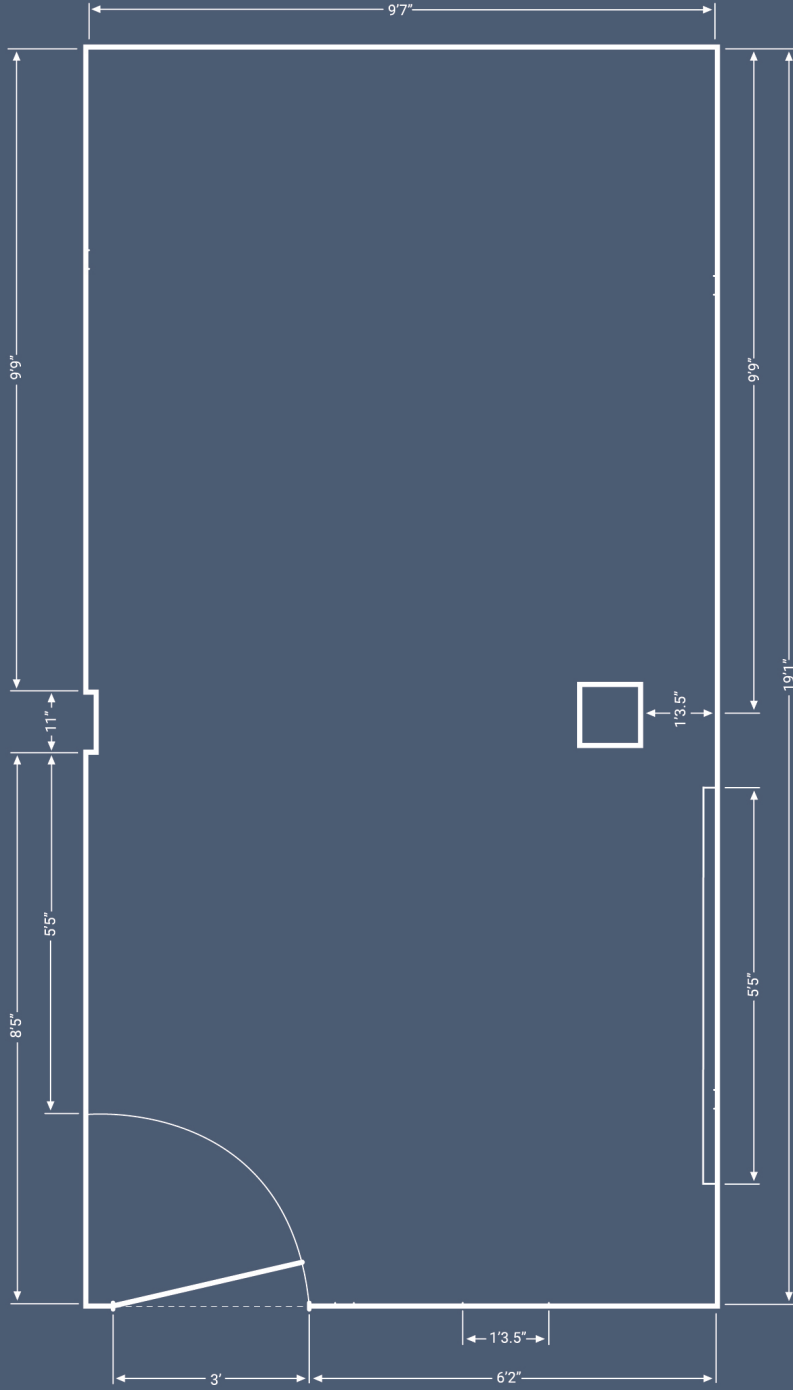


IN RETROSPECT

2009-2019 / 10 YEARS-10 ESSAYS-10 EXHIBITS

GRIZZLY YISSIAG

Roberta Fallon/Olivia Jia/Leroy Johnson/Roksana Filipowska/Rachel Debuque/Justin Plakas
Cassandra Stanton/William Downs/Laurel McLaughlin/Michelle Marcuse/Deborah Barkun
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GRIZZLY GRIZZLY

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FOREWORD

GRIZZLY GRIZZLY

In a data center somewhere in the United States there is a loose archive of Grizzly Grizzly correspondence: passwords, meeting notes, program ideas, email, and photographs. It is a functional record of necessary information created to collectively organize monthly exhibitions. It also serves as an organizational memory.

This digital memory is dwindling each year as we remove "obsolete" files to stay within the 15GB free storage space. Every so often a member is tasked with deciding what to delete so we do not exceed the limit. This process of deleting the past to make room for the present illustrates the porousness of collective memory, especially one that can't afford to pay for more storage.

Grizzly Grizzly is an entity with a ten-year public record of exhibitions and writings, a brick and mortar space within a large warehouse, and a shared experience between artist members. The shared experience between members is a social interaction that is lived, spoken, and felt in time and place, and only exists as an oral history. The current members do not know the founding artists. We only know the stories that were passed down between members. Therefore, our legacy is a somewhat distorted one, an ever-changing understanding of "why and what" is directly linked to how a specific subset of members interacted at any given time. In organizing this book, *In Retrospect*, we look back to place our 10th anniversary in context and to capture in print some of what might be deleted from the digital archives in the coming years.

In Retrospect is also a snapshot of our current evolutionary form. This year-in-review was designed to forefront our commitment to supporting both the visual arts and writing within the same creative space. An offshoot of our ongoing blog *Speak Speak*, this book pairs writers and artists with the goal of generating an additional layer of dialogue that delimits the existing architecture of our project space.

In Retrospect is an undertaking conducted in relation to a national movement by and for artists and in response to the lack of supportive mechanisms for emerging and mid-career artists. The proliferation of artist cooperatives in Philadelphia continues in part due to the economic situation that, so far, has kept space affordable. We are just one of numerous DIY artist-run spaces that persevere in spite of the political and cultural climate. In Richard Torchia's essay, *Toward A History of Artist-Run Spaces in Philadelphia*, written for Vox Populi's 21st anniversary in 2009, he states, "...artist-run spaces and collectives have gone from being what was once thought of as a grass roots

movement to nothing less than a new medium for contemporary practice that blurs almost every traditional categorical separation—artist from audience, curator from artist, studio from exhibition space, and finally artists from each other...”¹

Grizzly Grizzly opened the year Torchia wrote those lines. Ten years later, Grizzly still functions much like a grass roots organization—members and artists provide the resources to keep it going. Grizzly also owes much of what it is now to its location within a building shared with Marginal Utility, Napoleon, Practice, Automat, Vox Populi, and the artists that work in the studios and commercial spaces on the floors above and below.

In accordance with Torchia's premise, we do consider Grizzly as an extension of our own creative practice; we work as artists and with artists to engage in a dialogue with each other and those that visit our space. This blurring of categories is still pertinent today. But the questions he posits remain: this grass roots movement cum new medium for contemporary practice...goes where from here? What other activities are needed locally and nationally to extend beyond the exhibition space and advance critical discourse?

In Retrospect is not an answer to these questions, but an attempt to look back to contemplate what we are doing and why. We are one light on the larger flickering map of Philadelphia's artist cooperatives.² We may go out or change form at any moment.

At the time of this publication, Grizzly Grizzly is under the stewardship of Talia Greene, Amy Hicks, Angela McQuillan, Maggie Mills, Ephraim Russell, and Philip Scarpone. However, in retrospect, it must be acknowledged that we are part of a larger collective-stewardship that has fostered and programmed our modest project space since its inception in 2009. Having persisted for 10 years in the same space, our history is made possible by previous Grizzlies: Mike Ellyson (2009-2013), Bruce Wilhelm (2009-2011), Vincent Colvin (2009-2011), Dennis Matthews (2009-2012), Steven Little (2009), Cindy Stockton Moore (2010-2017), Jacque Liu (2010-2014), Mary Smull (2010-2015), Joshua Weiss (2011-2017), Ruth Scott Blackson (2011-2014), Matthew Alden Price (2013), Michael Konrad (2013-2019), Marianna Williams (2017-2018), and Jed Morfit (2018).

Grizzly Grizzly's collective history is a conglomeration of 312 exhibiting artists, curators, writers, and members who have all directly contributed to the 100 exhibits installed behind our industrial gray door, at the end of the hallway, on the second floor of the Rollins Building in Chinatown North.

¹ Torchia, Richard. "Toward A History of Artist-Run Spaces In Philadelphia." In *Vox Populi: We're working on it* (Vox Populi Gallery 2010), p 92-93.

² Keefe, Colin and Monnier, Annette. "Longevity: On the Life Spans of Artist-Run Spaces." *Title Magazine*, March 16, 2015. <http://www.title-magazine.com> (accessed July 2019).

PHILADELPHIA COLLECTIVES AND WHY THEY MATTER

Roberta Fallon

Over the course of the 20+ years I've been watching the art scene in Philadelphia, I've seen over 25 collective spaces spring up—a remarkable number for an art community that is not New York or the 6th borough and doesn't really want to be. These edgy, experimental spaces, located in almost every neighborhood from Kensington to Chinatown to West Philadelphia, provide art openings, discussions, performances, music, poetry readings, and the youthful energy and community that goes along with the collective making and showing of art.

Artist-run collectives are great for Philadelphia! As engines of creativity and productivity, they contribute to Philadelphia's arts economy (paying rent, hiring curators, directors, interns, selling art). Together and singularly, the collective spaces have created a nationwide buzz about the communitarian spirit here that is directly responsible for the continuing influx of artists. While many of the spaces that open don't make it past a couple of years, as members' lives change and they move on to other projects, for the long-lived spaces that have succeeded in staying open, the secret seems to be refreshing the membership regularly and somehow sticking to the core values of the mission. Yes, there is always a mission.

Grizzly Grizzly, which opened in 2009, is ten years old this year. What Grizzly Grizzly shares with other currently open, long-term collectives (Tiger Strikes Asteroid (10), Marginal Utility (10), Fjord (7), Vox Populi (30), Space 1026 (22), Little Berlin (12) Muse (42), and DaVinci Art Alliance (84!)) is a mission to put on exhibitions and programs; promote and support the members and the artists shown; and to operate as a group in a free-spirited and egalitarian way. Most of this group of notable "long-timers" are not non-profit organizations but rather non-incorporated volunteer groups who pool their money to pay rent and support the enterprise. Unified by a passion for art, the camaraderie of like-minded spirits keeps their eyes forward and optimistic for the next thing.

Philadelphia collectives live outside the capitalist art market by decision. They may not sell a lot of art, but that's not the point. The collectives are not small businesses with business plans and bottom lines. The members are not driven by sales; what drives them is the love of art, the love of producing art exhibitions, and of gathering art lovers together to discuss and learn from them. The collectives embrace a kind of democratic socialist idealism. It's selfless in a "One for all and all for One" way. As one young collective member put it, a collective is like a family that supports you, yet needs you to do your part for the collective good.

Some might think that artists learn their trade by simply buying paints or clay or wood or a camera and just getting on with it. But artists who go to art school are trained individuals. Beyond the skills they learn in the woodworking shop, plaster pit, foundry, print shop, or painting studio, they learn more intangible things. They learn how to negotiate a career as an artist and the importance of networks, collaboration, and competition. Art students are trained to think in terms of projects and naturally can't stop thinking about projects when they're out of school.

Projects give structure, have deadlines, involve other people, and can be fun. Projects are also risky, but artists are trained to take risks, "make something happen," and "Do It Yourself." So, in addition to the tools of the trade, artists need a kind of personal headspace to think about what they're doing and why. And in Philadelphia, with its slower pace and affordability, artists can make the space they need to think beyond hustling to pay bills. A slower and less hectic pace helps foster a more collaborative and less competitive ethos. Not all artists are joiners, and not all will be a good fit for a collaborative project, but many take the risk of joining; for lots of those artists, it's a fit and satisfies. It gives purpose and can become an important part of an art career.

In 2012-2013, two big, ambitious projects brought the Philadelphia artist-run spaces together for an intramural project: to raise this essential but overlooked art scene's profile and to empower artists, create new collectors, and enhance the experience of art in the community. Both projects were exhilarating, labor-intensive, and short-lived. But, as risk-taking endeavors by a "herd of cats" (as artists are often called), these projects were wildly successful.

The Community Supported Art (CSA) project (supported by the Knight Foundation) was launched by Grizzly Grizzly and Tiger Strikes Asteroid in 2012. Based on the agricultural model of community-supported agriculture, the collectives commissioned a number of artists to make art for a "basket" of artworks that would be made available via subscription to anyone in the community wanting to subscribe. In 2017, Grizzly Grizzly repeated the project on a solo basis. The CSA project supported the artists who made the art and was a break-even financially for the collectives. But, the money was not the point. The CSA was about breaking down the standard model of buying and selling art and introducing a radical paradigm that was community-embedded.

Then, in November 2013, the Citywide project joined together 23 Philadelphia artist-run spaces in a celebration of art and the collectives. Supported by the Knight Foundation, the month-long festival was again exhilarating, labor intensive, and not-sustainable. Against all odds, the 23

groups split up the work, got the jobs done, and managed to raise the public profile of this under-appreciated part of the art scene.

Neither Citywide nor the CSA project could be sustained by groups that rely on volunteer labor and a changing cast of artist members. But these two amazing projects prove that artists who collectivize here believe in themselves, continue to take risks and achieve goals, and then move on to the next thing. And it's to their credit that 14 of the 23 Citywide organizations are around today with flourishing programs.

Taste in art is a personal thing, based on your background, your history, your knowledge, and in fact, often, your gut reaction to work. What I love in art might not appeal to you in the least. Thus, I've had my personal favorites among the artist-run spaces, generally based on my love of what they show and the spirit in which they curate their shows.

Grizzly Grizzly's exhibits have ranged over a wide variety of materials, approaches, and concepts, yet overall, the sensibility of the shows coheres: experimental, fearless, and boundary-pushing. They've had a stage-set installation that took over the entire gallery and was the backdrop for performance; and a wall-spanning, interactive, digital projection that viewers could "dance" with by walking back and forth in front of it. There has been a live music and video projection piece; and, for several years, August brought a one-night-only curated video shorts program that was outstanding for the fearlessness of the program. Taste is idiosyncratic, like I said, but I've found myself consistently satisfied intellectually and visually with the Grizzly program.

Artblog started in 2003 as a kind of two-person collective with a mission to cover the city's under-reported art and artists and bring them to the forefront of the discussion. *Artblog* has given the collectives a lot of love through the years. I didn't round up all the coverage of all the collectives, but in the case of the Grizzlies, *Artblog* has covered many of their shows: 32 reviews, a reasonably good number, more than 4 a year between 2010-2015; awarded two Liberta Awards (*Artblog's* end of the year shout outs) in 2010 (for *The Honeymooners*, one of "6 Best shows of 2010 that we saw") and in 2015 (for *Alternative Currencies*, for being the "Alternative gallery who knows no bounds"). If *Artblog* has helped raise the profile of the collectives with our coverage, we've done our job.

Philadelphia's collectives locate in neighborhoods where rent is (or was) cheap. Those neighborhoods have recently been discovered by developers, and in Kensington, Fishtown, Chinatown, and elsewhere, buildings housing the groups are in danger of "flipping," going luxury condo, and forcing out

the artist groups. Some will survive and some will not. Recently, Space 1026, which lost its home in Chinatown to development, is surviving due to a crowdfunding campaign and an angel donor who underwrote the purchase of a new building for the group. I can only hope that other angels exist to assist other artist-run spaces that might need help in the future.

Speaking of angels, City Hall and Arts and Culture leaders, which have never directly supported this active sector of the arts economy, should step up and acknowledge that the artist-run galleries matter, and that the loss of or damage to this arts sector would greatly impoverish Philadelphia. For starters, creation of an Ombudsman position in the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, to promote, support, and help the independent, artist-run spaces would help. Cash support would be great, but leadership and a plan is called for, now more than ever. Here's to long life for Philadelphia's artist-run collectives!

ROBERTA FALLON

is an artist, writer, and co-founder of *Artblog*, the online arts publication, at which she is Editor and Executive Director. Fallon holds a degree in English from the University of Wisconsin, and studied painting, drawing, printmaking, and sculpture at Tyler School of Art and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Fallon has written for *Philadelphia Weekly* (1999-2011) and *Artnet.com* (2000-2005). Her byline has appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Daily News*, *Art Review Magazine*, et al. Fallon taught at Saint Joseph's University and Tyler School of Art, and curated exhibitions at York College of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Contemporary. Born in Wisconsin, Fallon and her husband, Steven Kimbrough, have three children.

LEROY JOHNSON: DOGS/WALLS/DARK ENERGY

Olivia Jia

If you don't have a forge, melt zinc in your oven. If you need clay, dig it up. Sift through it in your palm to feel what this street corner is really made of: note its nuances in roots and grainy gravel. This place isn't ubiquitous. The clay has its own nature that a potter must contend with—and learn to love.

According to Leroy Johnson (b. 1937), the knowledge of how to work with this mysterious, unprocessed earth is the real skill of indigenous potters, long forgotten by contemporary ceramicists who rely on smooth, pre-mixed clay. For years, Johnson made pipes from clays excavated throughout Philadelphia, tapping into that long lineage of potters who molded things from the very ground on which they lived. These humble objects embody some of that specificity of place—Johnson's relationship to this city, his home, is made concrete. It's articulated through touch.

These clay pipes are the most potent gesture of Johnson's ability to reveal meaning in things often overlooked. Yet this same ethos can be found in all of his artworks, no matter how far-ranging in appearance: Johnson is a shape-shifter and an alchemist, and for him, no material seems unmalleable. At his Callowhill studio, he hops from painting to sculpture with a deftness borne of voracious reading and intense practice. The seven decades of Johnson's work have never been weighed down by the desire for a niche. He chases his curiosity wherever it may lead.

