the natural world around him, his traditional media carry contemporary narratives.

"Beadwork has been an art form in the Americas for generations. With the introduction of seed beads from Europe, the tiny glass beads were highly desired for their color, ease of use, and many ways in which they could be painstakingly embroidered onto Native smoked, brain-tanned leather. As our cultures evolved, we also suffered from other things introduced to our lands, with devastating impact: viruses and disease.

I used Czech gas masks as a base for their functionality and silhouette. I hand-stitched—often one or two seed beads at a time—'florals' made from viruses and bacteria that we have collectively been asked to endure: Smallpox, Black Plague, and the Coronavirus. The stems and vines are DNA strands—despite race or location, we all have suffered and our resilience and ability to overcome these pandemics are due to our collective efforts at survival. Science, knowledge, and the diminishment of ego must all come together to create a foundation for humanity and our survival."

Maybee's artistic journey began with learning various beadwork, leatherwork, and feather-work techniques in the construction of his outfits and regalia for Iroquois social dancing and intertribal powwow competitions. He is an accomplished Northern Traditional and hoop dancer.

He has won numerous awards including best-of-show at Santa Fe Indian Market and Cherokee Art Market. His art can be found in private collections and museums such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the Autry Museum, the Heard Museum, and the Portland Art Museum. Maybee has a JD from the Sandra Day O'Conner College of Law and a BA in Philosophy from Utah Valley University. ×

Jill O'Bryan

Las Vegas, NM
jillobryan.com

Jill O'Bryan's artmaking is not an act of representational picture-making but a practice of accumulating the residue of recorded time and place through the physical actions of her body. Her process is performative, specifically located in time and space, and records moment-to-moment interactions with the elements.

"Drawing for me is a dynamic system of mark-making to reveal both the personal and universal experience of breath while bringing audiences into an intimate encounter with time. For more than twenty years, a methodology at the core of my work involves counting and recording my breaths with graphite on paper. I began by making 'breath marks' (each lasting the duration of one inhale and one exhale) next to one another on large sheets of paper.

In the Tonglen-inspired works, I layer graphite marks one on top of the other to render the residue of accumulated breaths until the paper becomes incised and frayed. An alchemical transformation occurs in the paper as it takes on the weight of the graphite. This mirrors the transformation occurring during Tonglen breathing, a Buddhist practice of teaching compassion by breathing in pain, transforming it to positivity, then exhaling. These works are made in hours-long drawing marathons lasting days, months, and sometimes years.

In 2020 I had a reckoning with my breathwork, realizing that the meaning of 'breath' had changed overnight. Due to COVID-19, sharing someone else's air became potentially lethal, and George Floyd was murdered by asphyxiation. I rediscovered my equilibrium by looking at the moon, then discovered moon breaths, a form of breathing calm into the body"

O'Bryan has a PhD from New York University in Aesthetic Theory and Criticism and an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. She has exhibited widely nationally and internationally, including a forthcoming exhibition at the National Gallery of Art Library in Washington, D.C. ×

Jill O'Bryan, *22,410 breaths between October 15, 2019 and November 3, 2019*, graphite and oil pastel on rice paper, 16 x 16 in.

Jill O'Bryan, *The Shape of the Sound of a Breath: Hum Sa Breath IX*, 2019, graphite and oil stick on Bhutan Mitsumata rice paper, 22 x 22 in.

OPPOSITE
Jill O'Bryan, *George Floyd, May 25, 2020*, graphite on rice paper, 10.5 x 11 in.

8
Minutes
46
Seconds
161
Breaths

Rosalinda Pacheco

Albuquerque, NM
IG: @rosalindaluciapacheco

Rosalinda Pacheco, *Somos Increiblemente Resistentes,* 2020, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 in. Photo: Christiana McBride.

Rosalinda Pacheco, *Las Rosas Crecen en la Tierra,* 2020, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 in. Photo: Christiana McBride.

OPPOSITE
Rosalinda Pacheco, *Sequia,* 2020, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 in. Photo: Christiana McBride.

Rosalinda Pacheco is a native Nuevo Mexicana who grew up watching her grandmother paint.

"I create paintings that revolve around the manifestation of cultural values. My creation of work involves a contemporary take on traditional symbolism. Patterns are frequently shown to illustrate New Mexican culture. I look to history for more inspiration. Although I want to celebrate culture, I recognize frequent degradation that has occurred throughout history. I combine historical themes and significant personal experiences.

