



FIVE MINUTES

**INTERVIEWS  
WITH ARTISTS  
BY MFA  
CANDIDATES**

2015–16

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<b>4</b>	Editor's Introduction
<b>6</b>	Scott Reeder
<b>12</b>	Enrique Chagoya
<b>18</b>	Paula Wilson
<b>22</b>	Chris Coleman
<b>26</b>	Lisa Radon
<b>30</b>	Samantha Bittman
<b>34</b>	Steven Matijcio
<b>40</b>	Anders Ruhwald
<b>46</b>	Brian Bress
<b>50</b>	Martha Rosler
<b>56</b>	Lauren Fensterstock
<b>60</b>	Karyn Olivier
<b>66</b>	Squeak Carnwath
<b>70</b>	Liz Larner
<b>74</b>	Christian Patterson
<b>78</b>	Aram Han Sifuentes
<b>82</b>	Rick Lowe
<b>88</b>	Zackary Drucker
<b>94</b>	Artist Biographies

# CONTENTS

5 Minutes was conceived in the 2014–2015 academic year as an initiative to research, engage, and share threads of discourse between University of Oregon Department of Art masters of fine art candidates, the department’s visiting artist lecture series participants, and the University community-at-large. The process gained a momentum that launched the initiative into an entirely graduate student-run fixture of the 2015–2016 academic year. As a participant in the first iteration of 5 Minutes, I aided this transition in the hopes of both continuing the interview series and of helping the series find its voice as a recurring process among students. This year, artists invited to hold studio visits with the masters of fine art candidates were added to the interview series, providing a lineup of visiting artists who presented lectures, held studio visits, or both. In expanding the conversations had with, about, and around these artists, the conversations have persisted and entered into all aspects of dialogue surrounding the Department of Art. Actively encountering the artists visiting our campus and choosing to push those encounters further has allowed the graduate students a proactive stance as well as an opportunity to more wholly engage the artists by breaking down the perceived barriers that often feel present in a lecture

## EDITOR’S

setting and can present themselves in a studio visit with someone you’ve only just met. Each of the interviews that follows was conducted in a variety of locations and recorded on a small handheld digital audio recorder by an active listener, transcribed and introduced by the interviewer, edited, and collected into this volume. The interview series would not exist without the generous advice and support of Christopher Michlig as the project transitioned to its new form, the scheduling, coordination, and expansion of the following list of interviewees provided by Wendy Heldmann, the contributions made designing this volume by Bijan Berahimi, the contributions as co-editor of Laura Hughes, and the immense time and effort placed into researching, interviewing, transcribing, and writing by the graduate students of the University of Oregon’s Department of Art.

Thank you and enjoy!

– **Chelsea Couch**, Editor in Chief

## INTRODUCTION

**FOREWORD**

As someone who started out in painting but has now branched out into sculpture, installation, and video, I am interested in Reeder's ability to bring together these different media in such a fluid and cohesive way, as concretely exemplified in *Moon Dust*. There is plentiful reference to art history in Reeder's work, yet their absurdity and playful parodies make them more accessible through subversive humor. As the first film directed by an artist known primarily for his paintings and objects, *Moon Dust* is a dystopian comedy that's also an exercise in color theory with nods to modernist painting and sculpture. Just days after NASA confirmed evidence that liquid water flowed on Mars, I had the pleasure of interviewing Reeder at the café of the University of Oregon's Jaqua Center. We sat down on Pantone 107 yellow (one of UO's institutional colors) leather mod lounge seats, surrounding in a suggested shape of an "O" an unlit four-sided gas fireplace. The carpet beneath our feet is of the same bright yellow. The retrofuturist aesthetic transported us to one of Reeder's sets for *Moon Dust*. Reeder remarked that he used the same hue of yellow carpet in his recent installation at Kavi Gupta, adding that it was surprisingly hard to find yellow carpet. Maybe they are all in Oregon.

ESTHER WENG IN  
CONVERSATION WITH**SCOTT  
REEDER**

**ESTHER WENG:** Humor and playfulness seem to be important in your work. Could you talk about the roles they play in your process and also in the experience you want to give your viewers?

**SCOTT REEDER:** I think I'm more interested in the absurd than humor. I mean, I'm definitely interested in humor as a way to get people in the door, or engage viewers who wouldn't otherwise even look at art. I mean, I've always been interested in reaching multiple audiences. But I don't know if I want everything to be funny or a joke, so I always think of absurd as a better word than funny, even though it is sometimes funny. So that's like a philosophical thing, like absurdity is—yeah, like Camus or something. I'm sort of questioning all systems of value and humor is a way of doing it. And play is important, but that's also kind of a bad word in art. But I think there's a whole history of serious play, or whimsy, or even like the Bauhaus. The social aspect is very important. With the Bauhaus school you don't think of Mies van der Rohe as funny, or Albers, or Kandisky. But I think that was an important part of

that community, that social aspect or that kind of innovation or experimentation through play. I know the parties were really important at the Bauhaus. There was one party where you had to enter with a slide. So even that was like a formal ball. Everyone had to come in through the slide—even the mayor of the town or these diplomats, so it leveled the playing field or there was a way everyone set the tone to see things through a different lens. But maybe it also depends on what aspects in my work we're talking about, because I just made this film and it's definitely kind of funny. It has some funny parts and I like it. [laughing] If I see it with an audience it's a good thing, but maybe not with my paintings. They're not all laugh out loud type of humor, and I want them to be a little more uncomfortable or disorienting.

**EW:** And with the film, it's an activity that you would do as a group, right?

**SR:** Yeah, I just screened the film in Chicago at the Museum of Contemporary Art last Saturday, and I've screened it in New York and in Marfa, Texas. I've screened it in a few

places, and also in this festival in London. But there hasn't been a lot of screenings so far, but yeah, I definitely like seeing it with an audience. It's a conventional, feature length movie with a beginning and an end, so I wouldn't wanna just show it in a room just playing on a loop or something.

**EW:** ...like in a gallery?

**SR:** Yeah, like a video. So it's definitely better to see with a group.

**EW:** In a theater setting?

**SR:** Yeah!

**EW:** Well, I actually had a couple of questions about your film *Moon Dust*. When I was reading about it, I read that it was made over the course of eleven years, and you seemed to have paid a lot of attention to color and form, so how did working on the film during this period of time influence your painting practice? And did the boundaries between the film production and paintings start to blur?

**SR:** Yeah, I'll talk about it a little bit in the lecture, but it was a whole new body of work that came directly out of the production of the film. So it took me ten or eleven years to finish it, but there'd be long periods—two or three years where I didn't do anything. So it's just sort of like if you were building a boat from scratch in your back yard [laughing] and work on it when you—but that's not an ideal way to make a movie, because the actors are aging and everything [laughing] But that's how I did it, so I kind of thought I would never finish it. But I was invited to do this

exhibition in LA at 356 Mission Road and they had this huge space and part of their mission about space is that they like to realize projects that couldn't be at other places, so longer-term, crazy things that wouldn't really fit for a commercial gallery or museum schedule. So they invited me to come and shoot these scenes that I always wanted to shoot but never had the space and time. So I built these final sets, and in doing that, building sets and taking them apart, painting and repainting them, this whole other body of work, these large-scale paintings that came out of that, they were made with paint rollers. I call them Landlord Paintings, 'cause it's like painting a wall, so there were these moments when a couple of interns were painting this wall and have four different pastel colors on it, and they didn't really know how to paint a wall. And they'd look kind of like a Clyfford Still, so one thing fed into the other. But the movie was probably influenced by my paintings too—just the color, ongoing, interesting color...

**EW:** Because it was based on the colors, right? The hierarchy of the workers?

**SR:** Yeah, it was like—I heard that Google... it's just like this thing that I've actually mentioned in other interviews and I don't research. [laughing] I still know just as much about it last time I brought it up and I totally forgot to look it up again. [laughing] So yeah, I'd heard maybe that Google has—that the colors in Google mean something, so that there's actually a pretty rigid system of hierarchy of employees in Google. It looks fun to us, but if you're a green G or whatever, it might suck. [laughing] I don't know if that's even true, though.

But I read it. I've gotta research that more. But it's that kind of system. It's like some arbitrary color hierarchy. Like in the military too, how they have different ranks.

**EW:** Will we see a sequel to *Moon Dust* any time in the future, perhaps set on Mars?

**SR:** Well, I've joked around that, instead of having a DVD extra of deleted scenes you have just a whole other movie. Because there's so much extra footage that didn't make it in. There's eighty hours of footage. I mean, a lot of it is just of people that can't act and repeating the lines until it's acceptable. But there is some amazing stuff that was shot but didn't make it in the final cut. But yeah, I have an idea of doing something with that extra footage, and then a sequel. In the movie they talk about this other resort. If Mars is the new hot spot, the moon is sorta like Daytona Beach, like no one goes anymore. [laughing] So maybe a movie about Mars or something...I don't know. I've thought about doing some kind of sequel for sure.

**EW:** Well, I would certainly be interested to see that and hopefully we won't have to wait another eleven years for it.

**SR:** [laughing] Right, right.

**EW:** You mentioned the actors improvising. Did you leave a lot of room for that? Or allowing chance during the production of the film?

**SR:** Yeah, sometimes I would just direct them. Like, this is where you're supposed to start and this is where you'll end up. They might make up how they get there. I mean,

sometimes it was written out and then sometimes we'd just keep trying stuff and write it on the fly. So refine it, and you'd end up figuring out exactly what to say but it wasn't written ahead of time so you just would keep trying things out. So sometimes it was straight improvisation where people were just totally making it up. There was a range of that. And the final product was kind of a mix of scripted and unscripted.

**EW:** And while we're on the topic of improvisation and chance—in a recent interview, your brother (painter Tyson Reeder) mentioned that you used to make a dart board where you would have different ideas for a painting and then throw the dart. In another interview, you talked about being interested in things that are made by people who don't know what they're doing and creating artificial constraints that always put you back at square one. How do you use and balance chance, risk, and control in your practice?

**SR:** I like limitations, and if there are infinite choices, you can't make a choice. Also, I'm a Libra, [laughing] so I always have extra trouble with sort of balancing the options. So I like to have rules or mess myself up somehow. Either you have to do something really fast, or you do something with limited supplies, or you let chance make some of the decision. I guess I'd always been interested in that and think that it's mysterious what ends up being interesting and it's not always the thing that's calculated or pre-conceived. And especially with painting, it seems like it's hard unless you're like Albers, or you have some really good system. I mean, I am jealous of that. Like, how much anxiety did he ever have?

I want them to

be a little more

He could be like, Oh, what about orange, orange, or orange? I mean, you know it's going to be a square. Or Agnes Martin or something. I mean, I am sort of envious of that kind of artist. But that's a limitation, too. That's a way of reeling it in, so the inventions happen in a smaller arena and there's control over it. In some of the things I've worked on with my brother collaboratively, we've done a lot of curatorial projects. So one thing was this four-color pen show, where we had sixty different artists use the little ballpoint pen that we just sent to them. That was a good example of limitations so it forced everybody to use that one tool. And some people got really good at it and ended up making more work using that pen, but it's kind of like ugly colors—but people did some really crazy stuff.

**EW:** I'm sure you received a lot of unexpected outcomes from that.

**SR:** Yeah!

**EW:** So if you had a dartboard now, what would be one of the ideas on it for a painting?

**SR:** The dartboard thing was—I used to just throw darts at words and then it'd be word combinations for titles, to generate content for what imagery I would paint. When I got here and I walked out of the airport I walked through a spider web, and then we were joking that the airport was haunted. [laughing] I mean, I've never seen a spider web at an airport. Like, usually they're pretty busy?

**EW:** This is Eugene.

**SR:** [laughing] Yeah, yeah! So that's an idea. Something about a haunted airport could be cool.

**EW:** That sounds pretty interesting. I'd like to see that when it's done. So finally, as an exhibiting artist who has worked on a number of curatorial projects and as a professor of painting and drawing, what is one thing that you would want your students to take away from your teaching? Or, what advice do you have for a young artist in art school right now?

**SR:** I mean, you mentioned risk, so I always think it's good if you think you might embarrass yourself—you're probably doing something right. So you have to take some kind of chance or chances. I think it's hard to do, I mean, the stakes are high and our world isn't nurturing, warm; do anything and there's a lot of judgment. That's all it is, is people exercising their taste and judgment, and connoisseurship. I think you just can't let that stuff mess with you. You have to do something—just the crazier the better. I know in my own career that the things that are the most embarrassing make the biggest impact. So I have this feeling like, oh this, I might have gone too far. This really is dumb. But not always. I have gone too far, but usually that's a good sign. And even if you do, that's good too. You learn from that. And the movie is a perfect example. I started it so long ago. It wasn't designed for an art context. Video cameras got better and people were making features on a consumer camera. So I was like, Oh I'll just make a feature in a couple of weeks. Just to do it to say I did it.

**EW:** But it turned into this huge project.

**SR:** But ten years later... So it's been nice that it's been well received in this art context and now it even fits. It does fit in with

everything else I've done. It's like this other thing. That was surprising. That would be an example of the most—it was embarrassing, it was hard to show the movie. Because it's, you know, Sci-Fi. I don't know. It's pretty nerdy, but it's fun. But people liked it at the MCA, so that was good. And that was extra hard because I had been talking about it for so long in Chicago.

**EW:** People had expectations.

**SR:** Yeah, people had expectations, and I think most people thought I was just lying that I was never gonna finish it.

**EW:** Well, thank you so much for taking the time to do this interview with us, and we look forward to your lecture tonight!

uncomfortable

or disorienting.

**FOREWORD**

Enrique Chagoya is an artist utilizing printmaking as a tool for remix and reexamination of cultural assumptions. His lithographs, etchings, woodcuts, and other print media work address issues of colonialism, art history, and politics. He draws on his experiences living on both sides of the Mexican border as well as spending time abroad in Europe. Enrique engages his audience on multiple levels and was very articulate about his influences when we sat down to interview him before his campus visiting artist lecture on October 15, 2015. Joe Moore and I were both familiar with his work as undergraduates and his mix of satire and critical commentary of visual culture has been influential in our own printmaking endeavors.

ANYA DIKAREVA IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# ENRIQUE CHAGOYA

**Anya Dikareva:** How do you start off your day? What is your ideal breakfast?

**Enrique Chagoya:** I usually wake up between 7:30 and 8:00. I have a couple of muffins for breakfast; they are mostly coconut flour, almond flour, and chocolate... no sugar. Coffee—I make myself a very strong latte. My wife makes a fruit salad and a smoothie with hemp protein. And that's my breakfast!

**AD:** What drives your imagery? How do you source your visual material? It seems like you have a lot of different channels.

**EC:** A lot of social context influences my work. Sometimes it is the place I live or events of the day, and I react to them. Sometimes it is a beautiful object that I want to make my own version of, such as some of my etchings after Goya. Those started after I fell in love with Goya's prints when I was a student at the San Francisco Art Institute. A history of printmaking class I took gave us access to original Goya prints

and I wanted to do my own versions of them. I was also influenced by an experience I had as a child at my dad's office. My father used to work for the central bank in the internal security department where they keep an eye on forgeries and crooks. That's maybe one of the few institutions in Mexico that cannot afford corruption because they print the money. My dad used to work with other people to catch forgers and all kinds of crooks.

**AD:** That's the mark of the ultimate printmaker—to be able to print money!

**EC:** Oh yes, not only that but his office was full of plates of forged money. His office was a museum of crime. He had a skull of a famous criminal on his desk, the Tiger of Santa Julia. This criminal was a bandit who killed a lot of cops. Everyone was really afraid of him but they got him when he was on the toilet, which made him even more famous. This became a joke; whenever somebody called you and you missed their



call, you tell them they got you like the Tiger of Santa Julia and they would know where you were. So that famous skull was on his desk. I was about ten years old and it influenced me to do look-alike things. I kind of wanted to be a forger without being a forger. When I made my first Goya print, I was amazed I could do it. I measured the original print, took notes about how long to leave it in the acid to make the lines, and studied Goya's lines. But my lines were coming very crisp and straight and his lines were shaky and beautiful. So what I did was shake my hand a little bit and then I realized his hands were shaky—he was in his sixties when he did those prints. I learned something about Goya, a little encrypted message about his etching, and felt like I was communicating with a dead artist! So far I have done about forty of those, from Los Caprichos series, the Disasters of War, and from the Proverbs.

The Codices are a similar idea. I wanted to make something that looked like a pre-Columbian object so I made ancient-looking books with pre-Columbian imagery. Because I have a lot of interest in social issues and my background before I became an artist was an economist, I mixed that idea with making look-alike things. It gets complicated eventually; I began to rethink the theories of Modernism and realized that a lot of Modernism was appropriating art from former colonies. Picasso is an example of this, he loved African masks and used them to develop his cubist style. Henry Moore was also inspired by pre-Columbian figures to develop his seated figures. The architect Frank Lloyd Wright developed his houses in Los Angeles to look like Mayan architecture. Joseph Albers did an altar based on

Mixtec-Zapotec architecture. So I thought, what would happen if the opposite took place? What if an artist from a former colony appropriated European art? So I began to take over European paintings and other things and developed something I call Reverse Modernism, or Reverse Anthropology.

This combines everything—my idea of look-alike things, putting a mirror on the history of colonialism, and on ourselves basically. Instead of pointing fingers, it's a critique of human behavior in general to which we all, one way or another, are related. It's not Us Vs Them, it's Us Vs Us. We could be our own best friends and do incredibly amazing and helpful things for others and equally in the opposite direction, we can do terrible, horrendous, criminal actions against humanity. It's a duality that humanity deals with all the time. That duality is something that informs a lot of my work.

