

UNIVERSITY

OF

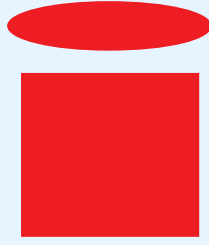
OREGON

**Interviews with Artists
by MFA Candidates**

FIVE

M

2020



2021

B

U

t

Q

S

Table of Contents

Editor's Introduction	06
Simon Starling	08
John Mann	12
Jenna Sutela	16
Jess Perlitz	20
Caroline Woolard	24
Fred H.C. Liang	28
Jillian Mayer	32
Laura Fritz	38
Hamza Walker	42
Glenn Adamson	48
Rebecca Morris	54
Amir Zaki	60
Natalie Ball	64
Mario Ybarra Jr.	68
Artist Bios	76

Editor's Introduction by David Peña

In preparation for his final year as an MFA candidate, previous 5 Minutes editor, Nathan Ward sought out a replacement. As a 1st year MFA entering the program, I read the word “publication” in an email sent to current MFAs and curiously inquired further. I waited to see if there were other interested individuals, but it ultimately turned out that I was next to carry the torch, so to speak. What drew me to the position is my love for zine-making and self-publication. I have made zines for many years, co-founded a zine festival, and actively participate in cultivating an enthusiasm for self-publications. My approach to most things I’m taking on tends to be DIY and I learn as I go. Editing this edition of 5 Minutes was no different. As the name implies, interviews would take place 5 minutes before large lecture artist talks. This edition’s series was reformatted to accommodate the pandemic and the Zoom platform. We all have had to adapt to our collective reality. Adapting meant connecting digitally through glowing screens often taking place within the confines of our studios, offices, living rooms, bedrooms, while simultaneously taking care of children and pets or possibly taking in a bit of lunch at the same time, all while being in different geographies and time zones. There was an intimacy exchanged between MFA, art historians, and visiting artists that led many conversations to go long past 5 Minutes. I made the decision to include as much of these conversations as possible. I also encountered, beyond what I had anticipated, that transcribing 14 spirited conversations of varying lengths is an investment in time and it’s very own space for learning. All this to say, the trade off is well worth it – the depth of perspectives and brilliant insights on practice brought forth through these generous conversations, will be relevant for years to come.

5 Minutes was started by Wendy Heldmann and Christopher Michlig. Through their support and vision, MFAs, art historians and visiting artists have a space to collectively archive timely dialogue for future generations to reference back upon. This is the 7th year of the publication which is both made available digitally and in print.

Simon Starling

in conversation with
Agnes Cebere

AGNESE CEBERE: So when you explain the process of a work and the story of it, it gives me goosebumps because of the way it fits in, it clicks into place. I was wondering if you get that feeling as well? This visceral satisfaction of things coming together in your work?

SIMON STARLING: Yes, I do. There's many aspects to answering that. I think that is partly a question of developing a language of representation of projects which I've done. In a way, I sort of value the talks as being a part of the practice in that sense. I have this idea that the work exists... I talked about it a little bit in the lecture the other day with this idea that work is a constellation of phenomena. There are images and objects and texts and titles and sometimes films and so on and so on... and publications... It's this sense of, they're all spinning around this invisible gravitational node in the middle, which is holding them all together, which is sort of the work, as I understand it. So you get a... I mean, I've been making talks for years now and you learn how to... it's a sort of re-animation process or something. Of course it's very selective as well. I'm very interested in how artists represent themselves to the world. I've made works about that, you know how Henry Moore was extremely prescriptive about what images of his work and his working process went out into the world. He controlled that mediation of his life and work. The same with Carlo Mollino. I've made some works about Carlo Mollino, the Italian designer and architect who was this incredible polymath. So much of his output was to do with controlling the reception of his work and part of that interest comes from my own experience of having to do that. It comes from the nature of the practice which is often drawing quite disparate things together. Materials and geographies and

histories and layering them and condensing them. So the process of retelling the work becomes part of the work in a fundamental way.

AC: It's almost like a performance you know, it becomes performative.

SS: I don't know if you saw it when it was sent out, but there was a work that I made called A Talk which was a condensation of various talks I've made. It was about trying to dramatize that aspect of the work. I did that by co-opting an actor and playing with it a little bit, I suppose.

AC: Yeah, I love seeing that. I don't think I've ever really seen anything like that before. It was amazing. It was almost like watching an orchestra, because you have all these different things coming in at different times but it's one piece you know?

SS: That's a nice way to understand it, yeah. There's a lovely tradition of artists making... They've come to be known as performance lectures. I don't use that expression myself too much, but yeah... I was just reading a little text by Hito Steyerl who you probably know. She's somebody who makes fantastic lectures. She's a great writer and really a very rigorous academic, but because she's an artist, she can do something else with the lecture format that a lot of academics can't do. You know, there's other... I mean, somebody like Mark Leckey, a British artist who's made some wonderful... he made this performance lecture called the Long Tail, which is a fantastic piece full of layers. He's a great performer as well, which I'm not so much, but yeah...

AC: Yeah, so we've gone over five minutes for

sure, but maybe just a couple of questions. We can just go into talking about your relationship to performance. I know that staging and props are things that come up in your work and I'm wondering about the relationship to performance as a medium?

SS: It's evolving all the time, my relationship to that notion. In the beginning of my practice, I was setting myself these sorts of problems which usually involved me as an individual seeing what was possible for one person to do. They were very self contained projects. Things like Project Blue Book, back in Marcé, where I got this residency and took an old museum display case down to Marcé on the top of my car in pieces and then built a boat and went fishing and caught some fish and then made the boat into charcoal and then cooked the fish for some friends and so on. It has a sort of performative aspect to it, but I was always very keen to extricate myself from the work when it came to the audience. I sort of pulled out at the last minute because I had a feeling that it wasn't really about me as a performer in that sense. Perhaps it gave the audience some space for themselves to occupy within the fragments that remained from the process. They could step in and take my place perhaps. There were some works over the years where I did actually creep in visually as a performer. The first was the Autoxylopyrocycloboros work that I made along with the steamboat which is a series of images of this process of cutting up a boat and feeding it to a steam engine, a boiler, to make the journey possible. And of course, that's a self-defeating process. In the end the boat sinks and I'm there in the images. That was a shift in a way, I suppose. The other thing that happened was that I started to think about... theatre came into play which in a way surprised me because I always found the theater a slightly awkward space. The work took me there and that mostly began with the Project for a Masquerade where I imagined

a piece of theatre. It was a kind of impossible piece of theatre. A kind of combination of a pre-existing 16th century Noh play and the story of Henry Moore's Atom Piece sculpture in Chicago. It's kind of a double identity that led me into thinking about masquerades and Japanese Noh Theater and working with Yasuo Miichi, this extraordinary mask maker in Osaka and it never became a play. It was a film and a series of sculptures, masks. It sort of put that into play in my practice. When I did that a lot of people asked me, you know, could you imagine putting this on a stage? I always resisted that idea, but one of those people, Katrina Brown, who runs the Common Guild in Glasgow, she kept pushing and I said okay. I don't want to put Project for a Masquerade on the stage because I think it would implode and fall apart and be horrible as a player, actually. One of the things that I discovered when I was working on Project for a Masquerade was a very similar sort of precedent for what I was trying to do in Project for a Masquerade, which was W.B. Yeats attempted to work with the traditions of Noh theater during the first World War. He made a play called At the Hawk's Well and he'd read some Noh plays which his assistant at the time, Ezra Pound was translating into English for the first time which was a weird process because he didn't speak Japanese. I guess Yeats was a little bit disillusioned with European theater and he found this very exotic and sort of rarefied aristocratic Japanese tradition. He got all excited about this and very fast wrote this play. He co-opted this Japanese dance. Michio Itō was the only person involved who had ever seen a Noh play. So they staged this thing in a very small salon in London during the first World War in 1916. Anyway, that became the beginnings of a full blown piece of theatre. I don't know... actually I was talking to one of the other students about... the really exciting thing about making work is when the work seems to have its own life. It feels somehow out of your control. It gains its own momentum. That's very

...the process of retelling the work becomes part of the work in a fundamental way.

SIMON STARLING

exciting. It's very empowering somehow to feel that, I don't know... one thing kind of leads to another. It's like this big boulder rolling down a hill and gathering bits of moss, or whatever sticks to it. One thing leads to another. But yes, the lectures that we talked about earlier, definitely part of that trajectory, I would say.

AC: I think throughout your work you are more than a performer. You're kind of the operator of the performance. So you're pulling in these materials and putting them into a relationship with each other and orchestrating it.

SS: Yeah, in a way, we tried to tackle that idea in *At Twilight*, which was the play about the Yeats play which was actually a collaboration with a real bona fide theater maker, Graham Eatough. We decided to write ourselves into the play. We became two characters in the play. We weren't played by ourselves, but we got two actors to play us and they also played other characters with masks. They became Yeats and Pound and

a donkey, Eeyore and so on and so forth. And I think it was a continuation of this... I'm the character in the play... is constantly going to this podium to explain all the backstories of what's going on the stage, you know, so it's really like me trying to do what I always do when I do artist talks or something like that. So yeah, it was a nice device. And then Graham's character is constantly trying to actually deal with the nuts and bolts of making the whole thing function.

AC: Yeah, no, that's great.

John Mann

in conversation with
Nathan Alexander Ward

NATHAN ALEXANDER WARD: I see that you did your undergraduate and graduate studies in the Southwest and after that you ended up in Florida, so the Southeast, and now you're up in Chicago; do you feel that your geographic location has had an effect on your development as an artist?

JOHN MANN: It's funny that you ask because every place that I've lived in during the past twenty-something years, people have always been like, "Oh, great idea, there's beautiful landscape there." But I've always tried very hard to make my work be outside of those places. I photograph outside and I certainly love being outside and experiencing landscape but I never wanted my work to take on the specifics of a landscape. So, living in the Southwest or Florida, I never wanted my work to be referential to those places specifically, even if I did want it to be about the experience of those places.

NAW: Thinking along those lines, some of your earlier works like *Folded in Place*, *The Cut Path*, and *Pack Ice* seem to have navigation as a recurring motif, I'm wondering if you consider that a significant concept in your work? And if so, was it at all conscientious that you were stringing these projects along with this common thread?

JM: Travel and movement through space has certainly been a recurring thought that has come up; whether that gets siphoned down to, let's say, movement through a Morandi painting or a small still-life, I'm interested in how the eyes and body move through or get lost in a place. But yeah . . . I'm not interested in the specifics . . . that's interesting: a specific place, I'm not so interested in, but the specifics of place, I am

interested in. [Laughter] So yeah, I think that's a very different line, those two things.

NAW: Good answer. You know, a lot of my ideas about the work—and especially after having just listened to your lecture—were about the ways in which places are represented as not specifically themselves but as something more ambiguous. So, another thread that I noticed was your exploration of the various ways in which landscapes are represented, whether that's cartographically, photographically, or sculpturally, and there appears to be a trend toward abstraction getting to your more recent works like *The Echo's Wait* or *Shadow Mantle*. And it seems to me that there is this tipping that happens from your earlier works to the present, from representational strategies regarding landscape to just representational strategies as a subject in itself. I don't know if you agree with that but maybe you have some thoughts on it.

JM: Yeah, I don't know if landscape is the defining thread of my body of work but it certainly has been a motivation at many times. As I've moved forward, I think that the photograph itself, the movement in and through the photograph, has become the most exciting part. You know, thinking about the rope that's being thrown from the photograph to pull somebody in and what's there to block them from that experience, how the photograph does both; it's a fascinating conundrum that I'm interested in.

And landscape certainly has shown up many times, maybe because of my interest in books. I have this theory that books are very similar to walking a horizontal line, in a linear fashion, and that the book form takes you through a path in a

similar way. To get back to the start you traverse a similar route or you hope that the book goes on and on and gets you back there somehow. So there's been times that I've thought about the endpoint, the output, as the way that work meets back with landscape in terms of how the physical form requires a viewer to move around it to see the sequential parts.

NAW: Great, and that's a really good transition to my last question here, which is about artist books. You've made a few books but it seems that exhibitions are the primary format for your work, so I just wanted to hear your thoughts on how you navigate that decision.

JM: It depends on a lot of different things, different times of making. So for instance, some projects will evolve as book projects only, because there is a sequence of images that I can control the experience of, whereas if I were to insist that the only way that the work can be seen is to have like forty works inside the same place with architecture that I've designed—that's less likely to happen. Some projects can only be books for me while others can float in the world as singular objects or photographs. Right now, as the coronavirus has clamped down on us, I'm more likely to make small books and use that as a place. I've kind of always seen the book format as an exhibition format anyway, the volume of images, their rhythm, and the way that they punctuate in an exhibition all happen in the book format as well.

So it kind of comes and goes based on time and opportunity. The book can be something that's entirely self-contained, self-published, and self-produced and that offers a lot of DIY excitement. That's probably where I'm at right now, actually.

**Some projects can
only be books for
me while others can
float in the world as
singular objects or
photographs.**

Jenna Sutela

in conversation with
Dana Buzzee

DANA BUZZEE: I have three questions for you, which I really agonized over because I think of this carrier bag, Ursula K. Le Guin approach to your practice where you are holding so many ideas. It's pretty intimidating. There were some really good questions asked in the lecture yesterday. Hopefully, these are offering something a little different.

To start, thank you so much for your lecture yesterday. It was really exciting to experience that presentation of your work and through it to engage with the multitudes you carry with your practice. I'm curious about your day to day work as an artist and the shape that practice takes for you. Your work is very research informed and often collaborative towards shifting understandings of subjectivity. Are there ways that this is designed into and reflected by your ideation for research and production? Or are there particular routines or rituals you observe in the spirit of your practice?

JENNA SUTELA: This is a good question. As you mentioned, the work often takes this kind of collaborative shape in one way or another. My day to day looks very different from the next because quite often the work also happens in a residency, or as part of a residency at a lab. It also of course takes place on the computer writing narratives, then in the studio making stuff. The different kinds of media that I use are pretty varied. It's more the questions and narratives, and of course, certain aesthetic choices, certain types of sounds or images connect the work. It takes shape in different formats from sculpture to video to performance. The connecting thing is often the narrative or the questions so that's why the right answer is, in this case, the days are really different. The work is collaborative, but

the collaborators quite often change. There are certain collaborators that I often work together with but there's this scientific collaborations for example, that they place in a lab or at a university or something. It's a phase or a certain amount of time that I spent there or am in contact with these people. I mean, usually I am in contact with these people longer also, but in this kind of intense contact on a day to day basis.

