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FIVE MINUTES

Interviews with
Artists by
MFA Candidates

2017-18

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EDITOR'S

This limited run publication marks the fourth year of 5 Minutes. The interview series takes the name from the short conversations between the MFA Candidates and the guest lecturers of the Department of Art's Visiting Artist Lecture Series. The lecture series is a benefit of the Department of Art, with each studio area inviting influential artists, curators, critics, and historians from around the world. Guest artists visit the studios of Graduate students and BFA candidates and often have lunch or dinner with a group of students, giving valuable feedback from perspectives outside of the department. The 5 Minutes interviews are a way for our students to share these artists' interactions to a wider community and to our campus at large.

Though this project started as an initiative within the department, this is the third year that the publication is solely student run. Each year, the interview coordination changes hands to volunteers within the current second-year class. Once the visiting artist list is revealed, students call dibs on artists they are most interested in having an extended conversation with. This year we happen to have the same few students interviewing multiple artists. All interviews take place just prior to the lecture, giving only a limited window for the interview to take place. (We cheat! Sometimes the interviews are up to fifteen minutes.) As much as the interviews give greater insight into the practice of our visiting artists, it also gives insight into the personality of our current fine arts masters candidates. A common thread throughout the

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INTRO

interviews is the question of humor. This question started with graduating third-year Alexander Wurtz, who asks this question in every critique class: "Where does humor enter your work?" His other infamous question, "what is your ideal studio snack?" may also have been featured in this interview series, though slightly altered. In some cases, lines of questioning led to discussions on formal properties. Other questions gravitate towards where their art-making started: "Did you know you were going to be an artist when you grew up?" In many cases, these interviews reveal a side of their personality that was a surprise to many of the interviewees. The personas we perceive of people at distance is seen through many filters- being able to ask a question directly can cut through to the real. I, personally, like the oldie: "what is a typical day in the studio look like?" Cliche, maybe, but as students, our days are filled with useful work and useless toil, that is only marginally typical. These interviews give insight to what it is like balancing life and a career as an artist.

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BIOGRAPHY

“Every morning I walk to the studio before the sun comes up. Five years ago, on that walk, a meteorite streaked overhead and lit everything like day. It was a terrifying and wonderful moment. Painting is that same experience. The bits and details of that flash of brilliant clarity would pass by if not for the practice of painting. A painting is a structure for the extraordinary and informative events of nature that are otherwise invisible.”

– James Lavadour, 2013

Born in 1951, James Lavadour is one of the Northwest’s most revered living painters. Lavadour’s family are descendants of the Walla Walla tribe of the modern day Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. He has lived his life in Northeastern Oregon where he is an enrolled tribal member and has lived and worked on the reservation for the past 38 years. His sense of service and commitment to the tribal community have lead him to work for the tribal government in education, housing, alcohol and drug treatment, and natural resource management. In 1993 Lavadour and a group of supporters founded Crow’s Shadow Institute for the Arts, a not for profit print studio/arts organization that provides a creative conduit for social, economic, and educational opportunities to Native Americans through artistic development.

James Lavadour’s work was featured as one of only 102 artists selected for the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art’s seminal survey exhibition, State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now and at the 55th Venice Biennale in Personal Structures.

His works are included in the collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC; the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK; the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; the Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR; the Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, WA; the Boise Art Museum, Boise, ID; the Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, IN; the Hallie Ford Museum, Salem, OR; the Hood Museum, Hanover, NH; Bank of America, San Francisco, CA; the Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA as well as numerous private collections.

pdxcontemporaryart.com/lavadour

JAMES

Daniel Miller
in conversation with
James Lavadour

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LAVADOUR

Forward

It's always interesting discussing art processes and motivation with those who have a non-university art education. Although we make great strides in small amounts of time within the institutional setting, there may be something lost. I could tell immediately when talking with James that he has retained a zeal for art making that is typically vacuumed from the souls of those seeking a degree in art. Also, he is just a kind person.