**Joe Moore:** Are you more of a patriot or a concerned parent out for revenge?

**EC:** Neither! I'm the opposite of a nationalist, if anything. After living in both Mexico and the U.S., and also in France, I realized that people are different but also the same everywhere. The differences are great and something that could enrich our lives. Unfortunately, people see differences as a threat for the most part. Sometimes they use differences against you and it creates conflict. Very often the conflict becomes violent, which is unfortunate. Conflict is a natural thing that happens, especially in our species, which is very diverse. Different nationalities, different religions, different social classes, gender identities, languages, you name it. This diversity will naturally lead

to conflict. But resolution of conflict is what brings progress. History is an ongoing resolution of conflicts, or violence which delays resolution. So from that perspective, I don't feel like I belong to a particular country or culture even though I have two passports, two nationalities. When I was living in Paris, I was not missing Mexico, and I was not missing the whole U.S., I was missing San Francisco. Paris was a beautiful place with amazing art, amazing food, but somehow the people reminded me a little too much of the conservative Catholicism of Mexico. There was something very alienating in my interactions with the local bureaucracies, the Biblioteque Nationale, dealing with my residency permit...

**AD:** That's right, and the Biblioteque Nationale wouldn't let you look at a collection...

**EC:** Oh yes, I was writing an essay about the destruction of pre-Columbian books for the LA County Museum catalog for the 2000 exhibition titled The Road to Aztlan, which was part of the ancient indigenous migration route between southern U.S. and Mexico. I was writing about what happened to these books during the conquest. The Biblioteque Nationale has one of the three Mayan books in Europe, the Codex Paris. The other two are in Spain, the Codex Madrid, and in Germany, the Codex Dresden. So I wanted to see the Codex Paris and they told me they couldn't show it to me because the last Mexican who looked at the collection stole some pre-Columbian manuscripts from them. So I told them, search me, and they didn't get the joke. I got kind of annoyed and I told them, those books were basically smuggled out of Mexico illegally and they should be returned so people like

me could see them. And of course they didn't like that and they only let me see the microfilm which was useless. So I made my own codex, Les Aventures des Moderniste Cannibales (The Adventures of the Modernist Cannibals). It's full of French imagery with a lot of conflict happening there. That was my context and my reaction to that context.

To reiterate, I will say that I feel like I belong nowhere and everywhere. You become yourself and your circumstances, as a Spanish philosopher, Ortega Gasset, said. When you live across borders you realize, in spite of all the differences I listed, there is a human essence that is very much the same. I feel like I can identify with the good and bad everywhere. Even though we would like to think we are something like a breed apart, the world is getting so small today that maybe that's why people are reacting so strongly to the differences—they are afraid of getting to know people too much, seeing the differences as a threat rather than a commonwealth. Eventually, when people realize that they are a commonwealth, I think we will celebrate our differences more than being afraid or worried about them.

**AD:** What advice would you give to young artists today? What is the most important thing to consider?

**EC:** To ignore the art market and making a living from selling your work and focus on the rewarding aspects of making art, whatever is rewarding for you. If you can get away with doing what you like, then you are a successful artist. The market may come for help or it may be an obstacle but that does not matter. If it comes for good

I realized that

people are

reasons and you start selling your work, then that is the cherry on top of the cake but you should never make art for some other reason than art itself; everything else follows. If you become a really good artist, then people will look for you, you will have opportunities. If you focus on having big shows, being famous, having your work in every art fair and then you don't get that, you will get so frustrated you will just quit. And that's not good at all. In the other direction, if you are really happy with your work, you can withstand difficult circumstances and times and most likely you will find a way to make a living. Most artists find a way to make a living, maybe not necessarily through their artwork but maybe through other means. Maybe they become curators or teachers or entrepreneurs of artistic venues, open a gallery or if they have access to investments they might open up an art factory! Who knows! But that's not the objective. If you want to make money, you better go to a business school, get to Wall Street and maybe become a big collector of art instead.

different but also

the same everywhere.

**FOREWORD**

Paula Wilson is an art-making powerhouse. Her artworks span a range of media (nearly all of them) while still managing to come together into a cohesive whole. She's found ways to make work that is consistently surprising and increasingly dynamic. It's these aspects of her works that really intrigued me, and I was excited for the opportunity to interview her. When I met Paula, I was surprised by how friendly she was which made the interview even more enjoyable. Her outfit was particularly impressive, consisting of colorful clothes she made herself. She also wore a handcrafted wooden utility belt that carried her art-making supplies which made her seem like a superhero artist ready for battle. When preparing for this interview I was interested in writing questions that would give people an idea of Paula's unique perspective and art-making practices. Specifically, how they make decisions about materials and content, what inspires her, and so on. These are the same things that all artists struggle with at every point in their career, so I was hopeful that Paula's answers could provide some valuable insight.

ALEXANDER WURTS IN  
CONVERSATION WITH**PAULA  
WILSON**

**Alexander Wurts:** So we'll start off with an easy one. What is your ideal breakfast?

**Paula Wilson:** [laughing] My ideal breakfast is chia seed pudding made with coconut milk with almonds that have been blanched, and the skins removed, and peaches that are fresh. And mint. And maple syrup! [laughing]

**AW:** In your work you mix contemporary media with traditional media, such as stained glass and iPhones—can you talk about what those references mean for you?

**PW:** What they mean for me is what it's like to be alive today. We, you know, go to The Met and look at sculptures from antiquity and then we take a picture on our phone and then we sit at a picnic and show our friends the vase from antiquity in today's world. So it's just a reflection of what it feels like to be human in this moment.

**AW:** You utilize a wide range of materials and processes, and it seems specifically non-medium specific, so can you speak to

how you think about material processes and how you make those decisions about what materials to use?

**PW:** Yeah, I think fundamentally I respond to a collage aesthetic, akin to Romare Bearden. Until I have these disparate pieces that can come together to form a whole, that's when it feels real to me. I think that when it's only one medium it feels untrue to the kind of diversity of materiality that I see around me.

**AW:** The way you use figures and portraits in your work suggests an exploration of ideas of identity in our everyday life. Can you tell us about those ideas and how you think about them in your work?

**PW:** Well, I'm biracial—my mom's white and my dad's black. I grew up in a very diverse part of Chicago, this neighborhood called Hyde Park on the South Side. So to me, this kind of mixing and melding of perceived opposites in figuration is something that has become the norm and something that excites me to reflect back on my work.

**AW:** What advice would you give yourself when you were first starting out?

**PW:** To know that I'm never going to figure it out.

**AW:** What are you presently inspired by? Is there anything you're reading or listening to that's currently fueling your work?

**PW:** Well, I love listening to music on SoundCloud and accessing playlists where you meander and find yourself somewhere completely new. This is my first trip to the Northwest, so I'm greatly inspired by this tree that I walked by on campus that had moss growing on it, had ferns growing on it, it had this golden explosive rainbow effect that blew me away. So I'm taking that back to New Mexico with me.

**AW:** What are your plans for the future? Are there any projects you're working on that you're excited about?

**PW:** I have an art organization in New Mexico called MoMAZoZo, Museum of Modern Art Carrizozo, which is the town I live in. We are launching an Artist-in-Residency program, so that's something I'm excited about—particularly to see that this might be in print, and that students might see that and think about coming and visiting, so Momazozo.com. I'm gonna go to Detroit to check out this kind of ruin porn renaissance that's happening soon, so that should be exciting as well.

It's just a reflection of  
what it feels like to be  
human in this moment.

**FOREWORD**

Before our interview, I did some sleuthing online about Chris Coleman. His website ([digitalcoleman.com](http://digitalcoleman.com), what a good domain name!) includes a long list of projects to explore. I was impressed by the variety of work as well the interactive quality of many of the pieces. His art is beautiful, with playful moments, and is at times political. There is a definite theme of technology but also a focus on making connections with people via digital tools. I was surprised by his openness towards his ideas, process, and ways of executing each piece. He even includes links where you could download the same programs he is using. Scrolling through his site helped me generate questions about what it is like to be an artist so heavily immersed in technology. As my own work has grown more and more digital, I have wondered about how to find balance between virtual and reality. I wanted hear Chris' thoughts on that issue as well how his pieces come into being. It was a great conversation that I learned from and have often reflected back on while working in the studio.

NATALIE WOODS IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# CHRIS COLEMAN

**Natalie Woods:** What does a typical day in your studio look like?

**Chris Coleman:** My studio is a room in my house where there are lots of computers and 3D printers and soldering irons and things like that. Just to set the stage. Typically, unfortunately, ninety percent of the days are spent in front of the computer. I have one of those adjustable standing desks where half the day I'll stand up, half the day I'll sit down. Half the day I will use my right hand with the mouse, half the day I will use my left hand to prevent damage to my wrist. So it is a sort of ergonomic dance, I suppose. [laughing] But when I am really focused on my artwork it depends, because I work in so many modes. It might be a day where I'm just programming and trying to beat a problem. Or it might be a day spent 3D modeling and trying those models out on a print. Or I might be doing more animated stuff. But typically by the time I am sitting in my studio, I already know where I need to go. The actual ideas and processes are things that have come to me while I'm

working in the yard or while I'm walking to school or while I'm sitting on an airplane. That is when innovative, deep thinking happens and then the computer is when it's time to execute.

**NW:** So you get ideas elsewhere, then you come to your studio ready to work on it?

**CC:** Yeah, for me that has always been an important part of being an artist. There is never a moment where I am not thinking about the next couple of projects. No matter what I'm doing, if I'm listening to a podcast or while I'm raking the leaves in the yard, I'm constantly trying to solve and think through subtleties of the problems for the next project. By the time I'm at the computer it is too late. Either I have figured it out or I haven't. [laughing] I might test some things out and find failure and then go back out. Because when I am in front of a computer I am either working or there is the Internet, right? [laughing] And it is endless and vast and too much. So I cannot be in front of the Internet and be able to think about my work.

**NW:** I noticed that you often work with other artists. Can you talk about your experiences collaborating and how that influences your personal practice?

**CC:** For me, it has always been a pretty comfortable space. It requires first and foremost that I have a conceptual topic that is shared between the two or three or four of us. I'm not interested in, Oh you do work in this stuff, I do work in this stuff, let's do stuff together! That is terribly uninteresting. For instance, I have done stuff in the past with Michael Salter. Some of that work has been about the way we choose to live our lives and suburban settings and separation from person to person and isolation and how that allows us to think differently about everybody else because we don't feel the community ties to one another. So that was a conceptual connection that allowed us to work together and tell stories that both of us instantly understood. I think the same thing comes out in the work I do with my wife, Laleh Mehran, and several other people in the past. And then other pieces, like I have a sound designer that I like to work with, and we have done work together that is collaborative but most the time I am commissioning him to do sound design after I have completed a conceptual work.

And that collaboration, in so much that it is a collaboration, it is a delicate term there, but it's because I know that his audible results match my visual aesthetics. So I trust that I can put something in his hands and we are quickly going to be able to narrow down where he can go and where I am already going.

But I say this pretty intensely because I also do technical production work for my wife

and then I also do collaboration with my wife. And while some people may go, If you are doing half the work in both situations, what is the difference? But for me, it's that key piece of—are we trying to talk about the same thing? Or did one of us generate an idea and the other one is helping that person accomplish their idea? So when I am a technical producer, Laleh has an interesting idea, and we've discussed it. We help each other's ideas grow. But at the end of the day, it is an interest of hers that she wants to talk about. It is not an interest of mine and I don't really have any deep input as to why she is trying to execute something. It is just my job to help her execute it.

**NW:** On your website you seem really open about your process and will even have links to download software that you are using. Can you share your thoughts on open source materials and being transparent about your process?

**CC:** If you believe in what you've made and its power, then you shouldn't be afraid that by making files available to other people that somehow they're going to copy or rip you off. I'm not interested in the notion that you have to protect things. To be frank, people say it all the time, there is no such thing as an original idea. We're all ripping off of each other and culture. So to suddenly say, Now that I've done it, you can't touch it, is a pretty stupid notion to me. Now, that being said, I make my money as a professor. I don't make my money with art. And so, because I don't participate in the art market, which requires artificial limitation—I work in the digital field, anybody can copy anything, right? So the art market requires that even though I can print an infinite number, I only

make five. That is how you sell art. If I had to participate in that market, I would have to take a different stance. But because I'm a teacher, because part of what I do is share knowledge on a daily basis, having my art practice also be embedded in sharing knowledge goes hand in hand. I can't do one without the other.

**NW:** With your project W3FI you talk about how it is getting more and more difficult to lead lives separate from our virtual lives. As a digital artist and spending so much time in front of a computer, how do you find balance?

**CC:** I don't think there is a balance anymore. I think, [pausing] well let me ask you, what do you mean in terms of balance?

**NW:** Well, I am interested in what you were saying about being in your studio and switching hands and standing and sitting. So that is physical balance and taking care of yourself physically. I spend so much time in front of a computer and it is so exhausting that sometimes I have to go make physical projects that have nothing to do with the computer. So I wonder how you balance that in your art practice or how do you step away from being in your studio and balance the rest of your life?

**CC:** Ok, yeah. For me, the balance is teaching versus working on art; because other than taking an hour out of every day to do some yard work or something outside, there is nothing else. I don't play games, I don't hang out or go to bars. We maybe watch a movie once a month. But every moment that is not in school we are spending making art. And I kind of see that as why I'm successful. Because I am working all the

time. But it is also why I went into this, the beauty of being a professor and an artist, as opposed to working in an ad agency or whatever, is that part of my job is to make art. Making art is what I love and in my free time I want to do what I love. And my wife is an artist and professor too. So there is no need for, Oh it's the weekend, let's take off and do something different. No. We are both like, Yay, it's the weekend! We both get to make art! And I sit in front of my computer and plan for the next thing. It's not always healthy, but it's where we're at.

That is when innovative,  
deep thinking happens...

**FOREWORD**

I met Lisa Radon after having the pleasure of being alone with her work for a couple of hours. I knew beforehand that she was a writer but was not prepared for how strongly language permeates her work in a way that, before this interview, I would have described as poetic. After a coffee shop disappointment (they were closed), we had the conversation that follows in a booth in the dining area of a dorm whose vinyl cushions kept falling off. The setting couldn't have been further away from the space of Radon's work, but to talk to her is truly to be transported to a magical, monochromatic place where objects have a life of their own.

LEE ASAHINA IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

**LISA  
RADON**

**Lee Asahina:** When you are making a body of work, how do you decide what form it will take?

**Lisa Radon:** Oh, you have to explain that question more... Are you asking about process?

**LA:** I guess I'm asking about process or if you have an idea in mind—if you want to make it into a book or if you want to make a visual work, are those separate things?

**LR:** Okay. That's multiple questions...

**LA:** It is multiple questions.

**LR:** Well, I mean because one aspect of it is the relationship of the book to the object matrix—

**LA:** Sure.

**LR:** —and a different question is—here is a concept, how should it look?

**LA:** Yeah, I think that's the question.

**LR:** Okay. Well, it might be useful to know that I think about objects as having power, and that I think of them as little machines that do work. And so, they're kind of like these purpose-built machines that are meant to do a job—and that I don't think of them individually, I think of them as a matrix in a space. So there's a set of objects that together perform work. At the same time, that set of objects is also a poem that may have aspects of it that may be—this publication that I made, for example, it may be a text that lives on the website, and I have made a website that would be something that would work with the objects before, so I think that answers your question...

**LA:** Yeah, that's great. That's exactly what I wanted to hear about, thank you for clarifying my question for me.

Can you talk about choosing materials and the importance of cataloguing them?

**LR:** The materials are super important, and I feel like—two things, one is if we think

that an object has power then it draws a lot of its power from its material before I ever—I mean, my touch also has an aspect of charging that material, but the material in and of itself has its own power. And so when I was asking myself what materials are best for this use, going back to materials from my home place was a way that felt the most powerful to me or the most... like the most core.

**LA:** Yeah.

**LR:** So, oak—I come from a place where there are oaks, some pines but those are dying, and then there's granite, as well, and clay, so there's clay, but this Carmel stone is like—something that besides adobe, a lot of things are built with, a lot of rock structures like your fireplaces so forth would be built with this stone. And then the adobe of course is literally—most of it was made in people's yards and then made into the buildings—so anyway, it also helps me because I'm very seduced by materials, and it helps me not be profligate in my use of various materials because otherwise I think I can be quite slutty about the materials that I would use because I fall in love with them, you know?

**LA:** Yeah!

**LR:** So much! So, it's a check on Lisa's enthusiasm for materials, if that makes sense.

**LA:** That's a great way to talk about it. I need that!

**LR:** That's the dorky answer. [laughing]

**LA:** [laughing] No, that's great. Okay, poetic

is a word people seem to use a lot when describing art. What do you think makes a work of art poetic or, I guess alternatively, do you even think that's a good word to use to describe visual work?

**LR:** It's a weird thing to ask a poet that question—

**LA:** Yeah.

**LR:** —because I understand the use of that word in that context and I do use it in that context, and I think... Well, the other complication is that there are different ways to understand that word, and what we might mean is lyrical.

**LA:** Sure, yeah.

**LR:** Or, we might mean suffused with meaning and metaphor in like, really rich ways.

**LA:** Yeah.

**LR:** And so, it's hard to say. I'm not above using that word for something but I also, for my own work, think about an exhibition or this matrix of objects as a poem—it all comes out of the same impulse. I mean I feel like it's a word that's not—it's kind of like the word great...

**LA:** Yeah.

**LR:** —In that it's really multi-purpose and not very specific, and if we were allowed to have a hundred words to talk about your exhibition we might think twice about using that one because it maybe isn't pulling its weight, you know?

**LA:** Yeah

**LR:** It's actually sort of a feeling that we have when something speaks to us in a particular way. I think that's the way people most typically use poetic—if something is like, evocative, right?

**LA:** Yeah, yeah. Definitely. I always feel like it's so vague, so that's why I was curious to ask you the poet what you thought.