DB: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense and it's good to hear. Obviously there's so many ways that we can activate studio and practice. It definitely fits with the work you're making.

JS: I should also mention that there is a lot of management because I've been talking to the students today and something interesting that I noticed coming through from a lot of the discussions was this need or the necessity to come up with new kinds of frameworks for working. New kinds of ways of financing the work, so on... and my way has been this kind of science collaborations which have allowed me to make many commissions, which have allowed me to be a bit independent from the art market for example. Managing that of course becomes part of it. You kind of create your means of working a little bit while going on with the work.

DB: I could see how it really does... it could really start to shape being your own boss. [laughter]

JS: Yeah, it's an art in itself.

DB: I think the next question I want to ask grows from this, and especially from this idea of... maybe this crucial need for new technologies for managing studio practice and thinking through it.

It's also very much sparked by your slime mold ingestion for the Many-Headed Readings. Ingesting physarum polycephalum functions as a hyperbole of the holobiont. It offers a visual and haptic thinking through of symbiosis. As a self aware holobiont, who actively acknowledges and fosters co-creation and collaboration with the more than human, are there any practices that you regularly engage with to develop, deepen and become more fully cognizant of these relationships?

JS: Definitely probiotics... [laughter] ... fermentation, things like this on this day to day level. I'm very curious, I actually talked to one student about Buddhist practices and I've been really curious about Jain Buddhism. I haven't practiced it, but I think it's a good example of this form of life that really considers the more than human life forms around us. In that case, this kind of ritualistic means, takes into account not stepping on anything living, not eating anything living or not even inhaling something from the air. I think that sort of sensitivity is something that I try to be mindful of and try to sense. I'm in the process of developing this and I guess a lot of my work is also trying to develop these practices of sensing that invisible world around us.

DB: Totally, and clearly we're always in relationship with it, but it is an awareness that I think is a very human way of going about it.

JS: And sort of trying to tune in to these other forces in different ways. Often the ritual is the work actually. Focusing on it and trying to find methods or technologies or means to act on it. Even ingesting slime mold and things like this.

DB: Yeah, I wasn't planning on asking this, but I got to know, how did it taste?

JS: It tasted kind of moldy I would say, It tasted

like an old cellar would smell like. [laughter]

DB: Gross. [laughter]

JS: Because it was in a dried form, it's basically immortal. You can re-enliven it with moisture, a drop of water or bacteria, and of course, the human mouth would already have both of those. It might have something to do with the taste that it was dried at the time. I think I read that in Mexico there's a type of slime mold that's been eaten a bit like an omelet. It's called moon shit. It has an actual scientific name also, but it's called moon shit. It's this white kind of foamy type of slime mold that's apparently cooked and eaten. I don't know how nutritious it is, but it's a bit of a different type of slime mold, but still delicious, I'd love to try. I haven't encountered it here.

DB: Yeah, I feel slime molds are this thing I hear about but I've yet to actually see one in real life.

JS: The thing is, once you start looking for them, or once you see one, you'll see many. You just focus on it. It's a bit of this similar thing that you need to focus your attention to realize it's there and it's been there all along way before us. [laughter]

DB: It's interesting, the temporality of it. There's also something really poetic about the idea of reviving it or invoking it, the spirit of the slim mold with the mouth.

So the last question I wanted to ask. In your lecture yesterday and also in your statement, you provide this framework of words and sounds of living media. With that in mind, I'm curious about what you might be reading or divining from right now?

JS: Hmm, right now, I have to mention, obviously, Lynn Margulis and the symbiotic writing of hers that is a constant inspiration. The

The thing is, once you start looking for them, or once you see one, you'll see many.

JENNA SUTELA

Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction that you mentioned before. But right now I'm actually reading... This is kind of not related. I wonder if I should say it. I'm thinking what would be the right response because... how do you frame the question?

DB: Thinking about your mention of words as a living, non-human sort of life. With that in mind, is there any texts that you're ingesting or divining from in that way? I love the slippage between medium and medium and channeling that you presented yesterday.

JS: Yeah, obviously this is not something I read right now, but a good example is the Hélène Smith séances which I mentioned. I actually just read a book by my friend K Allado-McDowell, which is written in collaboration with GPT-3 which is the OpenAI language, algorithm and neural network based system. So K wrote this in collaboration with GPT-3 and it's called Pharmako-AI. It's dealing with a lot of the topics that I also... this kind of interspecies relations that I've also been dealing with. It's interesting because it's written together with this machine intelligence. That would be like the most recent reading. It's published by Ignota Books. It's

actually just on pre-order so it's very new.

DB: That sounds like something I would like to read, that sounds really interesting.

JS: I really recommend, It's great.

DB: I mean even the framework you offered yesterday of AI as aliens of our own creation, what a compelling way to think of that or machine learning. That is definitely something I would like to check out.

JS: I recommend.

DB: I really agonized over this because there's so much that you're working with and you've covered so much ground. So it's like what could I possibly ask. That's all I have.

JS: These are great, thank you. They were really comprehensive and on point. Send me the text if there's anything you're wondering about. I'm always happy to read or make some remarks or whatever.

Jess Perlitz

in conversation with
Erin Langley

ERIN LANGLEY: It's Friday the 13th and I'm wondering if you are a superstitious person?

JESS PERLITZ: I'm not a superstitious person. I definitely can fall prey to magical thinking. That comes out of my own anxieties and fears and desire to be able to control things I cannot control. I appreciate superstition because I do think it's about, in a certain way, an attempt to have some kind of control in a world where we are often left feeling like we don't. In some ways, I'm also thinking about that with my work.

EL: This is moving away from that... I conducted a little bit of research on you and saw that you relocated from Philly to Portland years ago. I'm curious because I'm also an East coaster who found herself on the West, and I think about this idea of manifest destiny and everything associated with that and how I fulfilled it in a way without realizing it. I'm wondering how that move and that experience of shifting affected your practice at all? If it did, I'd be curious to know.

JP: I don't know... that's an interesting question to think about how it's affected my practice. I moved here for a teaching job. So simultaneously my life changed because of that and I was deeply involved in that. It's hard for me to understand what's changed what. Obviously it's very different on the West Coast. I still brush up against a kind of culture shock or a difference in culture. From Philly, I definitely miss the kinds of collisions of culture that I was experiencing daily there. It brought about a richness to the city that is different than what I'm experiencing here. I originally came from Toronto, Canada. In moving to the States, there was already a cultural shift for me.

You know, the West Coast and East Coast in Canada are also just as different and in some ways, some people say that the West Coast of Canada also has some similarities. It's an interesting question. I think about it daily. I don't think it's actually affected my work that much because there's so many other things tied up in this age and job and getting older and my practice that I just don't know what's affected what.

EL: Yeah, that makes sense. So looking at your work and listening to your talk yesterday, I found myself ruminating on this idea of an imposter or maybe the concept of hiding in plain sight. Because of your engagement with masks for instance, or the rainbow every other day project where you embody a rainbow in a sort of ostentatious cloak, where you're hidden, but you're also very obvious. These both carry this idea of performing or the exaggerated idea of a thing. I think of two kids stacked in a trench coat walking around to appear like an older person or something. Is there anything to you about this idea of hiding, but also being very visible at all in your work?

JP: Yeah, the thing I was talking about yesterday with the structures that are addressing a kind of physical scale where you can climb up them, stand in them, on them and interact with them that way... I'm interested in how you are simultaneously made more vulnerable by being up and on display and yet you also feel protected because you're up high and you can look down on people. You can survey and hold the landscape in front of you. It's super simple, but I like the collision of those two things, being both vulnerable and powerful at the same time. A lot of masking or cloaking is like that. You

are both powerful and vulnerable in some way. I think that's exactly why I keep coming back to this masking or shielding. It's both armor and a weapon. That's both a protection and an offense.

EL: Going off that idea of vulnerability and power, I'm interested in your clown training and also the history of the clown or the jester or the fool as this harbinger of truth who's able to be critical of power in a way that the general public is willing to accept because it's couched in humor. I know yesterday you said that humor doesn't factor explicitly in your work, but how does your clowning inform your practice beyond the function of slapstick or something like that?

JP: With clowning, I'm interested in the role of the trickster or how the humor comes out of subversion of the natural order of things. It's funny because we have an expected order or way things work that becomes funny when you subvert it, poke at it, shift it in some way, surprise the expectations. I think about it more as a subversion or undoing. It makes sense to me that there's also something uncomfortable in those moments and that we find that funny... I don't think we really find that funny. That's what I'm trying to say yesterday, you know, we laugh, but at its core, is it really because it's funny? If we actually had to talk about it, what is it that we would be addressing that's making us laugh? I don't actually think it would be funny in the end.

EL: Yeah, I like that you said that. It kind of morphs into my next question. Beyond this humor or beneath this humor, or like perceived humor, I see this darker desperation or a tragic futility in some of the pieces. Face or especially in the mud breaths better piece where you're literally clawing at your own face while also trying to construct a face. It makes me think of ways we carve out our identities from the world around us, but also how we carve out a practice in our studio space. The tragic comedy of the

studio existence, is there anything generative for you about that concept?

JP: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's spot on. I think you said it better than I could say it. [laughter] That's why I kept trying to talk about a kind of humility, though I don't think that word... I think what I'm saying, humility, both feeling humbled by the process of what it is that I'm trying to do and feeling humiliated, both exist at the same time. That's why this is all so hard, but we keep doing it. That's true, there is always for me in the work a simultaneous undoing and making that's happening at the same time.

EL: I actually think that's a really great way to end it. It's five minutes, I think that's great. [laughter]

JP: Yeah! Great question.

**I like the collision of
those two things,
being both vulnerable
and powerful at the
same time.**

Caroline Woolard

in conversation with
Tannon Reckling

CAROLINE WOOLARD: Okay, you said, what's your favorite color right now? I have no strong attachment to a color. That's probably why I'm into infrastructure rather than making prints or paintings. Color is always a challenge for me when I'm making art. I respect the people who have strong feelings about color and organize their libraries chromatically, I'm not one of those people.

So okay, next. What's a weird experience you've had with an animal recently? Woah.

TANNON RECKLING: I think they're definitely silly questions.

CW: Yeah I like it.

TR: Feel free to use them as prompts in however way. Maybe you hear the word animal and then it's like, well, here's this weird artist work I've been thinking about the past week for some reason or something like that.

CW: Interesting, yeah, I feel like there is something with an animal. I'm trying to think about the animals.

TR: Yeah chill vibes to.

CW: Well I would say that I was never much of a naturalist, but during COVID I sat in the same place at this rental. I'm in a new rental now, but I sat in the same place in this rental in Hartford, Connecticut. When we had to do Zoom sculpture classes for the first time in March... in March, April and May, I would just look out into this sad miniature porch with three different barriers. So there was first a wooden fence, then a chain link fence and then some other kind of more

strong fence. I don't know what the last fence was made out of, but anyway. I was looking at these three fences and one of them had a little rail and every day these squirrels would go on it, and at first, I thought that one of them had died because it was sitting on this ledge and was so still. Then I realized after a few days of this that it would move. So at first when I saw it there, it was so still, I thought it died. I was like oh my god I'm watching this squirrel die. Its eyes are closing. Then I realized this is where they sleep. I became a kind of squirrel naturalist, and they also eat paint. I would hear them nibbling the paint off of these bricks near me, and I also saw how horrible, at least to me, their tails are. They're kind of like bottle cleaners or toilet brushes. They're just like this teeny little tail with this poof of fur around... anyway. They're really very gross animals and I had no idea that I would know the sound of a squirrel eating paint... watch squirrels repeatedly sleep in front of me, and yeah, that was a weird experience. Now I moved to a different rental and I have no squirrel views. I pretty much look at a maroon wall for many hours a day so I can't tell you what the animals are doing.

Okay, looking at arts pedagogy within ongoing COVID settings. What's been some notable emerging forms of kinship or being that you've encountered? Oh nice, I like this question.

TR: I found the 5 Minutes website too if you want to get a vibe.

CW: I'll look at that. Well, I think that the Zoom-a-thon of this moment means that people are much more informal and much more vulnerable in an interesting way. We see each other's bedrooms and living rooms, we have more of a

...the Zoom-a-thon of this moment means that people are much more informal and much more vulnerable in an interesting way.

blur between work, and for example, the child care that you heard my partner asking me about. So the kinds of kinship that are possible there are much more, ideally, in the best cases, they are more empathetic, more compassionate about what's happening in people's lives. You can't ignore if there's a child or an animal or someone who has a need. It's harder to block that out and so that extends into our workplaces and into our learning environments and people, I think, in the best cases, are more compassionate and more open to sharing what's happening in their home life and how that affects their work and learning. Emerging forms of kinship I've encountered are around making more time for that, for like care and learning from disability justice activists around access and support, rather than thinking of that as extra or when we have time, we'll focus on that.

TR: I feel like the best art, art anything, in general, has been through some of the recent Zoom meetings and lectures I've been able to attend and it is sort of sad that this couldn't have happened more often. You know what I mean?

CW: Yeah, and there's more international connection and also regional connection where people can more easily be in dialogue with each other if they have access to the Internet and to Zoom then was possible before. So, that feels kind of interesting. I'm talking to someone about making this larger network, kind of free Zoom university where you could attend any of these lectures every day. See all the emergent conversations that are sort of siloed right now based on pre COVID relationships so that we can accompany each other into these emerging art worlds.

Okay, in your work within BFAMFAPhD, especially in making, being, how might some of these very pertinent sensibilities be utilized in new Zoom environments and precarious classrooms and real life?