The do-it-yourself nature of Johnson's work is not an aesthetic—it is born of necessity. As a black artist without a formal art education, Johnson is a self-described outsider. For most of his life, he has occupied a position alone, away from the various art communities of this city. Only in the past couple of decades have local institutions given Johnson his due. Yet this position apart has allowed Johnson to survey his world clearly. Injustices are blatantly visible, and this landscape is inundated with politics.

I first learned of Johnson's work in 2017, during an exhibition at Grizzly Grizzly's neighboring gallery, Marginal Utility. The exhibition, entitled *#WEHAVENOPRESIDENT*, featured hundreds of protest drawings made by Leroy Johnson and Sarah McEneaney. Each drawing was a parodic reaction to the circus-like hirings and firings of the Trump administration. Though not all of his work is so explicitly political, Johnson is always clear and earnest in his intentions—there is no tired irony or apathy here. In the corner of his studio, a sculpture of a figure stuffed with plastic bags holds a cardboard gun. The stained cloth of its bodice bursts at the seams, and it's a thing of dire shambles—a sharp castigation of American gun violence. Then, there



Leroy Johnson, *Dogs/Walls/Dark Energy*



Leroy Johnson, *Top Dog, War Dog, Rites of Atonement*
Charcoal and conté crayon on canvas, 72" x 48", 2018

is the stack of watercolor paintings—birds and babbling streams, observed with such quiet care. There are panoramic cityscapes and little models of houses made of cardboard, all created with dense layers of painting and collage. Each model is an incredible microcosm. In every artwork, Johnson understands the city to be a stage for all manner of human experience.

The function served by native Philadelphian clay in his ceramics is, in other works, filled by photographs or things gleaned from the sidewalk, that public lost and found. Johnson's work is often formed through accretions of objects and scenes that usually go unnoticed or unremarked. He brings together the stuff of the lived urban environment, actively sifting through his field of vision for the quiet dramas of the landscape. Even in the throes of abstraction, Johnson's colorful, geometric city blocks are built with fragments of these photographs; the architecture of his paintings is firmly rooted in textures of the real. This is the earnest stuff a person can't make up: in a little sculpture of a city block, he reproduces words found scrawled on a wall: "1 CROSS + 3 NAILS = 4 GIVEN." Johnson's city is a palimpsest of our actions and desires, a record of that which we learn to unsee by convention. We're unconsciously editing out things that are incompatible with our preconceptions. Perhaps we censor our own vision even more egregiously in cities, where the sheer saturation of visual material can be overwhelming. These works are fervent affirmations of that world. At the heart of Johnson's practice is a utopian notion that we all ought to believe; the stuff that makes life so confounding and exciting is all around us, in the dirt, on the street, and in good books.

The rich and varied breadth of Johnson's artistic practice is important context for his latest exhibition, which leans heavily into metaphor. The city remains the setting in *Dogs/Walls/Dark Energy*. Here, dogs are presented as personified metaphors and mirrors for human nature. An accompanying text lists possible references and inspirations ranging from Snoop Dogg to Cerberus; the dog he draws is both mythically powerful and utterly relevant. In shattered geometric landscapes, the dog holds court. Other works are more atmospheric, and the hound becomes a phantom figure, the mere slip of a shadow. The occasional mark of white pastel casts a ghostly pallor.

There is one large painting in the room. Titled *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, it is the earliest piece, and a bridge to the rest of the exhibition. Three faceless figures live in this haunting urban dreamscape. Before them is a large dog, the only character to peer directly at the viewer. Surrounded by a confetti of photographic fragments, these anonymous figures fade, pressed into the geometric space around them. They are without identity, perhaps alien even to themselves—in this painting, the dog is the one with agency.

The rest of the exhibition consists of charcoal drawings on paper. They mark a shift in Johnson's practice, because they drop those pieces of the real world in favor of a fantastical one. It just may be that our real and political



Leroy Johnson, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*
Acrylic, photo collage, oil stick, and mixed media on canvas, 72"x48", 2018

climates are so challenging and so absurd that photographs can no longer capture the existential dread of our society. Johnson posits that drawing can suffice where photography fails, because drawing re-centers the subjective hand, the every-one who feels that anxiety. Johnson's black marks are scrawling, vociferous, vibrating; there is tension in these lines, shapes that loom, lurk, leap, and leer. They beg to be described through onomatopoeia. They feel alive but alone. We are mired in strange times, and these drawings are their reflection. Their world—and ours—feels on the verge of breaking, but what will be the contours of those pieces? We are the dog, that lonesome beast, yet it is also the specter that hounds us.

OLIVIA JIA

is a Philadelphia-based painter and arts writer. She received a BFA from the University of the Arts in 2017. Honors include the Ellen Battell Stoeckel Fellowship to attend the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art. She has exhibited at Dongsomun in Seoul; Space 1026, Marginal Utility, New Boon(e), and the UArts President's Office Gallery in Philadelphia. Jia has written for *Hyperallergic*, *Title Magazine*, *Artblog*, and the *Broad Street Review*.

LEROY JOHNSON

was born in 1937, grew up in the Eastwick community of Philadelphia, and earned an MHS from Lincoln University. Much of his work takes the form of painting, collage and found objects, and is reflective of life in the inner city. Johnson has exhibited widely, including at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, Tirza Yalon Kolton Ceramic Gallery in Tel Aviv, University of Pennsylvania, and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in Pittsburgh, PA. He has received grants from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the Independence Foundation, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Johnson received a PEW Fellowship in 2014. He was chosen as the Director's Highlight in the *Let's Connect* competition at the Barnes Museum, and was the inaugural resident artist at the Art Barn in Amaranth, PA. Johnson is currently the Peter Benoiel Fellow at The Center for Emerging Visual Artists, and the Mural Arts Studio Artist-in-Residence at the Barnes Museum.

DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY AS CREATIVE FORCE THINKING WITH PLAKOOKEE'S *ETERNAL CLEANSE*

Roksana Filipowska

A hat hangs on the wall of a gallery. Its uneven surface evokes fabric, and it is enticing to imagine walking over, reaching up for the hat, and placing it on one's own head to try it on for size. Closer inspection reveals the object to be a sculpture of a hat that only appears flexible and soft but is actually made of paper clay that, though once malleable, has hardened into the permanent shape of a flat-brim baseball cap. Legible as both sculpture and hat, it is an object that occupies multiple ontologies. Decorated with bold, white lines gathered into the letter "W," the object seems to be a signifier, yet the sculpture's limited palette and lack of detail suggests that it signifies Washington, DC, as a place rather than referencing a particular DC sports team.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of the object is its placement. It is hung in the gallery as a painting, which further complicates its status as sculpture and solicits metaphoric interpretation. The phrase "to hang one's hat" is an idiom meaning "to reside" or "to call a place home;" it evokes a sense of belonging. Then there is the act, or gesture, of "hanging one's hat," which introduces an aspect of time to the object. To observe the hat already suspended on the wall suggests that it was hung after a long day's work or in honor of a life well lived.

The sculpted hat is one of several objects and images in Plakookee's exhibit *Eternal Cleanse* where a slippage between metaphor and form gives rise to a dynamic plasticity. A creative collaboration of artists Rachel Debuque and Justin Plakas, "Plakookee" is itself plastic—the name is a play on the synthesis of the artists' last names and a reflection of their partnership across the domains of both art and life. Since 2013, the pair has worked on projects exploring the value and aura of the art object. *Eternal Cleanse* marks both a continuity and rupture to Plakookee's project, and this simultaneous endurance and transformation reveals the creative force within the overlapping of ontologies as well as the generative potential of destructive plasticity.

The term "plasticity" is most commonly associated with the field of neurobiology, where it describes the malleable quality of neural synaptic connections. Due to this malleability, the brain is observed to be "plastic," meaning it is adaptable and capable of transformation. Plasticity is formulated as a positive process within neurobiology; the scientific discipline approaches the brain as an organ capable both of change and progressive improvement. This positive formulation of plasticity has trickled into popular culture as quick-read articles touting that one can "hack" the brain's



Plakookee, *Eternal Cleanse*

plastic potential by practicing a new language during a workout routine—a suggestion based on studies showing that exercise increases the malleable character of synaptic connections.¹

Positive formulations of neuroplasticity offer an incomplete narrative to the phenomenon. Even Norman Doidge, the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst largely credited as introducing popular audiences to the phenomenon of neuroplasticity, discusses the loss that always accompanies plasticity's positive force. In the appendix to *The Brain that Changes Itself*, Doidge describes immigration as "hard on the plastic brain" because the additive process of learning a new language and set of cultural codes comes at the expense of losing existing neural structure.² In terms of neuroplasticity, the neural structures responsible for one's native language erode as one assimilates within a new culture. To learn a new language means that a neural pathway has altered without any possibility of returning to its original form. Plasticity is therefore competitive and multiple rather than purely positive or coherent.

Philosopher Catherine Malabou is perhaps the most ardent critic of neurobiology's narrative of positive plasticity. Throughout her work, Malabou resists this rose-colored view of neural change by tracing a plasticity that runs counter to any myth of progress or perfectibility. In books such as *The New Wounded*, Malabou strays off of neurobiology's chosen focus on neurotypicality to instead consider those who live with brain lesions, whether from an accident or such degenerative conditions as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, as well as those who navigate the world with post-traumatic stress disorder. Observing a process of destructive plasticity at work, Malabou describes situations of degeneration and traumatic loss as having the potential to result in the formation of a new identity. The emergent self of destructive plasticity deviates from narratives of self-actualization—this self materializes through a process of becoming other to oneself. Here, destruction and creation occur in tandem. Thinkers such as Julie Reshe point out that Malabou's inquiry into destructive plasticity is itself a generative act: Malabou crafts a philosophy of destructive plasticity in response to her own experience of witnessing her grandmother's struggle with Alzheimer's disease.³

Reshe's observation points to another facet of destructive plasticity's generative potential—that of the caretaker who witnesses the struggle and death of a loved one, and who changes in response to that loss. Despite

¹ See for instance: Gretchen Reynolds' "How Exercise Could Help You Learn a New Language" in *The New York Times* (April 16, 2017) <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/well/move/how-exercise-could-help-you-learn-a-new-language.html>.

² Norman Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 298.

³ Catherine Malabou, *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), XI. See also: Julie Reshe, "Beautiful Monsters: On Destructive Plasticity" in *Medium* (November 6, 2018), <https://medium.com/@juliereshe/beautiful-monsters-on-destructive-plasticity-694c9cdb1671>.

Western society's focus on individualism, self-identity forms through one's relations with others. The plastic brain, therefore, changes with the experience of intimate connection as well as the shock of losing such a bond. Consideration of destructive plasticity's relational quality opens up a vast terrain of identity-formation, with the subject asking themselves: What does it mean to rewrite one's life and sense of self in relation to loss? This identity shift is plastic, but it is neither purely positive nor negative. It opens onto a proposition of a possible future upon a past that can never occur again.

Visiting Plakookee's *Eternal Cleanse* inspired my contemplation of destructive plasticity because the show approaches the themes of death, melancholy, and loss in a few different ways. According to the exhibition text, a central theme of the show is the commodification of death. Commodification is certainly apparent in a series of canvases titled *Groovy Coffin Tops and Obelisk*, where a repetition of forms associated with funerary monuments manifest in attractive, hand-dyed, stretched fabric. It is not difficult to imagine stores such as Urban Outfitters selling these paintings as ironic home décor. Beyond the sardonic humor of these canvases, what I find so compelling about this exhibit is that several of the pieces reveal the extent to which death actually resists commodification. There are entire industries dedicated to life insurance and the management of deceased bodies, yet death remains particular and shattering.

Located in the center of the gallery, *Memorial Urns* is a grouping of fired ceramics painted in black vinyl pigment. The title identifies the work as a series of urns, yet each individual ceramic vessel features a unique aberration. The urns do not replicate as much as aggregate. When seen together, the urns are a collective of difference rather than a mass—their sinuous wilts do not betray the seamless pace of the assembly line. Those who have ever tried wheel throwing know the difficulty of achieving such irregularities. The forms evoke the creative possibility of failure, or the potential of a beginner's mindset, but it takes a certain mastery to know when to lean back and release pressure. Each vessel is a body suspended between collapse and flight, hovering on the precipice of becoming something else, something other to itself. Another remarkable aspect of these urns is their vinyl pigment skin, which absorbs more light than acrylic and oil paint. The ceramic openings resemble miniature black holes that draw visitors in with their blackness. Over the course of the exhibition's run, many visitors could not help themselves from touching these vessels. Their deep coloring appeared to be an invitation towards intimacy and the discovery of form by touch.

Indeed, the motif of tactility is prominent in the exhibit. Hands appear as a primary way of interfacing with the world. *Broken Tools* is a wall painting featuring two abstract hands reaching, but it remains unknown for what.



Plakookee, "I will be here when you get back.. I'm not going anywhere"
(detail) Paper clay, vinyl pigment, fired ceramics, wood, 36"x12"x8", 2018

The open-ended painting serves as a backdrop to Plakookee's enigmatic pieces, underscoring mourning as an unresolved process. An especially captivating component of the show is a digital animation, titled *Do the best you can with the tools you got*, which features a pair of hands attempting to grasp at a static wrench. Hands and tool appear to occupy different worlds: the hands look delicate and flat, as though woven from soft cloth; the wrench, meanwhile, is rendered meticulously in 3D so it seems weighty and consequential in comparison. Played on a 25-second loop, the digital animation repeats without becoming repetitive; it induces a meditative trance of nuanced discernment rather than commodification or indifference. Another layer to this work is its ambient original soundtrack, which evolves subtly over the course of 3 minutes and 35 seconds. These two temporalities perform the overlap, as well as the dissonance, between the relatively short material event of death and the ongoing, unfolding experience of mourning.

A sculpted hat, a pottery series of unique aberrations, and an animated loop of phantom hands failing to grasp a simulated object all contribute to the exhibit's economy of melancholy and intimacy. No longer in the terrain of fixed signs or decipherable binaries, form and metaphor circulate around one another, giving rise to flickering ontologies and cognitive slippages. Marked with mourning and loss, it nevertheless offers a proposition of something still emerging, something other to itself that is just beyond immediate perception. Counter to the forward march of progress or the erosive downward pull of degeneration, a dynamic plasticity arises within the intersecting, and frequently contradictory, mesh of lived experience.



Plakookee, *Memorial Urns* (detail)
Fired ceramics and vinyl pigment, 24"x13"x264", 2018



Plakookee, *"Do the best you can with the tools you got"*
Looped digital animation and audio, TRT 25sec, 2018

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RACHEL DEBUQUE

is an artist and designer who focuses on sculpture, installation, and performance work. She has an extensive national exhibition record including shows at The Cue Foundation in New York, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art in Baltimore, MD; and Vox Populi in Philadelphia, PA. She was a Southern Constellations Fellow at Elsewhere: A Living Museum, and resident artist at The Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts. In 2017, she was awarded the Individual Artist Grant in Sculpture from the Maryland State Arts Council. Debuque is currently an Assistant Professor at George Mason University, and the director of the Studio Foundations Program. She is also a certified laughter leader and yoga instructor in Hyattsville, Maryland.

JUSTIN PLAKAS

is an artist and designer who focuses on photographic images, video, and new media work. He has an extensive national exhibition record, including Ortega y Gasset and Tiger Strikes Asteroid in New York, NY; and Untitled Fair in Miami, FL. He has held residencies at The Bemis Center for Contemporary Art and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. In 2018, he was awarded an Individual Artist Grant in Photography from the Maryland State Arts Council. Justin Plakas is a studio arts professor and freelance designer in Hyattsville, MD.

PLAKOOKEE

is a creative collaboration between artist-designers Rachel Debuque and Justin Plakas. Their work spans sculpture, installation, performance, video, and new media. PLAKOOKEE projects incorporate both digital and analog approaches to production. They embrace the important role that humor plays in art-making to subvert meaning and entertain audiences. Debuque and Plakas began working together in 2013, and have exhibited collaboratively at spaces including Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY; and Hemphill Gallery in Washington, DC.

TOURNIQUET

ON *STANDING ON THE VERGE OF...* BY WILLIAM DOWNS

Cassandra Stanton

Scene I: Finding L



I found you. Took me weeks, hours at a time. I figure you've been anticipating my internal arrival because when I finally forced my way through the dark, static blizzard, between the afterburns lingering after sight, the shadowed neon canvas parted like a white rip. Your eyes met me; sought me. As a child I felt soothed by the movement present in the dark. Behind eyes, as if the universe had a secret for me, I'd hunt the movement. The sensation of blood worming in either socket sparks little speculation. I have no time for belief

anymore. Death is fine, hasn't stopped me from finding you gripped by its clammy palm of calamity. You sit there cross-legged. One of you sits. Dozens of you dance around the terrain in a frenzied body symphony. I long for stillness, stillness weighted enough to scare the silent hunter. I am not sure what I am physically doing. I left my body limp somewhere hazy. A messy afterthought of an olive-skinned, stocky figure lies in a room. I beat mindfulness into myself with a dull-headed hatchet. I search the taste of my recollection. I don't risk thinking about another room. Being here takes everything. I am gulping the synesthetic taste of late noon on the gritty wallpaper of your basement. I didn't break in; I had a key cut hours before you died. I am violating your space. I am saying all of this to you without speaking. Longing is a language. I am certainly the shadow wrapping itself around all of you, not letting you go in any dimension. Our memories together are the thorns on a syndicated timeline. I pluck a thorn from the body my mind has made for me. A memory ensues.

Scene II: Barren Circus



If away from a person too long, we experience corrosion. Whether the memory becomes corrosive or the details corrode incoherently remains unknown. We visited a traveling circus in Alamosa; accidentally, we were overcome. They came for us. One act was everything, a slew of similar people whose similarities made them seem not human. I looked over at you often to protect you, or read your reactions, or whichever intention seemed more intentional.