**LR:** Yeah, let's analyze that... [laughing]

**LA:** Yeah, let's dig in. [laughing]  
Okay, my last question is what's your favorite naturally occurring phenomenon?

**LR:** That is so hard. What is a naturally occurring phenomenon that I don't feel a strong relationship with?

**LA:** I mean that's a great answer.

**LR:** This is the farthest I've ever lived away from the ocean in my life, and I think—so I would say waves, ocean waves, because speaking of something that is ripe with metaphor, or ripe for metaphor... That is the thing, that it is—I mean we call these cliffs at our beach—we call them sand factories, right? It's taking this stone that forms over millions of years and breaking it into smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller pieces, and it falls, and then when the winter ocean comes, it recovers these larger pieces and then tumbles them smaller and smaller until they're granular, and then it settles down and starts the process again—come on, that's like, incredible! [laughing]

**LA:** Yeah, that's amazing.

**LR:** I feel also a really strong connection with waves because I think my kind of core directive or understanding about things is this idea of the plumb line and the wave, alignment and flow—so, that's like that half of it, that's fifty percent of it, that maybe you're actually lying on top of the ocean and letting the swell move you or that idea of process and recovery and redoing. Waves—I should have just said waves. Period.

**LA:** That's such a lovely way to talk about it—yeah, that's great. Thank you.

# I think about objects

# as having power.



**FOREWORD**

As an artist who is personally invested in using the optical potentials of pattern to conceal, confuse, and alter perception in paintings, I was particularly excited to interview Samantha Bittman before her lecture about her intricate, mesmerizing paintings on hand-woven textiles. We spoke about pattern, imitation, distortion, and camouflage.

SARAH MIKENIS IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# SAMANTHA BITTMAN

**Sarah Mikenis:** So I'm really fascinated by the logic behind dazzle ships, and how the ships aren't camouflaged by blending into their surroundings, but rather by the painted patterns making them impossible to perceive the ship as a whole or the direction that the ship is moving. Can you talk about the influence of camouflage, or maybe dazzle ships specifically, on your work?

**Samantha Bittman:** Yeah, I mean I think about camouflage both in terms of what you just described with the dazzle ships and the way they distort the enemy's perception because of the large black and white patterns—like if you look at the pictures of the dazzle ships the patterns are sort of like in lots of angular shapes that suggest a certain perspective or directionality that the ships might be moving in, and then in another part of the ship it might suggest another directionality. So, in terms of that particular show, Razzle Dazzle, I was thinking of that in terms of the way that the black and white patterned wallpaper was organized in relation to the architecture

of the space and how maybe the different angles of the patterning would sort of break away and interact with the, you know, the seam of the walls or the floor of the architecture and distort the viewer's understanding of themselves in relationship to the architecture of the room. I don't know that that necessarily happened, but that's what I was thinking about. I think it also was because of being surrounded on all four sides with the black and white opticality, it just made it difficult to perceive distance in a way, you know— that was kind of interesting so that's what I was thinking about for that particular show. And then I think about camouflage in a more traditional... or, in the way maybe we think of it more traditionally, where an object blends into its background just through similar patterning. I think that's very straightforward.

**SM:** Yeah. So this might be sort of a repeat question, but I will ask to see if you have anything to add to it. I was thinking about your recent exhibition Razzle Dazzle and was just wondering how you decided to

start creating wallpaper, and then also if the wallpaper was a catalyst for making decisions to hang work that engaged the space in a different way and deviated from the standard sixty-inch center line?

**SB:** Yeah, I think in a way... yeah. The wallpaper—I think of the wallpaper as an extension of the paintings in the sense that the wallpaper patterning really is the same as some of the paintings so there's a particular relationship. I think of, in some of the paintings, where the painted portions blend into the textile of the paintings—and then I guess I was thinking of that as a relationship to the paintings blending into the wallpaper as well. It was also just—the first time I did the wallpaper, a problem that I was interested in of having a discreet show of the paintings and tying them all together in a specific space. So it was also to unify the walls and yeah, the paintings, and yeah, the wallpaper patterning—and maybe I said this, but the wallpaper patterning is taken from the textiles themselves. So when I produced the wallpaper in Photoshop, I was thinking about the pixel of the Photoshop screen in relationship to the pixel of the woven textile, or the interlacings of the woven textile, and how those two things are both related in the sense that they're a storage or carrier of binary information and so in a sense they're like different manifestations in terms of medium—but in terms of information they are exactly the same. That in a way is a different kind of camouflage too; it's like a camouflage of medium through the sameness of information.

**SM:** How do you think about color in your work, specifically your use of black and white and primary colors?

**SB:** Well the use of black and white I think at first was, you know, I think I was just focusing on materials when I first started using black and white. So maybe it was a way to break down making work without the added layer of thinking about color. But also going back to the idea of camouflage, I think in order to camouflage—in some of the earlier works where there were large areas of black and white textile and then areas of black and white paint where I wanted the image of the patterning of the painted parts and the patterning of the textile to visually fuse together and make another type of patterning. The strong value contrast of black and white I think fuses the material contrast between the plastic-ness and the cotton of the textile and so it was a strategy for making those two surfaces visually more fuse together.

**SM:** What role does distortion and warping of patterns play in your work?

**SB:** Well for warping of patterns, I mean—I think the way that occurs most is taking a piece of cloth that has a pattern that in theory is rigid but it's fluid because it's cloth, and then how that interacts with essentially a two-dimensional frame or front part of a stretcher bar by wrapping the textile that sort of hardens the warp-ness and flattens it out. So I am interested in the paintings as objects and how the stretching of the textile with the pattern interacting with the hardness of the stretcher bars—so that physicality, the warped patterning, is like an indirect relation to that physicality of the object of the textile and the frame interacting with each other. What do you mean by distortion?

**SM:** I meant through the process of

stretching the weave onto the canvas there's that kind of distortion in a lot of the pieces, so it's really interesting to hear you talk about it being that kind of...

**SB:** Yeah! And I think too, like, in making textiles a lot of times textile patterns are repetitive or hard-edge in terms of like, if you read a set of instructions for making any type of textile there's a certain objectiveness to that information but then I think through the process of hand making something it softens it or it gives it a distortion or an organic feel to it so I like that combination of the hand with the hardness of the patterning.

**SM:** Okay, last question. Your paintings blur an understanding between structure, support, weave, and painted image. I was just wondering, is the idea of imitation or paint imitating the woven structure important to you?

**SB:** Sometimes. Yeah, I mean sometimes, and maybe this isn't exactly what you mean, but I'll think of the paint—I'll like copy it in paint or inverse what it is in paint and in that way it's like maybe the paint application and the plastic-ness sort of flattens out and removes the patterning and the surface of the textile away from the object of the textile and that experience we have with cloth. I suppose that's a type of imitation and it kind of negates that experience and it just becomes a picture of itself. So yeah, that would be imitation.

**SM:** Okay, that's it! Thank you so much!

**SB:** Cool, thank you guys. That was fun—that helped me warm up!

It's like a camouflage

of medium.

**FOREWORD**

Talking to artists about what they do is always a treat because you're afforded a chance to hear a unique perspective on what art is or what it can do. Speaking to Steven Matijcio, the curator at the Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati, was a particularly enlightening chance to learn about the role a curator has in looking at art from a broader perspective. Steven intuitively and fluidly makes connections between artists and ideas and is able to package what he does in a way that is accessible to diverse audiences. It's not every day that you speak to someone who knows contemporary art so well. I spoke with Steven about his role as a curator, how he sees that position, and some of the ideas behind his work.

STEPHEN NACHTIGALL IN  
CONVERSATION WITH**STEVEN  
MATIJCIO**

**Stephen Nachtigall:** I've read a bit about your curatorial process and I'm curious about how your role as a curator tries to address the rift between local and global perspectives?

**Steven Matijcio:** It's crucial that one of my first orders of business when I arrive in a new city is to do a whole series of studio visits to try to survey the landscape not only of what artists are doing and how they're working, but the general kind of zeitgeist or landscape of ideas that are being wrestled with and engaged. I draw a lot upon this idea of curatorial practice as geopolitics, but really that boils down to looking at the nuances, the idiosyncrasies, the eccentricities of place and using that as a lens for what I'm going to do with exhibition making. Really seeing that as curatorial fodder, as the bedrock with which I build exhibitions upon. Because I think it's a fallacy and a grave mistake to go in and say, I'm going to bring perspective, understanding and knowledge to this community who needs to know better. I think that you build from the

ground up and I like to channel and to challenge what's happening in a local setting. Often times to try to convene global conversations I think the group show is often times a very effective way of doing that, where you're bringing together an idea of a dinner party setting of international, national, local, and regional artists and allowing them to wrestle with similar topics but contributing all of their different perspectives. I think that that's how I try to address the local and global, to make it a much more fluid relationship, trying to break down the fortification of them.

**SN:** You were talking about bringing knowledge into communities. The second question deals with a responsibility of contemporary art to its audience and vice-versa the responsibility that the audience might have in coming to view some of the exhibitions that you put on.

**SM:** What I often talk about when I generate exhibitions or present exhibitions is that indifference is the ultimate enemy

of contemporary art. I want people to either love or to hate the shows, but I don't want them to go through and shrug their shoulders because that is not a resonant experience. A few days or a week later you'll kind of go, What did I see again?, and it won't register or resonate or reverberate. I don't want people to hate shows but if they have something like a really passionate response, that's what I want to engender and cultivate. I don't think that I would say audiences have a particular responsibility but I think there is work that is richer when you know the larger context. I'm very careful to program work that has some level of immediacy. I compare it a lot to having a relationship with another person, you have to have some level of appeal or attraction to want to know more. It has to inspire your curiosity. I think that's the danger with some programming and work is that it's too aloof, it's too distant. The people just don't want to work that hard to make the bridge because you're not sure if it's worth the investment. Whereas I think if somewhere there is a flicker, a flame, a spark, a seedling, I think that's where you can start to let the layers accumulate. I try to do that with a lot of interpretive strategies. We try to do extended labels. We often try to incorporate audio and visual material. I love to have the voice of the artist incorporated on some level of conversation. I just want to provide portholes for people to find their own footing, to offer interpretation. We don't want to be the center of the museum that says this is the definitive or authoritative knowledge or meaning of this piece and that's all you need to know. Really it's just the foothold to allow that conversation to grow.

**SN:** So working at the CAC, it seems a lot of

your projects deal with the architecture of the institution very directly. I'm wondering if you have anything to say about contemporary artists responding to architecture, or if maybe that connection can be addressed through art education.

**SM:** I've worked with some eccentric and unique spaces in the past. I think the Zaha Hadid building is an especially pronounced case. Often when you're working within those so called starchitect buildings, the voice of that architect is always present. It's the kind of degree or volume that I want to turn on the switch. I find that there's tremendous opportunity when you bring contemporary artists into the space because everyone sees it in a different way. I think that's where commissioning specific work is crucial to a more effective relationship between artist and building because I think that that's when the dialogue becomes that much more pronounced and rich. So we try to do that, to give you an example we have Do-Ho Suh coming in, this celebrated Korean-American artist. I would love to commission new work, we didn't have quite that budget but he's kind of customizing a few of his prior installations to really establish a conversation with the geometry, with the physical manifesto of what Zaha Hadid is doing. He's kind of creating this conversing point, this call and response, and so we try to do that continuously. It's incredibly enlightening and inspiring to see the way that artists are enterprising that architecture because it offers something to respond to, it's not the white cube. You can love or hate it but it will inspire a response. I think as an institution we are there to cultivate and nurture that kind of relationship.

**SN:** Being from Canada and taking part of numerous international residencies, I was wondering if you consider yourself as an outsider.

**SM:** Oh wow, that's a good question. I think it's sort of the plight and the opportunity of the contemporary art curator to be this perpetual outsider. I think it's more and more difficult for a curator to be at an institution or a place for decades. I think that you're almost forced to be this transnational citizen who continues to take their wares and pack up shop and go elsewhere. I don't want to be doing that for the rest of my life but I think that it does offer a perspective. I think that when you go away you're trying to negotiate and understand what that landscape is. There's certainly a danger of coming in and making rushes to judgment and saying, I understand this, I've been here three months, I totally get what's happening and now I will solve all your problems. There's a hubris to that kind of gesture, but I think that there can be something. I don't know exactly what that proverb is but it's like you see the forest for the trees. It's that sort of idea of standing at the side of it, and when you're in a place for too long you're too enmeshed in it. You're immersed and surrounded. Whereas I think if you're the outsider it does provide that opportunity. I look at theorists like Edward Said and that idea of the exile, sort of taking something that you are able to assess and evaluate and to hopefully find different opportunities for interpreting; I think that really that's the ultimate goal. I think that in contemporary art we can be catalysts for social-cultural awareness. Hopefully through the raising of consciousness and awareness we are able to catalyze some real change and to

improve society. But I think ultimately we are sort of thinking about philosophies and paradigms and understanding sight lines. In that way contemporary art can have an effect in the way you can capture what artists are doing and the way that they're looking at particular urban and natural contexts. Again, we just want to convene that conversation so yeah, being an outsider isn't always tough. Socially it's difficult, sometimes you feel like you've arrived at a party and you've gotten there a little too late and all the circles are established and you're kind of peeking over shoulders. So on a personal level often times it's more difficult than in a professional context.

**SN:** Last question—could you perhaps explain what your dream exhibition might be like?

**SM:** Oh man, see there's so many, I have this little black book and I sort of generate these exhibitions. Sometimes they may be completely unrealized and may sometimes never take physical form. But I will just continue to add names and experiences to these growing lists. And so I have about four or five of these shows that continue to swell and accumulate. I can think of one that has inspired me through the longest period; I'm fascinated by the idea of the manifesto, this idea of a very pronounced political statement that is meant to inspire action and that has taken a very definitive stance. This was especially prevalent in early twentieth century avant-garde movements. I studied quite a bit of Futurism and it was this movement of movements, there were about five or six manifestos that all got congealed in that movement as a whole. I'm interested in the evolution or the trajectory of the manifesto

# Indifference is

# the ultimate

and today in the twenty-first century it's almost become a caricature. It seems like there's this level of political impotence, I don't know if the manifesto still has that same currency or ability in today's society. And yet there was something with the Arab Spring where you saw this sort of ability for people to gather agency and critical mass, but then there were all of the Occupy movements which seemed like much more of a pacifist approach to political action. So that's kind of my dream show is to track the evolution of the manifesto and to look at it across a century or perhaps even longer, and to look at all the ways that artists are wrestling with political action as an artistic subject. That's the one that if I ever have my Venice Biennale, that's what I'll do, but there's a lot of other contenders that I have that continue. I like that my inspiration and research can go on and be mobile and can last within that sense, I can develop multiple exhibitions within a single timeline.

SN: Awesome, thank you.

enemy of

contemporary art.

**FOREWORD**

Mary Margaret Morgan and I met to speak with Anders Ruhwald on Thursday, November 19th, at approximately 5:15 pm. We went to the wrong place to meet Anders so it might have been more like 5:30 pm. He didn't seem to mind. All of us were confused as to what was going on. The following conversation took place at the front of a dimly lit, mostly empty auditorium

JOE MOORE IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# ANDERS RUHWALD

**Joe Moore:** I just have like five questions and I wanted to start off with something kind of lighter—I was wondering how much weight you think you could lift above your head?

**Anders Ruhwald:** [laughing] Ah, that's a good question. I think if I really pushed it, probably like sixty pounds?

**JM:** Sixty? Yeah, that's pretty good.

**AR:** I don't know—is it? I've never tried.

**JM:** I don't do that either.

**AR:** I'm not like a bench pusher or whatever.

**JM:** Yeah, me either. Sixty sounds good, though.

**AR:** That's like a bag of plaster. I think if I like really get my shit together then I could do it. [laughing]

**JM:** [laughing]

**AR:** Or somebody else, maybe. Which, I guess is not good for the question—so, whatever.

**JM:** Okay, so, I was reading a review of your work by Ezra Shales—

**AR:** Uh huh.

**JM:** He was talking about—or he described your sculptures as insignificant forms. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about your interest in the banal or the austere or the domestic?

**AR:** Yeah. A lot of what I'm interested in is about kind of making the unnoticed noticed, so I think—it's been a couple of years since I read what essay, what Ezra wrote in that essay, so at least for me it's about sort of drawing out the things that are perhaps—the things that we don't notice so much and kind of begin to kind of make work around that and kind of bring those sort of things that we just kind of go by in the everyday and not think about. So, that's

one of the things that I think about a lot, of kind of bringing—there's a writer, a French writer called Georges Perec who kind of talks about the infra-ordinary which is all the things that we don't think about in the everyday and so those are the things that I'm kind of interested in, particularly when it comes to objects, you know, just all the kind of supplementary stuff of like, you know materiality and all that kind of stuff. I'm very interested in the kind of visual coding that we have when you know—so you look at this green plastic table, right? And you kind of, even before you look at it you kind of know what it feels like, but then there are certain kind of sensory qualities that then pop out from it just by touching it, they kind of—it's a pretty hard edge here, which is probably why it's chipped there. And so on and so forth, but there's like a material kind of a vocabulary that comes with things that I think we just notice and we rarely kind of think about and so I'm interested in those kind of things and those kind of moves and what that kind of prompts in our minds and try to kind of bring that to the point of noticeability if not language.

**JM:** Cool, yeah. And that sort of leads into my next question. I guess sort of in relation, I was wondering who or what was or is your greatest influence as an artist?