My goal is to illuminate generations and generations of stories that have never been brought into the limelight. My artistic journey enforces human commonalities that transcend barriers such as language, rurality, and poverty. I evoke a genuine contemplation on the cyclic lives of people and the communal celebration of culture that captures uplifting connectivity."

Pacheco is currently pursuing a BFA in studio art with an emphasis on painting and drawing. ×

Augustine Romero

Albuquerque, NM
IG: @romerosculpture

"The concept of *Displaced Context* refers to the current state of affairs in which competing narratives about power, privilege, and inequality are broadcast via the media and official government proclamations. Facts are twisted and retold to support fetishized narratives that distract from the realities of inequality and injustice. The works I create shine a light on multiple displaced contexts and offer a space for imagining what could be if we dare to create counter-narratives told from the position of the lived experiences of marginalized communities. I use material and subject matter from my own life experiences of resisting by creating a new language of possibility in a displaced context."

West Mesa Allegories was made in response to the West Mesa murders: "In 2009, the bodies of eleven women were found in Albuquerque's West Mesa. To this day, the West Mesa murders are unsolved. The South Broadway Cultural Center where I am the gallery curator is visited by a diverse community. I would often see missing person flyers posted on the bulletin board at the entry. I wondered if I saw any of these women in the public gallery. The media described these women in ways that were not respectful of their human rights. I constructed a memorial that I hope pays respect without being too literal. The forms I constructed are made of plywood and spray paint. I thought of these forms as vessels of spiritual transformation."

Augustine Romero was born and raised in Pueblo, Colorado where he received a BA in graphic design at Colorado State University-Pueblo. He also has an MA in fine arts from New York University. He has worked as gallery curator for the City of Albuquerque since 2006. Honors include fellowships at Socrates Sculpture Park and the Smithsonian. Romero continues to work and develop his own art, exhibits regionally, and has public sculptures and works in private collections. ×

Augustine Romero, *Mexican Gray Wolves*, 2020, fiber glass, resin, spray paint.

OPPOSITE
Augustine Romero, *Languages I Used To Speak*, 1998, rebuilt 2021, mixed media. Video: https://youtu.be/-C8F8kkVpwQ.

Augustine Romero, *Virus Killer*, 2021, mixed midea, 12 x 18 x 9 in.

Augustine Romero, *West Mesa Allegories*, 2017, installation view, Exhibit 208, Albuquerque, plywood, spray paint, and mixed media.

All photos: Augustine Romero.

Bond.

Denver, CO
brendastumpf.com
IG: @brenda_stumpf

Brenda Stumpf

Sager Braudis Gallery, Columbia, MO

Brenda Stumpf, *Vanish*, 2021, found and scratched vintage photograph, digitally captured and then ink transferred by hand onto an acrylic sheet, mounted to wood panel, acrylic paint, and colored pencil, 30 x 42 in. Photo: Wes Magyar.

OPPOSITE
Brenda Stumpf, *Bond*, 2021, found and scratched vintage photograph, digitally captured and then ink transferred by hand onto an acrylic sheet, mounted to wood panel, acrylic paint, and colored pencil. 30 x 20 in. Photo: Wes Magyar.

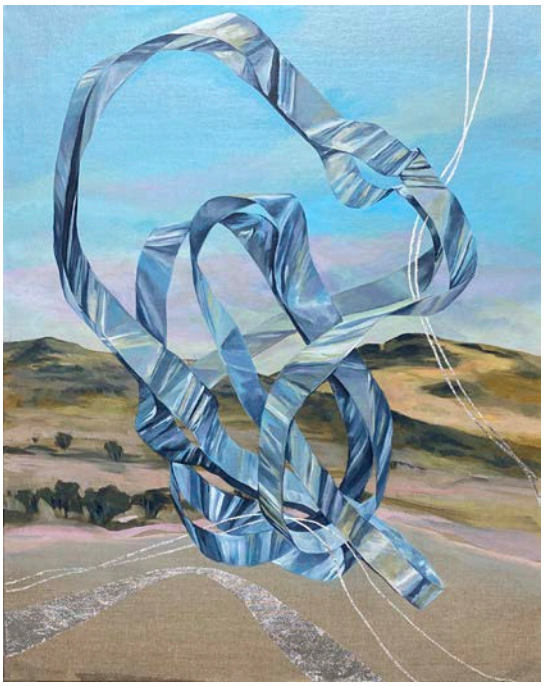
Brenda Stumpf is a contemporary sculptor and painter. Mythology, mysticism, poetry, and ancient history are deep wells for Stumpf. While deconstructing her materials and recreating anew with the fragments, she takes an almost shamanistic approach—a potent act akin to the cycle of death and rebirth.