Well, I do think that people are getting into the zoom performance space more and more. I haven't seen many great performance lectures

on Zoom but I imagine that they're going to happen more and more or that I've just missed them. Like I know Leslie-Lohman Museum, they've been doing a lot of Instagram live performances. I'd be curious to see what else is happening. For example, I have to do a talk on Friday, I guess. Wow. I was thinking maybe I should hire someone, like I've always wanted someone else to give my talks for me. But really anybody could show up and put their name as me, or I could wear a mask or I could, you know, bring other people in. I've already been interrupting Zoom's where I'm like, let someone do a public service announcement within my time. I'll be like, "Hey Kenny, why don't you like... I'm just going to spotlight you right now. Why don't you talk about what you're doing." So I think there are ways to break it up in Zoom. Like think about collective identity and anonymous identity more. How can this be utilized in newsroom environments and classrooms? I think when we go back in person, there will be such a shift in ways to build community because I used to do a lot of work that involves people physically touching each other. Even just holding each other's hands or holding an object together. So I'm still rethinking what it means to have consent around touch, which I think is good and I'm glad that that's now going to be at the forefront. I did have ways to allow people to not consent to anyone else's touch in the past, but now I don't know if anyone will want to touch each other. Actually, my friend just did something really nice. She put her back against my back. We were at an event and it's someone that normally would be like my sister, like we are very close. She's like "Hey, what if we just put our backs to each other" and we did. I like let out this yelp of just like... the ecstasy of being in a less impoverished tactical zone. It was amazing. So maybe we can do things like that where we breathe in this way, but touch backs. I don't know.

Fred H. C. Liang

in conversation with
Will Zeng

WILL ZENG: You referenced in your artist talk about Fan Kuan and Wang Meng in Chinese Art History landscape painting of the idea of embedding ideas into their work. I was wondering if there are some ideas that you often embed into your work that are very subtle and hard to pick up on that don't normally get acknowledged or seen or talked about?

FRED H. C. LIANG: Yeah, the answer is yes most of the time. Most of my work, and I think for most artists, it works this way. Not everything that we do says everything who we are. Everything that we do carry a little bit about who we are in the kind of things that we're interested in. For Example, formally speaking, everything that I do, touch up a little bit about paper cut, printmaking and things like that. In terms of subject matter, every time I create images, it kind of carry the idea of transition, impermanence, and also passage. In terms of the passage, I use that as a way to talk about being a person without a home, a transit, someone that's an immigrant. So I embed these things into my work. Nobody knows it. They're not going to flesh it out. They won't know it until I started talking about it, but that's not the important point. The important point is that for me as an artist it's a starting point for me to create work. That's interesting to me. Hopefully, even if they don't get it, visually it's interesting to them.

WZ: I'm really glad that you mentioned that because I never would have gotten to that point of thinking about your work in terms of transitions. Obviously in the material that you choose it becomes part of it. There's something else that I was thinking about. Does it frustrate you, especially the paper cutouts, they're such beautiful rich objects, and for a lot of people

who view your work, that their understanding, or interest, might just stop there, as a purely aesthetic object?

FHCL: Well, no. I think art can be pretty intimidating. If you only demand people to read the way you want it to read, it can be utterly intimidating. I'm hoping that my work can have dialogue with people of all different levels. They can be scholars, they can... actually, matter of fact, a filmmaker once came to my work and started talking about Buddhism when nobody who saw the work understood what the exhibition was about. He knew because he was a Buddhist. He's like "Your works about Buddhism." I say "Yeah, how did you know that?" He said "I can see it." In that way, he's not even an artist, but he recognized that aspect of it, whereas all the people that's in the art never recognize that aspect. Is it my job to say hey, you must understand Buddhism to appreciate my work? And then to the person that's Buddhist, you must understand art to appreciate it? I'm hoping that art is expansive enough, more encompassing to allow people to enter at different levels, in different ways. In a way that we're all talking about similar things, whether it's about Buddhism, transientism, it's all about the same thing. We talk about them from our own vantage point, and hopefully you can connect to somebody else thinking about the same thing. There's no art out there that's universal. Not a single piece of art that is universal. It's all preconditioned.

WZ: Cool, yeah, I think we have time for one more question. We're talking about this emphasis and importance of gesture and brushstroke in Chinese calligraphy and painting. I feel like that's kind of a through line in the works that

you shared in the lecture. I was wondering if you could speak more on the role of gesture in your practice.

FHCL: That's interesting because I can talk about this in two different ways. In calligraphy the gesture is utterly the art form. Doesn't matter how hard you try, everybody's gonna have a different gesture. The goal of it in a lot of ways, is a recognized aesthetic that everybody appreciates. That's a good gesture. If you're not practiced, you're not going to have that good gesture. A lot of that gesture is well practiced over and over again to look like you've never even done that before. You just incidentally did it. This kind of an incidental mark is both unique and yet universally praised. It's a contradiction. If everybody says it's good, that means it's not unique. If everybody says "Wow, this is such a great tasting thing." There's no way that dish is a unique dish, because everybody has the same taste. So that's an inherent contradiction there. In the West, the brush mark, the gesture, abstract expressionism, it became a hallmark of individuality, freedom, Americanism and yet, there's no way it's individualized either because everybody was trying to practice to be individual. Eventually, it ran into trouble because very quickly people realized it can not have that many individual gestures. That's why Abstract Expressionists didn't last that long.

WZ: Yeah, it's 10 years of everybody trying to look like Pollock or some variation.

FHCL: The difference is whether you use the mark, the gesture, to become an internal expression or an external expression. So in both of those examples, whether it's abstract expressionism or the calligraphy mark, the evaluation with the societal approval rating is external but you as an artist makes it for internal. That's where it separates itself. How do you become an artist that has individual

expression, individual mark, that also exists within the societal? It's a kind of contradiction in itself. How do you become truly individual and yet still everybody accepts? As a society, we don't accept nuances of individuality. I don't even care if American think there's that aspect of it. Let's put it this way, those who hail freedom and individuality the most try to walk through their room wearing flaming red lime green hair and buck naked. They're gonna... "What the hell you doing?" right? There's no sense, you know, it's like it's only a slump. So in art, we confront that all the time.

**In terms of the
passage, I use that
as a way to talk
about being a person
without a home, a
transit, someone
that's an immigrant.**

Jillian Mayer

in conversation with
Tyler Stoll

JILLIAN MAYER: Hello, my name is Jillian Mayer.

TYLER STOLL: That's funny, my first question was would you state your name for the record. Well, I guess I'll just start with your work. So I was at your talk yesterday and looking at your Slumpies, seeing these opposing, overlapping functions of drawing attention to technological fatigue and providing relief for fatigue and also seducing one to lean in further to technologies simultaneously. I'm wondering about that tactic of humor, but also using design and function and playing, this siren canary call simultaneously thing. I don't know if that sparks anything for you, but I'm curious to hear about it.

JM: Are you talking in terms of interaction from the viewer?

TS: Yeah, perceived function and then also looking at your video documentation of the ads.

JM: So the Slumpie body of work is a series of interactive, colorful, quasi-functional sculptures that I've been making over the past couple... I guess since 2016, 2017. They do offer people a place to rest, specifically designed for when they are engaging with their technology while in public, because these works are mainly shown in public. What I intended is for them to be sat upon and generally people are happy to participate when an artist sets a prompt. The prompt here was for people to use their phone while sitting, which I noticed is something that people like to do anyways. Whenever you give a person a chance to pull out their phone and rest, they will. Whether that's a normal chair, or a stump of wood that seems comfortable enough, or a corner in a building. People will

find a way to, not necessarily disconnect from others, because who's to say how many people they're connecting with on their phones, but rather, take a moment to check in on the other realms that they are linked to. So for me, I wanted to make an art object that is very much not a traditional furniture piece, yet is still inviting and invites interaction. I am aware that the gestures I normally invite will soon be obsolete as far as reaching for the phone. Having the arm up in front of your hands. We already had a glimpse of that with Google Glass, which ultimately was deemed a failure by the companies that created it. So I'm aware that that gesture of the extended arm will not be a practiced motion in years to come. So then I think about it like this, that the sculptures can just relax and become art when they're a bit more obsolete for their contemporary function. That happens all the time. When you think about planned obsolescence, two years of functioning objects makes a good designer for late capitalism. If something works forever, how does it get bought for a second time? So I really wanted to play and investigate that. There's also something else, when a person is out in public and they pose with a particular artwork or background or experience, they are wanting to capture that and show that to others, whether it's online or to a friend. My main interest is the growing collection I have of people on my Slumpie sculptures that gets past to me of people on dating apps. When you think about it, when you are allowed to choose a certain amount of photos for your online dating profile, to choose one that lets people know that you go and see art, it's a pretty strong signifier. So I just like all the coded messages and all the prescriptive yet inviting and investigatory ways in which we can interact with the objects artists leave behind.

TS: I was also looking at your Bunker Mood Board and thinking about the idea of the DIY Pinterest crafty bunker now that we're in the middle of a pandemic, or maybe towards the end of it, hopefully. Early in Instagram there were all of these ads about how to... I remember looking at The New York Times... would be like... the difficulties of furnishing a Manhattan apartment during COVID... and also a new craft to keep yourself busy during COVID... So I guess I'm wondering how you feel about the Bunker Board project now that people are in the process of creating these DIY, Pinterest, crafty bunkers of our own?

JM: I think the plant fascination and the ceramics and knitting, crocheting, muffin baking or bread baking zeitgeist that we have experienced was already on track. As I mentioned the other day, even the art world's interest in crafts and ceramics and the boom of that is a reaction to screen fatigue and digitization and screens. It's just that antithetical experience we're provided through as we converge more and more with technology. As far as the bread baking, I haven't baked a loaf yet, but that is a laborious process. That may have been something that I thought was more iconic of the return to the field or the grain. Baking is perhaps a time prohibitive activity and people all of a sudden felt like they were granted extra time during the pandemic when no one knew what to do. No one had seen this type of closure in America before. I'll speak to just America because that's where I am. Everyone felt like they were on stolen or borrowed time. But then week two, everyone and their moms wanted to have a freaking zoom lecture. And I was like guys, we've got to relax, we're blowing it here. I had a Google calendar full of Zoom's I had to attend or talk on and I thought, what a moment for respite. What was the question? Number two! Number three, number three! [laughter] These are all just mood boards, these aren't answers.

TS: The questions are sort of mood board questions, too... I spent part of the morning watching your TikTok reaction videos. I sort of get this feeling on TikTok, after a minute, that nothing means anything, nothing is anything, no one is anyone... I just feel really lost and total vertigo from spending any time on there. I guess I'm wondering, watching yourself as this dislocated source material for TikTok duets, that there's any sort of... I don't know... have you had a revelation about TikTok content, or productivity on TikTok, collectivity over TikTok? I'm just really curious about it. It feels inaccessible to me and I'm curious to hear about someone who's sort of been a source material for this duet meme...

JM: Yeah, we're all just content in the end. We're all going to be a bunch of hard drives after we die. Just like collected files. I guess it's trite to say, but it makes me think the kids are all right. There's also other thoughts that come to mind that are about audience and viewership. I don't know if there's an active audience anymore, especially with the young kids, with everyone streaming, but also who's watching? But does it matter? I love these kids and I love the constant divorce of... I feel that they are more fluid with the way that they don't hold themselves to some of the constraints that an older person may, who is more concerned with their online image, because they are just diarrheating at the mouth with it. I hope it's just an extension of their flow and not them strictly performing for the camera. To me, what was cool about growing up without being saturated in the internet and it coming to me later on in age, is I was still able to be a messy person without it being archived which I feel quite freeing. There's an intentionality that I do think is important when you're expecting an audience to watch. I don't know, I just ran around all in circles in the last 20 seconds of talking. I don't know, it's just what it is. It's the constant push towards our technological singularity. In the end, will there be anyone to see how many

photos your aunt took of her lunches, you know? Why did she ever take those photos? Was it to prove that she's doing alright because she could afford going to eat out for lunch? Was it to show the bounty, like no different from pictures from the 60's of fishermen posing with their giant catch from the boat? Is this on some caveman stuff where you're saying look at how much yield of crop I have that ensures a better survival? Is this like a fertility gesture of resources? Or is it that I think people like to look at photos of food online and I haven't posted in 3 days and I should really be posting and engaging in this thing that everyone is? You know, it just depends on how each person comes to it. I hope they do whatever version of authentic is or else I think it's only natural that will all go nuts. If we're all performing for others all the time, then that seems like we're missing something. But maybe the single person's performance, even if it's for others, isn't the point. Maybe it's the fact, it's the movement of the fact, you know, we have a building's worth of content everyday or the old statistic was for every second there's six hours worth of content being uploaded online to youtube. Maybe it is the point that we will have so much that we can't understand or see it all. We still don't know what's in the ocean. We're exploring outer space because it's more sexy, but we still have no idea what's in the ocean. We discover new animals all the time. Maybe, I never really thought of it this way, but maybe this exodus and this push to optimization of ourselves and content is just to create another proxy of a world will never get to know. Hum, I never thought about that.

TS: That's terrifying. [laughter]

JM: An organic new thought. Wait what's

terrifying? The thought or that it's new? [laughter]

TS: Oh just the ever increasing unknowingness.

JM: I'm gonna write that down and stress out about it later.

TS: Great, I'll let you do that and give you silence for a minute.

JM: Or just send me this article.

TS: Oh you'll definitely get that.

JM: Thanks. Wow.

TS: I have one or two light hearted questions if you want to end with those.

JM: Sure, sick.

TS: These five minutes are so short. I was just wondering, last night I was thinking about my first viral video and as someone who's gone viral and watched you go viral also, I was wondering what your first early YouTube, favorite viral video was? Circa 2006 if you remember.

JM: I don't know, I can tell you one I love.

TS: Sure.

JM: Oh I can tell you two. I love the golden retriever dancing merengue.

TS: I haven't seen that one.

JM: Oh my god. They're both animal ones, I love animal ones. Lab dancing meringue and also the mariachi band playing to the beluga whale.

TS: I don't know either of those, I'll check them out.

JM: Oh my god, those are for when I'm feeling sad, but I do remember the shoes video from back in the day that was like "shoes, shoes..." that one.

TS: Yeah, that was my first big one, I had just got to school and we all died when it came out.

JM: Yeah I just remember being like, what am I watching. But I grew up watching Absolutely Fabulous and Space Ghost Coast to Coast and also Kids in the Hall, so I think that's where my humor was set.