**AR:** [laughing]

**JM:** ...to get into that materiality, but maybe there was an impetus for the interest in that?

**AR:** Yeah. It's so many things, right? You know, if you kind of think about what makes you make work it's—I don't know, it's like a ton of things. So kind of putting it on a

top ten is difficult. I mean I got into making art by just making pottery and that was kind of just a kind of simple act of being able to kind of make something on a wheel was pretty revolutionary to me. I started when—I'm going to be talking about that in the lecture as well, but whatever—I started when I was fourteen and, you know, being kind of pretty early in your teenage life and then suddenly having this ability to create a thing was pretty amazing, I thought. And so, I think at the root of when I make objects that simple kind of thing is still there very much so. And then, [sighing] but then in terms of what influences me, that shifts a whole lot all the time and depends really what I'm interested in at various times but what am I really kind of thinking about a lot these days? I'm thinking a lot about ideas as around legibility—and so there's a French artist who lived in Los Angeles in the seventies and the eighties called Guy De Cointet who kind of did a lot of work around object and language and performance of language and legibility and all that kind of stuff and so he would do a lot of kind of performances which were basically on language with objects, where the objects were just kind of props to prompt language that didn't make any sense. Sometimes it was a language that didn't exist even to that sort of point but in those performance you'll kind of see the actors kind of acting through, like pointing at specific language or pointing at specific objects and then they become prompts for the narrative that goes through. So I'm looking a lot at that right now; It's not my greatest influence, I guess, but it's one of the many.

**JM:** Yeah, I mean that makes total sense, I don't think that anyone really has like, this is [gestures]

**AR:** It's this and only that, right?

**JM:** Yeah.

**AR:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**JM:** So do you have any advice for us as student artists moving forward? I mean you're at Cranbrook...

**AR:** Mhm.

**JM:** ...even exiting school or something like that, what do you have as advice to focus on while we're still here?

**AR:** Yeah, I mean while you're still here it's just—do as much as you can in your studios I think is like the most important thing that you can do because it's such a luxurious time that you have right now. When you graduate I would—what I always tell my students is just keep making work. It's so simple, but it's kind of the most difficult thing. Particularly for the first three years is what I've found with the people I went to school with but also people that I've seen come through a lot of schools—that those three years if you can just keep on retaining your practice just for those three years, you most likely are gonna kind of succeed as an artist, you know? [laughing] In whatever shape or form that takes it might be that you get a Blue-Chip Gallery somewhere or it might just be that you know, you have your own practice that at some points gets recognized and might not get recognized but at least you'll have a life that revolves around that practice which is I guess what we really kind of aim for as artists, right? But what I've just seen is that it just seems as if it's—the challenges are the hardest for the

first three years but then after that, then you figure out a way to deal with your loans, you'll figure out a way to kind of deal with getting a studio or whatever you need to do to make it work, right? And finding money to make sure that you can pay for your situation, you need to make your art and all those sort of things—you know, shit then starts falling into place but those first three years are the most difficult ones and so if you can just find a way to keep on making work, whether it's from like 2:00-4:00 in the morning or whenever but something that keeps you focused on your practice because if you lose that focus or you get enticed by a job or paycheck or something else then that's when it slides if you don't do it. So, yeah, just make work. [laughing]

**JM:** Right? Yeah. That's good advice. [laughing] And then finally I wanted to end kind of light again. What's your favorite food? You can be as specific as you like.

**AR:** Oh, my favorite food is probably kimchi. I really love kimchi. I can eat as much kimchi as anybody can serve to me. Yeah, I can really eat a lot of kimchi. Kimchi and like ramen and udon, but particularly kimchi.

**JM:** Yeah.

**AR:** Yeah. [laughing]

**JM:** [laughing] Alright. Yeah, that's good.

**Mary Margaret Morgan:** Do you make your own kimchi?

**AR:** No, I haven't gotten that far yet. I'm blessed with a lot of good Korean students

that provide me with a lot.

**JM:** That's, yeah, that's a huge bonus.

**AR:** Yeah. [laughing] Exactly, yeah. Good cooks, it's important in your students.

**JM:** Yeah.

A lot of what I'm interested in is about kind of making the unnoticed noticed.



**FOREWORD**

I was looking forward to speaking with Brian Bress because he makes art that is fun to look at. His work seems to push back against medium specificity in a positive and engaging way. Brian is a very nice and successful artist. I sat down to talk to him and ask him some questions that might give some background about his personal journey into the world of art.

STEPHEN NACHTIGALL IN  
CONVERSATION WITH**BRIAN  
BRESS**

**Stephen Nachtigall:** Did you ever play any sports as a kid?

**Brian Bress:** Did I play sports as a kid? Yeah I played soccer. I played goalie. I was not very good at it. Oh, and I wrestled.

**SN:** You wrestled as well?

**BB:** Yeah, I wrestled in high school. Because you had to do a winter sport in my school and basketball was out of the question. At least in wrestling, nobody came to the wrestling matches. And I was really good at not getting pinned, so they would just put me across broad weight classes because they didn't have enough guys sometimes. So they would bump me up to heavyweight, I weighed like one hundred and sixty pounds and I would just go out there and wrestle like five guys in a row because they didn't have the right classes. Not showing up you lose a lot of points, but if you go up there and don't get pinned you lose less points, so it gave me a chance to not do as poorly. So that's the lesson: don't do as poorly.

**SN:** Okay, good lesson—good way to make it through. So did you ever want to be a cowboy or an astronaut as a kid?

**BB:** No, I was way too practical. The earliest profession I remember was wanting to be an anesthesiologist. At a very young age, like seven.

**SN:** How did you find out what they did?

**BB:** Well, I was like, I like to draw, but you need a lot of time for that. I wanted a job that I could do and then quickly go and draw. I was very practical, so I thought, what doctor takes the least amount of time? I think I saw it in a movie, the guy was like, Count back from ten, and then he left. So I was like, that guy—that's the guy. He's getting paid. And then I realized I was no good at math or science so it went downhill from there. I thought about other doctors like maybe I could be a psychiatrist but you have to be good at science for that too.

**SN:** But you figured it out—you're doing well.

**BB:** Yeah, I eventually figured out not to be a doctor.

**SN:** Okay, so about your work. Do you ever wish that other paintings would move and do things the way that yours do?

**BB:** I think that that's why mine do that. I see so many paintings and they seem like a frozen moment in time and I can imagine the before and the after to them. So it's not sort of a wish, but I do see them moving.

**SN:** Would you ever make like a feature length painting?

**BB:** I see what you mean—yeah, I would for sure. I don't see that as something that's too far off on the horizon. At a certain point there's a fine line between a groove and a rut. The thing that's working for you now might not be working for you later on. Maybe that's something to do, a challenge, something that could go off the rails. Something ripe for failure.

**SN:** You're kind of close to the cinema industry in LA right?

**BB:** I am, yeah. Absolutely. My wife works in the film industry. She's a set decorator. And I know other people that are deeply involved in that. Everything from line producers, directors and cinematographers. So it would be feasible to cobble together favors and people that could do it. The way that I would want to do it—it would happen organically, not necessarily from a script or a plan. I'd want to build it to be ad hoc. Work on it for six months and set it aside and then go back to it and make it a longer term thing. It wouldn't be made like a normal feature length thing.

**SN:** If your artwork were to be a food item, would it be more like a pizza or a salad, or maybe like an Indian buffet?

**BB:** I think I understand this question. So there's this thing in the art world—there's some work that is maybe more pleasurable or more in the realm of entertainment. More accessible like pizza maybe. And then there's other work that's conceptual and maybe drier and more—I don't know, cooler is not the right word, but the guy is like smoking a cigarette in the corner and doesn't give a shit how many people get or understand him. And that might be, not really the salad, but something else, maybe dry toast or something. I think I'll cop to the work having a more populist undertone, so it's probably more pizza than salad. I'm sure there's gotta be another food that's more... maybe it's like a... Okay never mind, I'll answer it like that, it's pizza probably. That's a deep question. You can't trick me with those seemingly simple questions, that one's loaded.

I see so many paintings  
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to them.

**FOREWORD**

Martha Rosler is a “famous person”. This identity was unearthed by a Facebook follower unaware of her life beyond the conversations they often engaged in online. This digital platform was the bridge that collapsed the distance between an artist, activist, and academic and an anonymous blue collar worker. Without pretense they often engaged in conversations surrounding her posts on her Facebook account; an account that I also follow. Aware of her many forms of activism (collage, pamphlets, billboards, art events) I could not help but think this was an artwork in itself—another form of protest and dissemination of information. I couldn’t wait to ask! Martha is such a relatable person I felt as if we could have discussed this over coffee for hours, but there was a train to catch (that she almost missed).

RACHEL WIDOMSKI IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# MARTHA ROSLE

**Rachel Widomski:** Thanks for coming, we really appreciate it.

**Martha Rosler:** My pleasure.

**RW:** It was great listening to you yesterday also.

**MR:** Thanks.

**RW:** Some of the questions I had are answered already. So, in lieu of being safe, I want to ask you a question—

**MR:** Can I take a picture, I always photograph people who interview me if possible.

**RW:** Sure.

**MR:** [photographing] I’ll do one more. [photographing] Thanks.

**RW:** Sure. One thing I’ve been thinking about a lot since your lecture last night, is culture and class as not something that is exclusively monetary, that it’s the

division—but, that there are different ways to speak to people who are coming from different perspectives and I’m wondering if you think that social media can act as a bridge that kind of collapses the division of those classes?

**MR:** Very interesting. That’s a really interesting question. Well social class is complex because it isn’t really just based on money it also has to do with your position in terms of world of work. I mean, this is really a major issue, whether you’re a professional or a laborer or a teacher a doctor an artist, these are all really basic elements of class and there is a worldview that goes along with it because of your subject position in relationship to the other classes in society but at the same time if people are willing to engage with each other where none of those things are actually visible, which is social media, I think there can be. I have an interesting experience, I have a lot of Facebook friends and there was one guy who after about a year and a half, he wrote to me recently and he said, Are you an artist

named Martha Rosler? and I said, Yes, that's who I am, and he said, I just discovered that you're a famous person. And I said, Mmm, to some people. He's actually a worker, this guy, he's a hardhat guy. I said— but it doesn't matter, and he said, Well, do you actually write your own posts? And I said, Well, of course. Though, a lot of people ask me that—I mean, art world people ask me that, which I thought, I mean, why bother? It's not—Twitter is I think where people have other people write stuff for them, but on Facebook? Well, anyways, we didn't know each other as people of different classes. And after he sort of regained his footing, he just went back to being, you know, someone who I talked with and actually had the same reaction from a woman of color who was an artist somewhere when after we'd been corresponding for a while she said, Are you that Martha Rosler? And you know I never anticipated any of this, and I think the reasons some people friend me is that they want to hear pronouncements but that's not who I am on Facebook. I'm just, you know, passionately me. And I'm also somebody who forwards articles that I know people wouldn't see otherwise. So I do think it's a place where—and then people comment because I post publicly. So I do think that one of the things that you can say about social media is that they can act to some degree as a social leveler or that is they remove the barriers to having actual conversations. The question is what happens with the rest of life. Will it actually affect people and their world view and you have to assume it, to some degree it can. So, thank you for the question.

**RW:** Thank you for the answer. I was really thinking about that because I know that we

both follow you on Facebook, and, I mean, as an artist I'm wondering is this a project that—

**MR:** Oh, that's right, Facebook! I was told by Wendy that you were interested—I forgot about that. So here we are, we've come around.

**RW:** Yeah, like a billboard would or a flier that you would hand to another person on the street that's a quick interaction or an indirect interaction and was this a purposeful thing to disseminate these articles and this information to—

**MR:** No, I'm hopeless. I'm hopeless.

**RW:** [laughing]

**Chelsea Couch:** [laughing]

**MR:** I used to do it in my family until my son and daughter-in-law said, We can't read all of that. But then I had an online group, a group or people from a former workshop that I'm still friendly with—it's like, I can't help thinking, Oh, people should see this! Or, I bet people don't know about this! Or, What do they think about this? So that's what I'm thinking. And I'm almost compulsive that way, but I'm not the only person, I have a number of other Facebook friends—a woman in England and a few other people, I have a friend who still does it in an Email group who is living in now Northern California, people who feel we have a pedagogical instinct, we feel compelled to say, Read this! You know, and also I post screaming goats— [laughing]

**RW:** [laughing]

**CC:** [laughing]

**MR:** —and imitative cats, but not a lot, it's just because I get a deep pleasure from some of these things, I get a deep pleasure from reading but also from some of the really strange things that people have posted. I actually wanted to ask people yesterday, I had this crazy impulse to say, at dinner, Did you see the thing I posted that was a GIF of Obama after The State of the Union where he threw his papers?

**RW:** [laughing] Yeah!

**MR:** It was so great, it was so well done, you know? Fuck you all!—and Michelle is just standing there... Yeah, right. It was just so beautifully done and we could all identify with that feeling of you know, pissed off but triumphant, in a way, you know? [imitating mic drop] I'm done, I'm out of here, but I won. [laughing] So, yeah, I think the thing about social media is it allows you to communicate on several channels. I have a guy I don't know who's a close Facebook friend, I've never met him, he lives in the Midwest, he teaches Film, and he is a diehard anarchist who always posts amazingly nasty things and we have really nasty arguments but I will never unfriend him and as relief he posts pictures of his poodles—his standard poodles and I used to, in the beginning, say, why are you posting your dogs? And he says, When the conversation gets too heavy I show you my dogs. Because he's trying to say, you know, I have a life and I have things where I'm not in opposition all the time, and I think that's maybe why we use these—as I was saying about, you know, animals and performative things we use to represent the different voice, the different stream in our

lives to say there's also—don't get so stuck in one mode reading political articles or the latest atrocity against women or people of color, things like that.

**RW:** Right.

**CC:** Right.

**MR:** But also scientific discoveries and things about the universe that you know, really motivate me. So, I think social media is the great bulletin board of our time and it can't be ignored. I try to ignore it, and I have many friends, even younger than me academics, and I'm shocked by how out of step they seem because they're not on Facebook—that's crazy! But it's the truth.

**RW:** Yeah. It's almost as if if you do not have an online presence you almost don't exist.

**MR:** Right. Well I never thought of it that way. But I think you're right, yes. And it's more and more getting that way, of course it may also be a way that passes but when I was teaching in the seventies at UC San Diego, I was teaching a photo class, it was a small class, maybe fifteen people and they were talking about TV. I happened not to have a TV but there was a woman in the class who was significantly older than all of us and she said, I don't have a TV, I don't have a radio, and everyone was completely horrified, how do you know what the world's about? (I had a radio.) And she said, I choose not to, and I told them they needed to respect this, that this was a choice, that she was actually into meditation and learning about herself and not being caught up in the movement of the world and of course that is what Buddhism often teaches, that you leave the turmoil

# When the conversation

# gets too heavy

behind, and that they ought to think about doing it more themselves. So, one of the things about social media is that you ought to take a vacation every once and awhile and just...

**RW:** Yeah—

**MR:** ... step back because I think you do get—one of the things about it that I think is very bad and worse about Twitter is that it magnifies nastiness and outrage and that this is not a good thing socially either for the person or for society that everybody's just boiling mad at every minute and then we see that reflected in someone like Donald Trump—

**RW:** Yeah.

**MR:** Where outrage becomes the primary form of address so I think it's good when we can use Facebook to build up communities without being vicious and exclusionary and I get very upset—it's mostly men—who say the most insane things. And every once and awhile I challenge them and say, what did you mean by this, and then they—whatever, but still, I do think that we ought to tone down the rhetoric a little. In a way, posting articles is a good way to avoid that because very few articles are really just incendiary. So, I guess I gotta go.

**RW:** I know, you do. Thank you, though, for squeezing us in, I appreciate it.

**CC:** Thank you so much!

**MR:** Well, thank you for reading my Face-book! [laughing]

**CC:** [laughing]

**RW:** [laughing] We do! It's a thing. You have a following amongst grad students, at least.

**MR:** But you see how little I post about either my work or about art. I just feel like other people can do that better and that I don't want to be a guru. I'd much rather just talk. I'm sorry to have to leave! It's nice to talk to you.

**CC:** Thank you for the opportunity!

I show

you my dogs.

**FOREWORD**

Earlier in the day before speaking with Lauren Fensterstock, I heard her lead a discussion with ceramic casting and metals casting classes. She chose an excerpt from *The Hare with Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Wall as a companion to a conversation about our relationship to objects and the human impulse to collect. It became clear hearing Lauren speak that she is as energized by history, language, and the possibility of multiple points of view as much as working through process and materials. As she began her lecture later that evening she mentioned that she had visited the University of Oregon ten years ago, and the work she'd discuss would pick up where that last lecture left off. This past decade of work saw an incredible shift to very large installations of black paper vegetation inspired by Romantic English gardens. Rachel Widomski and I had an opportunity to talk to Lauren about where this shift came from and how the work is made.

LAURA HUGHES IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# LAUREN FENSTER- STOCK

**Laura Hughes:** What role does drawing play in your practice?

**Lauren Fensterstock:** Oh, drawing is a huge part of my practice. And I think drawing was really the first art that I participated in—I think probably like most people. For me it's the way I always go back to the basics. I find a lot of my ideas come from reading and my next step is always drawing. For me it's a way to keep my hands busy and and have that kinesthetic learning that can only happen when you're making. It's a physical thinking process for me, and so I do a lot of drawing because a lot of the work that I do is ephemeral—I make a lot of large scale installations. Drawing is also a way I can have a permanent record of the work that I've done and its process, and it's also something I can sell that can move to an audience.

**LH:** And so some of your larger installations come from drawing first?

**LF:** Yeah everything, I always draw first. I don't always feel I have to execute the object the way it's been drawn, so I'm willing to sort of take some license to let the drawing be its own entity and installation can sort of veer, but I always use drawing as a sort of roadmap of what I'm going to be doing. Also because a lot of the work that I do is installation, and if I'm working with a curator they can't come to my studio which is like ten by ten square feet and see this giant two thousand square foot installation I'm about to do and so the drawing is also a way that I can communicate what's going to happen to someone.