William Downs, *Standing on the Verge of...*
Ink wall drawing, 2019

You never gave much away for the sake of fear or excitement, just constant, straining inquisition. You said they reminded you of tourniquets; I told you you were thinking of the wrong word. You said you didn't care, the word sounded exactly how you thought it should for what you saw, which was this: dozens of performers glittering the plain and plugging any blank space on the horizon. Ashen mountain backdrops gave an infinite stage effect. A barren, formless, full landscape of grandiose squalor due to the frantic static meddlesome motion of them. "Semi-organic apocalyptic phenomena," I could hear you whispering all sorts of incomprehensible descriptions to my left. You with your words took a hotel painting and projected Basquiat all over the unhappening landscape. You were not wrong about the odd feelings they provoked. Contortionists described them mildly, acrobats from hell, they didn't say a single word or burp up a goddamn sound while they twisted around for us, only us. Why wasn't anyone else around that day? Their bodies played intimate Tetris together; I couldn't look away, the completion felt satisfying, but I never admitted so to you. Instead, I feigned uncomfortable. The thought of you finding any satisfaction in their prickly postures meant another entity was pulling you away from me. Their springy motions were bizarre; the majority were smiling to themselves. Some looked critically at the others. This helped, knowing their eerie act had breaks in the execution. The way their garment wrapped around their bodies reminded me of artifacts on a sailboat we took out, just the two of us; a white beacon against the beastly cerulean sea. You kept us afloat.

(We touch mouths somewhere)

Scene III: Evolving Ocean

I hear myself feeling this. My body jerks distantly in response, a tug in my chest and trousers. You still remain seated in front of me. This place is more familiar now. Another you I see from the corner of my vision drops its tongue to the ashen ground. A thorny vine takes its place. I allow myself to be taken for a moment: I fear you so deliciously. I want to eat your expressions from

a depthless cereal bowl. I pleasure myself daily for drawing your face in the sand, remembering, finding your face in the marble veins of my shower, ripping a hole in the mattress where you slept. What's an echo without the source? You're always contradicting our pasts, so misdirection makes you my sole soul consumption. Locked into you, a freckled foe offering me a gift to husk hands-free in exchange for simple sanity. My mind has an ongoing affair with right and wrong. Avoidance places itself at the tip of that trismic palace we used to call home. I lied. I can't say I've avoided a single inch between the whole passing of yes to no. You do not sit any longer. A pressure I can't see is pressing onto you. Surrounded by leaping, constant leaping, you now lay as



still as the atmosphere allows. Your leaping is your longing. The twitches pull grafts of your flesh away. I'm losing you in this mind. You exist as time does in the loop of impossible roving. Magnets pulse behind your vision; features twitch with stagnant anoxia. The tongue is writing in the ash now. You're begging me to remember our time at sea, so I do, and you pull yourself back into focus and speak inside out.

L: Evolution is a maxim.

Me: I don't know what that means.

L: Ev -olution- Ev -eryone- (ev) Something and everything has to apply to everyone.

The vessel we rented was called *Apocalypse, No!*, which you liked very much. I recall ruffling your hair as we walked toward the beached boat that just kissed the waterline. You didn't like that very much. You walked ahead after confirming times with our Thai tour guide. You were a renegade trying to exsanguinate light years of evolutionary dilution by going about your ways in such obvious dissociative behavior. My mistake was seeing you as my novelty. At one point on the ship you read me something you'd written. The magic wouldn't stop, minutes prior we'd seen a whale in the far distance; such a dark far-cry sounded so many miles away. Your words seemed the source of its pain.

Enigmatic loss becomes the sun
Animals fall dead in a consolatory clap
A wash of sanity sirenic at last.
Beautiful suffocation blossoms grand singularity
Enigmatic loss, a fortified wash to a quiet world.

Your dark hair pooled in my lap while we floated aimlessly. When you slept the world had time to be without scrutiny. I don't want to be in this memory any longer; why have you put me here?

Scene IV: Four Walls

The only way to find you is to swallow either side of symmetry. Fucking the life out of contradiction with the one state of being it cannot exist within; emptiness. I wonder where you sleep, nest or web. The only real difference between the two is life and death. Webs are mid-air traps spun for death's sustenance. Nests are nourishing proof we're all collectors. We collect materials for comfort, for new life. I prefer stolen comforts. I see you crowding yourself. I see your faces glitching with repetitive velocity, like a bullet shrouded in cotton pegging the sides, resuscitating truths. There is only your movement or stillness. I am violating the gray, maggoted coils in



my skull by forcing myself to stay just a bit longer. I am distantly evolved to simply get me through the day. This day is the pinhole I strain my whole being against, wishing my two eyes could evolve to one in order to focus better. The smell of the oceanic air followed me back to this squandered, present place. I slink from the memory of our sailing while rolling my eyes around to reset. I stay wrapped in your unempirical flicker. You stay folded in the mind desert around me. I spoke

with a specialist about losing you. They suggested meditation. I would've taken sailing advice from the middle of the black ocean, from a tide trying to swallow my sails. I don't trust professionals, but such simple advice from a decorated person made me giddy. Triumphant deterioration of self. I release the grip. Strain is replaced by paresthesia. There is no loss. There is hard work. The days between my finding you will shrink into seconds. This is the only way to love, at either pole of perfection and destruction. You make feats of my dreams, but not tonight. I feel a caressing between my shoulder blades and remove myself from the restraints, then the room, then your house. I walk into the night, picturing white rips opening the tight night. Sleep is soft, tempting, and terribly asking. Meditation is following something with your eyes while they're closed. Forced meditation is anti-meditation. I am an anti-being.

CASSANDRA STANTON

is an author of poetry, prose, and written miscellanea who cherishes the absurd and holds a panpsychist appreciation of everything.

WILLIAM DOWNS

received a mutli-disciplinary MFA from the Mount Royal School of Art at the Maryland Institute College of Art and a BFA in painting and printmaking from the Atlanta College of Art and Design. He has had solo exhibitions nationwide, including at the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, MO; Parker Jones Gallery in Los Angeles, CA; and Slag Gallery in New York, NY. His work was included in *Black Pulp!*, which traveled to multiple museum venues including the African American Museum of Art in Philadelphia. Downs is represented by Sandler Hudson Gallery in Atlanta, GA.

PAREIDOLIA FOR RELATIONAL SURVIVAL: SCULPTURES BY MICHELLE MARCUSE

Laurel McLaughlin

Michelle Marcuse's new works in her exhibition at Grizzly Grizzly activate liminal spaces that emerge between material precarity and seemingly impossible structural relationships. In her six wall-mounted sculptures, apparent smoothness gives way to ragged edges; negative spaces seem to buttress the weight of teetering towers and hidden tunnels; and beheld all together in the gallery, they modulate between a collective architectural schematic and individual industrial "islands."¹ What are these forms that evoke such empathy and urgency, shifting between ruins and futuristic communes? Are they pieces of Pangea, broken off and clarified? Are they tectonic compasses of a future perfect tense, only making sense when adjoined? Or, are they possible frames, each leaning-to an understanding of a messy and emergent present?

To work toward an understanding of the sculptures is to acknowledge their dualities, and perhaps none is more apparent than that of foreboding and play. This dialectic emerges from the materiality of the works, as Marcuse revealed that they are "repurposed," composed from older sculptures, finding temporary shelter in their current states. Others are new but made from recycled materials.² In various forms of salvage, they are all "interventions on the wall," alluding to previous spaces *and* inhabiting their new contexts.³ Previous works such as *No Logic in Line* shown at Philadelphia's Fleisher Art Memorial employ clearly defined cardboard shapes in dense arrangements, evoking feelings of loss, mourning, and displacement. Reviews associated such sculptures with the shantytown cityscapes of Capetown in Marcuse's native South Africa; but here, the artist recasts that compressed feeling of pastness anew in constructions teeming with space. Fibrously textured and makeshift in composition, the works move away from the memorial toward various states of becoming—what children might imagine in games, as Marcuse describes. In *Own Sphere of Memory*, 2019, a circular vortex of links associated with both fences and ladders wraps itself around a central and abstracted landscape. Projecting from the wall, a black circle of perforated links teeters on the brink of falling into the viewers' spaces while simultaneously beckoning us toward it. Positioned lower than the other works in the gallery, we approach it with reverence, as if approaching a shrine, daring to peer into its chasm-like center. Reaching the interior, however, we find playful ridges, grafts, planes, and contours within, held together by gossamer strands of hot glue. It is provisional, like a paper castle, and also brooding, as if hiding something darker.

¹ Laurel McLaughlin and Michelle Marcuse, Conversation with the artist, January 25, 2019.

² *Ibid.*

³ Laurel McLaughlin and Michelle Marcuse, Conversation with the artist, February 11, 2019.



Michelle Marcuse: Solo Exhibition



Michelle Marcuse, *Holding Absence*
Mixed media, paint, 26" x 26" x 27", 2019

Another elision—that of the apparent past and simultaneous formation of the present. It is a pairing that Marcuse welcomes in her process as traumatic memories and what she understands as resilient fantasies taking shape within the sculptures.⁴ But rather than future-facing, this combination incites a sense of urgency contingent on a present tense. For instance, *Holding Absence* projects curved slivers of cardboard from a central column, embodying an impossible action—holding absence. It is as if the cardboard strains to contain its own negative space, while the space nevertheless continues to expand. This oppositional effort unfolds before our eyes, imparting a continuous push and pull that inhabits not only the works but the corners of our social spaces as well.

The push and pull in the present ultimately emanates from Marcuse's keen awareness of her communities no matter the location. Observations permeate her process of making in the studio, flashing up in moments of dense concentration, and at other times requiring rhythms of speedy composition, as with this series. She describes this intuitive process as thinking by doing. The observations that wend their way most strongly into her studio are emotional connections with discarded materials, joints that do not quite match up, and spaces that are vulnerable. Marcuse describes an inkling of "spirituality" in finding a sense of beauty in something like the crinkled tin of a used soda can on the street.⁵ A sense of human precarity perhaps is contained within. But this mysterious sense of connection does not emerge from a vertical power structure or a deliberate elevation of low materials to the place of "high art." Marcuse instead articulates a horizontal recognition of *potential* in the quotidian, leaving room for multiple outcomes. She feels what we might call a kinship with such materials. And, in this horizontal potentiality, Marcuse strives to see all sides—literally and conceptually. Oftentimes, in the process of sculpting, she employs a mirror, looking at the object right in front of her from another angle in the same time and space. She thus situates her works within the manifold positions of the discarded objects she sees in the everyday, choosing to revel and engage with their present states.

The temporality and potential of Marcuse's sculptures shares affinities with Thomas Hirshhorn's monuments, not in the sense of his grandiose stagings but in the installations' attempt to meet materials—and consequently viewers—where they are.⁶ In *Bataille Monument*, 2002, from Documenta 11, Hirshhorn employed cardboard, duct tape, plastic wrap, and detritus from Kassel to erect temporary architectures that are complicit with and simultaneously critique cultural obsessions with consumerism and capital. Hirshhorn's *Bataille Monument* was composed of nine structures,

⁴ Michelle Marcuse, "Artist's Statement," InLiquid Website, Accessed January 23, 2019: <https://inliquid.org/artist/marcuse-michelle/>.

⁵ Laurel McLaughlin and Michelle Marcuse, Conversation with the artist, February 11, 2019.

⁶ Ibid.

including a library, exhibition, public sculpture, and café, both producing a microcosmic cultural center while simultaneously welcoming viewers—no matter their education or means—to partake in “building” the structures through participation. Characterizing the *Bataille Monument* and three other Hirshhorn installations dedicated to philosophers as “anti-monuments,” curator and scholar Simon Sheikh contends that such works counter nostalgia and transcendence in favor of an “immanence” rooted in the now.⁷ Sheikh’s conception of presentness notably owes its foundation to philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his interpretation of philosopher Baruch Spinoza’s (1632–1677) formulation of immanence.⁸ In Sheikh’s essay, these thinkers are strung together across time, referencing various publics and still articulating a broader and perhaps more global presence of immanence.⁹ So, what is the connection between the specificities and broader articulations of immanence in Marcuse’s sculptural works?

One could say that Marcuse references the local and global, of both Capetown and Philadelphia, in addition to potential structures for urban environments around the world. Unlike Hirshhorn, however, she does not cite them directly. There is no particular mandate in *Reservoir of Lost* or *History and Unreason*, both 2019, to consider Philadelphia’s increasing gentrification or South African landscapes plagued by histories of apartheid; but rather, a vague urgency underlies each joint, link, and bind in these sculptures, illuminating the precarity in each moment, in all places. *Reservoir of Lost* divulges the feeling of such an encounter. Its title conveys a confluence of water with that which is lost for a structure that appears like an impossible architecture. In looking, perhaps we wonder whether its muted blue streaks calm us into forgetting the lost, or does its imbalance prompt our reconsideration? Can the “reservoir” contain all of that which is “lost” in a world brimming with the effects of global warming? Will there be anything outside of the reservoir that is not lost for generations to come, or will there be only disparity? Marcuse’s sculptures guide us on the fringes of such thinking, emanating from one’s local experiences and expanding into broader global arenas.

History and Unreason continues such a nuanced guiding. The work is the sole sculpture to use mirrored mylar—a new material for Marcuse. Recalling her process employing mirrors, the material represents a curious convergence of past banalities reflected and reformed within the new. And yet, it does not conceal the imbalances in such a process. Much like Hirshhorn’s off-kilter environments, *History and Unreason* veers to one side, with its top segment, which Marcuse described as never quite fitting in

7 AM Weaver, “Carrying the Dreamer,” Michelle Marcuse Website, Accessed January 26, 2019; <https://www.michellemarcuse.com/essay>.

8 Simon Sheikh, “Planes of Immanence, or The form of ideas: Notes on the (anti-) monuments of Thomas Hirshhorn,” *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 9 (Spring/Summer 2004): 90–98, 92.

9 See Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, Anne Boyman, trans. (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2001).



Michelle Marcuse, *Own Sphere of Memory*
Mixed media, paint, cardboard, 13"x38"x35", 2019



Michelle Marcuse, *History and Unreason*
Mixed media, paint, 23"x16"x9", 2019

other works, counterbalancing the lower portion. A multilayered sweep of mirrored strips in the lower portion reflect our faces back to us, implicating us in its structure. Alongside our faces, other mirrored strips reflect one another, *positioning infinity nearby*. Marcuse's structures do not present binaries but instead conjoin us within an adjacent immanence that calls us to care. *History and Unreason* thus embodies and projects a seeming confluence of paradoxes: the societal ills that have and continue to burden us despite our knowledge of them—such as imbalances of power and displacement—alongside a counterintuitive cultural structure of immanence, that makes us see the present differently.

In the end (that actually resists finitude), the sculptures continue to shift and shape in the present, and one might say that these "islands" and their visions of the potential present are a kind of last plea for structural reconsiderations. We might think of them in this light as pareidolia for relational survival.

LAUREL MCLAUGHLIN

is a writer and curator from Philadelphia. She is a PhD candidate in the History of Art at Bryn Mawr College. Her dissertation traces how contemporary migration informs identity formations in performance art by women-identifying practitioners within the United States. She presented her research at the University of California, Berkeley, the College Art Association in New York, NY, and the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present in Hong Kong, among others. McLaughlin held curatorial and research positions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Slought Foundation, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and most recently the ICA Philadelphia.

MICHELLE MARCUSE

was born and raised in South Africa and lives and works in Philadelphia. She is Co-Director of HOUSEGallery, a mixed-use exhibition space in Philadelphia, PA. Her work merges industry and art to address waste colonialism and single-use mass consumption. Marcuse's fragmented architectural forms express the memories of a society under duress. Her work can be found in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's collection, among others. Recent exhibitions include: *Borderless Caribbean* at The Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance in Miami, FL; BLAM Projects in Brooklyn, NY; *Arte y Amor* at Taller Boricua in New York, NY; and *Against Gravity: TECTONICS–Imagined Spaces*, an exhibition organized by Doral Contemporary Art Museum.

A GUIDED WALK THROUGH THE CONTEMPORARY SUBLIME: SHANNON LEAH COLLIS' *KIEWA*

Deborah Barkun

At the far end of Grizzly Grizzly, the six pristine right triangles of Shannon Leah Collis' multimedia installation *Kiewa* rise in darkness like a minimalist mountain range. These peaks occupy space sculpturally, stretching laterally across the far quarter of the gallery, with a single, freestanding peak emerging in the foreground. Geometric purity is where associations with minimalism end, however. The triangular forms screen dynamic and spectacular video collages depicting Australia's Alpine National Park and the neighboring Kiewa hydroelectric complex. In an exemplary segment, two screens feature horizontal pans of tranquil Lake Guy reflecting the jagged glacial rocks of Mt. Beauty to a specular finish, intermittently veiled by images of the rushing Kiewa River. Simultaneously, against the lateral motion of passing landscape, scrolling images of the lithic monumentality of Kiewa Dam and the elegant latticework of its attendant hydroelectric towers alternately ascend or descend the four remaining screens in architectonic majesty. In situ and installed, naturally formed mountains meet fabricated mountains, and currents are harnessed and tamed. Each screen presents a fragmented view of the Kiewa environs, unified by a palette that fluctuates in intensity and a deeply resonant hum that builds in momentum. *Kiewa's* visual fragmentation and directional shifts destabilize the viewer's senses of scale and perspective. Immersed in *Kiewa*, the modest space of Grizzly Grizzly feels dizzyingly limitless. The erratic immensity of landscape is, at once, rendered in and expansive of human scale, evoking a particularly contemporary experience of the sublime—a curious aesthetic experience of simultaneous awe and terror—in which the natural environment and humanity's imprints upon it are co-implicated. *Kiewa's* sensorial abundance reveals the degree to which our hybrid landscape remains ultimately unknowable and unfathomable.