"These works are from the series *For a Time They Took Pleasure There*, the title of which comes from *The Book of Poverty and Death* by Rainer Maria Rilke. The lacerated and obscured figures and landscapes become less familial and more symbolic of memory, loss, loneliness, aging, and ultimately, death.

Whether creating sculpture, paintings, or works on paper, my urge is to make art that conjures the mysterious and enchanted—to dive into the dark and hide in the secretive. I'm often feeling my way towards something that seems deep, ancient, and timeless by way of the abstract and symbolic.

My work has referenced female historic and mythic figures such as Pandora, Seshat, the Black Madonna, Hatshepsut, the victims of Jack the Ripper, and the women of the Inquisitions. I have delved into my personal history, playing with nostalgia and memory, and I continue to be inspired by the works of composer Arvo Pärt and the poetry of Pablo Neruda and Rilke."

Stumpf's paintings, sculptures, and works on paper have been exhibited in numerous exhibitions, including the Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Butler Institute of American Art, Littleton Museum, Strohl Art Center, Pittsburgh Glass Center, and Outsider Art Fair. Her art resides in private collections throughout the United States and abroad. ×



Rossitza Todorova

Reno, NV
rossitza.art
IG: @rossitza

"In this series, I explore how landscape embodies the idea of time: past, present, and future. The landscape reflects our memories by helping us recall and associate a place with history. It captures our present by allowing us to let go and be in the moment. It shows us our future, metaphorically and literally as it reveals the journey ahead.

Memory of a landscape depicts the landscape of the Great Basin inspired by walks around Reno, hiking in Tahoe, and my recent residency at Playa Summer Lake in Southern Oregon. My images are interrupted by scrolling lines that exist in the space between the viewer and the vista beyond. The forms are visual metaphors for what we bring as we view the desert. They are the reflections of ourselves that we place on the landscape. As Henri-Frédéric Amiel eloquently said, 'Any landscape is a condition of the spirit.'"

Born in Sofia, Bulgaria, Rossitza Todorova immigrated to the United States as a child. She received an MFA from Arizona State University in 2013 and a BFA from the University of Nevada, Reno in 2005. Todorova is currently a full-time studio art instructor at Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno.

Todorova's artwork is in the permanent collections throughout the Southwest, including the Nevada Museum of Art, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, and Tucson Museum of Art, as well as abroad. She is a recipient of the 2015 Phoenix Art Museum Contemporary Forum Artist Grant and was a 2013 Squire Patton Boggs Artist Fellow. ×

Rossitza Todorova, *Desert Path*, 2020, acrylic, silver leaf on linen, 30 x 24 in.

Rossitza Todorova, *The Start of Dawn*, 2020, acrylic, silver leaf on linen, 5 x 5 in.

OPPOSITE
Rossitza Todorova, *Showing the Wind*, 2021, acrylic, silver leaf on linen, 40 x 30 in.


27
I CAN'T BREATHE
FAKE BILL
GUILTY
EVERTON TSOSIE 2021

Albuquerque, NM
evertontsosie.com

Everton Tsosie

Everton Tsosie, *Primal Soldier*, 2021, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 65 x 53 in.

Everton Tsosie, *Barbarian Breach*, 2021, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 49 x 66 in.

OPPOSITE
Everton Tsosie, *Final Exhale*, 2021, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 66 x 71.25 in.

"In the painting titled *Final Exhale*, I envisioned a strong expression of George Floyd as a man of feelings and courage. I think that is important because of the brutality he faced by officer Derek Chauvin. I wanted his hands to be raised high because of the different meanings inferred when we see someone with their hands up. As Floyd left with a final exhale, he is then revived as an Eagle with wings and his courageous spirit lives on. I think that the attention to the last breath or final exhale created a strong connection to humans everywhere. Floyd will be remembered as the optimist within, by wanting 'to touch the world.' On the canvas, I portray him as a strong spirit and embrace the Eagle protector that is rich in culture. In the form of a spirit, he revisits the scene where it all happened and the consequences; Derek Chauvin: guilty; $27 million paid to his family; the fake twenty-dollar bill; and the green bicycle. Justice prevailed and police brutality has gone viral. We all are fighting for equal breath in America. Black lives matter."

Everton Tsosie is an abstract contemporary artist from Albuquerque, New Mexico. He recently received his BFA from the University of New Mexico. ×

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