**LH:** It seems you must spend a lot of time in your studio making components and amassing multiples. So how do you think about that kind of labor leading to something else?

**LF:** It's interesting because I have this background in jewelry, so I think I still think

of production on a kind of jewelry scale and then I just amass it. So I'm often working really in the space of a bench pin, making small units, and I'm thinking about things on that microscopic level of a jeweler in fractions of millimeters. I box things almost like a botanist, I'll make a thousand paper daisies and a thousand paper leaves and they get boxed and labeled, and then in the space of the installation when it all comes together—and it's funny when I'm making the modules I'm completely anal. Like I will agonize over the tiniest detail, but when I'm in the installation zone I'm a completely different person and I will like radically change things and rip things up and throw dirt on them and it's like a completely different artist I think in these different moments.

**LH:** When did the shift happen toward the more monochromatic work? And does color theory or some relationship to the body inform your materials?

**LF:** It's almost like a perfect storm of reasons that it all ended up being black. A lot of the current work started with my research into garden design, and I came across this object called the Claude glass which was a black convex mirror that people would use to go into the landscape and reflect scenery. So some of this body of work started with the question: What would it look like if I made a landscape viewed through this black lens? Which is a kind of historic reference of the black, but I'm also interested in the garden as a model for metaphysical reality, and so I like the sort of otherness of the black, it appears so mystical and unnatural, unfamiliar, and I love the ability of things to be reduced to form but also to slip into darkness. With a lot of my work when

you first see it it looks just like a black hole or a void or a minimalist artwork and then when you get close you realize there are all of these details and I feel like that's something that can really only happen with black. I was a teenager in the eighties, I was super goth, I was into new wave, I wore black lipstick so there's still a little bit of that in there. It's a little bit of all of those things. I like to watch vampire movies, you know?

**Rachel Widomski:** I think the black might also communicate ephemerality in a different way, it's a shadow of something that existed at one point like when you are talking about the mirrors.

**LF:** Absolutely, yeah. Like with a lot of the natural objects you understand where they are in their phase of life through the color, and so black is generally not found in nature or at least not in the objects I am looking at. I think it does allow them to be separated from a lifespan.

**LH:** I heard you say in an interview once, which I thought was really lovely, The way we view the natural world says more about us than the natural world itself. I think we've already touched on some of those ideas but could you expand on that a little bit?

**LF:** Yeah. it's interesting, my interest in nature comes not so much from being in nature or growing plants, even though I do, and I'm not so much interested in ecology, even though I am. I think my real interest is the way that nature is used as a metaphor for other human interests like understanding a metaphysical world or understanding man's role in the world and so most of my ideas about nature are much more about

culture and how we use nature to make allegories of human life. But I also feel like we are so—in our post-Renaissance reality, we always want to separate ourselves from nature and you know I would argue that this concrete building is as much a part of nature as any bird's nest and so I think our ideas of what nature is is really a human construction and in many ways sort of false.

I like to watch

vampire movies.

**FOREWORD**

I was honored with the opportunity to speak with Karyn Olivier just before she gave an artist's talk. When it was time to meet up with Karyn I found her checking out a shrub that was in bloom with a huge smile on her face. It only got better from there. In the interview, and also in the chats we were able to have around it and her lecture, I felt very connected to her strategies and concerns. My own practice, like Karyn's, brings me to use multiple mediums and aesthetics, but I felt a more generous connection from our conversation around a notion of placement. Much of my art comes from investigating my place and agency in culture and reconciling how that place resists a singularity. I won't speak for Karyn or editorialize on her statements—I will let the interview speak for itself—but I must say the notion of an expanded identity that carries through many of her statements is a notion I stand firmly in support of. Immediately after introductions, Karyn and I started laughing and joking together, before the mic went on we found a comfy couch to hold the interview, and had a genuinely friendly and good time.

**ANDREW DOUGLAS CAMPBELL  
IN CONVERSATION WITH**
**KARYN  
OLIVIER**

**Andrew Douglas Campbell:** So I guess out of the questions I've come up with—Sorry. [laughing] I should not be covering my mouth.

**Karyn Olivier:** Because you have a recorder— [covering mouth] So what I was thinking, I have this really intense thing I wanted to say to you [laughing] —Don't tell her. [pointing to recorder]

**ADC:** So you work with disparate fields and forms, right? Just in terms of imagery and sculpture and investigations and stuff.

**KO:** Right—

**ADC:** Could you speak to your relationship with that range of strategies?

**KO:** It is a funny thing, my background is not art. I went to Dartmouth, I studied psychology. And when I was young I guess I was good at art, but I was also good at math and science. And when I started doing art it was through clay and it was things you understand, like clay is bowl, it has sustenance,

you can use it to eat, you know? But then I realized that the disparate fields just come from the only things that I know, are the things that are concrete in the world, you know? I know a chair or I know a couch, I know a pair of jeans—and in that comfort—because I always feel as though I'm a fraud and I don't know this Art thing—these things that I know in the world and how they exist. I have to believe that as human beings they are going to keep on shifting, and there is still more there to uncover, or this thing that I assume could then take on a different meaning. So that can happen through a social practice piece, it can happen through an object, a discrete object, it can happen through an installation, it could happen through seeing an image and saying, Okay, I know that is a picture of a cemetery wall, but if I put it with this other thing... All of a sudden now it's totally confounded what I presumed those two things were and hope that something new, or something—something—it doesn't have to be new but, I think Audre Lorde said something about, there's not new ideas it is just new ways to feel



them, you know, the new ways for them to be felt in the world. So now if I start with the known—because I'm not one of those artists who was a kid drawing these fantastical worlds, that just wasn't my reality—I have a forty-seven year understanding of the world, but then I have to know that this can't be it. This plane is only one plane, you know? Ten years from now who knows, we won't need to use chairs. You know what I mean?

**ADC:** Yeah.

**KO:** That's kinda roundabout, I think.

**ADC:** No, it's there. And I have a couple of follow up questions, or maybe it's one question split into two lines, I don't know. Do you find that certain interests gravitate towards a corresponding mode of production? And I guess what I mean is—formal investigations lean more toward the photographs but then social inquiries take you closer to interaction spaces in your work?

**KO:** I'm wondering—I think not having that art background, when I'm stuck I used to take photographs—because everyone knows how to take a photograph—or read or try to write. But it's weird, I'm in a place now where photography is becoming a thing in the work, where before it was just a way of organizing. Okay, if I'm seeing and I'm looking at this frame, what am I framing? What am I seeing? What can I now conflate this with, to press it to do something? [pausing] I go back to the idea that we are not—I was talking to somebody in their studio, and they were saying something about the fragmented self, and I was all, Yeah, Lacan, and I get all that,

but if anything it's about our expanded identities. So sometimes it makes sense when I'm thinking about myself being from Trinidad and I grew up in Brooklyn, I have that moment when I feel as though I'm not tied to my culture. Or I go into a Caribbean store and I realize this is just about nostalgia for home, and I'm thinking, Well, what can I do to deal with that? That lead me to make this library project. I'm not tied to my culture in a way that I think I am, and if I'm feeling that way as an immigrant then I'm sure someone else is. So in a way it was to satisfy my own need. But I know I'm part of a community and that maybe I can find a way to bridge something so it made sense in that way, to do the work that way. So when I was making installation work that was coming from more literal ceramics work, saying, Okay, so this is a container, but it is not just containing food—you're eating because it reminds you of your grandmother. And the same thing is true of a room—a room is a shelter, it's safe, but it is also filled with this other psychological stuff. I don't think I'm answering your question, though. [laughing]

**ADC:** You are though, or at least like—I'm feeling it, right? [laughing]

**KO:** [laughing] It's a thing—I remember one summer I was a participant at Skowhegan and I went back as a dean for a couple of summers and I remember being really stuck, and my studio mate was Daniel Bozhkov, who is this amazing artist you guys should look up if you don't know him, and he was like, Karyn, just use what's there. Just use what's right in front of you. Why are you fussing, just use what you have, be it material, be it sound, be it air,

be it the mouse that keeps running around. You know what I mean? I think it is that mentality—I feel as though I never will know enough, I don't have that BFA in my back pocket, so now there is something here that I can use. Yeah.

**ADC:** Yeah. So that was a lot of talking about all of your art in really broad umbrella terms, right?

**KO:** Shouldn't we all be thinking about ourselves in terms of expansive identities, or having multiple publics for your work? You can have a public of one and that can be the most beautiful thing, and another work you can have a public of thousands of people seeing it and that's kinda beautiful, too. I'm not saying one is better than the other, but I think those varying publics relate to our multiple identities, our expanding identities. So hopefully it's going to be felt in the work. Some work you make very quickly or I can make it by myself because it's a scale I can handle, other things it's like—oh my god, it took three years make that project because it involved a corporation to help me make this happen. Because those things happen in different durations and different materiality or different ways of butting up against the world it has a potential to have different reaches—which will really express who you are in the end. Right?

**ADC:** Yeah!

**KO:** Yeah.

**ADC:** Yeah. I'm definitely into the space of multiple identities and simultaneous truths that are possibly contradictory, right?

**KO:** Totally, right?

**ADC:** So, the Inbound Houston project, I was drawn to those on your website. I looked through them multiple times. I'm curious what you think is being provided there.

**KO:** That project came out of being a New Yorker moving down to Houston after grad school a week before September 11th, and being inundated with billboards. It was like sky and advertisements, and they felt very innocuous. I was like, Wait a second, why am I acting like this capitalist structure is okay? It was that way in which I had to be a commuter, and I had to be driving a car, and I didn't know how to drive till I was thirty. What could I do as a gift to the commuters and a gift to myself. Can I give myself a reprieve or a respite from all these ads? I forgot your question, dammit what was your question? Damnit. [laughing]

**ADC:** [laughing] What's funny you have almost, in different words, said exactly what I have written down for the next question. I just asked you what was being provided.

**KO:** It started off for me asking—lots of artist have done things with billboards, but I'm thinking of a place where billboards exist as the status quo, just being part of the landscape. People don't see sky without billboards. So I'm thinking if I can kind of take away some of these ads, take away from the capitalist structure for one month with these thirteen ads. Or, the fact that when you are a commuter and driving and you are in a car, it is a very insular experience—you are thinking about point A to point B and you are in your own world, but what happens when you see something that

I'm not tied to my culture

shouldn't be there? And what you're seeing is a kind of nothing, in a way, and then you start to think, Oh, that's the landscape. All of a sudden you are seeing this thing, and maybe after two days you realize maybe that was not the landscape, it was not real, it was a photograph of the landscape and maybe you'll wonder, What is this thing here, and then what are my assumptions about advertising, and all that. But it was really a way to just give people something else to see, and I like that it did do that uncanny surreal thing there, it did line up, but in the end the project became more exciting on the side where you are seeing these paintings in the sky, or fragments of something else existing. I was hoping, on one level, people wouldn't notice until a couple of days before it was gone, and say, Wait, now what was that thing?, and that question about it is not being about art. I was very interesting in this project not being read as art, and then when it's gone maybe that's when it becomes more profound and poignant. When, aww now it goes back to being what it usually is. So in that thirty-day opening, that space, there's a kind of pause, a kind of public whisper, or something.

**ADC:** Yeah yeah. I didn't want to guide when I asked about that, but I did interpret it very specifically in two ways simultaneously—that it was this beautiful noise reduction, and that at the same time it was this very marked political statement. And now I wonder is that chill?

**KO:** That's it! That's it, that's it. Literally two weeks before it was to go up I had a meeting with the CBS Outdoor, the billboard company who gave me a crazy discount, and they said, We have to meet with you.

I asked why and they said, The heads are saying they're worried this is a political statement. And I'm saying, [joking voice] No, no, look at the history of the artists who work with billboards, and I'm thinking, Oh this project that I've been working on for four years is about to shut down. So I say, No, it's just expanding the space of a billboard. Yes, in one way it can be used for an advertisement, but it can also be used for this. And we got it, but yeah of course there was politics in it, but then someone can say to that, Well Karyn, you are participating in the system, because you kinda put up billboards, you did have to raise funds to pay for part of it. But I think artists should be both inside and outside the system. I mean, if we are totally outside it, what are we doing? It has to be a rubbing up, and part of that means you have to be in it a bit to figure out what needs to shift.

**ADC:** Absolutely.

in a way that

I think I am.

**FOREWORD**

Squeak Carnwath is painter. I am not a painter, but wanted to know how she thought of things I think of.

KRISTA HEINITZ IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# SQUEAK CARNWATH

**Krista Heinitz:** So I have a few questions, the first one is something that I'm interested in with my own practice and that I've seen in your work so I'm curious. How do you work with the idea of an archive?

**Squeak Carnwath:** Oh, I archive everything, I save everything.

**KH:** How do you think about an archive?

**SC:** I want to sell my archive, that much I know. [laughing] The crazy papers are part of the archives, then I have prints, that could be an archive. I have two of each. Then I have all my records, businessy stuff, tenure stuff from University, merits, letters of rec I've written. All my images are in a digital archive, a database and in books when the images are film. I think it's really good to document, I think everyone should keep track of their work, even if it means drawing a sketch of what went out if they didn't have a camera or didn't take a picture, and write a date on it. So if it gets separated, at least it can get researched. I don't

make archives, like, it's not my work. It's a kind of—my paintings are the work, the crazy papers and the other stuff that I save, those are the archives to me. And I don't keep a diary, I keep boxes of clippings and things that I've used in my paintings. I keep a couple of notebooks that are filled up with clippings, a travel notebook with little paintings in it.

**KH:** I always like a take on a fictional archive.

**SC:** No, mine is a real one. I'm not going to make a fictional one. I would love to sell my crazy paper archives because they are artworks kind of, or the print archives.

**KH:** How does time relate to the way you make your work? Thinking of your talk last night, connected to a revealing in time.

**SC:** Really? I don't think I said that. You mean the labor?

**KH:** The time that the painting is completed, it lives in the world, and there is a change?

**SC:** Oh, you mean the paintings change over time? It's a given, it ages like a skin. I think about that. I know that the things that are buried underneath the outermost surface will eventually reveal themselves as shadows. I have no sense of time when I'm in the studio. I have no sense of time anyhow; I have to check the phone or wear a watch.

**KH:** How you talk about the skin is interesting. What is your studio routine?

**SC:** I don't have a routine-routine.

**KH:** That's an answer, talk to me about it.

**SC:** I mean—I don't get up early. I go to the studio and sometimes I read the *New York Times* before working, sometimes not. It depends on what I feel I have to do or how behind I feel. Even if I don't have a deadline, if I feel things have not been moving along enough for me then I want to push them along. There's a lot of things that have to be layered, so I have to build up the paint. So I make sure I get those done. But I can be in the studio for ten to fifteen hours, it depends on what else I need to do. I have the TV on at all times with sound off. NPR on or else playing music. The TV is on in case anything happens. Painting is the routine. In case there is something pictorially I need to know, that's on the news, the TV is on and I can see that it is happening.

**KH:** I have one more question, I am unsure how you will answer it but I'm curious. Right now I'm really working with quilts, talking about them, thinking about them, making them. When I look at your paintings I think about the composition of quilts, in the blocks. I'm curious if you think about textiles?

**SC:** I don't think about textiles. I grew up on the East coast where there are Amish quilts and East Dutch quilts, barn painted quilts. Shaker stuff, the architecture is like a quilt. It's more like an agglomerate of Amish, Shaker stuff.

**KH:** It's interesting how you bring up architecture...

**SC:** If you think of shaker building with punctuation of the windows, or line pegs up. Shakers are really great. There are these women that made these song drawings or poetry. These drawings Shaker women did that were kind of meditations. They were gorgeous.

**KH:** Were they map-like?

**SC:** Map-like, quilt-like, diagrammatic...

**KH:** Do you think about maps?

**SC:** A little bit, but not in a map-map way. Do you know the Mbuti women? They are nomadic, they make these beautiful drawings that are maps where the water is, where they have been. Like little hashtag things. That kind of mapping, yeah.

**KH:** I always think of maps and the archive as these accumulations of mark, form, shape that sometimes tell specific information but sometimes it's about the disconnect of not being able to understand. Like your fragmentation of text in your paintings, bringing fragments together into new constellations.

**SC:** I'm picturing it in my mind.

**KH:** Thank you for your time!

Painting is

the routine.

**FOREWORD**

I was pleased to interview Liz Lerner because I like her use of material and color. It seems clear that she implements significant experimentation in the studio, preferring to collaborate with material rather than dictate form. I particularly like her large bent-cube sculptures like *2 As 3 And Some Too*. Her resin-coated ceramic series is beautiful and I was able to ask some in depth questions about process the following day when we had lunch together.

MANDY HAMPTON IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

**LIZ  
LARNER**

**Mandy Hampton:** How do you structure your studio days? Do you have a rhythm that works well for you?

**Liz Lerner:** Yeah, well it's changed. It's different now than it used to be because I have a young son now so it's totally different. I try to just work three days a week. It's very difficult after working all the time. I keep it pretty structured these days. It all depends on when I can get childcare. I go in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and try to spend at least eight hours.

**MH:** Do you spend a lot of that studio time experimenting with processes or planning and researching ideas?

**LL:** A large part of my practice has always been experimentation. A lot of the processes I use I don't have control over. The planning kind of gets in the way. [laughing] I mean you have to do it but I'd be in the studio experimenting.

**MH:** Your works traverse an array of

materials and forms. What is your process for selecting these, and does one usually come before the other?

**LL:** I have to say it really varies. Sometimes I'll get an idea for a kind of work that I want to do. I wanted to do the smile series and I knew that I wanted it to be cast in porcelain but I didn't know how to do that. That whole idea of a work led me to ceramics. A lot of times I'll have an idea, get the ball rolling, learn how to do something, and that takes me on. What seems to be happening now is that the work just tells me what to do next.