In 2018, Collis spent two weeks in residence at the Bogong Centre for Sound Culture, where she encountered the Victorian Alpine region through daily walks that emphasized both active and passive listening and looking, initially unmediated by recording or documenting devices. The process of intensive, embodied absorption heightened Collis' engagement with this unfamiliar terrain. Her explorations were guided, in part, by composer and musician Pauline Oliveros' philosophies of Deep Listening, in particular the directive, "Listen to everything all the time and remind yourself when you are not listening."¹ As in Oliveros' work more generally, ambient sound, including one's "internal and external sounds," comprise music of daily life:

¹ Oliveros, Pauline, quoted in Shannon Leah Collis, "Entry #1: The Poetics of Environmental Sound," bogongsound.com.au, <http://bogongsound.com.au/artists/shannon-leah-collis/jornal-1> (accessed July 26, 2019).



Shannon Leah Collis, *Keiwa*
Two-channel video installation, audio, dimensions variable, 2019



Shannon Leah Collis, *Keiwa*
Two-channel video installation, audio, dimensions variable, 2019

"You are part of the environment," she writes.² Here, the act of deep listening sensitizes the subject's aural acuity while subsuming her to the sonic environment. Electronic journal entries reveal Collis' developing bond with the Bogong region and connections between embodied experience and processes of documentation or representation. After days of unmediated communing with the environment, Collis transitions from "visitor" to "part of the place," enabled by her assumption of camera and sound recorder.³ Now part of the environment, the artist walks the hybrid landscape in a "state of perceptual receptivity," sourcing images and sound: the raw materials for *Kiewa*.

For the realization of *Kiewa*, Collis performs the role of artist-cartographer. Her methodology engages various mapping strategies to absorb the landscape's character. Walking the Kiewa landscape constitutes a corporeal cartography of the terrain through physical sensation: the coarse crush of stone underfoot, the length of a stride, herbaceous notes of grasses, spray from falling water, an awkward torsion to evade a thorny limb, the diminution of embodied physicality in proximity of mountains, both natural and constructed. This somatic mapping informs the mapping she undertakes in-camera and through audio field recording, which provide once-mediated data harvested on location. Collis' processes of editing comprise a third form of mapping: charting a discernible course through an abundance of information. Lastly, the artist integrates, collages, and digitally maps this material onto triangular screens installed in the gallery. In quest of representation that effectively captures an experience of place, Collis invokes multiple technologies of mapping, each constituting a distinct way of acquainting with surroundings. And yet, the sum of these domains of visual, aural, perceptual, and technological knowledge is a work that, despite its multisensory immersive generosity, eludes the possibility of ever grasping the forces that inspire it. *Kiewa* bathes viewers in rich, fragmented topography, making iterable the chaos and volatility of nature but also the chaos and volatility of human interventions in it.

Experiencing the spatial, visual, aural, and temporal sensations of *Kiewa*, one cannot help but consider the precariousness of the natural environment at the hands of its human inhabitants. As global temperatures and sea levels rise, weather patterns shift or become more severe, and resource scarcity leads to adaptation, endangerment, and climate migration. Oceans acidify, lead taints drinking water, and air and land grow toxic, consequential to human productivity. In Edmund Burke's and Immanuel Kant's Enlightenment-era conceptions of the sublime, the concomitant sensations of terror and awe, necessarily realized from a position of security, manifested

² Oliveros, Pauline, quoted in Shannon Leah Collis, "Entry #1: The Poetics of Environmental Sound." bogongsound.com.au. <http://bogongsound.com.au/artists/shannon-leah-collis/jornal-1> (accessed July 26, 2019).

³ Collis, Shannon Leah, "Entry #1: The Poetics of Environmental Sound." bogongsound.com.au. <http://bogongsound.com.au/artists/shannon-leah-collis/jornal-1> (accessed July 28, 2019).

as liberatory; from a safe distance, one can contemplate dynamic natural forces as sheer, aesthetic thrill. However, feminist philosopher Bonnie Mann argues that our contemporary context collapses our ability to stand apart from the natural world. "The fantasy of nature as a human construction is not *mere* fantasy," she writes, continuing, "our creations have changed our relationship to the natural world and are changing nature itself, in often terrifying ways."⁴ For Mann, the "natural sublime is a powerful experience that lays bare our relation to the natural world, and it lays bare the deep entanglements of natural and intersubjective dependencies."⁵ In other words, we cannot extricate our relationship to the natural world from our relationship to each other; they are codependent. Under the conditions of contemporary life, Mann's "natural sublime" is inflected with grief:

We cannot look upon a waterfall or mountain, raging river or vast forest, without the grief associated with the question, what have we done? combining with our terror.⁶

Here, the terror effect of the sublime is greater than aesthetic phenomenon; it is a terror partially of our own making. In Mann's assessment, our interventions are assaults on the natural world, which responds, in turn, with increasing ferocity, necessarily impacting how one experiences the sublime. Ultimately, Mann's project is political, championing connections between people and places over individual sovereignty and aesthetic distance and transcending specificity of place to address global community. The natural sublime's "play of terror and exhilaration moves us...to ask, How might this place be saved?" Mann's natural sublime thus evokes urgency.

Kiewa's absorptive, sonorous spectacle—intimate yet vast, natural and built, multidirectional—unmoors the viewer, arousing a technologically mediated sublime that eclipses the gallery context. *Kiewa* presents a confluence of foliated Alpine terrain and Brutalist hydroelectric grandeur that comprise a more ecological system of power generation in a region formerly reliant on coal-generated power.⁷ Yet, *Kiewa's* potency derives from tension, ambivalence, and melancholy that dwell just below the work's brilliant surface. The human imprint on the earth's landscape, writ large, lingers as a Barthesian punctum, a detail that "pricks" or moves the viewer. Like a preemptive memorial, *Kiewa's* apparent aesthetic and generative harmony compel us to acknowledge a planet unknowable, unfathomable, unbalanced, and in need.

4 Bonnie Mann, *Women's Liberation and the Sublime: Feminism, Postmodernism, Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 160-1.

5 Mann, 160-1.

6 Mann, 163.

7 Victorian Collections, [victoriancollections.net.au. https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/595b6ab5d-0cde50bd42215fd](https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/595b6ab5d-0cde50bd42215fd) (accessed July 26, 2019).

DEBORAH BARKUN

holds a BFA in Studio Art from Carnegie-Mellon University and an MA/PhD in History of Art from Bryn Mawr College. Her research on social dynamics of artistic collaboration has been supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Whiting Foundation, and a Coleman Dowell Fellowship for Study on Experimental Works. She served as Visiting Scholar in Residence at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, and presently serves as Chair of the Department of Art and Art History and Director of Museum Studies at Ursinus College. Her current project is entitled *Tangled Webs: Artist Arachnid Models of Working*.

SHANNON LEAH COLLIS

is an interdisciplinary artist. She is a graduate of the MFA program at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, and has completed post-graduate research at Concordia University in Montreal in the area of Digital Media and Computation Arts. Collis is also a 2015 and 2018 recipient of a Visual Artist Grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. She creates installations and interactive environments that explore various ways in which digital technologies can transform one's perception of audio and visual stimuli. Her work has been exhibited widely across North America as well as in Europe, Asia, Australia and Brazil. Collis is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland, where she teaches digital media and sound.

FULLY ANIMATED

ON *THEN THAT NIGHT...* BY DEE HIBBERT-JONES AND NOMI TALISMAN

John Muse

Two black men: Troy Anthony Davis, October 9, 1968, to September 21, 2011. Manuel Pina "Manny" Babbitt, May 3, 1949, to May 4, 1999. Both men were convicted of capital offences—Davis in California for the 1989 murder of Mark MacPhail, Babbitt in Georgia for the 1980 murder of Leah Schendel. Both men were executed by lethal injection—Davis at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification State Prison in Butts County, Georgia, and Babbitt at San Quentin State Prison.

The previous sentences tie names to dates to places to life and death and race, all knotted around "lethal injection" and "were convicted...were executed," passive voice constructions. These phrases measure the full weight of the legal real, the machinery of state power where saying makes it so and where the doing of this saying is allocated to collective agencies: the People of California vs. Manuel Babbitt, and the State of Georgia vs. Troy Davis. Judges and supreme courts hear appeals, governors are called, wardens supervise, physicians attend, but no one individual, as a matter of will and caprice and in their own name, arrests, tries, convicts, incarcerates, executes, or pronounces dead. Individual officers, individual lawyers, individual judges, elected officials, all operate under the various colors of authority, authority ultimately derived, said to be derived, from the governed, from a sovereign people, from us. So, let me revise one of the passive verbs and supply an active grammatical subject: we executed Davis, we executed Babbitt. I did, you did, we did, we the people.

How to represent these ties and these lives and deaths so as, on the one hand, to characterize and affect the massively entangled agencies of the State and yet, on the other, not crush Davis and Babbitt beneath representational modes that would reduce them merely to names and bodies handled and marked by their encounter with the law? Nomi Talisman and Dee Hibbert-Jones take up this challenge in an exhibition at Grizzly Grizzly entitled *Then That Night...* This titular phrase is a narrative hinge, constituting as it does a moment that divides before from after. But "then that night..." is less a well-lubricated joint in an otherwise clockwork unfolding, e.g., "and then...and then...and then..." than a decisive turn. "Then that night" proposes a cut, implying that what came before might account for what comes after, but in mysterious, troubling ways. A surprise, a shock, something will be marked as irrevocable and yet explicable. The title thus signals that the exhibition and the artists' efforts to represent life, death, murder, and execution will commit to storytelling, to tracking breaks, to excavating enigma, and the proliferating power of trauma.

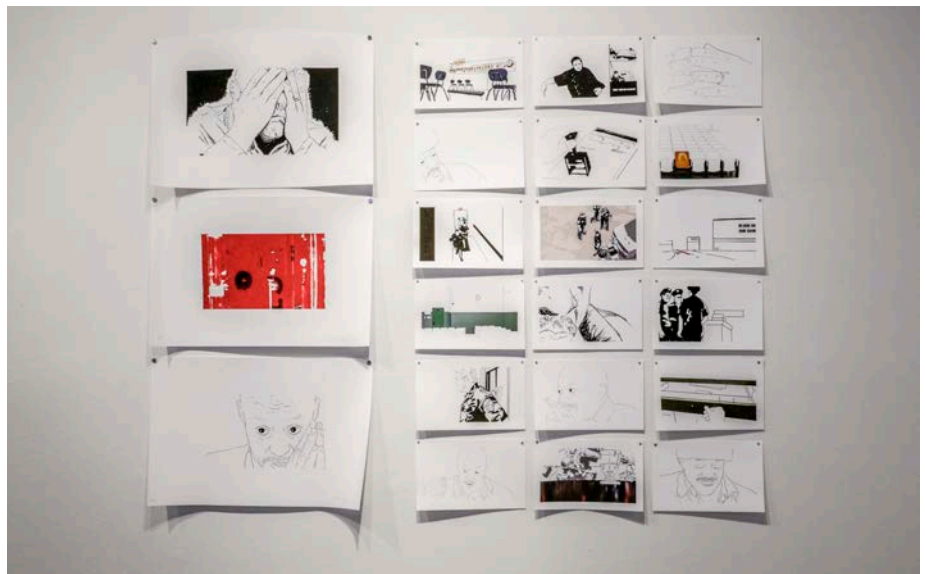
Then That Night... features a looping version of Talisman's and Hibbert-Jones' Oscar nominated, animated documentary short *Last Day of Freedom*, as well as looping versions of two clips, one a work-in-progress excerpt from a soon-to-be-animated feature, *Run With It*, and another, a stand-alone fragment titled *94124*. *Last Day of Freedom* tells Manny Babbitt's story; *Run With It*, Troy Davis'; and *94124* the story of James Hill, who was shot at a block party in Hunter's Point, California—hence the zip code, 94124. The exhibition also features color inkjet prints of frames from *Last Day of Freedom*, these organized into grids, clusters, and some hung singly, all mounted sparsely and neatly with magnets. White paper. White walls. Films that mostly feature white grounds upon which nervous, spritely black lines map the contours of black people, places, and things. All that whiteness undergirding black lines, black lives, black pain, black death.

The prints on the wall are all derived from film frames. These film frames—and the films as wholes—were rotoscoped. That is, they were made by drawing, in this case on a graphics tablet input device, tracing digital cinema images: of interview subjects, of archival footage from the Vietnam War, of children on the beach, of hands searching through coat pockets, etc. Lens-based images (found images and ones created by the artists) are the ground, the drawings mostly being tracings, thin black lines on expansive white ground, contours and textures, of a face, of tears coursing down a face, of a hand, a roof, a room, a helicopter, a soldier. Occasionally, posterized or high-key color appears: a green slice of a desk drawer, a chair, a book or two, a stack of manila folders, a red necktie. The color establishes a block of reality, not by piercing the veil of drawing to give what truly lies beneath, but to signify "partiality," only this much and no more, and to signify "pieces," obdurate and thick, redolent of memory and partial recall. The lines may be thin, separating positive from negative space by the sparest of means, but the colors and occasionally solid or shaded areas of bodies or objects provide counterpoint. The concrete and the abstract are on a turnstile: a line is a horizon; a splash of color is a beach; these contours sum to a person; a stained, sprocketed film frame presenting the letters "EN" of "THE END." The prints amplify the labors of abstraction, the rotoscoping being transformative, a way to sculpt generality—Babbitt's story, Davis' story, Hill's story, these are to have reach—plumping the sensuous punch of color and line while voiding the merely idiosyncratic. These cases, their courses, will capture the contour of many.

The exhibition is thus more than the longest of these films, *The Last Day of Freedom*, and more than the three time-based works together. The artists, by including the prints, remodel the white box of the small gallery: now a workspace, now a repository for *memento mori*, now a laboratory for forensics. First, the prints say, "this is our look board" and "this is our story board," the working images of filmmakers needing to emblemize their visual style and palette, the characters, locations, themes, and sequencing.



Dee Hibbert-Jones & Nomi Talisman, *Then That Night...*



Dee Hibbert-Jones & Nomi Talisman
Printed stills from the animated film, *Last Day of Freedom*

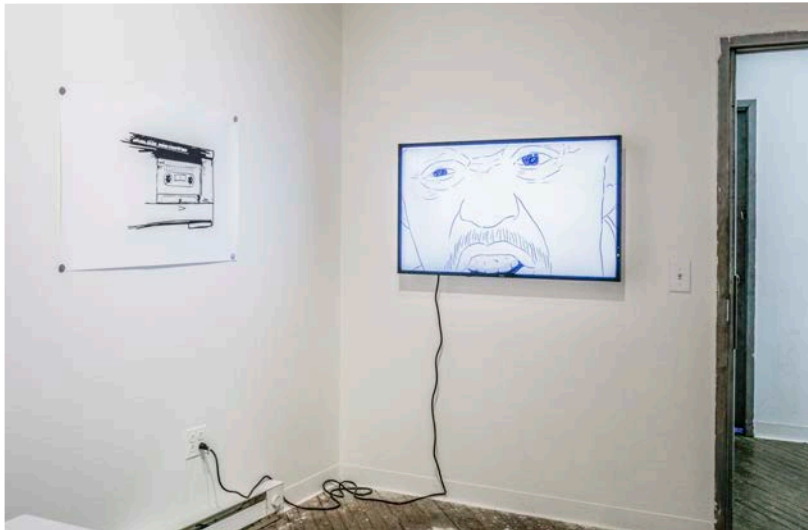
Second, the prints are also archival remnants of a moving image work, staid and still and to-be-remembered; parts that refer to absent and ephemeral wholes; less the spatialization of a temporal medium than a counter-temporal assembly. With these prints, the time of looking, unregulated as it is, has been unmoored from the time of the represented events. Third, the prints also seem to be the product of third-party attention: having seen something, having witnessed a life, a crime, a death; someone, wanting to understand, has mapped its most sensitive points, the clues and wonders. This latter regard asks viewers to treat the prints as the truth of an event, a truth though that must be set in motion, that is, narrated, ordered, and temporalized, the pieces having finally been put together; *The Last Day of Freedom* would be that truth. Sitting to watch this film then is to grasp a whole and to hope for a clear vision of justice, whether delayed or merely promised. These three utilities overlap: the artists invite viewers to step into the role of maker, into the role of collector, into the role of witness and investigator, which entails stepping into the role of citizen, into the role of "we the people."

Talisman's & Hibbert-Jones' title, *Last Day of Freedom*, cites a pivotal line from Bill's interview, two actually, as he uses the phrase twice: First, "I lied to my brother. On his last day of freedom." And then, "Her [Bill's sister] last image of Manny when Manny was making her kids squeal with delight. He made those little tent sheets out of sheets the day he was arrested. That's the memory she has of Manny on his last day of freedom." Bill lied to his brother: he lured him out of his sister's apartment with the promise of a day at the pool hall, one game being traded for another; the police were waiting. The last day of freedom then refers not only to the day Manny was arrested for the murder of Leah Schendel and not only to the day Bill lied to his brother—the phrase also refers to play, to the freedom of Bill's sister's children and thus to Manny's freedom with and for them. But the irony of the title is apparent, especially given the way that the artists stage the work and build the exhibition. When precisely was this last day of freedom? Was it the day before the 12-year-old Manny was injured in a traffic accident and began to suffer in school, to repeat grades, unable to read and write? Was it the day that Manny joined the Marines and shipped off to Vietnam, though he had failed to pass a written test but was admitted anyway? Was it the day before the 1968 Battle of Khe Sanh, a battle Manny survived but relived, it coming to him and for him again and again? Or was it the day before he was born, a black child who would grow up to be sentenced to death by an all-white jury represented by a white lawyer who discounted the relevance of the jury selection?

The film asks these questions and wrecks the very idea of the last day of freedom. Not that Bill can't mean what he says or that the relative difference between the freedom of a condemned man and the freedom of a child can't be measured and cultivated. The measurement though is fraught, haunted



Dee Hibbert-Jones & Nomi Talisman
Printed stills from the animated film, *Last Day of Freedom*



Dee Hibbert-Jones & Nomi Talisman, *Last Day of Freedom*
Animated video, audio, TRT 32min, 2015

by doubts, doubts the film insists be considered and drawn, diagrammed. As though to salvage and so reveal this wreck, right after Bill first intones, "on his last day of freedom," the film literally begins again: black diagonal lines creep across the white frame, forming a corner—just as before. Then circles, staining fields of muted, neutral colors: a rooftop, vents, shadows, a few doorways—just as before. An aerial view, the view from a helicopter or drone; surveillance, policing, a total view, a manhunt, an arrest, capture, incarceration, death. The last day was in the first few seconds; the last day was the always-coming day.