**If we're all
performing for
others all the time,
then that seems
like we're missing
something.**

Laura Fritz

in conversation with
Noelle Herceg

NOELLE HERCEG: I was able to see your APEX exhibition last year at the Portland Art Museum. With both the projected light and that one open skylight, it made me want to ask, is there a connection between light and the spiritual for you? Where does metaphysics fall in your thinking, if it does it all?

LAURA FRITZ: Well I'm personally not all that religious but I was interested in how people form their belief systems. I was kind of interested in addressing the space. The space had arched ceilings which reminded me partially of a church of some sort. Opening the window, leaving the one skylight open right above my piece Angular Wall Piece, which could have been seen as a crucifix or could be seen as a clock or doorbell or something, depending on the person's frame of mind and influences. The open window drew the eye up but it also gave the Angular Wall Piece an otherworldly quality or emphasized what some people could see as some kind of religious relic or symbol.

NH: What about this idea of seduction? You talked a bit about that in your furniture pieces, enticing someone into that void space. I wonder if it's because of the darkness or because of light as seduction?

LF: Well, I think those both are a little seductive. The void being the unknown or something, they can't see what's in it and they just want to know. We have natural tendencies to want to find out what's in our environment for safety reasons, survival reasons instinctually. So you're going to go and want to check out why is this opening there and what is it. It's a table and so you'd expect it to be functional, so you're like, why is this opening there? Why is it at this level? Why is

it so dark? What's its purpose?

NH: I think about the book and movie Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. I don't know if you've seen that?

LF: yeah I actually read that book when I was a kid, I think I've seen that movie as well.

NH: Yeah, so in the movie and the book, the wardrobe compels the child into it and it becomes a portal to another land and time. I was kind of wondering, do you have any memories associated with or connections to domestic furniture?

LF: Oh good question. Actually, most of my experiences with it are pretty functional. We sit on the chair, you use the table, although there is one memory I have as a kid when I was really young, probably a toddler. I noticed my mom using the kitchen garbage can, which is a kind that you step on, there's a pedal at the bottom and it just flips the lid open. I saw her put stuff in there. I remember thinking it was the coolest thing. I asked her about it and she said it was a garbage can. She showed me how she was putting things in it. I thought wow this is great. I didn't have any understanding of what garbage was so I started putting things in there that I would find because I didn't really understand the context of why she was putting things in there. And then, apparently, I must have thrown some important things away. Ever since then my dad has always been "what did you throw away?" every time, even as an adult if I visit.

NH: He'll never live it down. [laughter]

LF: It was really interesting how someone would

approach furniture if they're totally naive. If they don't know anything about the context of what furniture is for normally in the world. If I change the ergonomics or change something about the furniture, it makes you question it again as if you are totally new.

NH: Absolutely, yeah. That brings me to the question of when I look at your furniture pieces. I was curious if you collaborate with anyone? Or how many people are involved in design and production? Is it all you?

LF: It's all me. I design it and I build prototypes and I build the furniture. There might be an instance where I'll ask someone an engineering type question. When I made the tables for the Des Moines Art Center, they were really tall tables that had to withstand the weight of the materials that I had inside, the lighting and everything, because of their size. I was concerned that they would start to be less stable. An engineer advised me of using a Maxwell truss kind of design at the bottom. It's a kind of bracing system which was pretty simple to install but it was a situation where I wanted to check with an expert in engineering and building. In general, I do a lot of the engineering and building myself. The convocation, which was the hanging piece in the APEX show that had the video of the swifts, I pretty much engineered myself through many levels of models and consulting with the people at the museum about the structure of their own ceiling and what kind of weight it could handle and things like that. What kind of connecting devices we would need to use.

NH: Great, yeah that's really impressive. I have a few questions left, maybe we can squeeze in three more. Do you have a favorite film or do you have a favorite filmmaker?

LF: Do I have a favorite film... it's really hard to say, I have a few that I like. I really love Harold

and Maude, which I think it's really interesting in terms of the relationship between Harold, who is obsessed with death and then Maude, who's really into life and then she decides to die. He values life more after she's gone. There's also 2001: A Space Odyssey. What I really like is the part where he's left alone in a room that's designed according to how they're expecting him to want to be in a room. Every move he makes is constantly being analyzed and watched. To me, it's really surreal and kind of creepy. I like to convey that sort of sense in my installation.

NH: Yeah, that kind of brings me to one question I had about some of your video work. I think in Interspace and the video piece of projected video in the lightbox to look at the animals that seem like they're enclosed. I think that was called Section 4.

LF: Yeah, that was called Section 4. That was one of my earlier pieces.

NH: Yeah, I was thinking there's a repetitive use of cats and I wondered if you had a relationship or history with cats?

LF: Well I've had cats when I was a kid and I have cats now. The cat that I used in Section 4 was actually a friend's cat because I didn't have a cat at the time. What I was interested in was the movement of the head. You know, have the cat look like it's assessing the room or looking around. I knew that I would be able to get a cat to do that because of my experiences with cats. I could get them to look different ways, different directions easily since they like to play. They're predatory and they'll watch when you move things.

NH: Great, yeah I like to imagine you directing the cat. [Hand motions side to side] [laughter]

Last question. Why did you choose to be an

If I change the ergonomics or change something about the furniture, it makes you question it again as if you are totally new.

LAURA FRITZ

artist or a scientist? In your lecture yesterday, you mentioned you convinced yourself art was more practical. Could you maybe talk a little bit more about that?

NH: Yeah, well I'm glad you chose art. Thanks so much Laura this has been great.

LF: Yeah, thank you. It's been nice talking to you.

LF: I think I had a lot of interest in biology and psychology, but at the same time, I like to be more creative in the application of those subjects. Really in my heart I wanted to be an artist. I was just trying to convince myself it was more practical to go that way because it's not really seen as a practical field.

NH: Yeah, don't I know it. [laughter]

LF: This way I can enjoy the subject matter that I use as an artist with a sense of wonder.

Hamza Walker

in conversation with
Raechel Root

RAEHEL ROOT: One of the first things I wanted to ask you is maybe kind of an obvious point to start. Considering everything that's happened in the last year and it's significant ramifications for the art world, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, I wonder if you could talk about how your role as a curator has changed or adapted or embraced those situations? In an art world that's at a limited capacity, or in some cases, has its doors closed all together, how do you see yourself and maybe LAXART too, moving through this somewhat uncertain future of art post COVID?

HAMZA WALKER: Yeah, I guess, whole or by the slice? [laughter] Let's take the question by the slice. With respect to contemporary art, to what degree can the present be made legible... to what extent can the present be made legible period. Right? Let alone through the work of art. I prefer keeping that as a question, despite how quickly it gets subsumed within our desire for work that addresses the moment and all it's urgency which would then lead me to ask things like... the current urgency or wave of crises, to what extent are they different than the past? Is it a question of degree? Or a question of kind? One could also say, at what point does degree become kind? So questions about gender, sexuality, class, inequality injustice, race, identity, the transition from feminism into queer theory. I would make the argument that arts been grappling with these things for quite a while. The role of alternative spaces, particularly over the course of the 1980s and into the 90s has faced similarly fraught times against the backdrop of an authoritarian Right-wing government. In terms of... you know... in some sense having been here before, now, minus a pandemic, on the one hand, but then at the

same time, what was the AIDS crisis? What was the AIDS pandemic? So you know, is it that... I'm not going to say cyclical by any chance, by any stretch, but the idea of being here before, right, and so an intensification. What might account for that kind of intensification? If you want to go back to an artist like Sue Williams, circa 1992, to talk about women and the issue of sexual harassment, just as an example right. I mean look at Sue Williams from that golden period at the outset of Sue Williams career. Say what you mean and say it mean, very direct work about that. That was on the table, and I could show you an image by Sue Williams and you would think, oh, this was made five minutes ago. I mean you can pick one, anyone, pick any issue, you know police brutality, for example. I did a video series called Book Porn and I, right after the murder of George Floyd, I did one episode using a work by Adrian Piper, right, that was equally... and I can send you a copy of that so you can take a look as well.

Just to then say, okay, there is the work about these issues, these things we've been marching to the beat of the drum for a while in a sense and now you could look back into, say, what did the 1980s represent as a period? Was it a sociopolitical paradigm shift? You could argue that the coming of... as David Harvey writes his little short book on a guide to neoliberalism, something like that, but the Reagan, Thatcher, Deng Xiaoping triumph for it, right? The realignment of the relationship between the state and the market, you know massive deregulation, though homelessness, the AIDS crisis right? To go back and say the 1960s may have been a period of social unrest and to some extent carry, but a wholesale disavowal of the 1960s, is what would characterize the 1980s and

power. To look at work that was responding to that moment, to think about you know... figures like Jenny Holzer, right? Paranoia, right? Cruelty, Barbara Kruger, right? Cady Noland, right? Where it's very pointed work, so to say based on that, I would say yeah we've been here before. Now, is it for every generation to find voice to given issues? That is not to be discounted. On the one hand, to say yes, we've been here before, but then another way, has this generation, has a younger generation, you know, your people were 20 years younger than me, have they been here before? Arguably no. They might have a sense of history and the civil rights movement, but perhaps they don't see the 1980s. The 80s is now historical. They didn't live through the 1980s, so they don't see this moment. Some of the intensification can also be charged to the Internet. It's impossible to imagine the current wave of getting woke, of consciousness about sexual harassment and about police brutality, without the Internet. Women, black folk, all knew that these things... [Zoom freeze]

RR: Oh, you cut out a little bit.

HW: I may have frozen, did I freeze?

RR: Yeah, you were talking about the profusion of the internet and how that's Changed processes of like consciousness raising with like getting woke [laughter]

HW: Right, getting woke. The creation of collective consciousness around things like sexual harassment and police brutality, which were always there. So now a frank acknowledgement makes it unavoidable, the ability to connect the dots. Those things account for a new found urgency and a new found collective consciousness. The fact that we're all running around with phones and videos on us, you know, to be able to document these things. Can art respond to this new fact? What

extent can it? Arguably the election of Donald Trump, you know, to what extent can you say that's an extension of things that have been at play for quite a while? In fact, I would say that's true and at the same time, I'd also say, no, he also represents a shift. That is not to exclude him as a particular individual, right? As a particular force, in terms of what he's able to galvanize that's not imaginable through the mechanism of traditional electoral politics. To have a con man come from the outside and work the system to prey upon. To first learn about disinformation. So can art respond to this? If we're going to chart things... his presidency represented an unleashing of forces that are always there to some extent, but in a very violent way, so the urgency and the need for artwork to respond to this moment, yes. Can it respond on the dime? You know, some agitprop, yes, but certain things remain to be seen. We can look towards something like allegory for a way of narrating this present. How can the past be turned into a story that then informs this moment?

RR: Yeah that's fascinating. I think you really hit on the head this thing that a lot of people have been saying, which is that the pandemic has made legible existing forces. Things that are already going.

HW: On absolutely every front, you know? You go down the line... even to the extent... the protests at the Michigan State Capital, which is something I'm dealing with right now, we're rehearsal for January 6th. You can look at Michigan militia and where they come from. They were always there. They'd already had an anti-state position, so the pandemic, the idea of mask wearing and the lockdown is government overreach. You have to realize that the profound skepticism about government, which is part and parcel, the founding of this country since Thomas Paine. It's alive and well in terms of Michigan militias. As a standing reserve, to

use a Heideggerian term and I don't even like Heidegger... just needs a catalyst. That's all it needed. It just needed the pandemic. All the sentiments against the state are already there, so suddenly the state actually has to come into play for a public health crisis, and then you get resistance. It's not like you wouldn't have had resistance if this stuff wasn't already there.

So we know this, the racial disparity and inequality and those kinds of things. When you look at the whole thing, you know from end to end, all the stuff that was in place to turn this thing into a disaster was already at work.

RR: Yeah and really the trial run for that was certainly the AIDS crisis in the 80s and I've been turning recently to...

HW: Well... I wouldn't... I mean the parallels between the AIDS crisis in this pandemic, whereas I think they are interesting parallels, I don't think that they should overlap. I think they should be kept separate, in a way, despite the desire perhaps, to want to talk about them in some way to make parallels between then and now. If we had addressed and we're able to embrace people to understand you know... if I were to look at our attitudes towards homosexuality, they've changed over the course of my lifetime in ways that I wouldn't have expected. You know, having come through the 80s and seeing you know... the idea of gay marriage, if that's up there with having a Black President, if somebody came along and said there will be a Black President in my lifetime, I would of said hell no... what crystal ball are you looking into. If somebody had said gay marriage, the idea of civil union... Republicans... no way no way. I mean if you've gone through the AIDS

crisis to where we are now, with respect to those things was just like having to fight for basic kinds of rights on a human level at that time. So the idea of society and it's treatment of people at that time, cruelty, neglect and lack of care right? That was then towards a specific group and population and... you know Black people, drug users like all of it. It was able to record off a particular group, therefore it left it that way. That's not the case with this pandemic, even though there is inequality that's revealed and exposed, it does not have that same lack of care on the government's part. I mean there's a lack of care on the government's part in ways under Trump, not to say that, but you know what I mean by how it is... Not to say that the two things can't be compared, I just don't want that issue to be...

RR: Totally yeah. I think the uneven distribution of care in it's differences are interesting. I don't want to get into it too much but I was gonna say that I've been looking at Flood HAHAs project for Culture in Action.

HW: Sure, I know, I mean I was from Chicago. I know Richard House and Laurie Palmer, Wendy, they're all family. We all grew up together essentially.

RR: Oh that's awesome, yeah. I've been thinking about it a lot with this profusion of mutual aid, especially having to do with food and care and all of that. Another point that you hit with this, the way that the art world has responded to the pandemic is not so much a material responding of... oh, how do we get more visitors and galleries, it's kind of a conceptual turning and that bringing up of the 60s and 80s and certain eras into greater focus is really interesting.

HW: Yeah exactly, and now to think about, in some sense, the idea of the 1980s as a dress rehearsal for this moment. All of the things that were set into play then and now coming to bet... being born out now.