**MH:** Do you have a favorite process or material to work with?

**LL:** Yeah! I really love to work with ceramics and I love working with color. It's just so amazing. You know, in glaze or in epoxy.

**MH:** That leads me to my next question— How do you address color in your work?

**LL:** When I started making sculpture, there

wasn't that much color in sculpture, and when there was it was to reinforce the form. I really wanted to work with that idea. I do believe that color can make form and change form. I like to have color be an active, equal partner with form in the work.

**MH:** You've spoken to the way your art exposes the difference between the linguistic implications of what a thing is called and the inherent meaning in material—could you speak to this further?

**LL:** Yes, I think with materials there's what something's called, what something is, and then how it affects each person when we encounter it—what our histories are and what biases we might have that go along with that. All of those things can be really different and they all come into how we receive a material.

What seems to be happening now is that the work just tells me what to do next.

## FOREWORD

At the end of the year all of the biggest photography magazines start publishing their Best Photobooks of the Year articles, and in 2011 Christian Patterson was in every one of them. His book *Redheaded Peckerwood*, published by Mack in October 2011, was by far one of the most influential photography books of 2011–2012. *Redheaded Peckerwood* has sold out of three print editions and if you happen to come across one of them, please donate it to me and I will love you forever. Other than the book being incredibly successful, I was drawn to it because of Christian's unique approach to the project and the photographic book. *Redheaded Peckerwood* incorporates and references the techniques of photojournalism, forensic photography, image appropriation, reenactment and documentary landscape photography. The disturbingly beautiful narrative walks the fine line between fiction and nonfiction. It was my first introduction to a photography book that used personal documents, objects, and real crime scene evidence that allow the viewer to discover and make connections within the narrative. The way all of the visual material is edited provides cues and clues, but at the end, the myth of this tragic story is still kept.

STEPHEN MILNER IN  
CONVERSATION WITHCHRISTIAN  
PATTERSON

**Stephen Milner:** Hi Christian—Let's start off with probably one of the most challenging questions of the interview—If you were stranded on a deserted island and could only listen to one album for the rest of your lonely life, what would it be?

**Christian Patterson:** Boy that is a tough question [laughing]—Pet Sounds—probably the Beach Boys.

**SM:** At the beginning of your career you worked with William Eggleston as his archivist. What were some important things you took away from working closely with him?

**CP:** Well I definitely respect him not just as an artist, but an artist with his own vision, an artist with his own style. Someone who uncompromisingly did his own thing, he is a true artist, true embodiment of a stereotypical free-spirited eccentric artist. I think those are the most important things to mention, I just learned a lot about following your own heart, or doing what you want to do. I also learned a lot about more of

the practical side of being an artist, which he wasn't necessarily, but he has a lot of people around him who are, and there is a whole other side of being an active professional artist, there is a lot of work that comes along with that. For the lack of a better word, the business side of being an artist, that was very useful and is not easily learned unless experienced.

**SM:** Can you talk a little bit about how you became interested in the photographic book and when you started to think about your own work in the book format?

**CP:** I definitely was looking at books before I moved to Memphis. I was looking at books a long time before I decided to more seriously pursue the idea of being a better photographer and becoming an artist. The kinds of books I was looking at the time were for the most part more—perhaps a little bit more traditional, perhaps a little bit less adventurous. Books that probably functioned more like catalogues rather than conceptual books or narratives. Then I

moved to Memphis and books became the primary way I saw or experienced other artist's work, I mean yes, there were galleries and museums but it wasn't New York City. You couldn't just go out to all of these amazing galleries or museum shows and you don't have those kinds of bookstores either. So photography books became probably more of the primary ways of seeing other work at that time. I guess I always wanted to see my work in a book, I think it's something young artists, especially photographers, imagine or want or feel they need to do, or should do. But making a book is a real challenge and it takes a certain kind of work.

**SM:** In 2013 you published *Bottom of the Lake* with TBW books—can you talk about how you arrived to the 2015 version of the book?

**CP:** The books are different—I would say they both exist within the realm of more conceptual photography book but the manifestation or the realization of the TWP book is different because it has, as you were saying, as you are alluding, the second book sort of took a lot of the first book and inserted it inside the other book. The telephone book, which was the container for the second book, was always there from the very earliest point of thinking about the work. The first book was predetermined by the first publisher and with the second book I had the control and freedom of the book design.

**SM:** With *Redheaded Peckerwood*, based on the real-life murder spree of the American teenage couple—I'm curious if you set any rules for yourself when on the road photographing and also in the end when making the book, did you ever feel conflicted

dealing with such a heavy and sensitive subject/theme?

**CP:** Yeah, um—I don't know. [pausing] I guess there were certain lines I chose not to cross, either in the process of making the work... [pausing] meeting certain people, going to certain places, trespassing or breaking laws. Because a little bit of that did happen, I won't go into detail but I do try and maintain some sensitivity and respect for the tragic side of the story, the people who were involved and people who were affected by the events. [pausing] Yeah, I will get into that bit when I do my talk tonight, I will touch upon the things I saw in the archive, the things I saw or discovered myself later outside any official collection or archive that I could've used but chose not to because they were too bloody, too gory or too direct, too sensational or exploitative. Obviously this book starts with a story that is sensational and tragic but I didn't want to exploit that story, I wanted to carefully walk a line that basically investigated or treated the story much like a researcher or detective would but I didn't really try to establish or imply any guilt or innocence, despite the fact that it's a pre-existing, very well-known true crime story. There are things that allude to the tragic side of the story and I hope that comes through. It was not work that was made without empathy.

**SM:** What are you currently working on now? What is currently inspiring you?

**CP:** Inspiring me? I don't know, as time has gone on—[pausing] as I have less time for myself with work and at home, I haven't been really looking outside myself or outside my own practice, whatever it is I'm

working on I am not looking outside of that nearly as much as I use to. Part of that is the lack of time or lack of interest or need to get that inspiration. I feel like I have developed my own approach or my own path, yeah—not too sure what else to say. What am I working on now? [pausing] There's a fairly large project of both a book and exhibition that have been on the backburner for a long time and I'm finally making effort to begin to now work on, I don't know how long it will take but I suspect it could be a year or two and it's definitely starting to get into the thick of it right now where it feels good to be working on something. But it doesn't come without the anxiety of where it's headed or how long it's going to take.

**SM:** So do we get to look forward to a new book in the near future?!

**CP:** That's all relative. [laughing] I think give me a few years.

I always wanted to see

my work in a book



**FOREWORD**

Aram Han Sifuentes visited during the first real warm, sunny stretch of Spring days in Eugene. She led workshops, held studio visits, and gave a talk about her work. Aram was most recently invited to respond to Chinese and Korean textiles at the Chung Young Yang Embroidery Museum in Seoul, South Korea. She chose to do so by extending this invitation to groups of indigenous women who have their own distinct styles of embroidery at the Centro de Textiles del Mundo Maya in Chiapas, Mexico by way of workshops and exchanges. Her work often involves giving prompts to workshop-goers who are specific to a certain community, and in the presentation of the collected works individual voices emerge. I was happy to have a chance to talk with Aram about these collaborative works.

LAURA HUGHES IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

# ARAM HAN SIFUENTES

**Laura Hughes:** So I'm gonna start with an easy one. What is your favorite book or books?

**Aram Han Sifuentes:** Oh, easy! I don't know about that! Actually I've been rereading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I love that book, and actually now reading it—you know, I read it when I was in undergrad years ago but reading it now, being an educator and thinking about how it can apply to teaching—even the vocabulary I use while teaching and things like that. So that's a really really good book. In terms of fiction, *Kite Runner*, that one was really really great, I was so moved by that and I can't think of another book that has moved me so much.

**LH:** You often invite other artists to collaborate and contribute to projects, how did you come to start making collaborative works? What would you say are some important considerations to keep in mind when you are reaching out to different communities to collaborate?

**AHS:** I am a really social person. You know, it's funny because embroidery is so solitary and can be so isolating at times and I definitely still need that aspect of embroidery but in that way of working but definitely I get bored sometimes. You know it's not just about the boredom—if I ask someone to do this or engage with this prompt it's partly because of that curiosity as well and liking working with people and feeling like I learn so much, that I make my best work in those instances. That first jean project, *Amend* is the first project where I worked with other people—that really happened for practical reasons because I needed more jean cuffs you know? Going around talking to people, it was really intimidating, you know? But then really enjoying it and also seeing that these seamstresses and tailors were so open and enjoyed having someone ask them these questions about their lives. So that was really the beginning of how I started working with other collaborators.

Approaching certain groups of people, a lot of it's trial and error. I think what is

really necessary is trying to be as sensitive as possible and being in communication and having a lot of conversations with my collaborators even if it is artist collaborators. We have such different personalities, all of us, right? So just to be able to check in, How do you feel about this? Is this okay with you? Just constantly checking in. Working with non-citizens, a lot of them being undocumented, that takes a lot of sensitivity to be like, Can I take some photographs, are you guys okay with that? Can I put these photographs on the website, is that okay with you? Can I write down your name? If they are like, No, then being able to respect that as well. It wasn't that I always get it right every time, for example I remember when I first started these projects and I was going to the cleaners, seamstresses, and tailors the first couple people I talked to I was like, I'm an artist and can you donate your jean cuffs? and they were like, I'm working please leave. And then what I realized was to say, Hi, my parents own a dry cleaners and do this work in California. How long have you been doing this for?—That was a different entry, and I felt they were being so generous and I wasn't returning anything, so then I started taking my clothes to get dry cleaned. To drop something off and pay for their services, then ask, Can you save your jean cuffs? Then they were the most open and they'd say, Yes I'll save you a bag for when you pick up your dry cleaning! So I play around with how I can approach certain people and how it affects the openness to engagement.

**LH:** You engage the practice of labor in industry by mirroring it or speaking to it in your own work. How do you think about the intersections or distinctions of industrial

labor versus artistic labor?

**AHS:** It's really complicated and I think about it a lot and talk to my students about it. I don't call my practice labor. Being an immigrant I would never call it immigrant labor. That's not it! What I'm doing speaks to those practices and are in conversation with those practices and adds to the discourse, however there is a distinction between labor and leisure and being able to make art is leisure. And so it definitely does highlight my place of privilege and my ability to like spend ridiculous amounts of time sewing something, and that's my choice—it's not because I need to do that in order to feed my family and so I think it's really important to acknowledge that I'm privileged and acknowledge that I am able to make this work.

**LH:** Hearing your talk and seeing your work online it seems there is usually some text that gives some historical or cultural context for your projects, so that maybe the viewer has the experience of knowing the guidelines or prompt and then seeing the material results. Can you talk about how that information is presented when you are showing the work and how you come to those prompts?

**AHS:** Yeah, it's something I think about and experiment with a lot. I don't I have any answers or solutions to anything. It's a little difficult to make this type of work just because it is based on so much research and because of the interaction or the process of how the objects came to be made—the process is so important to the piece. That's hard to show in the final product. So then it usually is in the wall text, or hints of it at least. And as you said on my website, it's

there. However, I think that even if the viewers don't walk up to the wall text or read it on my website that's okay. I think it adds layers to the piece, however if they for example look at my Amend jean piece and are like, Oh, that's a cool sculpture! Hopefully that draws them in a step further to look at the wall text and think, That's where that came from! or There's this chart with stories. Hopefully that happens but isn't an expectation I have, or is something I think people need to know in order for them to appreciate the work. I think with the Chiapas stuff too, even from afar it's like they are really weird textiles right? I think you can kind of recognize them as being Korean or Chinese but then they are totally weird, they're not! So then I think even that kind of response is fine.

**LH:** I really love The Functional Needle project. Have you used the needles? Or do you plan to use the needles?

**AHS:** So, I experiment and play around with the needles. Some of them are really hard to use because for example one is a hole drilled into a sunflower seed—you know? [laughing] Oh no! it's a pine nut.

**LH:** [laughing] Oh my gosh.

**AHS:** Like it's tiny right! How am I gonna use this? But I have been playing around with some of them. It's interesting the way it alters my body, and how I have to relearn the tool. However, I haven't included that anywhere to be exhibited because it's not resolved yet. The cloth doesn't look that pretty. It's interesting because each one of them require a different cloth, and they also require a different thread. You know some

of them are really big, so I have to like rip a hole or really stretch out the fabric to get the needle to go through. They're more cool thinking about it conceptually than seeing it. For a while I was thinking I needed to have that fabric, and I needed to have the products of their—of me using them. But then I think it's okay not to include everything, and in them being laid out as tools without me giving that information people still see them and know they are tools and still say, Wait, how does that get used? I think that maybe more powerful and more beautiful as a gesture than showing these wonky holey fabrics. It's not to say that I may not still make a video, I'm still playing around with them but for now I'm satisfied with them as these objects.

I don't I have any

answers or solutions...

**FOREWORD**

I met with Rick Lowe on a balmy afternoon. Upon realization that we're both originally from Alabama, he and I discussed various differences between the South and elsewhere, perhaps summarized best by the homophones marionberry and Marion Barry.

MARY MARGARET MORGAN IN  
CONVERSATION WITH

**RICK  
LOWE**

**Mary Margaret Morgan:** What is your ideal breakfast?

**MMM:** Yeah. An array of ideal breakfasts. An ideal breakfast for every morning.

**Rick Lowe:** Ooo, Ideal breakfast...

**RL:** Yeah, yeah.

**MMM:** Yes.

**MMM:** Yeah. Okay, I was wondering what came first—was it finding the Row Houses in Houston or was it this interest in social sculptures or social practice, or was it just like this thing that happened?

**RL:** Oh, icebreaker question... [laughing]

**MMM:** [laughing]

**RL:** Oh man, ideal or what would I eat... I mean that's a tough question because there are like things that I would dream about eating but then there are things that I would eat. Okay, if I was dreaming about eating it would be like blueberry pancakes and, you know, some turkey bacon or sausage or something like that. And some scrambled eggs. Yeah—but then, maybe a waffle? I don't know. But that's not what I would eat. I mean I generally just eat fruit and oatmeal and stuff like that. [laughing] That becomes more ideal from a health standpoint.

**RL:** Yeah, that's always something to ponder because I'm always thinking about things historically—we always have a tendency to frame things historically from the standpoint of the idea. But, actually, so often it's like the physical stuff that shapes the idea, you know it's kind of like does the physical thing shape the idea or the thinking around it or does the thinking shape the physical thing? When we reflect back we always think, Oh, that idea that did this, but oftentimes it's like these physical things that we're making and things happen. So with Project Row Houses I think it was kind of a—it was a murky kind of thing. There was

a desire to do something but it wasn't clear what to do, and then there was this physical thing of these houses that popped up and so, I think that was a nice kind of balance of the two just naively kind of influencing each other in a very organic way.

**MMM:** Yeah. Excellent. I mean it is this thing that just kind of happens organically I guess, but I was wondering, now that it's been going on for a while and there's these other projects, how you are able to ensure that these are sustainable efforts or projects?

**RL:** Yeah, so there was an organic nature to the idea in the physical form, right? In the development of Project Row Houses, but since then—so now I have a framework that Project Row Houses has provided me with to approach things so the idea, there's always an idea that's kind of in the forefront, but generally the physical ramifications or the possibilities or potential for physical manifestations start having a huge impact and so I have these ideas of things I want to do but then there's the question about well, Is it possible to do it physically? And then what does that mean in terms of sustainability? And then there's the question of like, How important is sustainability anyway? You know and so there's like all these other things that come from—even when something physically manifests itself there are all these questions about it that question the idea because every idea, say, Oh, you want to do something that's sustainable and blah de blah, but then when it physically manifests itself then you start to get to know more about whether physical sustainability is even desired. I think in most cases you do want it but if the conditions are not right then you just have to give in to that and just

say, These are the conditions. So I had a recent project in Philadelphia that—I think it has the potential for some longer term kind of stuff, but the physical opportunities just wore out. The resources and all were just not there to be able to carry forth, so...

**MMM:** Yeah, kind of going into it, are there any criteria or things that you look for in a project or do these find you—the project in Philadelphia or wherever?

**RL:** Yeah. Well—I'm learning what to find. You know this kind of—the work that I'm doing is not... there's no history, there's no established thing, it is truly an exploration. You know, I'm learning as much as the next person. I have a lot of experience but I'm still learning. I could try to repeat the same stuff but that's not that interesting either. So I'm out trying to learn and figure things out. One of the things I have learned that I realize I have to look for is the thing that was most valuable at the beginning of Project Row Houses—someone asked me that as a question once and it had me think about this, they said, *If you had to say the most important asset in the beginning of Project Row Houses, what was it?* My first thought was like, well... you know you think of like money, resources, you know like there was, somebody gave this money to do that and it helped—but then I realized something after thinking about it. I realized that the most important asset that I had at the beginning of Project Row Houses was time. Time. I mean, I had time to be there, to just be like bullheaded, to show up when everybody, nobody else thought it could happen. You know, but I was still able to give time to it there, to be able to sustain between those gaps of aspiration, to then

those lows of like, you know, where people just have... that the solution, they don't feel like it's going to happen, until you can get back to some other point of aspiration. You know, and it was just time that was the most important thing I had. So now if you fast-forward twenty years later, I don't have that much time to devote, I don't have the same kind of time that I had twenty years ago to devote to a project. But I have a lot of experience and I have a lot of knowledge and I'm kind of networked with connection for resources. So nowadays what I try to do, what I'm trying to test out and train with is—if I'm going to work on a project in a place, to look for someone or something that has the same kind of time availability that I had twenty years ago. If there's someone, if they're gonna cut limbs off trees, and they have the time to do it and commitment to do it, then maybe I can partner with them and I can bring in my years of experience, knowledge, and we become partners and we work as partners. And so they can fulfill that most valuable important thing I think is necessary for doing the kind of work that I do—time. And then I can bring in experience—you know, so really the work has to be—I look for a good collaborator now, that's the main thing that I'm focused on now. I have to find good collaborators and people that have a commitment and time to the issue that they're talking about.