Near the end of the film, and by way of synopsis, Bill mentions the Schendel family, their loss in 1980, and their presence at Manny's execution in 1999: "Yes, they were victims. They had a terrible loss. But we're all partners in this experiment. We all got blood on our hands now." Though there is currently a moratorium on executions in California, these experiments continue: death is still a legal penalty in the state, and 737 inmates remain on death row. Talisman and Hibbert-Jones explicitly aim their work at the injustice of the death penalty, its implementation and existence, as well as the injustices of particular cases; they aim it, too, at the sentencing of Manny Babbitt and the conviction and sentencing of Troy Davis. But they also seek to shift the center of gravity from the theater of the courtroom and execution chamber to our shared predicament, the proliferating blood and wounds of the death penalty. They do so formally and carefully. While the artists depict a police station, an empty courtroom, and San Quentin—all typified and rendered iconic—Manny's execution is described by Bill but not depicted. First, we are only shown shadows, cross-hatching, really, a deep, dark place without form or substance, until Bill says, "He's just lying there with his eyes closed." Then, just before he goes on to say, "And I'm looking at the Schendel family..." Talisman and Hibbert-Jones cut to black. And while Bill continues to speak, they hold this black for 19 long seconds. Manny's eyes close, and so do ours. For a time, an abyss opens in the representational logic of the film and the prints: no print on the gallery wall is wholly black; thus, no print purports to take the full measure of lethal injection, of death at the hands of the state, or to take this time and make the eclipse of time its referent. The always something of the quivering line that cuts through the fields of whiteness, that offers intelligible figures in a calculus of memory and the synchronies of time—these collapse. This is what blood on our hands looks like. Not darkness, not the night of *Then That Night...*, not black, these being opposed by light, day, and white, by the turn of an event, but nothing, the nothing of something irreparably broken, a nothing done in our names and with our consent.

Talisman and Hibbert-Jones limn the experiment that is our democracy, our citizenship, and our death penalty; in all this we are partners; we share and yet don't share and share alike. Not yet. They seek to intervene, to show the harms of racialized policing, racialized criminal justice, the inequities that

breed and are bred by war, state violence, white supremacy, anti-blackness, and the heartlessness, shortsightedness, and criminality of treating murder as both a crime and its remedy. Their work is spare but unsparing, relentless, and focused, but also loving and attentive to the perspectives and voices of their storytellers, not only in how their voices are orchestrated, ordered, and aimed, but also in how their animation, their handwork and touch, sustains the lively and rough joinery of many lives, many places, and many times. Talisman and Hibbert-Jones have crafted a visual language that justly honors the singularity of each tale while rooting the latter in a drifting field of common fate, in whiteness and survival.

In the clip from *Run With It*, low resolution archival footage appropriated from news broadcasts occasionally flash into view. Talisman and Hibbert-Jones include a title over this footage that reads, in italicized all-caps, "*WTOC ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE TO BE FULLY ANIMATED.*" I read this as both a technical note and a heady promise, technical insofar as the artists here signify "work-in-progress," answering a question that someone viewing this clip might have about this not-yet-rotoscoped footage: yes, this too, just not yet; thank you for your patience. But the promise here is also reparative: would that the archive, the haunting traces of lives destroyed, could, through testimony and in the crucible of a canceled experiment, which too would be an experiment, be completely enlivened, all the blood finding its way back into the bodies from which we, citizens all, wrung it. That would be us, living together. But "fully animated" would have to mean, given *Last Day of Freedom*, *Run With It*, and *94124*, not resurrection, not miracles of time and space, but pellucid mapping, wayfinding through finer and finer lines, marks, colors, and tears; they would seek not the territory but the best map, the best diagram, the epitome of utility. "Fully animated" would mean reduced, abstracted, contoured just enough to clarify, generalize, synchronize, share, and transport, but not so much as to lose the particularity of our attachments and loves. *Then That Night...* promises full animation and perhaps an end to the nothing of the gurney, the 19 seconds of nothing that finally emptied Manuel Pina "Manny" Babbitt.

JOHN MUSE

is Visiting Assistant Professor at Haverford College. His most recent writing projects include reviews of exhibitions by Suzanne Bocanegra and Yoonmi Nam. He also documents small cairns and other ephemera built at the corner of Ardmore and Lancaster Avenues in Ardmore, PA and elsewhere.

DEE HIBBERT-JONES & NOMI TALISMAN

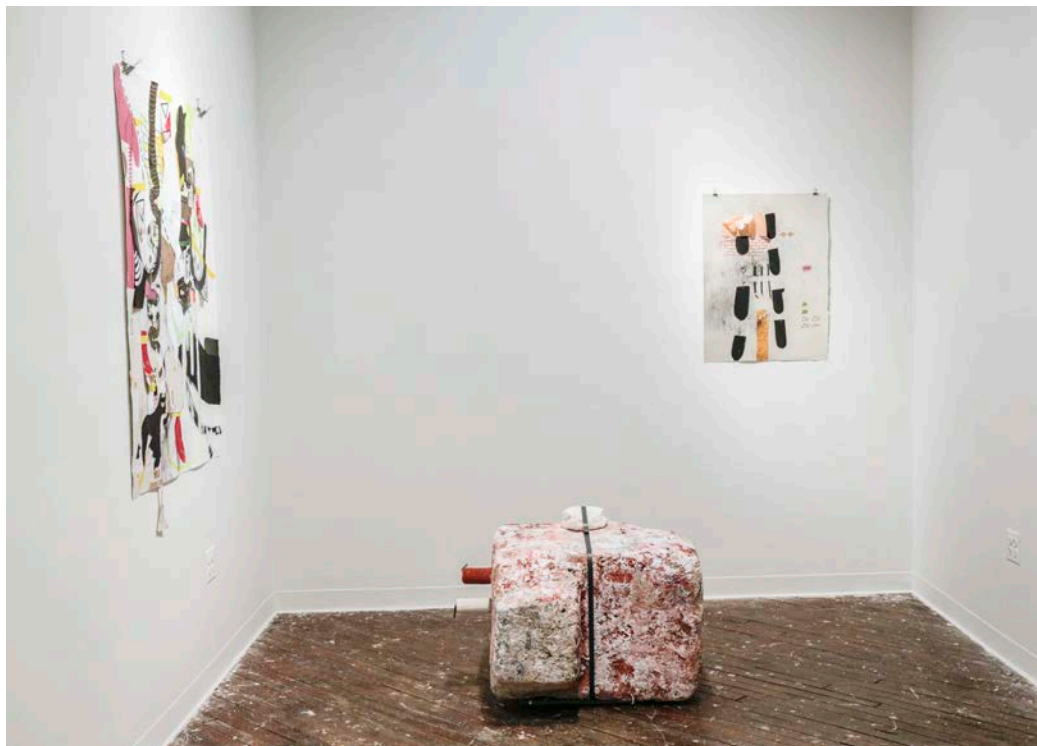
Academy Award® nominated, Emmy® award winning filmmakers Dee Hibbert-Jones & Nomi Talisman have been working together since 2004. Born in the UK and Israel respectively, they live in San Francisco. Hibbert-Jones is a Professor of Art at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Talisman is an independent animator and editor. Their animated films and new media projects address critical social issues that explore human resilience and challenge entrenched attitudes, engendering empathy and critical reflection. Their most recent animated documentary, *Last Day of Freedom*, was screened and exhibited internationally, winning international awards including the International Documentary Association, Best Short; the Filmmaker Award from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, and an Academy Award® nomination. They were also awarded a United States Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust Award in recognition for their outstanding national commitment to civil rights and social justice, and received a California Public Defenders Association Gideon Award. Hibbert-Jones and Talisman are Guggenheim Fellows.

TRUST THE PROCESS, OR ON THE SELF, CONSCIOUS ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF TIME BY CHARLES GOLDMAN AND JACKIE MILAD

Lance Winn

It is hard, upon entering *A Different Kind of Time*, an intimate, two-person show at Grizzly Grizzly with Jackie Milad and Charles Goldman, to not think about matter (I know you are probably figuring that I always say that, but I don't) after all, in Goldman's work, two of the sculptures are made out of RE>CRETE>, which Goldman claims as "a conceptual material, containing ALL," and in Milad's collage pieces everything seems to be cut out of something else...in fact, everything in *A Different Kind of Time* seems to be made out of something else (I suppose that is actually true of most things, but perhaps made explicit, or explicitly the point, in this case). The works all seem to hint at a kind of future object—think of the monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (which, I think, has to owe something to those odd West Coast Minimalists of the Light & Space movement. (I remember, somewhere, McCracken suggesting that he was making sculptures for aliens?)) Or maybe Stonehenge, with Goldman's strange hints at geometric meaning, or Milad's diagrammatic systems that you can sense but not entirely understand (unless, in the case of Stonehenge, you happen to be there on the summer solstice at some ungodly hour...Grizzly Grizzly has no sunlight...). The works in *A Different Kind of Time* speak to ancient systems and yet point to a sci-fi future. I think something that Walter Benjamin would describe as Ur-historical objects? What will things look like when all these new processes work themselves out? What can we learn from past processes that can teach us about now?

I can't help but recall my poorly constructed version of physics, or more specifically thermodynamics (neither of which any real physicist or thermodynamician (made up) would let me get near...), and how useful, whether accurate or not, it has been to imagine how things work. I am reminded of what I think of as the second law of thermodynamics, that all matter tends towards entropy or chaos, or something like that, and was reminded of those entropic thinkers of the 60's like Smithson, and some conversation around entropy ending in homogeneity (you would think of it as being pretty wild when everything broke down, but, in fact, as things break into smaller and smaller parts they become more similar); thinking about it in some terms like a pile of black sand and a pile of white sand, that Entropy (capital E, as in, "who is this character?" the wind? the guy from the insurance ads? just some ten-year-old that likes to kick sand?) will create a pile of gray matter. Which reminds me of the strange, slightly fleshy gray matter that feels not so much like a color but as the result of a process in Goldman's newly invented recycling, with RE>CRETE> being made up of shredded newspaper and junk mail, ground-up packing Styrofoam, home electronics wire, credit cards, CDs and DVDs, salvaged house paint, Portland



Charles Goldman, Jackie Milad, *A Different Kind of Time*



Charles Goldman, *RE>CRETE>KRAFT.1*
RE>CRETE>, styrofoam armature, paint, wood, metal, paint rollers, plastic strapping, 16"x40"x27", 2019

cement, and glass pozzolan. And another law surfaced (of which I could find some verification, but not in the language that I would use—plus there were mathematical formulas, which looked, to me, like ancient hieroglyphs...(just to bring things back around))—that matter does not increase or decrease but only changes form (I find this both beautiful and troubling)...and I had a somewhat horrifying image of the future world as being entirely constructed of recycled things that were the kind of non-color of RE>CRETE>. Which led me to think about a hill I drive by that is being constructed along the Delaware River. It is built of trash and has continued to grow during the fifteen years I have been passing by it. I'm sure, through some intensive research and science, that whoever is building this hill has managed to figure out how the matter will decompose and has filled in around and over the trash with a layer of topsoil, which has sprouted grass, and which, if you pass by from the right angle, on a pretty day, looks like a special place for a picnic overlooking the river (I mean, really, what is so different from a pile of trash becoming a hill and the earth growing over the bodies of dinosaurs that now produce the oil that we so like to consume? maybe a lot?) and I wonder what kind of rock matter will be formed by that hill of trash (maybe something very similar to the ALL of RE>CRETE>)...Which brought another image to mind of the rock mining pits...where mountains and hills are being removed. Matter moving from one state into another; some path where a slab of marble is removed for a kitchen counter, where some potato chips are eaten, maybe a beverage consumed, the packaging sent off in the trash to help build the hill along the river...the displacement of matter into a fully realized landscape/worldscape (that, in the removal of matter from one place and the addition of matter to another, and throw in a little entropic function, and the elevation of the world will become closer to homogeneous, a little flatter). And finally, some recollection of a conversation about bronze statues being melted because the bronze was needed to make weapons, and again, the shift in the state of material that reflects what is of concern to the population at any given time. As Milad comments in her statement for the show, "We assign value to objects, and those same objects can shift meaning depending on perspective, time in history, and their given cultural context. How does a society come to these determinations, who has dominion over what is highly valued or not?" What type of ideological "form" will reflect the beliefs of a group of people? The hill of trash being only one, kind of funny (not super funny) way of depicting the natural, "the hills are alive..." when it could be another form; a cube; a monolith (although I guess a hill is about the simplest form for a pile of matter to take?).

Which make Goldman's distinctly not-hill-forms feel even more specific and peculiar; the geometry hinting at the intersection of a consciousness giving form to matter. He calls them spacecraft, super-funny, because a spacecraft is the ultimate non-form, or has always kind of been the space for imagination (why, in the end, would something need to be "sleek" in anti-gravitational space?). What was the shape of that recent asteroid? The

signifier of Goldman's objects being "sculptures" is the one metal strap holding an object that must be the cockpit of the abstract geometry, and which also, very subtly, gives hints as to the density of this RE>CRETE>—I mean, why would we think that something made from all recycled matter would be particularly hard? (Maybe the trash-hill will have a certain bounce to it that people would find delightful?)

Milad is also involved in a kind of recycling; not of detritus, but of her own works, which become the material that she deconstructs to build new work. Her two-dimensional (they actually have quite a bit of a third dimension) collages hint at the geometric in a different way than Goldman's do, but similar as a site for human thought, as some blend of system, diagram, and cartography. Milad writes that "in my current studio practice, I cut up older completed drawings, in some cases artworks I've held on to for years, and now use for collage material to redefine their value and purpose. This sustainable process of making art is messy and most times irreverent—but an endless source of production." In the context of Grizzly Grizzly, I could imagine Milad making her next show by cutting up the current collages to make new ones until, when the project was complete, her wall objects would become the same neutral gray of RE>CRETE>, the matter ultimately returning to its natural state, in the end, as pulp, that somewhat beautiful color of what we used to call newspapers. (I know, probably a bit much there, but...)

It is a tribute, I think, to the artworks that through subtle acts of making and a belief (trust) in a process, a commitment to process, one is able to reach these kinds of conclusions. The show triggered something I have been thinking about a lot lately. Maybe it was the people on the radio talking about a glacier that is about to give way that will cause the ocean to rise eleven feet (talk about the displacement of a finite amount of matter—imagining how the very face of the earth will change (we are not talking about waves here, just the ocean being eleven feet higher...)). But perhaps bringing up a bigger point, it seems that there are at least two very different approaches to coping with the problems (must they be framed as problems?) that we face today. I am not talking specifically about just the environment here, but I might lean that way for a minute. One belief seems to be that we just keep pushing forward and that our supreme intelligence and inventiveness will keep finding ways to solve the problems we have created. We will harness new forms of energy and will continue to come up with solutions to humanity's complications—that is the entrepreneurial spirit! (I think about this as a kind of Dr. Frankensteinian hubris that Mary Shelley warned us of at the beginning of the industrial revolution; but hey, we have not gone up in smoke yet.) Or, secondly, we might have to change our behaviors or our very way of being (maybe considering some ancient forms of being that Milad hints at in her work), which it seems no one really wants to do (or it has most recently been framed as offensive, regressive, even kind of fascist, to ask people to



Jackie Milad, *The Flood Six-Hyena*
Acrylic, flashe, marker and collage on paper, 50"x42", 2018

change their behaviors; self not excluded). There is a good side conversation here about the Chinese government's ban on plastic bags...which I will leave for now...except to say that any "ban" seems pretty fascist? I guess the truth is that we all live with all kinds of bans? What are the bans we find acceptable? Or, the third option, I guess, is that we continue to push forward until things are not sustainable, and we get on our gray-matter geometries (spacecraft) and cycle through the matter on other planets (there seems to be a lot). We are, and have been, on many fronts, facing up to a history of a destiny that some considered manifest, and perhaps this is simply the next step? In any case, for the moment, there is a future that is going to happen, and Milad's and Goldman's commitment to process as a meaningful practice helps encourage us to think about the matter(s) at hand.

LANCE WINN

is an artist and—when forced—writer who teaches at the University of Delaware. His art and writings have been included in a range of recent books, including a collection on three-dimensional typography, another on Paul Virilio's influence on contemporary artists, and an essay in *The Material Culture of Shopping*. Winn's work has been shown nationally and internationally, and in 2007 was collected for a survey at the Freedman Gallery. His robotic video installations in collaboration with Simone Jones have been shown at Nuit Blanche in Toronto, the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York, and at the Icebox Project Space in Philadelphia. Their robotic installation, *End of Empire*, was included in the 2014 Montreal Biennale.

CHARLES GOLDMAN

is a Brooklyn-based artist who makes work that extends sculpture into painting, installation, performance, drawing, sound, photography, and architecture. He is the founder and director of GRIDSPACE in Brooklyn, NY, an artist-run project space. His work is included in public and private collections including the Museum of Modern Art and the Berkeley Art Museum. He has executed public projects and exhibited work internationally including the Museum of Art and Design in New York, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria in New York, NY; The Drawing Center in New York, NY; the Birch Libralato Gallery in Toronto, Ontario; Art Caucuses in Tbilisi, Georgia; Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, NY; Portland Institute of Contemporary Art in Portland, OR; and Toronto Sculpture Garden in Toronto, Ontario. He has participated in numerous residency programs, such as Civitella Ranieri, Art Omi and The MacDowell Colony. In 2011, Goldman was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts.