RR: Definitely, we hit on so many of the other things I was thinking of asking you about which is great. I'll move on to a different question in that case. Going through LAXART and listening to the talk about some of your different exhibitions, both your practice and the shows that you create seem impressively expansive which resonates with your personal narrative beginning with Bruce Nauman's Violence Violins Silence.

HW: Violence Silence Violins. [Violins Violence Silence]

RR: Violence Silence Violins, I mix it up, I say it differently every time. I thought it was interesting and charming when you said you didn't know that was art when you first saw it, and I was thinking about how that piece, and then you're experience.

HW: Or maybe we did know it was art, but that was so besides the point. It didn't matter to us. Yeah, it's on the art museum, so we would suppose that it was art but we didn't care that it was art. The language belongs so much to advertising that for us, it was a sign in the most pure and literal sense, it's talking to us, which is funny to say. It's a sign, in it far outweighs the idea of what art was to us in that way, just to clarify.

RR: Yeah, I noticed that resonating throughout when you were talking about the candy. The difference between seeing the Félix González-Torres in the gallery versus seeing a candy bowl sitting on a desk somewhere. I was thinking, given your experience with that piece, and these

kind of expensive practices, I'm wondering how that experience is expanding what art can do, be or look, has played out over time? Thinking also... LAXART facade projects and of complications inside or outside, public, private, challenges to representation, all that kind of stuff, there's so much really.

HW: Yeah, as funny as it sounds... how do we make distinctions between progressive versus liberal, right? In art world terms, right? So more liberal, art everywhere for everybody. Okay, I don't have that attitude. I'm actually, relative to a liberal position, I'm very conservative in that regard. To me the question about what the work of art is might be a question of where and when... in order to maintain the ability for art to be effective in terms of its function, its critique or raising questions. As opposed to a more feel good notion of let's put it there, let's put it here... to take the work and where it appears, in recognizing that it can be anything. Since art can be anything, I think we need to be hyper attenuated to when and where and what... you know art is a way of seeing and not a particular thing. It's a quotient of what activates that quotient as a question. So things like the facade project are very newtonian in terms of knowing as opposed to quantum mechanics in terms of physics, but newtonian in so far it's art on the outside. It's there for people, passers by, drivers by. To think critically about the facade of the building as another gallery. It's an exhibition space, albeit public, no different than a gallery on the inside. A frame of mind in terms of keeping it fresh, keeping it active, rotating it. To think of it no more or less as a part of our program as the things that we do on the inside. So that's in terms of how I think about the facade project now, how there's a number of different ways where art goes, we follow in a sense. Now, I have my own druthers when it comes to things... The current and Karl Holmqvist, it's a poem, and Karl is a poet, he belongs to the visual art world,

How can the past be turned into a story that then informs this moment?

HAMZA WALKER

right? Barbara's a visual artist, graphic design. But in either case, word and image. In her case, word can become image. Word as image, but language. My disposition about the facade, at least today, ask me again next week and it might change, but with respect to the use of language as opposed to... yeah we could do graphic visual things, but i'm interested in it as a piece of street signage in a way. Whether it's Barber Kruger or Robert Barry, an older conceptual artist, and his use of language, there's something about a use of language in signage or something that can fit into the fabric of the street and buildings, as opposed to art per say graphically and esthetically, like a mural. The ability to use language, or to look at language to think, is another way of greater porosity with respect to life. I feel as though language facilitates that curiosity. What you can get as opposed to... oh you know LA, there are lots of murals. There's something else that we can do with the facade that can mess with people. What does that building do? What are those words for? What does it say? What is it advertising? What are they selling you know? and so those are the way as opposed to... oh it's beautiful, it's a mural...

RR: It's not beautification.

HW: It's not beautification exactly. You always want to think in terms of counterpoint curatorially. Just as soon as we do a run of language based things, then we can do a graphic one. Like okay, let's get some color up in here I don't know... That's my thinking about the facade.

Glenn Adamson

in conversation with
Joseph Sussi

JOSEPH SUSSI: The first question I wanted to ask... could you explain some of the difficulty in writing and curating about craft as a topic that is entangled yet still separated from some of the art world? Is the distinction between art and craft still important? And also, could you speak on some of the challenges of curating this very large scale exhibition that you created, *Crafting America* at Crystal Bridges, which is currently on view. Are people in the board like... "Glenn, this a craft exhibition, this is not an art exhibition" but you have to focus on that? What are some of the politics if you can share about that process?

GLENN ADAMSON: Sure, yeah and maybe I could start with the exhibition because it's a good way into the topic. Thanks for asking the question in the way that you did, rather than, what's the difference between craft and art, which is how it's often asked. To think of it as a more positional and strategic question, I think is more helpful. It's worth saying that Crystal Bridges, is of course, a museum of American art. So that's their business. They're not an engineering museum, they're not a science museum, they're not a technology museum, they're not a decorative arts museum, they're a fine art museum, without a decorative arts collection in fact. So it was quite clear to us that was going to be the lens through which we've looked at craft history to the last half century or so. I think that really ended up foregrounding the narratives of diversity that I was talking about last night. The way in which, women particularly, but also, and to a lesser extent, still in an important way, people of color had been able to participate in the art world through what were previously identified as craft media, you know, textiles, metalwork, ceramics etc... That felt extremely important in that context, because

Crystal Bridges and many other institutions are trying to diversify their representation of what American art looks like. So for them embracing craft was a way to do that. However, I would say, they were embracing craft only in part, because they have that sense of being an art museum. So they weren't, for example, and it wouldn't have been appropriate to do this, to let's say feature a plumber or somebody who shingles roofs or thatch's roofs. That wouldn't have been in their scope. I think that's entirely justified. As you probably know, my definition of craft is skilled making at human scale which obviously can be applied to lots and lots of different types of things. I don't think there's any reason that you can't do a show about craft, as it is applied, used in the art world. Obviously you can do shows about how craft is applied in plumbing if you wanted to as well. You can find a plumbing museum to host it, but I don't think there's anything intellectually unsound about that. It just means that you need to have a very firm sense that what you're talking about is skill of making at human scale in the context of art production and a very nuanced sense of what that means because you need to have a good understanding of the shape of art history in your mind before you set out to paint that picture for people.

JS: That's fascinating. Thinking of the importance of having a familiarity with art history alongside craft. I had thought about this in reading the introduction of *The Craft Reader*. I re-read a little bit of it. I found that it's almost like art history. There isn't really a separation between art history or craft history, or if that distinction is even important. A lot of what you were saying, what I was surprised about in this introduction was... Oh, this is what social art history or what art history in general has been

**I feel that
contemporary art
practices is one
of the most vital
and productive
spaces that we have
culturally.**

achieving. There's a certain endowness to craft itself. It's maybe not craft history, but that there's art history and the discourse is endowed to some of the implications of what craft is about. The blurriness of cultural production of labor, of race and gender. All these things that you talked about last night and you've written about so eloquently. There was a quote from that intro that I pulled out, that I want to ask you a little bit more about and it's from the introduction. It's just kind of this simultaneous categorization, this categorical separation of art and craft, but also the way that they cannot. And so you say, "describing craft as an art form, even as a fixed set of disciplines, disguises the otherwise obvious fact that craft is involved in an enormous range of cultural practices that have nothing to do with aesthetics or museums." This is the part that I found really fascinating, something that I think is really really pertinent to contemporary art history, but also art practices right now. It also "blinds us to the potential radicality of craft's nonart status." I wonder if you could speak a little bit of those radical opportunities afforded by crafts nonart status. If you want to take it to the direction of what that implies, is saying about art history at large. I see this almost adjacent to socially engaged art in the conversation that has motivated a lot of discourse on Dada and Fluxus and since that whole genre of art history. That seems to be very very pertinent right now particularly.

GA: Yeah, I don't actually remember having written that per se, but it sounds like something I would say. [laughter] To me what that suggests is a focus on the realities of production which is, the radical possibility, is that it requires that you push back on what people say art is and talk about what it actually is, which is always a

radical move, right? To go to the conditions of production and to the actual effects of discourse rather than being satisfied with claims and counter claims and to somehow try to reach to the footprint that it's leaving in the world. I know you're very interested in the toxicity of certain art practices and the actual ecological impact of art practices, and really really looking at that, which of course, is a totally fresh way of thinking about land art let's say. Let's talk about what's actually going on out there in the desert or that Utah lake. Similarly, if you think about production, then what you end up thinking about is, of course, materials and tools and workspace. You start thinking about the capital investment in the art world, where it's not just workspace but also selling space. You also probably end up thinking about fabricators and the relationship between fabricators and artists and the true nature of authorship. You might well think about objecthood in the sense of exploitation, as well as expression in a more general sense. When I use the word radicality around craft, usually what I mean is radical truth telling. It's not to try to occupy the position of the little kid in the emperor's new clothes fable, I'm just saying this is all a ruse or it's false consciousness because I don't feel that way about contemporary art practice at all. I feel that contemporary art practices is one of the most vital and productive spaces that we have culturally. It's to say that a real focus on production and also the way that skill and human investment inform and are necessary to empower the very possibility of art, gives you a much truer sense of what it actually is and does in the world. That's the sense in which the nonart qualities of craft give you a sense of the context in which art actually occurs.

JS: I'm glad that you bring up a point of land

art. A lot of the conversation has focused on its discursive potential, particularly Smithsonian where it's transmediality of a piece like that has moved into this discussion of Smithsonian being pertinent to postmodernism but also the way that art is communicated. A lot of more recent art historical conversations have really focused in on the reality of other land artists. What are some of the ecological implications of it, that hasn't gone far enough, but it's more of moving towards this materiality. I'm thinking of craft in that way. You know, it is truly radical in a sense because it still is not happening all the time or not enough in traditional art historical kind of conversations.

GA: Yeah, Let me give you a really good example of that. I was just thinking about Alice Aycock, the great land artist and sculptor from the 1970s. Alice Aycock had studied, I think with Robert Morris at Hunter and so they'd come into the kind of post minimal sculpture world through that door and obviously she's a woman entering a very male dominated art world there in the late 60s early 70s. Her family was involved in construction and so she was able to show up, as it were, to the project of making art with a lot of earth moving equipment and other heavy machinery, and also with the expertise to both use it herself and to direct people that knew how to use it, because of that family background. That was absolutely critical in allowing her to make a lot of her breakthrough work in the early to mid 70s. There you have a situation where a familial connection to productive capacity turns out to be an absolutely central importance in an artistic biography. If you think about Aycock contribution more generally, to a broadening of the possibilities of minimalism and land art, what Rosalind Krauss influentially described as sculpture in the expanded field. To think that that expanded field was possible partly because she had access to that productive repertoire, and that means of production, that seems to be absolutely vital to know. And again, that's a

great example because it's a nonart relationship that she had. Her father was in the construction business but it had a tremendous impact both biographically and I want to say, conceptually on what she did as an artist and her influence. What I'm advocating is an accumulation of those kinds of stories and connections, and then, of course, to really do that story justice, you would want to know quite specifically about the construction industry of the 1970s and materials that afforded her the possibility to use etc... You would go further into that story to properly research it, but that's the kind of contextual interpretive strategy that I'm advocating.

JS: Yeah, this is really interesting. I'm also looking at some of the work of Adrian Piper, particularly in the late 1960s. She made a few maps of Utah and Manhattan transfers at around the same time as the cohort of land artists and people who are invested or interested in these land art projects and are going out to Utah. She mentioned seven years later that the idea of making these maps was because she could not have the resources to do something like an actual Utah Manhattan transfer. It just would not be possible. The point being that the conversation of land art is incredibly gendered, incredibly raced and very very siphoned in access to productivity that someone like Piper didn't have access to, couldn't, and therefore her pieces are conceptual in nature, could be considered within a land art or even earth art practice. Similarly, have someone more in design like Patricia Johanson doing House and Garden commissions and not getting those projects. Having a lot of failed commissions of doing remedial industrial design, larger project practices as well throughout their 70s. I think that idea of productivity, of the access to it, even in a Maycox sense, which is different, there's so much of what the discourse or history of earth art has left out as a result.

**... my definition of
craft is skilled making
at human scale...**

Rebecca Morris

in conversation with
Mary Evans

MARY EVANS: My impression of you is that you're so authentically true and devoted not only to your work, but also to allowing your work to have its own process. I would like to know how you stay true?

REBECCA MORRIS: This should be an easy question. [laughter]

You know a couple years ago I would have answered this question in a way that talks about certain things that I do, but I think it's also a type of personality. That might be just the most direct answer. There's just a certain kind of willfulness I have and also the right amount of naiveté too. Sometimes it's easier to be perseverant when you're not always aware of the hurdles. Another thing that helps is that I went straight through kindergarten through graduate school. When I started putting my life together as a professional artist, I was 25. I've been doing it a really long time you know. Kind of as long as I could have possibly have been doing it. You're talking to someone who's been doing it for maybe 30 years. It looks like that now for sure. I think I always prioritized being an artist above other things you know, things in my personal life for sure. Making work gives me a huge amount of meaning because I always felt really clear about that, it helped me protect being an artist. That was always clear and so that was helpful. I think when you have areas in your life that are not always clear it's harder to protect them. So that was clear for me... and again, this might just be a personality thing and having done it for so long.

ME: I love that and I see that for sure. My next question was going to be, if you always knew that you were going to end up painting or if you ever entertained other potential paths for yourself? But it sounds like you knew what you wanted to do all along.