**MMM:** Yeah.

**RL:** Does that make any sense?

**MMM:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**RL:** Yeah, cause it's one of those things that I'm just playing out all the time, trying to

think about what that means and how do you get there cause I—you know, I'm working at a number of different places. There's no way I can give that kind of devotion to any particular project that I did when I started Project Row Houses. But there's always somebody in a place that is, they're as passionate and have as much time as ever.

**MMM:** Do you find that you've become, through that, a mentor to those—

**RL:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And I'm getting more into that, too, because like I said, you know, to find partners to collaborate with it's... Really the valuable thing that I bring to a partnership is my experience now, I can bring my experience and whatever kind of network—well, networks and all that kind of stuff is tied into my experience. I bring that to bear on the potential collaborator. So, for instance, I mean there's a project in Dallas (it's still going) that, there's a great young woman who's working on that and I'm able to kind of serve as a mentor, collaborator with her on the project that I kind of initiated and I brought her in, though, because she was showing the kind of—that she wanted to put the kind of time in that was necessary, so we got her in. And then also the project in Philly, although the two people that were working on it there, I mean they had the time and the commitment but I just couldn't—I couldn't pull together the other resources to do it. But it's been great working them as kind of mentors.

**MMM:** How—as these projects develop have you dealt with gentrification and people trying to move in towards the neighborhood of the Row Houses?

There's no history,

there's no established

**RL:** All roads lead to gentrification.

**MMM:** Yes.

**RL:** [laughing]

**MMM:**[laughing]

**RL:** That's just the harsh reality. Land, real estate, is a rare commodity. I mean, you're not producing any more of it and so when, as capital moves around and tries to decide where it wants to be, it will find its way—and particularly in urban areas, it is just, yeah. It's hard to push it back. Now, but the challenge, though, for the work that I do and others that are working in urban environments is to create work that highlights and shows the value of the people and the culture of places as having a value that is strong enough that we can almost kind of, that we can generate as many resources to support and sustain that as the market forces that want to gentrify coming in, so you create a nice balance or even—or creating enough awareness of value that encourages policy structures that protect it. In the same way as we do—well of course it's never set, it's always a struggle—but National Forests and that kind of stuff, you know the market would love to come in and just kind of build throughout all of it cause there's beautiful sights and that kind of stuff—but we've somehow been able to articulate the value of those places that outweigh the economic benefit of development and so that's where I think we have to head in terms of the urban context. There's somethings that are people-centered that are as valuable as things that are a natural environment. Usually the reason that the people-centered part didn't seem to have

that much importance is because usually it's poor people and poor people don't have value.

**MMM:** Yeah. Yikes. [laughing]

**RL:** [laughing] Reality. There you have it.

**MMM:** What advice would you have for young people, young artists, looking to move to these urban centers and—with the knowledge that they are adding to that problem?

**RL:** Well, you know, I think the thing is for people—we can be assets to something or we can be a liability; anybody can in any way. There are people that live in the neighborhoods that are potentially going to be gentrified who've been living there for generations and they're not assets of their community because they're not active, they don't—they're not really doing things that will help preserve the neighborhood and show its value. And then there are new people that come in that are great assets, they come in from everywhere and they're assets. So it just kind of depends on your intention and how you go in. I mean gentrification is not, it manifests itself mostly in a racial kind of context, but that's not the root of it, the root of it is generally wealth that comes in and there are wealthy people of color like there are wealthy white people and they come in and—but the question is how do people come in, do they come in with the idea that they're coming in and committing themselves to embracing the place where they are and want to be a part of, or do they come in from the standpoint of isolating themselves from the existing place and actively trying to bring more

people like themselves in, which, will, you know, snowball the kind of... the displacement. So it's about attitude. It's just about attitude. That's all I've got to say about that. [laughing]

**MMM:** Excellent, thank you!

thing, it is truly

an exploration.

## FOREWORD

I was presented with the opportunity to schedule an interview with Zackary Drucker on the day of her studio visits while Laura Hughes and I were wrapping up editing this document. It was midday on a Wednesday and most grads were in class; it was also the week our third years were installing their thesis show in Portland. I could not stand the idea of missing the opportunity to include a conversation with Zackary simply because I'd gone into this year's Five Minutes decided that I would not conduct any of the interviews but only observe, coordinate, and compile. So, immediately following a delightful, insightful, and much needed conversation in my studio, we settled in for an interview. While she was in town, Zackary introduced a screening of Warhol/Morrissey's *Women in Revolt* at the Wayward Lamb in conjunction with The Queer Productions Series. It was quite the treat to have this experience introduce a thread of interactions which transpired over the next twenty-four hours, from a studio visit and interview to lunch and then a screening of her works interwoven with an artist's talk. I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to spend time with Zackary and to include this interview as the capstone of this year's Five Minutes; I am also glad the project found ways to be receptive and transmutable.

CHELSEA COUCH IN  
CONVERSATION WITHZACKARY  
DRUCKER

**Chelsea Couch:** What is your all-time favorite film? [laughing]

**Zackary Drucker:** Oh my god... [laughing] All-time favorite...

**CC:** Or if you had to pick a top five? Is that any easier?

**ZD:** That's so tough because cinema is one of my main influences. As an adolescent I wasn't exposed to visual art but I had access to an independent video store (video rental) and independent cinemas—so I was exposed to so much film and it was really my conduit to the world outside of Syracuse, New York, where I grew up. I could name more easily my five favorite directors?

**CC:** Sure—that works!

**ZD:** I love Wong Kar-Wai, and Claire Denis, and... I'm trying to be very precise here! I love John Waters, I love Lucrecia Martel... [clearing throat] That's four, and [laughing] Béla Tarr. From all corners, I would say;

I've been influenced by all their works. But there's so many more on that list—Godard, Bergman, Hitchcock, Kurosawa, Tarkovsky... I'm trying to think of people who are making work now that I really love. And I'm trying to also think of my all-time favorite film... There's kind of wacky films that I love, *Muriel's Wedding* being one of them. I love an outsider story. [laughing] And yeah, I don't know. Antonioni, Bertolucci films are just spectacular. I wish I had more time to watch films.

**CC:** Definitely.

**ZD:** Yeah, but... my all-time favorite, god I'm just like, I'm trying to think of even my ten top favorites. I love Maya Deren for sure. You know, the reason why I'm hesitating so much is because I know that I'm leaving so many important people out, so many people who have really influenced my work—David Lynch, absolutely, Robert Altman, so many of Robert Altman's films. I'm trying to think of more contemporary... I love Lee Daniels—*Precious*, did you ever see that?

**CC:** I haven't...

**ZD:** That's such a good movie. [laughing]  
I think about that movie a lot.

**CC:** You're definitely making a nice list for me to look into!

**ZD:** Yeah, I'm trying to think of women filmmakers... Andrea Arnold's *Fish Tank* is an amazing film. Yeah, that's a start.

**CC:** Yes, thank you so much!  
So, you've stated previously, I believe in an interview from last month, that photographic imaging has always played a large role in your explorations of self throughout time and that you've always known you wanted to be an artist. I'd like to hear you speak to how your relationship to making has changed throughout time?

**ZD:** I always kind of reference my first art project as being a young person using photography to imagine myself outside of the physical constraints of being assigned male at birth, so exploring a feminine identity was always sealed by a photograph, right? So, I had this collection of photographs in a photo album that acted as an escape and a way out, a fantasy realm to be sort of free of my role in life and I think of that as the seed for the many works that I've made subsequently. Photography is my original medium, but at some point I felt as though the limits of an image were too defined and I realized that speaking—that being a human body in a room with other people disallowed an audience from objectifying me. Yeah, and so at some point I started making video, performance art, installation, and now I've entered a more public realm of,

I think, being a participant in the trans civil rights movement.

**CC:** Excellent, thank you.  
Kind of going off of that, too—how does the initial creative process differ in your varying approaches to making work, from performance to video work to even more documentary work to public work?

**ZD:** I think as an artist I've moved towards what's interesting to me in that moment and one of the things I learned at CalArts is that the idea will find a medium—the idea will dictate the medium and to have flexibility in working in various forms of media, you can maximize the potential for an idea by working across platforms. I think of transness as more than a gender identity but also a way of moving through the world, a way of being a creative person, able to navigate a constantly shifting world. As a young person I remember being bored and not having enough stimulus and I think as an adult I've really kept this pact with my younger self to constantly engage with things that are challenging me and pulling me in new directions. There's nothing static about being a human—we're infinitely transformable. I think that I always return to certain themes and certain modes of working but I'm also always looking to expand.

**CC:** Thank you. I would love to hear you speak about inter-generational sharing and the kind of role that plays in a lot of your works, specifically in recent works where you're working with your mother. And also how you might advise we work towards this evolved relationship, I believe in your own words you say, *Where honesty is the only possibility?*

**ZD:** Yeah! [laughing] I think that we're—I think that we are old, I think that our spirits are amalgamations of past spirits. And I think that there's a lot of wisdom that happens in sharing with somebody from a different generation and it can go in either direction.

**CC:** Right.

**ZD:** I think that we have a lot to learn from the younger generations and ultimately they will keep us relevant as we age and we have that same responsibility for our elders and so many survival strategies to learn from those relationships. Every generation comes along and thinks that they're doing something for the first time.

**CC:** Right. [laughing]

**ZD:** [laughing] But I don't think that's ever the case. [laughing] There's always a parallel to a past movement or a past experience and we're so interconnected. I think that beyond what we inhabit, we are a part of a genetic chain and all of the sort of character traits of our ancestors have also been passed down through us and the only way that we could be conscious of that is by having authentic relationships with people in our own family and then people in our chosen family. Yeah, it's really valuable.

**CC:** I agree. Yeah, it's great to hear you speak to that—you definitely do with your work. Thank you, that was great.

**ZD:** Yeah, I think that, you know, you can use a relationship as a springboard to making work. It creates a really rich bonding experience. We produce so much out of our

relationships and it's usually ephemeral—sometimes you're lucky to have a letter or a photograph, but to actually create work in the context of a human connection can be a microcosm for understanding in the world.

**CC:** Yes! Alright, last question. So, the JSMA erected curtains for the Relationship show and it is so troubling in that the work is very private, right? I believe the initial intention was not to share the work? But you have shared and the work has entered the public space and it feels as though that gesture is pushing it back towards private, as an act of censorship.

**ZD:** [laughing] That's very astute.

**CC:** So I'm curious to hear you speak to how that can be used as an opportunity for something positive, through conversation around that gesture.

**ZD:** Mhm. I totally support the conversation and I'm happy to inspire conversation around gender and the reality of trans bodies in our culture and entering culture. Anything that's new I think takes time for people to adjust to, and the challenge that trans bodies present is ultimately a request for our whole culture to transition with us and it dismantles our own notions of gender as these sort of reinforced—and really most of our social order is based on that as a century of feminism has taught us and illuminated for us. All of the struggles that trans people face or the struggles that women have faced through time—I think the regulating and censoring of women's bodies is something that also affects trans bodies. This is a conversation that is happening all across our country right now, so

this is not unique to JSMA, to University of Oregon, to Eugene—It's not new to me or to Rhys, we just happen to be in this particular quandary together and I totally support the dialogue, the controversy. In no way would I ever attempt to shut that down or to silence anybody's voices. I think it's totally valid, but on a personal—first of all, I think as an artist, you can't take things personally. But it's hard when you are representing yourself in this one-to-one relationship, [gesturing] and it's a photograph of your body, and you are your own worst enemy, so of course in presenting work you're—it takes a lot of courage to not self-censor. The work was never intended for a public audience and now the relationship that it's documenting is very different—Rhys and I are no longer in an intimate relationship, though we continue to collaborate and to work together on a range of other projects. That too, can feel really sensitive and vulnerable, right? You're like, exposing this really significant stage in your own life and a life that you created with somebody. Yeah, and then too, we always try to correct things that are triggering for people, so from an administrative angle I also totally get it, it's just that sometimes the solution is—opens up a new host of problems that are worse than, or more troubling than, the initial complaint. Yeah, I've been so welcomed here and especially by Jill, the director of the museum, and I can't help but feel responsible for activating this conversation. But, it's all good.

CC: Alright. Thank you so much!

The idea will dictate the medium and to have flexibility in working in various forms of media, you can maximize the potential for an idea by working across platforms.



**SCOTT REEDER**

Scott Reeder's paintings, sculptures and videos are studies in contradiction—abstract and representative, ambitious and restrained, ironic and sincere. His “pasta paintings” with their loopy variant marks reference Abstract Expressionism but are made with the elaborate alphabet of noodle types, and his text paintings, pairs of four-letter words like “Post Cats,” and “Dark Math,” channel Ed Ruscha via a lo-fi punk aesthetic. His list paintings, such as “Alternate Titles For Recent Exhibitions I've Seen,” are comical blends of topical mundanity and absurdist existentialism.

Scott Reeder is a painter, filmmaker and professor of painting and drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He currently lives and works in Detroit, Michigan. Reeder was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago in 2011 and has been included in group exhibitions at the Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; and the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art. Reeder's work is included in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; The Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta; and the Kadist Foundation, Paris.

In 2014, Reeder debuted his first feature-length film project, *Moon Dust* at Anthology Film Archive in New York. Reeder has also curated several exhibitions, including *Dark Fair* at the Swiss Institute NY, *The Early Show* at White Columns, NY and *Drunk vs. Stoned* (parts 1 &

2) at Gavin Brown's enterprise NY. Reeder is represented by Lisa Cooley in New York, NY, Kavi Gupta Gallery in Chicago, IL, and Luce Gallery in Turin, Italy.

**ENRIQUE CHAGOYA**

Enrique Chagoya is a painter, printmaker, and art practice professor at Stanford's Department of Art and Art History. Enrique Chagoya uses art to turn assumptions, both artistic and political, on their heads. Drawing from his experiences living on both sides of the U.S.–Mexico border in the late 70's, and also in Europe in the late 90's, Enrique Chagoya juxtaposes secular, popular, and religious symbols in order to address the ongoing cultural clash between the United States, Latin America and the world as well. He uses familiar pop icons to create deceptively friendly points of entry for the discussion of complex issues. Through these seemingly harmless characters, Chagoya examines the recurring subject of colonialism and oppression that continues to riddle contemporary American foreign policy.

Chagoya was born and raised in Mexico City. He earned a BFA in printmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute and a MA and a MFA at the University of California, Berkeley. Chagoya has exhibited his work nationally and internationally for over two decades with a major retrospective organized by the Des Moines Art Center in Iowa in 2007 that traveled to UC Berkeley Art Museum and to the Palms Spring Art Museum in 2008. In 2013, a major survey of his work opened in Centro Museum ARTIUM in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain that travelled to the Centro Atlantico de Arte

Moderno in the Canary Islands in 2015. In 2014, he opened a print retrospective at the Elaine L. Jacob Gallery at Wayne State University in Detroit and in 2015, a print survey opened at the Instituto de Artes Graficas de Oaxaca in Oaxaca City, Mexico.

His work is in many public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco among others. He has been recipient of numerous awards including two NEA artists' fellowships, the National Academy of Arts and Letters in New York, residencies at Giverny and Cite Internationale des Arts in France, and a Tiffany fellowship. He is represented by Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco, George Adams Gallery in New York, and Lisa Sette Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona. His prints are published in California by Electric Works in San Francisco, Magnolia Editions in Oakland, and Trillium press in Brisbane, Made in California in Oakland, and Smith Andersen Editions in Palo Alto, and also in ULAE in Bay Shore, New York, Shark's Ink in Lyons, Colorado, and Segura Publishing in Pueblo, Arizona.

**PAULA WILSON**

Paula Wilson's work blends multimedia and multicultural references in creating extravagant paintings, prints, videos, and sculptures that are simultaneously realistic and unworldly. The dense layering of color, image, pattern, and material in her pieces act as a visual metaphor for the complex stratum of histories and

cultures that inform the work. With a style characterized by narrative, bold color, and silhouette, the work often depicts interactions between female figures and lush, highly detailed scenes of nature. Interweaving corporeal forms and patterns of bright color with literal and figurative reference to stained-glass windows and fabrics, Wilson's work uses decorative motifs to great effect exploring both the nature of femininity as construct and the visual markers of identity.

Paula Wilson received a MFA from Columbia University in 2005 and has since been featured in group and solo exhibitions in the United States and Europe, including the Studio Museum in Harlem, Sikkema Jenkins & Co., Bellwether Gallery, Fred Snitzer Gallery, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Center for Contemporary Art Santa Fe, Johan Berggren Gallery in Sweden, and Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw. Wilson is a recipient of numerous grants and awards including a Joan Mitchell Artist Grant, Art Production Fund's P3Studio Artist-in-Residency at the Cosmopolitan in Las Vegas, and the Bob and Happy Doran Fellowship at Yale University. She lives and works in Carrizozo, New Mexico.

**CHRIS COLEMAN**

“I believe in using art to create disruptions from daily life. Sometimes these disruptions are subtle, and sometimes enveloping. My art is always looking outward, unearthing the problematic and seeking possible pathways for positive forward movement. The question becomes how do I apply my digital media creation,

**ARTIST****BIOGRAPHIES**

creative coding, mechanical engineering, and sculptural skills towards answering challenges we face? How do the outcomes interrogate big picture perspectives and offer ways forward that are on some level practical? These are the challenges of the Critical Arts Engineer. The Critical Arts Engineer must have a deep understanding of many technological tools and methods of making, combined with a very critical look at what those tools offer, how they shape what is produced, and how they convey particular concepts; the concepts themselves being critical looks at our world in structural, political, and systemic terms.”