JACKIE MILAD

is a Baltimore-based artist who has been featured in group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally. Milad received her BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University and her MFA from Towson University. In addition to her active studio practice, Milad has an extensive career as a curator and educator, where she has committed many years to the education and support of emerging artists. Select exhibitions include The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, MD; Phoebe Projects curated by Alex Ebstein in Baltimore, MD; Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, PA; Museo de Arte de Mazatlán in Mazatlán, Mexico; DiFOCUR de Sinaloa Galleria in Culiacan, Mexico; and Transmitter in Brooklyn, NY. Milad is a three-time recipient of the Individual Artist Grant from Maryland State Arts Council. In 2019 she was honored as a finalist for the prestigious Janet & Walter Sondheim Prize.

GLITCH, GULF, GLYPH, GRID, GRAPH, GRAM: ON THE DIGITAL HUMANISM OF LEE ARNOLD'S *SIDEREAL MESSENGER*

Ricky Yanas

1610

In 1610, Galileo Galilei published 550 copies of his *Sidereus Nuncius*, *Sidereal Messenger*, or *Starry Messenger*, an astronomical treatise based on observations, made through a telescope, of the moon and the stars the previous year. Looking through a lens at an undetermined distance from his subjects, Galilei noted the phases of our moon and the movement of other celestial bodies. The modest etchings he produced, with lines carefully replicating the shifting light reflecting off the moon's bumpy, blemished surface, were revolutionary. *Sidereus Nuncius* confronted centuries-old assumptions about the physical nature of the objects in our night sky. The Roman Catholic Church sought to suppress his discoveries not only because they put the idea of a human-centric universe into question but also placed scientific observation in a position to supersede the church's role as sole mediator of earthly experience.

A NOTE

I was raised in a Catholic, Mexican-American family. This experience still colors my appreciation of the material world. Since I detached from the church, art has filled the gulf. So it is not surprising that the formal qualities of Lee Arnold's process-oriented videos (the grids, textures, symmetry) panged my subconscious and moved me to begin this essay by mapping my early structural-perceptual grid onto his work.

A MESSAGE

Sidereal Messenger, an installation of Lee Arnold's works, is analogous to a chapel: a small, dark, meditative space filled not with iconic figures, colorful stained-glass, or warm sunlight, but with rhythmic bursts of pattern, color, and glitchy imagery, emanating from horizontally oriented LCD monitors both self-standing on tripods and mounted to the walls. A series of visual-textural videos, or short films, playing on the monitors fill the room with spasmodic light and a musical atmosphere, both calming and energizing. Some of the screens have headphones attached, playing tonal counterparts to their corresponding images; some have earmuffs to cancel out the noise in the room, enabling their videos to be viewed in silence. An oculus projected high onto the back of the small gallery, operating as a focal point in the installation, displays a rotating set of images; a looping video of the night sky, silhouettes of plants, and sonic patterns rotate. The room, at moments, feels like it's moving.



Lee Arnold, *Moon Phase*
Looped video, TRT 1min, 2018



Lee Arnold, *Sidereal Messenger*

A DIFFERENCE

It is difficult not to draw comparisons to other chapel-like art spaces like James Turrell's *Skyspaces* and Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin* (2018) on the University of Texas at Austin campus. These spaces focus on color, light, silence, emphasizing site-specificity. The precious, individual experience they offer evokes desires for pilgrimages honoring great men, dedicated to rendering natural beauty and pure form. But unlike these austere and expensive franchise fixtures, Arnold's work, its jittery, non-passive affect, makes the space that it keeps. Transferable and malleable, formal and playful, the works are more akin to the holy spirit than a cathedral.

First-century Christians performed their small masses in their homes, outside the view of Roman persecutors, changing locations often. The subversive networks that emerged from these gatherings were based on the sharing of ritual meals and exchanging clandestine information. Similarly, Arnold's work yields a nomadic, lateral field of experience; he intentionally makes his videos available online without site-specific requirements, to be consumed and presented based on the preference of the user.

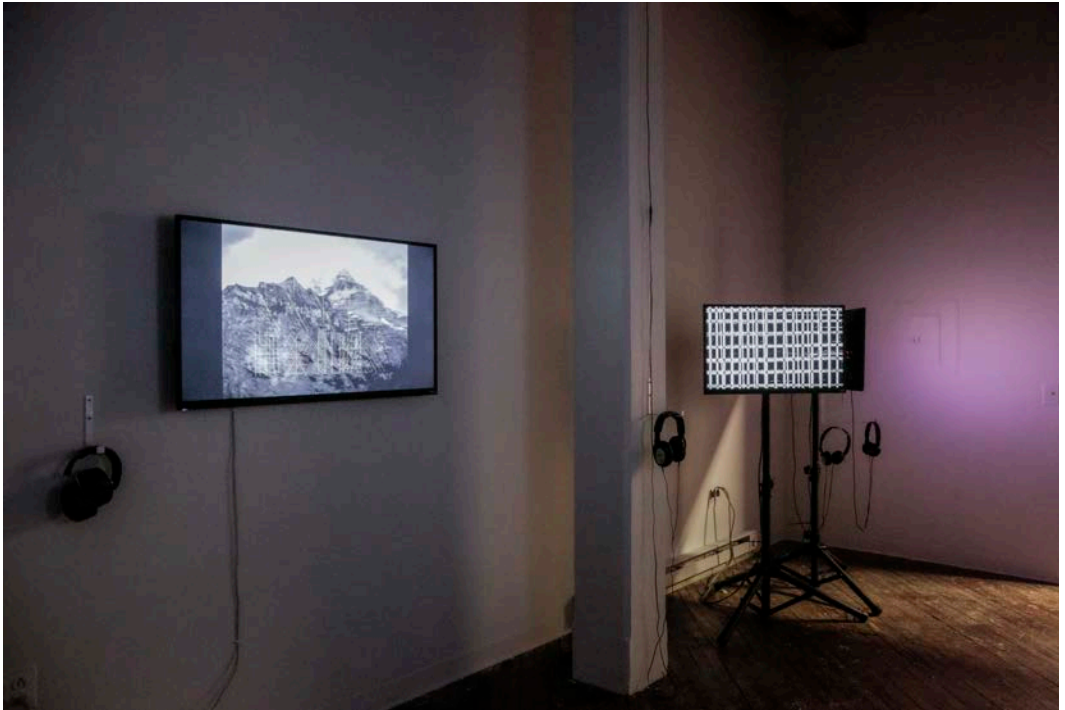
ANALOGY

American professor of cognitive science and philosopher Douglas Hofstadter states that the core of human cognition is analogy.¹ Our ability to map situations onto other situations is not simply an artifact of our thinking, it's the way we think. Early in life we begin to make these connections, gradually making packages of analogies, grouping them together in categories, larger concepts, and lexicons. Over time, these categories become more and more robust, nuanced, and abstract. Categories blur, blend, and leap from their assumed centers. Scientific and artistic leaps, like those of Galileo, are the product of this process: Observing the shared essence of objects over the surface of Jupiter with our own moon sparked a revolutionary hypothesis.

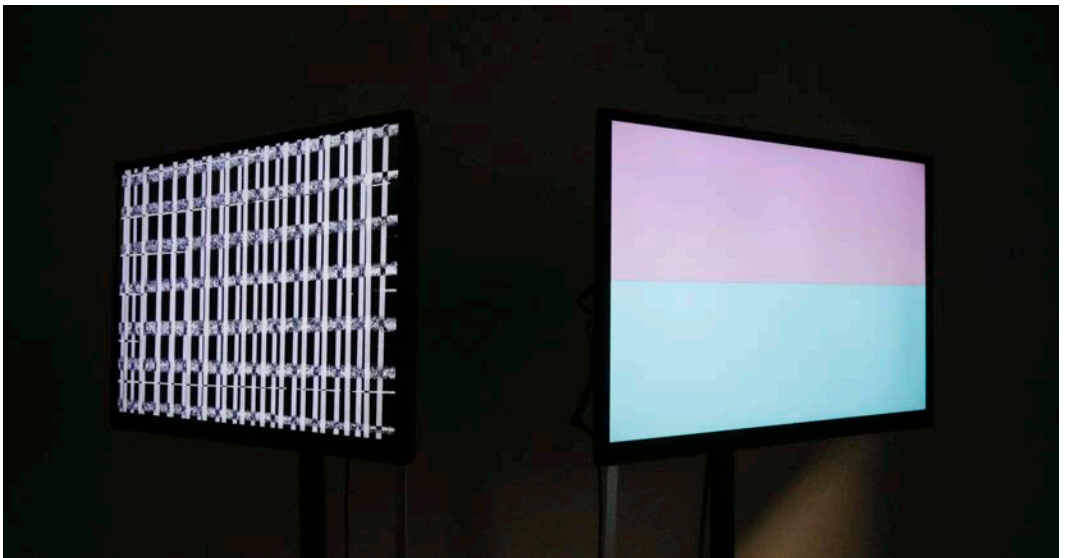
Hofstadter also refers to "lexical blends" that occur "when a situation evokes two or more lexical items at once and fragments of the various evoked competitors wind up getting magically, sometimes seamlessly, spliced together into the vocalized output stream..."² Verbal slippages like saying "Take-luck" is evidence of our brains attempting to choose between two appropriate but slightly different salutations: "Take care" and "Good luck." Arnold's videos embody a similar process of mapping images

1 Hofstadter, Douglas. "Analogy as the Core of Cognition." *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives from Cognitive Science*, MIT Press/Bradford Book, Cambridge, MA 2001.
<http://worrydream.com/refs/Hofstadter%20-%20Analogy%20as%20the%20Core%20of%20Cognition.pdf>, accessed 10 July, 2019.

2 Hofstadter, Douglas. "Analogy as the Core of Cognition." *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives from Cognitive Science*, MIT Press/Bradford Book, Cambridge, MA 2001.
<http://worrydream.com/refs/Hofstadter%20-%20Analogy%20as%20the%20Core%20of%20Cognition.pdf>, accessed 10 July, 2019.



Lee Arnold, *Stereograph*
Looped video, audio, TRT 1min, 2017



Lee Arnold, *Interference*, Looped video, audio, TRT 1min, 2017
Signals, Looped video, audio, TRT 1min, 2012

and more complex lexical categories onto others, compressing them into small chunks of time, looping endlessly, making the process of processing, recording, and translating information the core of their content. In the following, I will consider Arnold's work through six associated categories, each a formal artifact, each a point to engage their thematic essences.

GLITCH

Significant in Arnold's looped videos is their jittery, jumpy energy. Images of mountains (*Stereograph* (2018)) and grids (*Interference* (2017)) and graph-like forms (*Signal/Noise* (2019)) fall apart and reconfigure second by second. Similarities with contemporary digital phenomena like GIFs are clear; his hybrids of still and moving imagery manifest a seductively repetitive imagery created by grating textures and overlapping images. The patterns, rotating colors, and rhythmic breaks transfix our gaze (a hypnotizing effect that recalls Joan Jonas' landmark work *Vertical Roll* (1972)), settling us into a space of ritual or meditation.

GULF

Stereograph is a three-dimensional video loop presenting a view of a mountain top. The sequential composite of two views of the mountain repeated causes the image to jump and jitter; colorful, gridlike etchings appear with every convulsion. The stereograph, a method of image making popular in the mid-19th century, took two images photographed or drawn from slightly different perspectives and placed them side-by-side to be viewed through an apparatus called a stereoscope. Viewing each image through the individual oculi of the stereoscope would create an illusion, making the images appear as one three-dimensional view. The simple apparatus compressed the two views to a magical effect.

Galileo's telescopic lens collapsed the space between us and the moon, making it present, observable; the celestial image became an object. In *Stereograph*, the mountain is both literal and a metaphor for all great distances that we wish to surmount, fueled sometimes by the desire for victory but most often by curiosity. The image, its constant jerking away, its attempt to graph its subject, evokes sensations akin to the existential sublime of 19th century German painter Caspar David Fredrich.

GLYPH

Historically, we know hieroglyphics as signifying motifs from ancient societies. Today, glyphs exist in logos and in our alphabet as collectively accepted symbols, packaged iconic elements, as stand-ins for complex and simple ideas. The hand-made and the digital marks that appear in *Sidereal Messenger* represent ancient and modern motifs: the grid, the oculus, the moon, the leaf, and the moire signify natural elements, visual

phenomena and scientific inquiry. Like the early Christians' ichthys (two intersecting arcs creating a symbol resembling a fish), Arnold draws an ellipses that we must complete. The glyphs in his works invite us to parse out the forms, to consider their relationships, but more importantly, to take pleasure in that practice.

GRID & GRAPH

The grid is both a formal structure and a motif, creating order and signifying it. The Romans utilized the grid-plan in major works, most notably in their temples and city planning. The grid is an ideal metaphor for the western desire for control. Arnold uses the grid and other graphing motifs to the contrary. In *Interference*, a series of hand-drawn grids appear on the screen, overlapping, building up, and shifting in unison with a melodic rhythmic tone playing through headphones. *Dark Nebula* (2015) and *Signal/Noise* utilize NASA data to create undulating, organic forms projected into a simulated oculus in the gallery. Through Arnold's window we see the sky, water, and leaves merge into a musical, celestial experience. The works perform measurement yet do not desire results. Joyfully and reverently, Arnold engages recorded data, a stand-in for "objective truth," as a subject for interpretation, inquiry, and material engagement. The outcome is the concrete evidence of a material process, not a representation.

GRAM

Arnold's films are infinitely transferable and scalable and can be displayed with infinite flexibility; there is no authentic version. Recalling Charles and Ray Eames' exploration of scale in their iconic film *Powers of Ten* (1977), if the size of the image changes, the structure is constant. On a phone or projected in a gallery, the images retain their motion, rhythm, and play, limited only by the capacity of the display or the size of the file. This is a significant decision in that it compresses the gulf between the maker and the user; a gesture of interpretation is assumed, a relationship implied. Like Galileo Galilei, Lee Arnold, a starry messenger in his own right, shares his image of the universe, and the tools we use to interpret it, in the form of short, textural-visual songs, full of complexity, for us to contemplate and commune with—no cathedrals necessary.

RICKY YANAS

is a Texas-born artist, educator, and curator living in Philadelphia. Working within a pragmatic tradition of problem finding, Yanas aims to create intersectional spaces of inquiry and mutual engagement through art-making and art-thinking. In 2016 Yanas founded Ulises Books with Nerissa Cooney, Lauren Downing, Joel Evey, Kayla Romberger, and Gee Wesley. Recent projects include *Extension or Communication: Puerto Rico* at Tiger Strikes Asteroid and Taller Puertorriqueño in Philadelphia, PA; and *The Green Sun*, a collaboration with artist Kristen Neville Taylor.

LEE ARNOLD

was born in London and lives in Brooklyn, NY. In his work, he examines systems of natural phenomena and the aesthetics of information using a variety of forms, including film, video, animation, photography, collage, drawing, and sound. His diverse practice engages with perceptions of time, memory, and visual experience through the lens of philosophical and scientific inquiry. Arnold has exhibited at venues including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Eyebeam, and Exit Art in New York, NY; the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, PA; and SIGGRAPH in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. He is the recipient of fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and DAAD, Berlin.

BUILT/BUILDING – WORLD/WORLDDING: MATTHEW COLAIZZO, JACK HENRY, AND REBECCA SIMON MILLER

Kaitlin Pomerantz

The philosopher Martin Heidegger made a distinction between "world," the conceptual framework that imparts meaning and structure to our lives, and "Earth," the physical ground of our being:

The world worlds, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. By the opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening, their remoteness and nearness, their scope and limits.

—Daniel Pinchbeck, 2012: *Quetzalcoatl*, quoting Martin Heidegger's *Poetry, Language, Thought*.

An exhibition is a world that imparts on a viewer its logic, aesthetics, and perhaps, lessons. Visiting an exhibition could be said to be an experience of attunement to that particular world through the immediate creation of an internal world based on attention and noticing, followed by a more drawn-out world-building, which is the discernment and making of meaning from the work, its presentation and presence. If what is meant by Heidegger's *world worlding* is something about the way in which we live as much in a world of our own collective imagination as we do in the physical world (the Earth), it could be said that the viewing of art, if sufficiently provocative, could lead to *world worlding* in the consciousness and subsequent actions of its viewers. That is to say that compelling art could lead to the imagining of new worlds and new ways of being in the one to which we are physically bound.

Built/Building Environment, featuring work by printmaker Matthew Colaizzo, sculptor Jack Henry, and painter Rebecca Simon Miller, presents views of a world not unfamiliar from our own planet Earth. The works appear alternately as literal terrestrial fragments—as in the core-sample like debris-sculptures by Henry or the compost-clusters by Miller, and as postcards from sites these fragments might have hailed from—as in the pictorial drawing-collages by Colaizzo. The work is both the stuff of our physical world—material clusters, natural refuse, places—and a re-action to it. It is the familiar material put through the grist mill of individual artistic consciousness. When presented together, it conveys a group consciousness homing in on the particularity of our planet and our "world" today: nature in the age of the Anthropocene. Characterized by an inextricability of human presence from greater forces of nature, Anthropocenic landscape manifests as accretion of natural matter fused with the industrial, human-made, and human-discarded. It is the imagined fears around pollution made physical and forensic: a world becoming the World. The work in *Built/Building*



Jack Henry, Matthew Colaizzo, Rebecca Simon Miller, *Built/Building Environment*



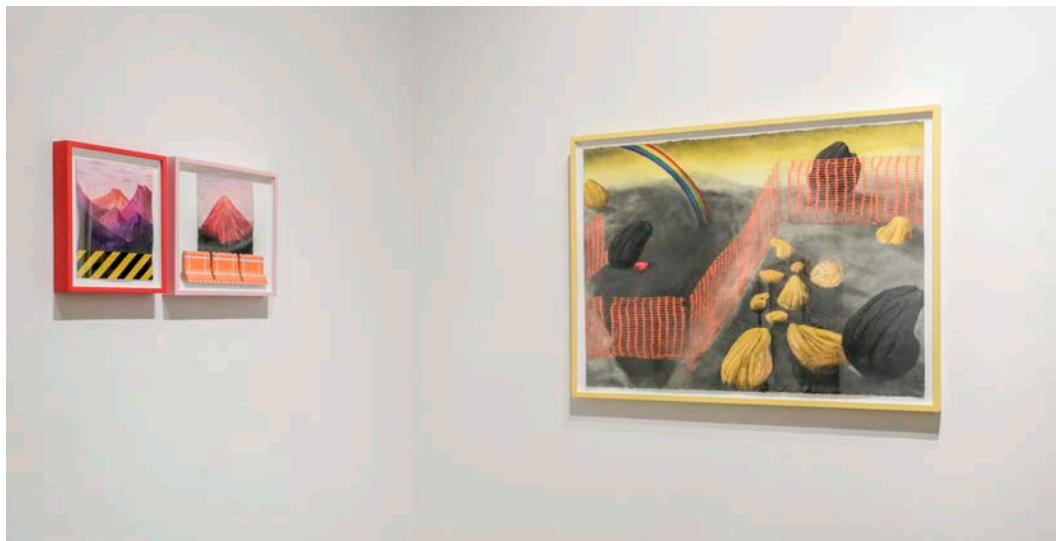
Rebecca Simon Miller, *New Forest [excerpt B]* (detail)
Oil and acrylic on wood panel, 5x5 (variable), 2010-2019

Environment presents a variety of views into Anthropocene conditions, like excerpts from the larger text that is our planet combined with oppressive and encompassing human forces.