RM: Well, you know it's interesting. I remember I was a Studio Art major in college and a lot of people around me in college... I started college in like 1987 or something... there were all these people around me who were double majoring in Japanese and Economics and I remember being like clearly I've got the wrong agenda. [laughter] I always knew I wanted to do something in the arts. It wasn't until my Junior year of college that I actually decided I wanted to be an artist. Maybe I always knew but I didn't have a conscious decision about it until my Junior year of college. For a while I thought "Okay, what can I do with my interest in art? Should I go into advertising?" That was the part of the 80s that had an influence. This idea of "What can you do to make money with creative ideas?" That was one musing thought, although I was doing nothing to go in that direction. If I really thought I was going into advertising, I should have been doing things that would get me into advertising, but I wasn't. The other thing I thought is "oh, well maybe architecture?" Maybe I'd be an architect. You know I love buildings, I love architectural spaces. Then I interned at an architecture office in high school for the summer, and all I did was erase toilets with an electric eraser. All the Junior architects around me were also unhappy and hated their jobs because it takes so long to actually get to the creative part where you're actually the person designing the houses. Most of the time you're not designing houses, you're doing these municipal buildings and other things. So it kind of disillusioned me about architecture. It doesn't have the being an artist part until later. So the turning point that I mentioned my Junior year of college was quite simple. The Professor I was working with a Connecticut College, his name was Tim McDowell. He would just talk to all of the Art majors like you were going to go to graduate school and move to New York and be an artist. He just assumed that

if we were going to be Art majors that's what we would do. He would talk like that to us and that's all it took. Someone to assume I was going to do it, for me to believe I could do it. To digress, that's sort of what stuck with me about teaching. You just assume that the person is going to do that and it's amazing the power of what that does for someone. That's when I was like, oh yeah, i'm moving to New York, which I never did, but the idea of moving to New York was the idea of being an artist.

ME: I love that about your faculty and that sense of just someone handing it over to you.

RM: yeah it's powerful.

ME: Place seems so important in the history of your work. Your grandparents' beautiful home, talking about Brutalist architecture. I'm wondering how this year being homebound has affected that relationship to place, if at all?

RM: First, I should say that I did not lose my house. I've had a consistent place to live. I did not lose my job. My relationships to my house and where I live have been secure and I have been thankful for that. At the beginning of the pandemic, I went to that scary place that so many people actually went to and that was their life, you know. I should just say that this whole time I've had a safe place to be. I didn't lose my studio so I had that. That said, I think the thing that has made being at home so much this year okay and manageable is that I always had my studio to go to. My routine, except for the fact that I would go to UCLA to teach, the idea that I'm home living at home, and then I go to my studio. It's almost like my year of a sabbatical in a way, like the structure of a sabbatical where you're home. The beginning part of the pandemic, I was doing Zoom at home, teaching and that wasn't working. That was too hard, I couldn't manage combining them. Over the summer I started renting an extra studio in my studio building where I am now, and what I did basically to survive this was compartmentalize.

I live at home, I work in my studio, I do all my zoom calls in this other office at my studio. That's how I've managed to negotiate this idea of being home. I think if I had been stuck in my house this whole time, no matter how nice my house is, I would have gone crazy. I like to wake up and go do my job.

There are things about our house... You know we painted our house this year on the outside. We've done some things... because we're home so long, we finally got to these decisions that we could make because we were home so much.

ME: And those compartments are kind of like your paintings as well.

RM: Maybe maybe. I found it really helpful to have these different zones.

ME: Absolutely. This is just way too short for me, I just want to ask you...

RM: I'm not good with the elevator speech.

ME: I should skip ahead a little bit. Okay, here's a fun one. If you had to go to a deserted island with only one of your paintings, which would you choose and why?

RM: I don't want to go to a deserted island with one of my paintings. [laughter] Can I go with somebody else's?

ME: Yes, you're welcome to choose someone else's painting. [laughter]

RM: I don't know why I don't want to go with my own work... I'll tell you why. If I went with my own paintings, I would be sad I couldn't be painting all the time. By looking at one of my own paintings... actually, any deserted island with a painting would make me want to paint. I don't want to go to a deserted island with any art, actually. No art, I can't handle it. It would be too depressing. I would

Making work gives me a huge amount of meaning because I always felt really clear about that, it helped me protect being an artist.

REBECCA MORRIS

want... I couldn't do it. I think if I'm going to be at a deserted island I just better embrace being on a deserted island.

ME: Fair enough. [laughter] I loved your manifesto that you wrote. I was wondering, after this insane year, do you have anything to add to that? Anything that you would tack on?

RM: No, I don't. I've thought about... would there ever be a second manifesto? I feel I got everything that needed to be said in that moment. I have this other manifesto that's a list of do's and don'ts for studio visits... that's sort of different... but that didn't develop over this year. I don't know if I have any new wisdom.

ME: That's perfectly fine. I feel like you gifted us with a lot of wisdom in your other manifesto. Last question, what do you listen to when you're in the studio?

RM: Oh God, I used to listen to music all the time. About three or four years ago I stopped listening to music entirely. It's so weird, I'm sort of disturbed by it. I used to listen to music and... if I really loved the song I would put it on auto repeat and it could go on for like four hours. The idea was that the energy was exactly the right energy, and you know, three or four minutes if it ended... was like... ahhh! [Hands gesture backwards] So I would just keep playing it. It's disruptive to get up, so I would just put it on a loop, or an album on a loop to kind of

keep a certain... but then I stopped. I don't know how to get back into it anymore. I don't know why I stopped listening, I'm upset about it. I feel like somethings wrong with me and I don't know what.

ME: Maybe you just need a new song. I do the same thing with putting the same song on loop for four hours also. [laughter]

RM: I don't know what it is, I think, maybe music started making me too sad. I felt like everything was such an emotional queue. It was distracting or something. Maybe I just needed to think more... or not think more, because then it implies I wasn't thinking before. I think something needed to change and I guess it was that I needed silence or I needed to totally focus... I don't know, maybe the music was too activating. So maybe that's my answer, the music was to activating. All of it was unconscious, I just stopped listening, I don't know why.

ME: It seems like your practice is... I mean you mentioned in your lecture, that you are pretty intuitive, so you follow what feels right for you and for your work, which I really admire. I could just talk to you all day, I still have all these other questions, but we're out of time and I'm so bummed about that. I really appreciate you indulging me and it was lovely to meet with you. Thanks thanks for visiting us again.

RM: Thank you, it was really fun to talk with you. Good luck in your next two years of school.

ME: Thank you, I can use all the luck I can get. [laughter]

RM: Luck, you just need time in school and I'll be looking out for your work in the world.

ME: Thank you, yes, as it blossoms out. [Hand gestures outward] [laughter] All right, well I hope you have a lovely rest of your day.

**You just assume
that the person is
going to do that
and it's amazing the
power of what that
does for someone.**

Amir Zaki

in conversation with
Anastasiya Gutnik

ANASTASIYA GUTNIK: I wanted to start off with a question about yoga. I read that you're a certified yoga and Tai Chi instructor and have offered classes at the University of California Riverside. I'm curious if your yoga and Tai Chi practice inform your artwork at all?

AMIR ZAKI: Yes, the quick answer is yes. What do I say... I think that practices that emphasize mind body connection inevitably bleed into the rest of your life. I think that it's a kind of chicken and egg thing though, because me being drawn to those practices is due to life experiences and same with photography and art making. I think that the relationship all these things have to one another is a little bit like... they're just interwoven. I don't think it's one directional in a way. Definitely in the years as I'm getting older and I have those practices develop and enrich, I think it does affect the kind of things I'm interested in photographing and maybe more what I get out of the act of photography. The current body of work I'm making is really... I set myself up with a project that allows me to go walk by myself, basically to the edge of the continent, literally. I make photographs and then stare out into the ocean and then go underneath and stare up... there's a conscious effort to construct projects that are about the things I want to emphasize in my life.

AG: Yeah, thank you. I'm thinking about the connection to the human body. Even though there is typically an absence of figures in your work, there is such an important implied relationship with humans. You know, with the skate parks and the lifeguard towers. You were just talking about the ocean as well. I'm curious if you could talk about the significance of absence and expanse for you, what that means for you in your work?

AZ: Yeah, I think absence... I mean obviously the photographs are all devoid of people and that's quiet intentional. I think that I'm naturally drawn to experiences of being out in the world alone and having to cope with that inevitable quality of existence. I want the viewer to experience a kind of emptiness in the work so that they cope to. I don't have any signage in the work, I don't really want people to rely on things that make them comfortable like language or maybe even other human connection. They're set up in this way... I have a very positive relationship to that kind of isolation, but I also realized that not everybody does. I have a kind of tricky relationship with this idea of alienation.

AG: Yeah and I was curious in your tree series, the Getting Lost series... with the titling. They are very intimate and are very much about connections. I think some of the titles are Close Friends, Parent and Child, Strangers. I'm curious, how does that differ for you when you think about that series from others?

AZ: That was a recent body work. I'm gravitating a little bit more to tap into some things that are personal. I've always had difficulty with titling. I'm starting to find my way with that and make it more personal and comfortable. That just happened to... you know, this pairing, this idea of pairing lends itself to me automatically, naturally to relationships. It's kind of a no brainer to title them, but also it personifies the trees. It creates a parallel between human relationships. I plan on doing more titles. I feel if I can title things in ways that are more specific and poetic, I probably would like to do that as I keep making work.

AG: I have a couple more questions for you, and I know we're getting close to the end of our

time. If you could manifest a dream space to photograph, what would it look like? What are the kinds of things that you're seeking out?

AZ: I feel that's constantly what I'm doing in my work. When you say dream, I imagine you mean a good dream. I've never been really interested in science fiction or fantasy and my actual dreams are way more often than not, bad, negative. [laughter] It's a funny question because I guess I do think about making work of the landscape in the world that's about my own desires. To experience space in a way that I'm making. So if I'm adding birds or creating this space that's very iconic, that is about my desire. I don't connect that to dreams because my connection to dreams is probably a little bit tainted by the fact that they're mostly negative and anxiety ridden.

AG: [laughter]

Yeah, so this is already built into your process anyhow. Ok, one last question. I know that you're a professor in addition to having this very active artistic practice and I'm curious, over your time of teaching, is there one or a couple of things that you feel most important to impart to your students as they're continuing on their artistic journeys?

AZ: Yeah, maybe more pronounced these days. I have been thinking a lot about this idea of personal responsibility and resiliency. This idea of turning inward to find what you want to make and what you want to contribute to the world. I think those are the kinds of values that I try to teach my students. It's a difficult thing to teach, especially an adult, but basically I emphasize this idea of empowerment and reliance on your ideas, and resiliency. It's very vague but those are the kind of things I try to model when I teach. You have to have thick skin to be an artist.

AG: Yeah, those are great lessons and takeaways and feels like a really great endnote as well. Thank you so much.

I'm naturally drawn to experiences of being out in the world alone and having to cope with that inevitable quality of existence.

Natalie Ball

in conversation with
Lily Wai Brennan

LILY WAI BRENNAN: How do you feel about getting your Bachelor's from University of Oregon and now you're returning as a lecturer and you're doing this interview? Does that feel a little bit surreal coming back to where you started?

NATALIE BALL: Yes and no. Now I can see the broader picture of this being my homeland territory. It only makes sense for me to be in these spaces. But also, I came to the University of Oregon because they offered a scholarship. My cousin and I... now she's a PhD, she's a doctor now. Her name is Angie. Her and I were both single mamas, young, and she was like... "Girl, they have a full ride scholarship at the University of Oregon." So that's how we started. I just wanted to spend time with my kid so I just started there. But yeah, it's crazy, I'm back in peoples studios but as an artist. It's a great experience, I'm glad to be there, but also I deserve to be in these spaces. Not only because I believe in the work I'm doing and I believe I have value and I can add to the conversation in these spaces, but also, these are my homeland territories. I'm connected to Kalapuya land in a deeper sense. So yes. Yes and yes.

LWB: Yeah and that kind of leads me into my next question. You already mentioned it's really important for both you as a person and also your work to be in this space, connected to your roots, so what was it like going to Yale to get your masters and being physically disconnected from that space?

NB: Yeah, good question. It was hard because I had a full life and I left it to go to Yale to start a new life. It was really exciting though at the same time. I had never been really on my own. I had

always carried around kids or I've always been really close to home, besides going to Aotearoa, New Zealand, but then I had my child too, so it was just kind of fun. It was like East Coast vibes. New York was just a train ride away. It was really exciting, I knew whose homelands I was on. I knew the history of the place, that helped ground me. It was a rigorous program but I had a lot of fun. It was hard and I missed my kids but also, I felt like I deserved that time alone. It was definitely hard calling them, face timing them and then crying. I always remember that but it was just 18 months and I was home every month. I just really hustled hard to keep my connections and then to build new ones.

LWB: It sounds like you always knew you would come back here afterwards, right?

NB: I thought I'd be in Europe, or something actually. [laughter] I thought that was the big dream, you know? Like I'll be abroad, but I feel like this is the big dream, to be in my place, in my homeland, where my ancestors lived and then also saying something. But also having a huge audience or a broader audience that I can bring to here.

LWB: Yeah that's definitely important. So I'm very curious as someone who's also female POC, what's your opinion on diversity in the art world? Do you think it's going in a good direction? I personally think there's a lot of room for improvement. I'm curious if you have anything to say to that.

NB: That's a really good question and it's a hard question. I think the past couple of years has changed the landscape in a way. A lot of people getting fired. A lot of people stepping

down but also, I don't know, I hope that there's a bigger change, broader change and more space held for us. But I don't know, I think that's a next generation question. [laughter] I'm seriously just in it. I feel like the art world isn't removed from the politics that we experience outside of there. They're all there too, maybe even worse, I don't know. It's changed a bit, well it seems so in the news right, there's a lot of articles that are suggesting it's changing, but I have yet to really say that it has.

LWB: Yeah. We're reaching the end of our time already so I'll end it with a fun question. [laughter] Do you have any quick advice for emerging artists or people inspired to be an artist?

NB: Yeah, or who are just starting out?

LWB: Yeah yeah.

NB: Yeah, I feel like our story, narratives, are really important. I would encourage artists to tell their stories. They're valuable and they help us to understand things in a larger context of the world. I'm really excited for more explicit narratives to be up in people's studios and to come from their studios and to offer us other ways of seeing. Your voice is valuable.

LWB: Yeah, thank you so much for doing this interview. It was really nice chatting even for a little bit. I just really wanted to mention I really love your work, so it was really great to talk to you.

**I would encourage
artists to tell their
stories. They're
valuable and they
help us to understand
things in a larger
context of the world.**

Mario Ybarra Jr.

in conversation with
David Peña

DAVID PEÑA: My first question is how do you navigate the art world and power dynamics? To talk more about it, being Mexican American myself and growing up in South Bay San Diego and crossing the border as part of my life, I'm curious about how identity has informed the way you interact with all the class and privilege that is visible in the art world?