- Chris Coleman

Chris Coleman was born in West Virginia, and he received a MFA from SUNY Buffalo, New York. His work includes sculptures, videos, creative coding, and interactive installations. Coleman has had his work in exhibitions and festivals in more than 20 countries including Brazil, Argentina, Singapore, Finland, the U.A.E., Italy, Germany, France, China, the UK, Latvia, and across North America. His open source software project developed with Ali Momeni, called Maxuino, has been downloaded more than 50,000 times by users in over 120 countries and is used globally in physical computing classrooms. He currently resides in Denver, Colorado and is an Associate Professor and the Director of Emergent Digital Practices at the University of Denver.

#### LISA RADON

Lisa Radon has made some books including *The Blind Remembrance of the Swirling Bone*, (*Ditch Projects/Artspeak*,

2015), *Infinity Increaser* (PICA, 2015), *The Plumb and The Wave* (*Pied-à-terre*, 2014), *Prototyping Eutopias* (2013), and *The Book of Knots* (*c\_L*, 2013). She has made solo exhibitions at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, *Pied-à-terre* (San Francisco), *Ditch Projects* (Springfield, OR), *Artspeak* (Vancouver, B.C.), and was included in *Six Weeks* at the Henry Art Gallery (Seattle). In 2016, she will make a two-woman exhibition at RONGWRONG (Amsterdam), a collaborative piece for a group show at Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium (Finland), and a solo exhibition at Jupiter Woods (London). She publishes the journal EIGHTS.

#### SAMANTHA BITTMAN

In her paintings on hand-woven textile, Bittman exploits the limitations of the basic floor loom. By designing and executing weave drafts that consist of simple sets of numerically based instructions, she generates woven cloth whereby the architecture of the weave interlacements and the graphics of the cloth are one in the same. Once stretched over traditional painting stretcher bars, the textile patterns, which often become distorted by the act of stretching, direct and dictate the painted surface. These moves are both intuitive and logical. In several works, the weave graphics are replicated precisely in paint, negating the materiality of the textile in favor of the pictorial aspects of the cloth. In other instances, selectively painted areas merge with their underlying textile support, further flattening the picture plane and perceptually disorienting the viewer.

Samantha Bittman lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. She received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2004 and a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010 and also attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2011. Recent solo exhibitions include *Razzle Dazzle* at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, IL; *Number Cruncher* at Longhouse Projects, New York, NY; and *Soft Counting*, at Greenpoint Terminal, Brooklyn, NY. Bittman has been included in recent group exhibitions at Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY; David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL; Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA; and Paris London Hong Kong, Chicago, IL. She is currently on faculty at the Rhode Island School of Design.

#### STEVEN MATIJCIO

Steven Matijcio is the curator of the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Prior to this position he served as Curator of Contemporary Art at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Matijcio received a MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York, and a HBA from the University of Toronto. He has held positions in a number of important galleries and museums including the Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the National Gallery of Canada.

Matijcio was honored in 2010 with a prestigious Emily Hall Tremaine Exhibition Award for his project *paperless*. In the summer of 2011 he was chosen from an international pool of candidates

to participate in curatorial residencies in Gwangju, South Korea as part of the Gwangju Design Biennale and Berlin, Germany as part of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt's SYNAPSE project exploring the relationship between art & science. In the fall of 2012, he curated the 4th edition of the Narracje Festival in Gdansk, Poland, which involved a citywide program of installations, interventions, and video projections upon historic buildings. Matijcio's 2013 essay "Nothing to See Here: The Denial of Vision in Media Art" was accepted into the RENEW: Media Art Histories Conference in Riga, Latvia.

Matijcio has also lectured on theory and criticism at the University of Manitoba, written for numerous catalogs and journals including the *Guide to the 27th Sao Paulo Bienal*, and was commissioned in 2003 by the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to curate one of their first online exhibitions. He has recently sat on juries for the Tremaine Foundation, School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the McKnight Fellowships in Minneapolis.

#### ANDERS RUHWALD

Anders Ruhwald is one of the foremost ceramic artists working in the world today. Noted for large-scale installations that explore ceramic as both idea and material, he brushes aside the distinction between 'art' and 'craft', emphasizing instead the disruptive and transformative capacity of objects in space. As the Director of New York's Museum of Arts and Design Glenn Adamson has stated: "For all their compressed particularity, [his] sculptures are also enlivened by inexhaustible nuance."

Ruhwald takes seriously the idea that surface is where form interfaces with spatial context, so his surfaces have an intensity in all registers.”

Anders Ruhwald is Artist-in-Residence and Head of Department at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He graduated from the Royal College of Art in London in 2005. Solo exhibitions include “The Anatomy of a Home” at The Saarinen House in Michigan, “You in Between” at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art in the United Kingdom, and more than 25 gallery and museum solo shows in New York, London, Paris, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Chicago, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Brussels as well as more than 100 group-exhibitions around the world. His work is represented in over 20 public collections internationally including The Victoria and Albert Museum, United Kingdom, Musée des Arts décoratifs, France; The Denver Art Museum, The Detroit Institute of Art, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Icheon World Ceramic Center, Republic of South Korea; The British Crafts Council and The National Museum, Sweden. In 2011, he was awarded the Gold Prize at the Icheon International Ceramics Biennale in South Korea, in 2010 he received a Danish Art Foundation three-year work-stipend, and in 2007 he received the Sotheby’s Prize, United Kingdom. His work has been reviewed in major publications including the Guardian, Wallpaper, Artforum.com, Sculpture Magazine, and Avenuel. Ruhwald has lectured and taught at universities and colleges around Europe and North America and has held an associate professorship at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## BRIAN BRESS

Brian Bress, a Los Angeles-based artist and filmmaker, creates absurd, circularly narrative films driven by the circumstances of a bizarre cast of ridiculously costumed characters, more often than not played by Bress himself. Though they rely predominantly on homemade props and costumes, Bress’ videos are visually innovative and their inherent silliness and rambling pace only serve to intensify the examination of assumptions about the nature of reality. He is also known for his collage-like portraits that feature costumed actors wearing strange masks that obscure their faces. By disguising the identities of the sitters, Bress heightens the level of uncertainty in the work to humorous levels.

Brian received a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and a MFA from University of California, Los Angeles. His collages, photographs, videos, and paintings have been exhibited in various group shows and film festivals in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, including Spike and Mike’s Festival of Animation, Black Maria Film Festival, New York Director’s Club Biennial, and The LA Weekly Biennial. Current and upcoming solo exhibitions include a ten-year retrospective at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver in 2016. Bress has recently had solo exhibitions and projects at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, Museo d’arte contemporanea, Rome, Italy, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA, and New Museum, New York, NY. Brian is represented by Cherry and Martin.

## MARTHA ROSLER

Martha Rosler is an artist, theorist, and educator as well as a leading contemporary critical voice within feminist and art discourses. Rosler’s work encompasses photography, video, installation, photomontage, and performance as well as commentaries on art—especially on documentary photography—and culture. She was born in Brooklyn, New York, USA, where she lives and works.

Rosler’s work has been shown internationally for many years and in 1999-2001 was the subject of a retrospective, “Positions in the Life World,” at five European and two American museums. A more recent survey show was held at the Galleria d’Arte Moderna in Torino. Her collection of over seven thousand books toured internationally as the Martha Rosler Library. Rosler has been the recipient of a number of national and international awards, most recently The New Foundation Seattle’s inaugural lifetime achievement award.

Rosler has also published over fifteen books of her works and essays exploring the role of photography and art, public space, and transportation, as well as public housing and homelessness. Her essays have been collected as *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001*. Her most recent book is *Culture Class*, published in 2013 by e-flux and Sternberg Press (Berlin), which includes an extended essay on the role of artists in processes of gentrification.

Her widely seen video work *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), reflecting her

longstanding interest in the position of the female subject within patriarchy, uses humor in this parody of cooking shows to address the implications of traditional female roles. Other videos cover the geopolitics of food, mass-media imagery and language, war and torture, and domestic life.

Her groundbreaking work *The Bowery* in two inadequate descriptive systems (1974/75), in which photographs of storefronts are paired with metaphors for drunks and drunkenness, questions the social meaning of documentary essays centered on poor and destitute people.

Rosler is well known for her photomontages combining news photography with depictions of ideal homes and perfect bodies, producing a single frame as a way of highlighting the false disconnection between two public discourses. In the series “Body Beautiful, or Beauty Knows No Pain,” made between 1965 and 1972, Rosler deconstructs commercial representations of women and families in mass circulation magazines—for example, by augmenting images of lingerie models with snippets of pornographic imagery, whether from soft-core or hard-core sources. In “House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home (1967–72)”, a series of works produced at the peak of the Vietnam War, Rosler combined images of Vietnamese civilians and U.S. soldiers with those of pristine dwellings. These works remained outside the art context for many years, as Rosler distributed them as photocopies among the anti-war community as well as publishing them in “underground” periodicals. She reopened this series in 2004 and 2008, pointedly using the same form to draw a parallel

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between the Iraq and Afghanistan military adventures, begun by President Bush and his allies, and the dismal catastrophe of Vietnam begun four decades earlier.

Some of her best-known works deal with the geopolitical dilemmas of dispossession and entitlement. Interested in places of passage, she has produced photographic series on roads and shop windows, and large-scale installations about airports. “If You Lived Here” is her highly influential cycle of three shows and four public forums on housing, homelessness, and the built environment, held in New York in 1989 and reprised many times in various forms over the years. The accompanying book, in print since 1990, is in wide use as a textbook for architecture students.

#### LAUREN FENSTERSTOCK

Lauren Fensterstock is an artist, writer, and curator based in Portland, Maine. Her work is held in private and public collections in the US, Europe, and Asia and has been the subject of numerous exhibitions including recent shows at The John Michael Kohler Art Center, The Contemporary Austin, The Pearlstein Gallery at Drexel University, and The Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Outside the studio, Fensterstock currently serves as a Critic at the Rhode Island School of Design. She previously served as Academic Program Director of the Interdisciplinary MFA in Studio Arts at Maine College of Art and as Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art. Her curatorial projects and published writings have been featured internationally.

Fensterstock received a BFA from the Parsons School of Design and a MFA from SUNY New Paltz.

#### KARYN OLIVIER

Karyn Olivier, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago, received a MFA at Cranbrook Academy of Art and a BA at Dartmouth College. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at the Gwangju and Busan Biennials, Korea, World Festival of Black Arts and Culture, Dakar, Senegal, the Wanas Foundation, Sweden, The Studio Museum, Harlem, The Whitney Museum of Art, New York, MoMA P.S.1, Long Island City, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, The Mattress Factory and Sculpture Center, Pittsburgh. In 2015 Olivier was commissioned to create public works for Creative Time in Central Park, New York and NYC’s Percent for Art Program. She is the recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, the New York Foundation for the Arts Award, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, the William H. Johnson Prize, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, and a Creative Capital Foundation grant. Olivier is currently an associate professor of sculpture at Tyler School of Art.

#### SQUEAK CARNWATH

“My paintings and prints draw upon the philosophical and mundane experiences of daily life to form lush fields of color combined with text, patterns, and identifiable images. My vocabulary is a personal one,

but one that is accessible to a wide range of people. I am interested in our collective and individual responses to representation and memory. They also act as a record of my daily struggles, fears, and moments of clarity.”

- Squeak Carnwath

Leah Levy wrote in Squeak Carnwath: Transformations, in Lists, Observations, & Counting—“The subjects of Carnwath’s works are the simple intimacies and subtle intricacies of life: modest objects that portend significance; the interrelationships of humans and other living beings; emotions and perceptions; and the element of time itself. In its exploration, Carnwath’s art emphasizes the way our lives are organized in and about the daily minutia that tend to echo a broader envisioning of space and time.”

Squeak has received numerous awards including the Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art Award from San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, two Individual Artist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Award for Individual Artists from the Flintridge Foundation. Carnwath is Professor Emerita at the University of California, Berkeley. Publications featuring Carnwath’s work include: Squeak Carnwath: Lists, Observations, & Counting (1996), Squeak Carnwath: Painting is no Ordinary Object (2009), and Horizons on Fire: Works on Paper 1979–2013 (2014). Carnwath is a founding member and current president of the Artists’ Legacy Foundation. She lives and works in Oakland, CA.

#### LIZ LARNER

“I began showing my work in 1985 and have always been interested in the meaning inherent in materials, as well as the linguistic implications of what something is called, which my art has often exposed the difference between. I am currently using more traditional art materials like paper, ceramics, paint, and wood but have also, and continue to use landscape materials bacteria and more contemporary means of fracture like digital modeling and production. I feel the material is often the message, but the message is configured by form. Color has been an important aspect of what I do, and have done, and I use it to basically destabilize, dematerialize, and question the validity of the symbolic and semiotic aspects of my art. I am a female artist and my work reflects this.”

- Liz Lerner

Liz Lerner received a BFA from the CalArts in 1985. She lives and works in Los Angeles. Lerner has been the subject of numerous solo museum exhibitions, including a forthcoming exhibition at the Aspen Art Museum, 2015, the Art Institute of Chicago, 2015, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2001–02, the Museum of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria, 1998, and Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland, 1997. She has been commissioned for multiple public artworks including the Byron G. Rogers Federal Building and Courthouse Plaza, Denver, 2015, University of California, San Francisco, Mission Bay Project, 2003, and the Riverside Pedestrian Bridge at Walt Disney Studios, Burbank, 2000. She has been the recipient of multiple awards including the Nancy

Graves Foundation Grant, 2014, Smithsonian American Art Museum Lucelia Artist Award, 2002, and the Guggenheim Fellowship, 1999. Larner is represented by Regen Projects in Los Angeles, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York, the Modern Institute in Glasgow, Scotland and Max Hetzler Gallery in Berlin.

### CHRISTIAN PATTERSON

Christian Patterson was born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and lives in New York, New York. Photographs are the heart of his work and are sometimes accompanied by drawings, paintings, or objects. His work “Redheaded Peckerwood” was published by MACK in 2011 to critical acclaim, won the 2012 Recontres d’Arles Author Book Award and is now in its third printing. In 2013, he was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. In 2015 Walther König will publish his work Bottom of the Lake. Patterson is self-taught but lectures widely about his work. He is represented by Rose Gallery in Santa Monica and Robert Morat in Hamburg and Berlin.

### ARAM HAN SIFUENTES

Aram Han Sifuentes considers the complex impact of globalization and how it speaks through the end of the needle in the hands of immigrant laborers in and outside the garment industry, and artisans active in living textile traditions around the world. Aram Han Sifuentes learned how to sew when she was six years old from her seamstress mother. Han Sifuentes was born in Seoul, South Korea and immigrated to Modesto, California as a child. She mines

from her family’s immigration experience to address issues of labor and explores identity as a first generation immigrant.

Han Sifuentes’s work has been shown in national and international exhibitions. Her work has been included in exhibitions at the Chung Young Yang Embroidery Museum in Seoul, South Korea, Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle, WA, Center for Craft, Creativity and Design in Asheville, NC, and Elmhurst Art Museum in Elmhurst, IL. She earned a BA in Art and Latin American Studies from the University of California, Berkeley in 2008 and a MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2013.

### RICK LOWE

Rick Lowe is a Houston-based artist who has exhibited and worked with communities nationally and internationally. His work has appeared in the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Los Angeles, Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York, Phoenix Art Museum, Kwangju Biennale, Kwangju, Korea, the Kumamoto State Museum, Kumamoto, Japan, and the Venice Architecture Biennale. He is best known for his Project Row Houses community-based art project that he started in Houston in 1993. Further community projects include the Watts House Project in Los Angeles, the Borough Project in Charleston, SC (with Suzanne Lacy and Mary Jane Jacobs), the Delray Beach Cultural Loop in Florida, and the Anyang Public Art Program 2010 in Anyang, Korea. Among Rick’s honors are the Rudy Bruner Awards in Urban

Excellence, the AIA Keystone Award, the Heinz Award in the arts and humanities, the Skowhegan Governor’s Award, the Skandalaris Award for Art/Architecture, and a U.S. Artists Booth Fellowship. He has served as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University, a Mel King Fellow at MIT, an Auburn University Breedan Scholar, and a Stanford University Haas Center Distinguished Visitor. President Barack Obama appointed Rick to the National Council on the Arts in 2013 and in 2014 he was named a MacArthur Fellow.

### ZACKARY DRUCKER

“Okay—So now you found me. What now? Should we have a conversation? You and me? Should we talk about planet earth and pontificate on the meaning of life? 2016? Things are changing, I know, the unknown is scary, but we will navigate this new landscape together. You know who I am. I am Zackary Drucker. I am a human, an artist, and a person.”  
-Zackary Drucker

Zackary Drucker is an independent artist, cultural producer, and trans woman who breaks down the way we think about gender, sexuality, and seeing. She has performed and exhibited her work internationally in museums, galleries, and film festivals including the Whitney Biennial 2014, MoMA PS1, Hammer Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, MCA San Diego, and SF MoMA, among others. Drucker is an Emmy-nominated Producer for the docu-series This Is Me, as well as a Co-Producer on Golden Globe and Emmy-winning Transparent. She is a cast member on the E! docu-series I Am Cait.



Scott Reeder  
Enrique Chagoya  
Paula Wilson  
Chris Coleman  
Lisa Radon  
Samantha Bittman  
Steven Matijcio  
Anders Ruhwald  
Brian Bress  
Martha Rosler  
Lauren Fensterstock  
Karyn Olivier  
Squeak Carnwath  
Liz Larner  
Christian Patterson  
Aram Han Sifuentes  
Rick Lowe  
Zackary Drucker

**2015–16**