Colaizzo's brightly framed, colorful drawings offer glimpses into sequestered environments of indeterminate scale. A construction debris pile might be a mountain, a stone might be a boulder, a grouping of orange cones might be an army, a monument, or simply the work of fastidious foremen. Colaizzo's disorienting yet highly ordered landscapes are like construction-fence-glimpses on acid, the banality of evil that is quotidian urban development made magic and mesmerizing. The piles and mountains come to appear as animals caged in by fences and by the picture frames themselves; they are objects of masquerade, human refuse parading as "nature," artificiality reading solid as rock. Effects such as fingerprints, the inclusion of graphic rainbows, or the collaging of caution tape or axonometrically rendered construction barriers function like keys within a distorted map—personal human commentary on an unwieldy landscape, an attempt to know a terra incognita of man's own making. What attracts the eye also indicates caution and blockage, making us look and also forcing us to look away. The effect of the work is a kind of rancid beauty: the dazzling rainbow slick of a gas station puddle, the appealing compactness of a flattened roadkill pigeon. We know something is wrong and yet there is a sublimity to it. The piece of plastic weathered by the sea still speaks of the sea, and yet, is still plastic.

Henry's upright mixed media sculptures stand as specters amongst the two-dimensional drawings and paintings. A mix of plaster, netting, old electronics, and pigments poured into dimensional molds, their contrivedness dissipates into a feeling of accidentality: are they made? Found? Chiseled out of some landfill? Their scale and proportions lend to an anthropomorphic feel, though the placement in the gallery space is neither confrontational nor particularly totemic, but rather like modest core samples mounted for didactic study at a geologic site. The materials speak of "artiness" and the condition of artmaking under 21st century capitalism, beckoning questions around sustainability and artist materials, that particular paradox of walking into Dick Blick to purchase the materials that will become the masterpiece. The sculptures sit on flat, sheet-metal plinths like trophies of human catastrophe. One can imagine them piling up, dusty and forgotten, upon Industry's mantelpiece.

Miller's delicate yet festering painting clusters speak of a fragmented nature activity: compost, desiccation, disintegration, tangling. Of the three artists' work, they seem most in the realm of "pure nature," though they, too, are not without human intrusion in the form of trash and debris. Like a mixed-up puzzle whose pieces will never find their partners, each painting feels like an independent piece, despite the grouped presentation. Each one boasts a unique quality of brushstrokes—sometimes hurried and light, sometimes



Matthew Colaizzo, *Landscape with Caution Tape*, *Red Mountain with Jersey Barriers*, *Black and Yellow Rocks with Orange Fence and Rainbow* 9.75"x8", 10"x10.75", 24"x32" (respectively), all works graphite, colored pencil, and Acryla gouache on paper, 2019



Jack Henry, *Sheer 2*
Found objects, gypsum cement, ink,
pigment, spray paint, steel, 73"x17"x3.5", 2015

flat and heavy, sometimes fastidious, and sometimes carefree—attesting to the feeling of the artist at the moment of making and also to the energetic forces they represent. The works have a zoomed-in quality like they are mere fractions of the artist's total visual world; they recall Ellen Altfest's body part paintings, or Durer's weeds in the way in which they *home in*. Evoking the very quality that makes a fragment a fragment, which is its *lack*, these works speak to what they are but also what isn't there: the systems, forces, ecosystems, spaces, places from which these small moments have detached. Less like specimens and more like shards, one wonders in what world they might get to be whole.

As sample (Henry), record (Miller), and postcard (Colaizzo), these works seem, all, to be transfixed by a *world worlding* into unknown futures. They hover between the imaginary space of artistic consciousness and the reality of our ecologically troubled Earth. Their cumulative effect is an oscillation of scales and views, a meandering into familiar sights and spaces that often go overlooked: trash heaps, debris piles, compost holes—sites of the teeming and fetid. As these three artists uniquely knoll the bits and bobs of this world's visual world and Earth's eclectic forces, they leave us with a sense of the jumbled nature of "nature" today and its unpredictable tomorrow.

KAITLIN POMERANTZ

is a visual artist, educator, and writer in Philadelphia. Her project-based work explores land use, exploitation, extraction, transformation, and the varied relationship between humans, nature, and the physical world. She works in print, 2D and 3D media, video, and public art and engagement. She is co-facilitator of botanical-arts collective WE THE WEEDS, managing editor of *Title Magazine*, and teaches studio and seminar courses at Philadelphia-area colleges including the University of Pennsylvania and Moore College of Art and Design

MATTHEW COLAIZZO

lives and works in Philadelphia. He received his BFA from Tyler School of Art and his MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Colaizzo's drawings explore our relationship to the landscape as a curated experience. He investigates our view of the landscape through boundaries, land organization, accessibility, and private property. Colaizzo's work has been included in various group exhibitions, including the International Print Center New York and the University of Texas at Austin, as well as a solo exhibition at Napoleon Gallery in Philadelphia, PA. He has been an artist in residence at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Snowmass, CO and Signal Fire Outpost in Mt. Hood National Forest, OR. Colaizzo currently teaches in the foundation department at Tyler School of Art.

JACK HENRY

was born in Jackson, MS, and moved to Flint, MI at an early age. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He graduated with a BFA from Florida Atlantic University and earned his MFA from the University of Maryland. His work has been shown throughout the US and abroad, including exhibitions at Wasserman Projects in Detroit, MI; Lesley Heller Workspace in New York, NY; ProjekTraum in Friedrichshafen, Germany; Black and White Gallery in Brooklyn, NY; Glass Curtain Gallery at Columbia College in Chicago, IL; Spring/Break Art Fair in New York, NY; Nudashank in Baltimore, MD; and Fjord Gallery in Philadelphia, PA. His work has been written about in the *Chicago Tribune*, *The L Magazine*, and *Hyperallergic*.

REBECCA SIMON MILLER

is a Philadelphia-based artist with a BFA from Alfred University and an MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Miller documents moments in place through drawings and paintings on shaped paper and wood panel. The physicality of her materials, mark-making, and paint application is crucial to her work, which focuses on the landscape, density of detail, and a building up of fragments. Ceramics influenced her sense of shape and materiality, and she is inspired by the journey format of walks, writing, and music, unfolding over time. She is currently a Teaching Artist with Mural Arts Philadelphia.

IN RETROSPECT

RUTH SCOTT BLACKSON, MICHAEL ELLYSON, MICHAEL KONRAD, JACQUE LIU,
JOSHUA WEISS + JACOB LUNDERBY, BRUCE WILHELM

Cindy Stockton Moore

In recognition of Grizzly Grizzly's 10th anniversary, *In Retrospect* brings together former gallery members in a summer group show. Being a former Grizzly myself, I am very familiar with the physical and conceptual obstacles this exhibition premise presents. First, August is a suboptimal month to plan in our small, un-air-conditioned space.¹ Second, Grizzly Grizzly members are (by design) a divergent blend of artist/makers; a group show can be an eclectic jumble unless we impose a theme.² And third, Grizzly Grizzly members never show their own work in the space.³ *In Retrospect* is problematic, but overcoming conceptual and material obstructions may be Grizzly Grizzly's specialty. A rigorous spirit of risk-taking is the constant in the experimental gallery, even as membership shifts over time. At one point, we defined ourselves as "a collection of sharp edges"; consensus is not the goal.⁴

Artist Jacque Liu recalls the dynamic as "a sometimes perfect blend of organization, chaos, assertion, generosity, and communication."⁵ For *In Retrospect*, Liu is showing *Lilt-L*, a quiet sculpture that is indicative of his nuanced and minimal approach to imagery. His highly refined surfaces distill architectural elements into abstractions of light and site. In contrast to these subtle shifts, a cartoonish sculpture—perhaps best described as an ex-voto hotdog—sits on a shelf across the gallery. Its pink cylindrical form is inscribed with a hand-painted gambler's plea.⁶ The humorous sculpture—on loan from Jacque Liu's personal collection—is by Mike Ellyson, one of the founding members of the space.

Ellyson, now living in Beijing, was originally going to use Grizzly Grizzly's second floor home in the 319 Building as a studio space but decided it was too hot in the summer. He reached out to some friends from VCU—Bruce Wilhelm, Dennis Williams, Vincent Colvin, and Steven Little—and together they opened the gallery in 2009. "The name Grizzly Grizzly was my dream band name that was never formed," mostly because he doesn't play an instrument, admits Ellyson.⁷

1 The default for many years was to turn August into a single night of performance or video.

2 Member Mary Smull came up with some notable ones: an obscure handwriting manual that served as the framework for our show in Detroit, titled *Writing Lessons*, and the hotel-themed exhibition at Public Fiction in Los Angeles, *Wish You Were Here*.

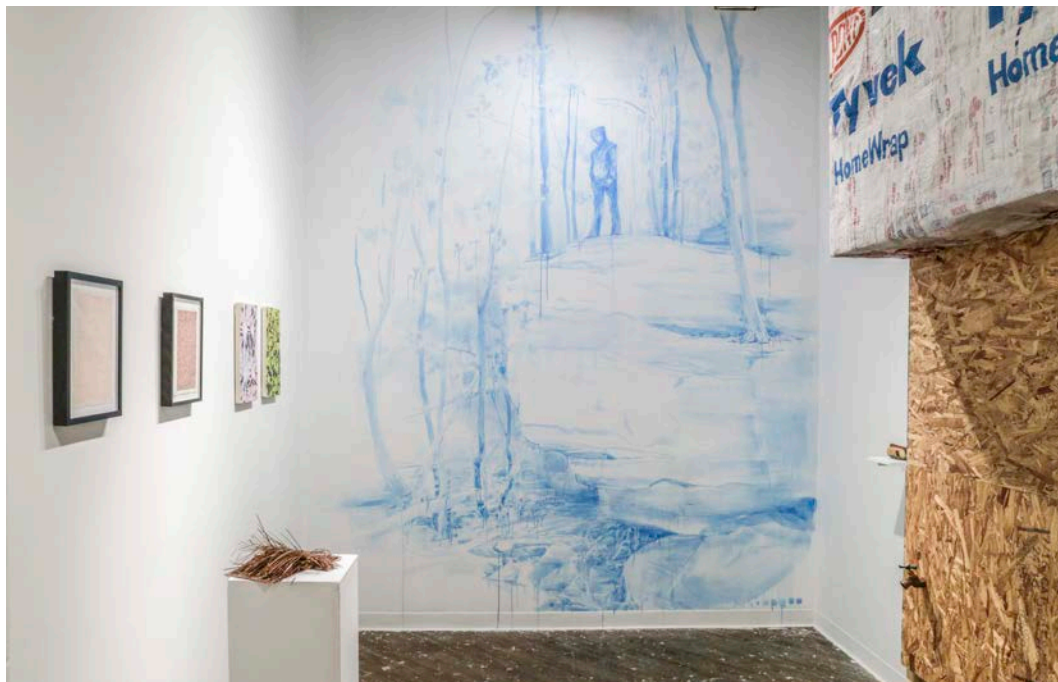
3 Since this show only includes former members, they are not breaking with mission. On the event of our 5th anniversary we hosted *To All the Girls We've Loved Before*, which reunited the early members, also.

4 Grizzly Grizzly mission circa 2011.

5 From email interview, July 4, 2019. Jacque Liu was a member of the gallery from 2010-2014.

6 The painted bun shows the artist is hedging his spiritual bet, addressing two different versions of Jesus.

7 Mike Ellyson is currently teaching acting and writing in Beijing, saving up to open a restaurant. Quote from email interview, July 2. Mike was a Grizzly Grizzly member from 2009 -2013.



Cindy Stockton Moore, *worlds end* (back wall)
Ink on wall, 144"x114", 2019



Michael Ellyson, *Untitled (Christs on Hotdog)*
Plaster and paint, 2.5'x7'x3', 2008

Jacque Liu and fiber artist Mary Smull both knew the charismatic and quirky Ellyson from Cranbrook. They joined the gallery in 2010, as did I, forming the second wave of members. My connection was through the painter Bruce Wilhelm, who left Philadelphia to return to Richmond, where he continues to enjoy "a hermit lifestyle."⁸ For *In Retrospect*, Wilhelm is showing two small paintings that reflect his responsive, process-oriented approach to mark-making and color. His proposed name for the gallery was Win-Win, which (ironically) lost to Grizzly Grizzly in a vote.

Our new group of five met monthly to discuss possible shows, introduce artists' work, and program the space. Although we each presented artists in rotation, proposed exhibitions rarely remained intact, with input from the group jostling concepts into something unforeseen. In 2011, we decided to pair Josh Weiss's densely layered paintings with an organic, encaustic installation by Laura Moriarty.⁹ The show was visually striking—one large painting in conversation with a singular floor sculpture—but the two artists' work blended into one shared experience, a curatorial tightness we actively avoided by the time Weiss came on board later that year.

Our collective tendency for unlikely pairings in the gallery led to equally unexpected collaborations between members, influencing our respective studio practices. Josh Weiss is now working with Jacob Lunderby (a painter who showed with the gallery in 2016)—their highly patterned construction for *In Retrospect* is one prototype for their new, scalable, interior design concepts that:

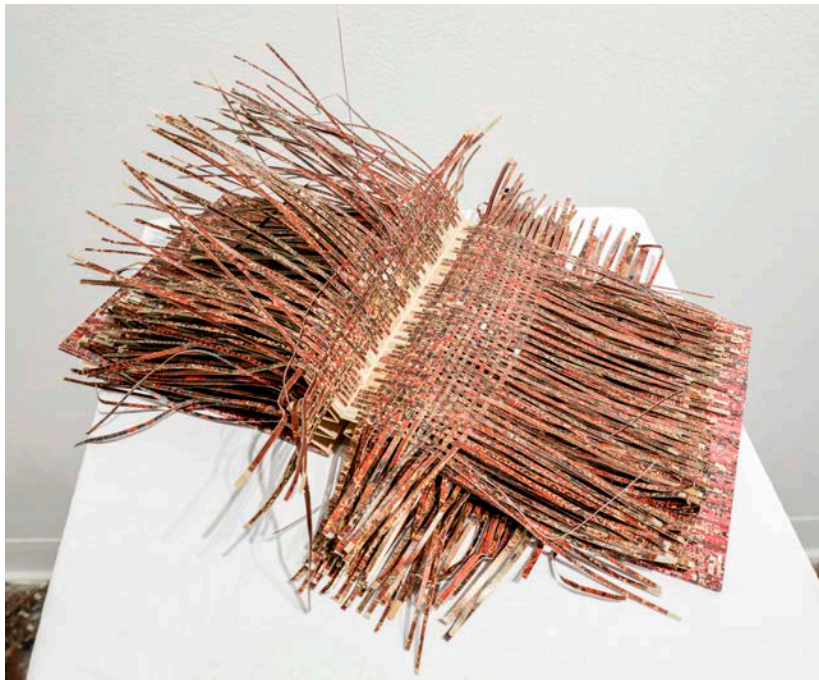
...strive to be the glam rock of visual arts: beautiful, visual ballads saturated with cheesy undertones of excess. Exactly what you want—designs that seek to destroy bullshit interiors that rely on mirrors, shiplap, vapid polyhedron paperweights and the lifeless grey wall.¹⁰

Weiss' bombastic declarations—both visual and verbal—provide counterpoint to the contemplative stillness of Ruth Scott Blackson's works on paper. Yet, with a shared attention to pattern, repetition, and structure, Blackson's deconstructed concertina book resonates with Weiss/Lunderby's installation. Literally weaving images of Persian and Middle Eastern rugs together, Blackson's reframing of an interior, domestic aesthetic results in "an explosion of paper."¹¹ The dialog between artwork occurs at disparate volumes—some voices are louder than others—but each is an important part of the conversation. Likewise, at meetings, our

⁸ Quote from July 8th email. More about Bruce's process can be found in this recent article. <https://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/artist-bruce-wilhelm-talks-about-his-playful-process/Content?oid=6676365>.

⁹ After the exhibition *Strike Slip* in 2011, Weiss joined Grizzly Grizzly as a member, where he remained until 2017.

¹⁰ From Weiss/Lunderby artist statement, 2019.



Ruth Scott Blackson, *Carpet Book*
Keith Smith structure, Concertina binding, Canson paper, shiny collage papers, 21'x6.5', 2018



Joshua Weiss + Jacob Lunderby, *Untitled*
Digital print and mixed media, dimensions variable, 2019



Michael Konrad, *DIYvek Homewrap (Homebrew Hose Bibb)*
DIYvek fabric, lumber, OSB sheathing, cinder blocks, refrigerator home brewed beer, keg and plumbing, 144'x43'x30", 2019

viewpoints were often contested, but the end result was always interesting. It was—and still is—a dynamic built on respect for what each artist brings to the group.