MARIO YBARRA JR: Yeah that's a good question, I get asked that a lot. As you could imagine I've thought about that a lot so I've come up with this little kind of model which is Black music, brown skin, white institutions. That's my go-to.

I grew up listening to Black music. As a kid, I grew up in the Hip-Hop generation. The anthem was fuck the police right. When I was 14 years old I got to be backstage with NWA and Ice-T and all of these rappers. I got to watch them watching their Straight Out of Compton video for the first time seeing themselves on a monitor. My friend was a DJ and I got to be in that backstage, a kid in the dressing room. I was like, yeah man, Black music, fuck the police, fuck power, fuck regimes that are against us and that's Black music. Along with the soul music that my mom played when she was growing up and cleaning the house... was Black music.

Brown skin, like I'm not super brown, but I'm brown. In my heart I'm brown y qué that's something that I can't change and I'm happy to be y qué... one time... You know you're talking about these power structures. Sometimes the most racist of them that I've faced has been from other Mexicanos. For example, I was in... that's not to say in general, but they fell into this kind of white power structure themselves. I was at a very

fancy dinner at a museum for their fundraiser and I was sitting there next to a señora. She was super Telenovela with big blond hair and really fancy! I was like "Oh this señora, I don't know why they sit me next to her." I don't know how they put you next to people at dinner parties, who knows... What do they think? Oh because this señoras Mexicana? It was in Texas, so Texas is a little bit different. They don't call Mexicanos with... from class, they don't call them Mexicanos, they call them Mexican Nationals. She was sitting next to me and she asked me "Oh Mario, what do you do?" And I'm like "Oh I'm an artist." You know, I've shown at the Tate Modern, I've shown at the Whitney Biennial, I teach at UCLA... I tell her all the things I do. Y she looked me straight in the face, este David... and she told me... "¿Tan morenito y has sido todo eso?!" What translates to "You're so dark and you've done all of that?" I was like what the fuck? I just stood up and left. I couldn't talk to her no more. Y qué, I called Karla up, my wife, immediately because I was like... trauma! Ah, I'm having a crisis! I had to leave and get away from that situation. Essentially, that has been the kind of power structures that not only... you know... people want to tend to be like... oh, no to museums or whatever, or... that's a white space, that's for white people... and you're like nah man... it's for classist ass people también. It's not just about the color of the skin of a person, it's about this classism and kind of caste system that's been in place for so many years due to colonization and capitalism. Even my café con leche is like "tan morenito y has sido todo eso" right. I can't escape that.

So Black music, fuck the police, soul, give me backbone, give me a kind of thing to lean on. You know my brown skin is unchangeable, it's unwavering, I can't be apologetic for that and

I can't cater to somebody for that. That's my identity, that's who I am. A tiger doesn't walk around the jungle having to say it's a tiger. You know it's a tiger by its indexical markings. It leaves big tiger shits, it leaves bodies of caribou that it ate right. You see the carcass all dead. It doesn't have to apologize for being a tiger. You know that it's a tiger because he scratches the trees to sharpen his claws. I feel that about me personally as a brown person. I'm not going to be going around apologizing. You know who I am because I leave carcasses around of the caribou and I take a big brown person shit. So brown skin right.

Black music, brown skin and then finally white institutions. White institutions, as your question kind of started with, is things that need to be negotiated with. I come from... my family here, they all work in the docks. They're all part of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. We're a union family and I've seen growing up how the union members go in solidarity to fight the employer for better wages or health care, or whatever. Y qué, white institutions are kind of like this employer. It's not about accepting whatever they give us at face value, más bien because they could give us a job or a gig, no. That's a compromised position and I think that we need to get over that. We need to get over this "oh qué me... they're gonna give me a show or they're going to give me this opportunity." No, we have to start saying well shit man, okay, you're going to give us that opportunity, that's great, and thank you, but we also need this. We need to also be very vocal about what we need.

You know Latinx people within institutions and throughout the United States, we're like the lowest paid people on the scale. And why is that? Más bien because we don't speak up for ourselves and say hey, no, you need us to do this job, we have the skill sets to do this job. We have the skill sets to do your work in the museum, we

have the skill sets as artists to be artists within the museum. This is what we need, and we need to practice like the union practices negotiating. They have representatives that go and negotiate. They're elected to negotiate with the company, so they could get all their fare stuff they need right, and the union decides that. We need this health care, we need this pay raise, we need the certain things that they need. Of course they're negotiating, meaning that they go in with 10 points to negotiate, and the company comes in with what they need. The people that are at the table know what their priorities are in relationship to those 10 points. Más bien number 7 and 9 need to get kicked out, but you got 1 through 5 and 10, that's a win. We got to understand that we got to start creating a win-win culture for ourselves and start being able to practice that with our institutional negotiating and our institutional navigating.

So we can't just be... you know... I'm hoping that I'm building that, we need to do that like the union does with solidarity. we need to be in discussions with each other. We need to be talking to each other. We need to find out what can you negotiate for the institution and your artist friend can tell you... "Hey, this is how I see your value." Más bien because sometimes we're too close right, we need a perspective. They can say, well, this is what I see for your value, this is what I see you bringing to the table, they can help you in solidarity. You could say when you're talking to an institution or negotiating with an institution, you could come to the table and with some kind of help in solidarity from your friends, or your mentors or whoever, you need to talk to get that, and be like okay, you guys need me to do a show in six months let's say, pero... I need an artist fee, I need you to pay for the shipping, I need you to do this, and this... that's what I need. And if they say okay, great, you know. Or if they say, okay, maybe they meet you in the middle, we could give you an artist fee, we can pay for

**... my brown skin is
unchangeable, it's
unwavering, I can't be
apologetic for that
and I can't cater to
somebody for that.**

MARIO YBARRA JR.

the shipping, pero esto y esto, these other two points, we can't do. We can give you the fee, and maybe whatever you need to do for that comes out of the fee. Maybe we can help you raise some other money, maybe... they meet you in the middle. That's negotiating tactics. That's like developing a skill set of coming to the table with some negotiating points, but you have to predetermine what those negotiating points are before you go in and try to have this negotiation.

Never, never should you accept a compromise. I'll give you an example of a compromise. A few months ago I had a museum approach me and another artist. I'm the elder artist and this younger latinx artist, awesome artist too from another part of the country. Me as a senior artist and this artist as an up and coming artist, we were going to do a two person show. We were stoked because the idea, it was dope. To put that

artist and me together would be dope and I will learn a lot from that artist and vice versa. Me and that artist already had a good relationship. The museum is like okay, we're going to do this, and this, and we want you to do this by the end of the year. and we're like okay, what's the budget? They were like... "We have to get back to you on that." We got off the phone with them. That artist and I... we got on the phone. We're like okay, they want us to do this within a year, what is the budget we need? You know, what do we need to do a show within a year to actually do something worthwhile? Especially, they're not asking "oh, can we ship this work that you already have?" they're asking for us to come up with a new idea and make a new work. So her and I, we got on the phone, we figured this dollar amount will do it. [Motions hand above head] We would be really happy with this dollar amount. But we'll take this dollar amount! [Motions hand bellow head]

To learn the difference between negotiating institutional spaces and being compromised within institutional spaces, is very important,

You know, when you sell a car, they put or best offer, OBO. Yeah so we want this dollar amount, but will take the OBO at this dollar amount, pero... if it's anything bellow that... we can't do it. We just can't, we can't fund it ourselves out of our own pocket. So then, when we got back to them, they couldn't even meet the OBO amount. We had pre-determined that if they can't make that OBO amount that we would have to say no thank you. We can't do it. That's an example, within solidarity with other artists that you're working with, being in communication with folks, so that you guys can have this negotiating power. If you're just by yourself and you have no council from other artists or a mentor or anything, you don't know. You get confused and that's where people can trap you into places where you don't want to be. That's when you're compromised.

To learn the difference between negotiating institutional spaces and being compromised within institutional spaces, is very important, especially as young artists.

If somebody had told me this when I was in grad school, I would have been conscious of it. Más bien I've learned because I've gone through some bullshit. Now I consult other people, I get advice. I'm not just all hot because I got an opportunity and then all of a sudden I'm having to pay out of my own pocket or putting myself in compromising positions that I don't want to be in.

DP: Damn, thank you. My mind is blown, very great advice. Can I go to the next question? I mean this is more than five minutes, is that okay?

MYJ: Thats fine, let me get another bite of my lunch.

DP: [laughter] Okay, so this kind of relates to me and Luisa. I'm doing this program and my goal is to go back to Tijuana and start an artist run community space. Coming from that context, I'm thinking, do you have any tips for establishing a sustainable artists run space after grad school?

MYJ: I did that. When I finished Grad school in 2001, the next year, I founded with my friends Slanguage Studio in 2002, so that was the following year. In between that year I went and sought out counsel. Every elder in my community that had started a space or had done a nonprofit organization or did an artist-led space or did art education with youth or whatever... I went and hit them up and went to their offices. I visited them. I asked how they started, I asked exactly what you're asking me. What their tips were. Usually people that are into that, they're very generous already or else they wouldn't do that, you know what I mean? They wouldn't be doing that, they would be doing something else. So you know, they're very generous and you know, I get them lunch or take them to tacos or something. Give them a t-shirt that one of you guys make or one of your zines or algo! You know what I mean! You don't be going into somebody's house and not bringing them a little something! [laughter]

DP: Claro! [laughter]

MYJ: The little cookies in the little metal box, algo wey! Go take them something! You know what I mean! [laughter]

DP: Yeah for sure!

MYJ: Seek counsel. The other day somebody asked me a similar question. I was telling them seek counsel you know, make sure that you can reciprocate in whatever way you can, if it's like a little box of cookies or tacos or you know, make sure you have the budget to smudge it! [laughter] You're taking something! Algo! You're taking the smoke and thanking the elders! [Motioning smoke ritual] [laughter] The thing is, you're not alone. That's the thing I was talking about earlier with solidarity, and the same thing with starting a space, you're not alone. We come from a tradition of doing things like that. You're not reinventing the wheel so to speak. You might be creating a new chapter or a new version of that. You're not alone. To your region, if there is a cultural center that exists already that is from another generation, maybe it's not exactly for your generation, pero, you could go and volunteer there also to learn and ask questions from the elders where they've already been there, done that, and maybe they need your energy también. Maybe they're tired! They need your young energy or they need your new ideas to reach a new generation. You don't have to invent from scratch, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. So I'm just thinking about Tijuana... go find ERRE and be like... "ERRE, how did you start Estación Tijuana?" And ERRE will be like... "I did this, and this" and you'd be like... "All right ERRE, gracias Don ERRE!" (Motions prayer hands) You know what I mean? [laughter] Don ERRE Gracias! Thank you for telling us. Is it okay if you help us a little or if you advise us because we have a few questions? He knows how to navigate Tijuana, you know... fuck, he is Tijuana homie!

DP: For sure, straight up!

MYJ: You're like, "...okay Don ERRE, how did

you invite Sam Durant and them to be here in Tijuana and work?" So I'm saying seek elders, seek counsel, you're asking me this question, that's what I did. Everybody in your specific region, anybody else from different places. You know go seek those community elders and look because you don't always have to reinvent the wheel. Maybe you could bring new vision, new energy to an existing place. Más bien because they're probably hoping that somebody comes along because they're tired.

DP: For sure yeah, I get that. I think that's really great advice. I have one last question that's a fun question. What music are you listening to right now, and what are your top five records or songs right now, currently?

MYJ: Okay, well, the music that I'm listening to right now, has been my pandemic go-to... one is the Boiler Room, they have Maseo, who is the DJ in De La Soul. He has a live DJ set on YouTube for Boiler Room that's dope. It's all rare grooves, 70s Funk, Soul music. That's been one of my go-to's. The second one is um... I've been listening to this other DJ. She was on Instagram and then she took herself off Instagram. All the DJs are going over to Twitch to do their thing and umm... I'm blanking on her name... I'll have to text it to you... but más bien I've been listening to live DJ sets, so Maseo and her.

Just songs that are stuck on repeat on my playlist... I've been really interested in the year I was born. I was born in 1973. So 1973 a lot of pivotal things happen, the Vietnam War ended, Picasso died. Hip-Hop. That's the year that's supposedly the birth of Hip-Hop in the South Bronx is 1973. So on my playlist, I've been listening on Spotify the best of 1973. The sound that really got stuck is the song Angie by the Rolling Stones, it's kinda like a ballad. What I've been building from my personal collection is this little box. I showed it yesterday. [Holds up 45 record box]

DP: Yeah I saw this yeah.

MYJ: I've been building this little box that is all of these old school 45 vinyls which is all of the music my mom played while cleaning the house. So it's like this 45 playlist of music my mom played cleaning the house and I'm still editing it and figuring it out. This will be like when I get to be a fantasy DJ and do my lives. [laughter] This will be my playlist for my DJ sets. That's kinda been what I've been listening to.

DP: That's amazing. Yeah I recently got... I mean... my Abuela passed away this past year and one of the biggest treasures I have is my Abuelos record collection and I've been going through those and it's just like... a portal... that's a portal. you know it's like...

MYJ: No, it is a portal. Music is a portal and there's a rich... that's what I'm saying... the way that you're looking through your Abuelos records is the same way I'm telling you to seek out counsel from elders. Más bien, my mom played these records and I think that gave me a good ear or sensibility for music. I have a prima... I love my prima, but I don't think her mom played her good music! [laughter] Every time she comes to pick me up or something she's playing something like... "damn, turn this music off, what the hell is this!" [laughter] ...and she's listening to some musicals... she likes musical theater... so she's blasting some music from the thing or blasting something! It's like chalkboard screeching! [Insinuating hands scratching chalkboard / Shakes head] [laughter] "Your family didn't play you good music!" [laughter] That's the same with culture. If you're coming from a rich history, a rich musical history, a rich visual culture history, you know, you don't gotta build it from new. You got roots there.

DP: That's amazing. I think that's a great note to end on. Thank you so much Mario for your time.

you know it's getting close to half an hour for this conversation. Outside of this, I would love to pick your brain more, just like hangout.

MYJ: Yeah let's just keep staying in touch mijo and tell your partner we said hello. If you guys do the zine fest this year, let me know, maybe that would be my first international trip since COVID. I'll have to jump through the orifice. [laughter]

DP: Will definitely send you an invitation for sure!

MYJ: Okay gracias, all right, thank you for listening to me.

DP: Thank you Mario!

University

of

ANNALS

Oregon

Visiting

Bios

SIMON STARLING

Simon Starling was born in Epsom, England, in 1967. He graduated from the Glasgow School of Art and was professor of fine arts at the Städelschule in Frankfurt from 2003 to 2013. His practice spans a wide variety of media, including film, installation and photography. Starling won the Turner Prize in 2005 and was shortlisted for the Hugo Boss Prize in 2004. He represented Scotland at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and has had solo exhibitions at Frac Ile-de-France, Le Plateau n Paris (2019), Musée regional d'art contemporain in Sérignan (2017), Japan Society in New York (2016), Museo Experimental El Eco in Mexico City (2015), Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (2014), Monash University Museum of Art in Melbourne (2013), Staatsgalerie Stuttgart in Germany (2013), Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art in Japan (2011) and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams (2008). Starling lives in Copenhagen.

JOHN MANN

John Mann is an artist who explores the visual complications of photography, the sequence and the still life through printed images, artist books and sculptural works. His artwork has been exhibited at venues such as Aperture, (NYC), Light Work (Syracuse, NY) Daniel Cooney Fine Art (NYC), Hyeres Festival of Photography (FR), Phillips de Pury (London), PDX Contemporary (Portland), Newspace Center for Photography (Portland), The Print Center (Philadelphia), Privateer Gallery (Brooklyn), and the Houston Center for Photography (TX). He has had artist residencies at Light Work (NY), The Visual Studies Workshop (NY), Virginia Center for Creative Arts (VA) and was a Research Fellow at the Lacoste School of the Arts (FR). He earned a BFA (Studio Art) from Arizona State University and an MFA (Photography) from

The University of New Mexico. He currently lives and works in Chicago and is a member of the Cake Collective photography network. johnmannstudio.com

JENNA SUTELA

Jenna Sutela works with words, sounds, and other living media, such as *Bacillus subtilis natto* bacteria and the “many-headed” slime mold *Physarum polycephalum*. Her audiovisual pieces, sculptures, and performances seek to identify and react to precarious social and material moments, often in relation to technology. Sutela’s work has been presented at museums and art contexts internationally, including Guggenheim Bilbao, Moderna Museet, and Serpentine Galleries. She was a Visiting Artist at The MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) in 2019-20. jennasutela.com

JESS PERLITZ

Jess Perlitz makes work focused on considering landscape and the ways in which we define and seek to recognize ourselves within it. Grappling with how space gets articulated, the projects take many forms - traversing performance, sculpture, and drawing. The work has appeared in a variety of venues such as playgrounds, fields, galleries, and museums, including the Institute for Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, Socrates Sculpture Park in NY, Cambridge Galleries in Canada, and De Fabriek in The Netherlands. Born in Toronto, Canada, Jess is a graduate of Bard College, received her MFA from Tyler School of Art and clown training from the Manitoulin Center for Creation and Performance. Jess is currently based in Portland, Oregon where she is Associate Professor of Art and Head of Sculpture at Lewis & Clark College. Jess was recently named the 2018 Joan Shipley Fellow from the Oregon Arts Commission and a 2019 Hallie Ford Fellow. Recent residencies include

the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art and the Vermont Studio Center. Her project, Chorus, is currently installed at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, PA as part of the museum's ongoing artists installation series. jessperlitz.com

CAROLINE WOOLARD

Caroline Woolard (b.1984) is an American artist who, in making her art, becomes an economic critic, social justice facilitator, media maker, and sculptor. Since the financial crisis of 2007-8, Woolard has catalyzed barter communities, minted local currencies, founded an arts-policy think tank, and created sculptural interventions in office spaces. Woolard has inspired a generation of artists who wish to create self-organized, collaborative, online platforms alongside sculptural objects and installations. Her work has been commissioned by and exhibited in major national and international museums including MoMA, the Whitney Museum, and Creative Time. Woolard's work has been featured twice on New York Close Up (2014, 2016), a digital film series produced by Art21 and broadcast on PBS. She is the 2018-20 inaugural Walentas Fellow at Moore College of Art and Design and the inaugural 2019-20 Artist in Residence for INDEX at the Rose Museum, and a 2020-2021 Fellow at the Center for Cultural Innovation. carolinewoolard.com

FRED H. C. LIANG

Fred H. C. Liang received a BFA from the University of Manitoba and an MFA from Yale University. His honors include Massachusetts Cultural Council Arts Grants in both painting, printmaking and works on paper. Liang's work is in numerous public and private collections including Fidelity, the Gund Collection, Addison Museum of American Art and the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University.

He recently exhibited work at the Currier Museum of Art in NH, Inside Out Museum in Beijing and the ICA, Boston. Liang's most recent exhibitions include the Milwaukee Art Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Addison Museum of American Art in Massachusetts, XC.HuA Gallery in Berlin and Jerez de la Frontera Gallery at University of Cadiz. He just completed a residency at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Santiago de Chile and the Swatch Art Peace Hotel in Shanghai, China. His work was recently interviewed by Huffington Post, WBUR Open Studio and reviewed in The Boston Globe. Liang is a professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, Massachusetts, USA where he is the Coordinator of the Printmaking Department. Liang is also a 2020 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant recipient. qna-studio.com

JILLIAN MAYER

Jillian Mayer's practice—spanning videos, sculptures, painting, photography, performances, and interactive installations—reflects upon how new technologies affect our sociality, bodies, identities, and conceptions of self. Throughout her work, Mayer models how to subvert capital-driven modes of technological innovation. By investigating the points of tension between our physical and virtual worlds, Mayer makes work that seeks to inhabit the increasingly porous boundary between the two.

Mayer has exhibited internationally at venues including MoMA and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Her work has been featured in Artforum, Art in America, and The New York Times. She is an alum of the Sundance Institute's New Frontiers Lab and a recipient of the Creative Capital Fellowship. jillianmayer.net

LAURA FRITZ

Laura Fritz is a Portland-based artist who works with a range of media, including, sculpture, video, and light. Her immersive installations explore the cognition of uncertainty. Her work *Alvarium 2*, currently on display in *Laura Fritz/ Rick Silva: Encounters at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art* (Eugene) presents a mysterious structure inhabited by a spectral swarm of bees. Recently, her *Apex Series* solo show at the Portland Art Museum explored surreal architecture, swarms, and the psychology of cognition. She has also exhibited at the Des Moines Art Center, Reed College, Portland; *Soil*, Seattle; *Aljira Center for Contemporary Art*, Newark, New Jersey; *University of Oregon*, Portland; and the *Couture Stipend Series* at the *New American Art Union* in Portland. Fritz received an Oregon Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship in the Visual Arts (2014). She holds a BFA from Drake University, and also attended the Pacific Northwest College of Art (CE program), Portland.

laurafritz.net

HAMZA WALKER

Hamza Walker is the director of the Los Angeles nonprofit art space LAXART and an adjunct professor at the School of Art Institute of Chicago. Prior to joining LAXART in 2016, he was director of education and associate curator at the Renaissance Society, a non-collecting contemporary art museum in Chicago, for 22 years where he organized numerous shows and public programming and wrote extensively on the field of contemporary art.

Notable shows at the Renaissance Society include “*Suicide Narcissus*” (2013), “*Black Is, Black Ain’t*” (2008) and “*New Video, New Europe*” (2004). In addition to his work at the Renaissance Society, Walker also co-curated the *Made in L.A. 2016* biennial. He has won the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial

Achievement in 2014 and the prestigious Ordway Prize in 2010 for his significant impact on the field of contemporary art.

laxart.org

GLENN ADAMSON

Glenn Adamson is a curator, writer and historian based in New York. He has previously been Director of the Museum of Arts and Design; Head of Research at the V&A; and Curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee. Adamson’s publications include *Thinking Through Craft* (2007); *The Craft Reader* (2010); *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion* (2011, co-edited with Jane Pavitt); *The Invention of Craft* (2013); *Art in the Making* (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson); and *Fewer Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects* (2018). His newest book is *Craft: An American History*, published by Bloomsbury, and he is co-host of the online interview series *Design in Dialogue*.

glennadamson.com

REBECCA MORRIS

Rebecca Morris is an abstract painter whose work deeply investigates materials, form, processes, and outcomes. A showcase for her extensive arsenal of techniques and ideas, her ambitious large-scale canvases incorporate different manners of mark-making and inventively explore questions of frame dynamics and figure/ground illusions, often within a remarkably shallow pictorial space.

Rebecca Morris, b.1969 in Honolulu, Hawaii; lives in Los Angeles, California. BA, Smith College; MFA, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago; The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She is a Professor in the Department of Art at the University of California, Los Angeles. Solo exhibitions include: *Bortolami, NYC* (2020); *Blaffer Art Museum, Houston TX* (2019); *Mary Boone*

Gallery, NYC (2017); 356 S. Mission Rd, Los Angeles (2015); The Bonnefantenmuseum, The Netherlands (2014); Kunsthalle Lingen, Germany (2013); Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin (2017, 2013, 2009, 2006); Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago (2016, 2013); Harris Lieberman, New York (2012, 2010); The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2005); and Santa Monica Museum of Art (2003); forthcoming, ICALA, Los Angeles (2022). Group exhibitions include: “Made in LA” at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); Whitney Biennial, NY (2014); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland; The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH; Victoria Miro Gallery, London; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; David Zwirner Gallery, NYC; Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna, Austria; The Hessel Art Museum at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Gavin Brown’s Enterprise, NYC; The Pit, CA. Morris was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, Tiffany Foundation; The California Community Foundation; The City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Award; The Durfee Foundation; Art Matters; and the Illinois Arts Council.

AMIR ZAKI

Amir Zaki is a practicing artist living in Southern California. He received his MFA from UCLA in 1999 and has been regularly exhibiting nationally and internationally since. Zaki has had over 30 solo exhibitions at institutions and galleries including the Mak Center Schindler House, the Doyle Arts Pavilion, the Dalian Modern Museum (China), ACME gallery, Perry Rubenstein Gallery, James Harris Gallery, Edward Cella Art & Architecture, and Roberts Projects (formerly Roberts and Tilton). He has been included in over 50 group exhibitions in significant venues including The California Biennial: 2006 at the Orange County Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American

Art in New York, Andreas Grimm Gallery in Munich, Germany, Harris Lieberman Gallery in New York, Flag Art Foundation in New York, Western Bridge in Seattle, Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago, the California Museum of Photography, Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego, the San Jose Museum of Art, and the Nevada Museum of Art. Zaki’s work is part of numerous public and private collections across the country including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), UCLA Hammer Museum, the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, Washington, the Orange County museum of Art, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Zaki has three monographs, VLHV (2003), Eleven Minus One (2010) and California Concrete: A Landscape of Skateparks (2019). He has been included in a Phaidon Press anthology of contemporary photography called Vitamin Ph and contributed essays to LACMA’s groundbreaking text, Words Without Pictures. He has been included in both an Aperture anthology organized by Charlotte Cotton called Photography is Magic, which addresses a major technological shift in contemporary photographic practices, as well as the anthology entitled Both Sides of Sunset: Photographing Los Angeles.

amirzaki.net

NATALIE BALL

Natalie Ball was born and raised in Portland, Oregon. She has a Bachelor’s degree with a double major in Ethnic Studies and Art from the University of Oregon. She furthered her education in New Zealand at Massey University where she attained her Master’s degree, focusing on Indigenous contemporary art. Ball then relocated to her ancestral homelands to raise her three children. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally, including the Half Gallery,

NY; Vancouver Art Gallery, BC; Blum & Poe, LA; Portland Art Museum, OR; Gagosian, NY; Seattle Art Museum, WA; Almine Rech Gallery, FR; and SculptureCenter, NY. Natalie attained her M.F.A. degree in Painting & Printmaking at Yale School of Art in 2018. She is the recipient of the 2020 Bonnie Bronson Award, 2020 Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant, 2019 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, and the 2018 Betty Bowen Award from the Seattle Art Museum.

Natalieball.com

MARIO YBARRA JR.

Mario Ybarra Jr., is a visual and performance artist, educator, and activist who combines street culture with fine art in order to produce what he calls “contemporary art that is filtered through a Mexican-American experience in Los Angeles.” His work has been included in many group exhibitions, including *Installations Inside/Out: Armory 20th Anniversary Exhibition*, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, California; *San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*, San Juan, Puerto Rico; *Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California; and *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York (2008). He is co-founder of an artist run organization located in the Harbor area of Los Angeles, called *Slanguage Studio* (2002–present).

ISSUE EDITOR

David Peña

INTERVIEWERS

Agnese Cebere - agnesecebere.com
Nathan Alexander Ward - nathanalexanderward.info
Dana Buzzee - danabuzzee.com
Erin Langley - erinlangleyart.com
Tannon Reckling - trtrtrtrtr.net
Will Zeng - willzengis.me
Tyler Stoll - tylerstoll.gay
Noelle Herceg - noelleherceg.work
Raechel Root - raechelroot.com
Joseph Sussi
Mary Evans - maryelizabethheavans.com
Anastasiya Gutnik - sokolikart.com
Lily Wai Brennan - lilywaibrennan.com
David Peña - david-pena.com

DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY

FISK

PRINTING

Brown Printing, Inc.

EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Wendy Heldmann, School of Art + Design Program Manager
Christopher Michlig, Associate Professor

SPECIAL THANKS

Wendy Heldmann
Luisa Martínez

Published by the Center for Art Research, University of Oregon

DEPARTMENT OF ART

5232 University of Oregon
Eugene OR 97403-5232

art.uoregon.edu
fivemin.org
centerforartresearch.uoregon.edu

UNIVERSITY

Simon Starling

John Mann

Jenna Sutela

Jess Perlitz

Caroline Woolard

Fred H.C. Liang

Jillian Mayer

Laura Fritz

Hamza Walker

Glenn Adamson

Rebecca Morris

Amir Zaki

Natalie Ball

Mario Ybarra Jr.

OF

OREGON

Interviews with Artists by MFA Candidates