Ruth Scott Blackson joined Grizzly Grizzly in 2011 after "dating" the gallery for several months (we ask potential members to sit in for a while to make sure it's a good fit.)¹² She had recently moved to Philadelphia from England, so one incentive was to get to know the Philadelphia art scene, and another was to curate shows. She recalls the 2013 exhibition, *Interruptions*, as one of her favorite—and most challenging—experiences with the gallery. Working with the British artist Victoria Lucas, the two had only 10 days to scout and shoot photographs for the exhibition and then design and print an accompanying catalog. Within this tight timeframe, Blackson served as host, urban guide, and publication designer while Liu penned the accompanying text.

The magic is in the madness of these ambitious projects—and the total lack of a working budget. We each (by necessity) play a variety of roles, working closely with invited artists, defraying costs by hosting them in our homes, sourcing their materials, and providing the install support. Each month is a new set of problems to solve, so duties shift and new partnerships form based on the skills needed for the exhibition at hand. We could each name many instances of all-night installs, crazy deadlines, hilarious house guests, and last-minute workarounds, but since the roles are constantly changing all of our lists would be different.

"Making all this stuff happen" excited Michael Konrad about the gallery, but it was also the smaller, inter-gallery connections he enjoyed, "like working the beer table with Peter Morgan... just hanging out."¹³ His interactive sculpture created for *In Retrospect* reframes that experience. Fabricating an exterior facade of a rowhome, Konrad creates an iconic Philadelphia stoop moment, including a spigot that will freely dispense his home-brew beer, a Ballantine-style IPA. Despite his depth of experience brewing beer, Konrad had a particularly hard time with this batch.¹⁴ The resulting ale is uncharacteristically cloudy but enjoyable, its unfiltered appearance an unwanted but apt metaphor for the Grizzly Grizzly experience.

Konrad's constructed facade includes his hand-made DIYvek, melded plastic bags meticulously cut to recreate the industrial wrap. The material itself has been repurposed, not just from the original single-use bags but from previous exhibitions. In 2017, it was a part of Konrad's construction at

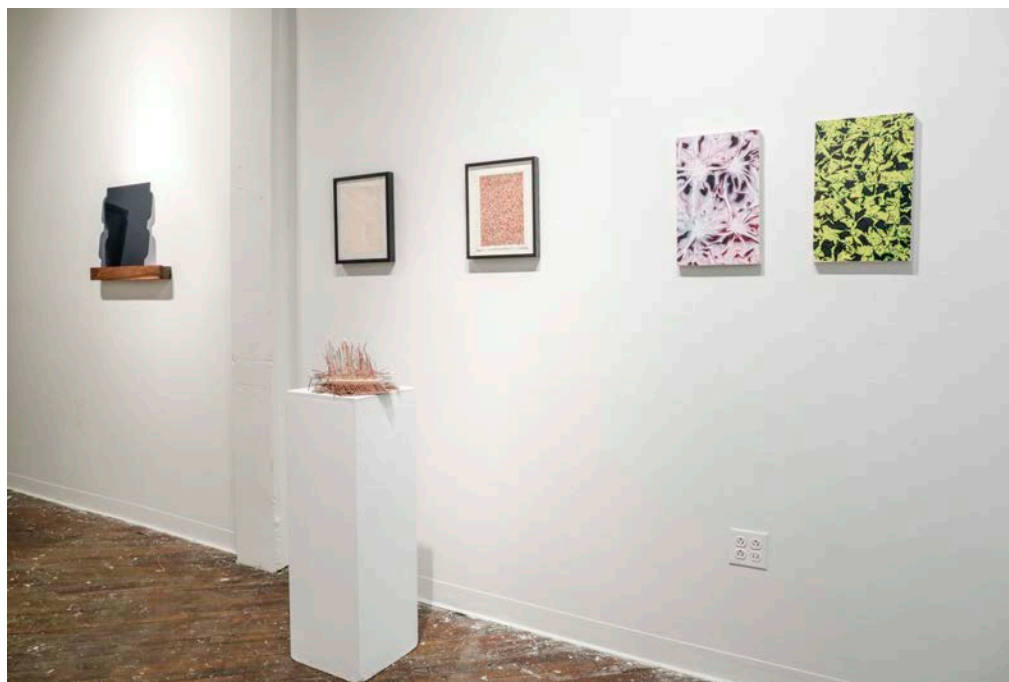
¹² Ruth Scott Blackson was a member from 2011-2014.

¹³ Michael Konrad joined Grizzly Grizzly in 2013 and was a member until earlier this year. We used to share floor duties (like manning the beer table and handling trash) with Practice and Tiger Strikes Asteroid and now split gallery hours with Practice.

¹⁴ Michael Konrad is an award-winning home brewer.



Jacque Liu, *Litt-L*
Walnut, Plexiglas, paint, 19"x23.5"x2.25", n.d.



Bruce Wilhelm, *Untitled* (right side)
Both works acrylic on canvas, 16'x10', 2018

Arlington Arts Center for a different Grizzly Grizzly group exhibition.¹⁵ Slated to have site-specific pieces on the same wall, Konrad and I decided to scrap our original plans and collaborate; the resulting artwork *Variance*—and the research and conversations it generated—led me to a completely new series of work. The wall drawing in Arlington morphed into a two-year investigation of an evolving city block. It's one of many instances where Grizzly Grizzly pushed me outside of my practice, creating a necessary disruption of my studio feedback loop.

For *In Retrospect*, I am contributing a new wall drawing, another questionable decision: it's a hot month to work in the space, and it's a tangent from my current research. Deadlines loom, but that gallery wall—a wall I've prepped countless times for others—is too good to pass up. It is a chance to leave a temporary mark, and then to be painted over to make space for the next artist.

All of us in the exhibition are no longer Grizzly Grizzly members; each of us leaving for our own reason, often to pursue new goals or simply reclaim time. For me, it was a difficult decision, but near the end I wondered if my time at the space was holding it back...if the institutional memory that I embodied (being the longest-serving member) could be an impediment to moving forward. The act of forgetting might be essential for an evolving collective. On the event of this anniversary, *In Retrospect* looks back to acknowledge a history but not to reside in the past. A new membership moves forward—necessarily confronting a fresh set of risks and rewards, meeting each task with renewed conceptual rigor, guided by an ongoing trust in the artists they support. *In Retrospect*, we glance back only to see how far we've traveled together.

¹⁵ The show title *Future Imperfect Continuous* references the imposed theme of uncertain time, but could also describe Grizzly Grizzly.

CINDY STOCKTON MOORE

is a Philadelphia-based artist. Recent solo projects include *An openness to all things lovely* at Glen Foerd on the Delaware, *Narrowed Plot* at Arlington Arts Center, *Consciousness and Revolt* at Moore College of Art and Design, and *Other Absences* on view at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia. She received her MFA in Painting from Syracuse University in 2001. Her writing on art has appeared in *ArtNews*, *NYArts Magazine*, *SciArt Magazine*, *The New York Sun*, and *Title Magazine* in addition to university and web publications; she was a member of Grizzly Grizzly from 2010–2017.

RUTH SCOTT BLACKSON

is a British-born artist who has resided in Philadelphia for the past eight years. Blackson utilizes process and research-based practices to create drawings, sculptures, and projects that highlight the subtleties around us. She created an installation for the 2015 Eastern State Penitentiary exhibition series and in 2018 she created an interactive work for West Park Arts Fest. Blackson was a member of Grizzly Grizzly from 2011–2014.

MICHAEL ELLYSON

currently resides in Beijing, China. He received his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and his MA from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has shown his work nationally, and attended a residency at Bemis Center for Contemporary Art. Ellyson is a co-founding member of Grizzly Grizzly, and was a member from 2009–2013.

MICHAEL KONRAD

is an artist and educator currently working as Lead Teaching Artist with Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program. He regularly exhibits work throughout the Philadelphia region and beyond, frequently outside of traditional exhibition spaces, including as Recycling-Artist-in-Residence at Revolution Recovery; with Neighborhood Bike Works while in residence at the 40th Street AIR Program; and on the Schuylkill Banks with Art in the Open Philadelphia. Konrad was a member of Grizzly Grizzly from 2013–2019.

JACQUE LIU

is a Philadelphia-based artist and arts administrator. Born in Taipei, Taiwan, he received a BFA from Alfred University, an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and a Fulbright Scholarship to study at the Universität der Künste in Berlin. Liu's work is widely exhibited and he is the recipient of numerous awards and grants. His projects have been reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, National Public Radio, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Artblog*, and elsewhere. Liu was a member from 2010–2014.

JOSHUA WEISS

received his MFA from Yale University and his BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design. He moved to the Philadelphia area in 2007. He is a working artist and teacher whose paintings have been shown regionally and nationally. Joshua is a full-time Associate Teaching Professor in the Art and Art History Department at Drexel University's Westphal College of Media Arts and Design. Weiss was a member from 2011–2017.

JACOB LUNDERBY

is an artist and educator based in Philadelphia. He earned an MFA in Painting and Drawing from the University of Minnesota and a BFA in Painting from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. His work has been exhibited internationally including Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Miami, Hawaii, Greece, South Korea and Japan. Lunderby is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Drawing in the Art and Art History Department, Westphal College of Media Arts and Design at Drexel University.

BRUCE WILHELM

was born in and is currently working in Richmond, VA. He earned his BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and his MFA from Rhode Island School of Design. Wilhelm has exhibited in galleries and art fairs from coast to coast, and was featured in Miami's "Untitled" Art Fair in December 2017. He was a recipient of the VMFA Professional Fellowship for painting in both 2004 and 2006, and is represented by ADA Gallery in Richmond, VA. Formerly based in Philadelphia, PA, Wilhelm is a co-founder of Grizzly Grizzly and was a member from 2009–2011.

GRIZZLY GRIZZLY

Grizzly Grizzly is an artist collective in Philadelphia, PA. We are practicing artists who also curate exhibitions, performances, and alternative programming. Using the creative problem-solving skills needed in our daily studio practices, we create a meeting ground for dialog and a space for innovative work without the constraints of institutional agendas or commercial interests.

We are a collective of sharp edges, committed to frank discussion and unexpected pairings. We do not strive for consensus; we do not show our own work in the space. We are artists curating other artists, supporting a community of makers from within.

Grizzly Grizzly's ongoing mission is to blur organizational lines, promote community, and—above all—take risks. In our intimate exhibition space we build new connections between artists, curators, and our greater community in Philadelphia, and beyond.

Grizzly Grizzly began in 2009 and at the time of this publication is under the stewardship of Talia Greene, Amy Hicks, Angela McQuillan, Maggie Mills, Ephraim Russell, and Phillip Scarpone.



Current Collective/Talia Greene/Amy Hicks/Angela McQuillan/Maggie Mills/Ephraim Russell/Phillip Scarpone/**Past Collective**/Ruth Scott Blackson Michael Elyson/Michael Konrad/Jacque Liu/Cindy Stockton Moore/Joshua Weiss/Bruce Wilhelm/Mary Smull/Vincent Colvin/Dennis Matthews Steven Little/Matthew Alden Price/Mariana Williams/Jed Morfit/**Interns**/Jordan Deal/Taylor Yarmie/Sam Whalen/Proebe Wang **Exhibiting Artists** **2019**/William Downs/Michelle Marcuse/Shannon Leah Collis/Dee Hibbert-Jones/Nomi Talisman/ Charles Goldman/Jackie Miliad/Lee Arnold/Jack Henry/Matthew Colazzo/Rebecca Simon Miller/**2018**/Zoë Charlton/Brent Wahl/Gary Kachadourian/Michael Siporn Levine/Tyler Kline/Chris Bogia Jesse Harrod/Stephanie DeMer/Ed Osborn/Seh Koen/Skrimantas Ppasa/Leroy Johnson/ Rachel Debuque/Justin Plakas/**2017**/Maksaaens Denis/Romei Jean-Pierre/Steveens Simeon/Joelle Ferty/Dymyr Chouloute/Wendy N'gati Desert/Adler Pierre/Kelly Sears/Kely Gallagher/Martha Colburn/Christine Buckton Tillman/Janel Olah/Christine Shields/Jacopo De Nicola/Ana Collette/Jessica Lund - Higgins/Roxana Geffrin/Hedeh Javanshir- Ilchi/Austin Shull Michele Colburn/Dawn Whitmore/Alice Whealin/Negar Akhemi/Pam Rogers/Jung Min Park/Becca Kallew/Ryan McCoy/**2016**/Leslie Mutchler/Jason Urban/Richard Hogan/Doan Lee/Sarah Legow/Heather Raquel Phillips/Marie Lorenz/Jacob Lunderby/Martha MacLiesh/ Laura Splan/Gail Wright/Takashi Horisaki/Gautam Kansara/Phillip Scarpone/Linda Frank/Erin Haehl/Juan Oh/Heather Raquel Phillips/Amalia Wilson/Scott Hewicker/Cint Takeda/Brendan Fernandes/Adrienne Gaither/Liss LaFleur/Lerra Fuller/Reuben Lorch -Miller/Tim Cross/Cable Griffith/Rob Rhee/Susan Robb/**2015**/Matt Hansel Christopher Davison/Anthony Miller/D-L Alvarez/Corre Baldauf/Ruh Scott Blackson/Michelle Levy/Sharilyn Neidhardt/Danca Pnelps/Tatfoo Tan Susie Brandt/Bernard Klevickas/Piil McGaughy/Juliana Foster/Sharka Hyland/John Karpinski/Martha Rich/Will Hutnick/Andrea Wohl Keefe/Ben Pranger Stephanie Williams/Ruth Jarman/Jo Gerhardt/Elizabeth Hamilton/Christopher Powell/Julian Rogers/Falke Pisano/Henrik Plegge/Jacobsen/Sondra Perry Babak Golkar/Whitman Young/Rob Duarte/**2014**/Victoria Burge/Willee Tibbs/Laura Ledbetter/Dan Rushton/Bruce Pollock/Renee Van Der Stelt/Vincent Colvin/Mike Elyson/Steven Little/Matthew Alden Price/Bruce Wilhelm/Ron Lambert/Christopher Moss/Jenny McGee/Dougherty/Selena Kimball Tyler Starr/Nick Primo/Chris Bors/Sandi Petrie/David Poolman/Jennifer Reeder/John Charnoia/Alison Wong/**2013**/Erling Sjovold/Emily Weiner JR Larson/Jamison Brosseau/Olivia Robinson/Victoria Lucas/Jason Varone/Kim Falter/Kristen Kinder/Laura Franz/Care Grill/Linnea Paskow/Elisa Solwen/Sarah Gamble/Emily Brintnall/Lilli Carré/Jo Dery/Juliette Goddard/Jason Hsu/Amy Lockhart/Lauren Kinley/Jodie Mack/Jillian Mayer/Ngendo Mukir/Serge Omen/Anastasia Owell/Nathania Rubin/Ben Wheeler/Karen Yasinsky/Colin Keefe/Fabio Fernandez/Tom Lauerman/Marge Wolowicz Sarah Eberle/Ben Will/Trevor Amery/**2012**/Alanna Lawley/Matt Giel/Samantha Mitchell/Saira McLaren/Michelle Oosterbaan/Annica Cuppetelli Cristoba Mendoza/Charlotte Halberg/Johannes Deyoung/Mark Sengpush/John Chwekun/Molly Denisevich/Nadine Guerrea/Peter Morgan/Jordan Graw/Jared Burak/Adam Lovitz/Vince Johnson/Ritz Reynolds/Kris Harzniski/Will Haughey/Chester Zecca/Eric Ascraft/Brian Hubbel/Jeffrey Moser Jonathon David Price/Julie Schusstack/Rudy Shepherd/Matthew Cusick/Jason Robert Bell/Scott Taylor/Sarah Kate Burgess/Brian Gimewski/Linda Yun **2011**/Derya Hanife Atan/Casey Droegel/Carrie Dickson/Mike Hein/Wilton F Stevenson V/ Laura Moriarty/Josh Weiss/Ann Gaziano/Lauren Ruth Lacey Jane Roberts/Jeff Williams/Mike Richison/Skye Gilkerson/Sarah Steinwachs/Patrick Gavin/Stacy Fisher/Rob Matthews/Matthew Fisher/Patrick Brennan/Chris Moss/Mike Elyson/Mary Smull/Jacque Liu/Dennis Matthews/Cindy Stockton Moore/David Dempewolf/Rebekah Templeton/Dan Schank Tyler Kline/Jaime Alvarez/NoraSalzman/Alex Park/Caroline Santa/Alexis Granwell/Anne Schaefer/Ryan McCartney/Matthew Sepielli/Rubens ghenov Terri Saulin/Mike Richison/Aggtelek/Amy Sacksteder/Ana Galan/Analia Zalazar/Anders Johnson/Andrea McGiny/Angie Zielinski/Arca Roe/Ben Will Benjamin Farnack/Caitlin Lennon/Carly Gowinski/Christina Day/Christine McCauley/Dana Lok/Dave Kim/David Welch/Dennis Ritter/Elmeargean McCormack/Joanna Platt/John Jodzio/Liz Davenport/Matt Brett/Michael Ohgren/Oja Strpanovic/Peter Morgan/Rachelle Beaudoin/Run Shayo Samantha Mitchell/Scott Giblin/Shelby Donnelly/Stephanie Norbert/Trevor Amery/Wendy Wolf/Yoorim Park/**2010**/Yevgeniya S. Baras/Robert Scobey Colleen Rudolf/Alison Reimuss/Paul Outlaw/Jennifer Catron/Theresa Pfarr/Matthew Craven/Tim Eads/Tieman Alexander/Tamsen Wojtanowski Madeleine Stillwell/Jenna Weiss/**2009**/Joshua Abelow/Tisch Abelow