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Daniel Miller: I saw a few interviews with you online some quick videos where you talked a little bit about hiking and how that informs your practice. Do you have any favorite hikes back home?

James Lavadour: Yeah I do. You know I live right at the foothills of the Blue Mountains so there are many canyons. I like to walk up canyons and get out on a ridge where there's a view where you can see the land.

What does your studio practice look like? Do you have any routines?

I do. I get up at 3 o'clock in the morning. I work until maybe 10 or 11 every day. I try to work on about, you know I have a large body of work that I'm working on at any given time. Maybe 100 pieces, but I work on them over a period of years. So I try to do 4 or 5 pieces a day where... they're all incremental, one layer at a time like printmaking so, I do something and I put it aside and work on something else and just keep on plugging. I have a large stack of paintings to go through. Every year maybe 10 percent, 15 percent end up becoming what I exhibit and I keep working on the rest and I usually start more to replace the ones that have left. Kind of like sourdough bread. Something is always moving, always developing.

Yeah, you've got the starter built in.

Yeah that's right and the momentum and the energy and, you know, it's hard to leave, for me, because I begin to forget things. It's like a pianist or a writer; you have to write every day. You can't let it rest. The creative process for me is something that continues to move forward. If I don't make it move forward it doesn't go anywhere. I don't have the great 'BANG!' in terms of finishing pieces on a daily basis. They're out there.

Right, continually moving forward. Those pieces that maybe don't finish the way you see them finishing, you continue working on them?

I do. I've got some paintings I've been working on. The body of work I'm working on currently I started in 2010 but I still have them all stacked so I have work that dates back to maybe '97 that I'm still plugging away at a group of paintings.

I imagine that have quite a few layers of history built into them.

They do and they're very... sometimes I'm just stumbling forward and applying paint and scratching around, you know? Sometimes it's more articulate in being able to pull things together. It's a matter of the miles for me. The accumulation of layers and the geology of the piece.

I think I saw one piece where it was turned into a 3-dimensional object, a 3-d printing. How did that work?

Well, it was a very interesting process to me. At Walla-Walla Foundry. I've always had this theory that the way my work has progressed it's about sort-of the microcosm of the macrocosm of where I live. The rivers and canyons and streams kind-of like in a brushstroke there are rivers, streams and mountains so that's always been a kind-of conceptual, philosophical thing. I brought some paintings to the Walla-Walla Foundry, just black and white abstract paintings and they put them into a CAD program and grew them so the darks receded and the lights went on top and it created this landscape that is identical to the Columbia River Plateau where I live. So, it was very confounding. I've always said that the land and I are one. That the rivers and streams and the brushstroke and that kind of thing but to actually see it in 3-dimensions I didn't know what to think about it. I was a bit dumbfounded for a number of years, like, what do I do now, you know? They put it into the machine and carve it. They have a machine that has drills and it just kind of **carving noise** it's like a topographic map that comes out. Working at the foundry I cast it in a negative of the positive and so it looked like a moun-

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tain inside of a cube of ice. So I painted on the inside a solid color of red. It was my only 3d piece. I'm not a 3d artist, I'm not sure what I'm doing taking up space. I don't have a lot of purpose to do that. It's in a thing like this, in a courtyard. It's not really what I do and it was interesting and confounding. I felt like one of those aboriginal people who see an airplane or a light bulb for the first time and you were it around your neck [laughs] you know? I was totally the primitive person when it came to that process and it was really a shock to my thinking.

Thankyou!

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“KIND OF
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SOURDOUGH
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SOMETHING
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ING.”

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BIOGRAPHY

William Powhida discussed his recent show “After the Contemporary” at the Aldrich Contemporary Museum of Art. The exhibition was the artist’s first museum solo show and offered a fictive survey of The Contemporary, a period of art history from 2000–2025 defined by the expansion of the art market. The exhibition also included a retrospective of the artist’s works from 2004–2047, made possibly by the 2050 setting of the exhibition. The lecture will cover works included in the show as well previous exhibitions and projects that informed “After the Contemporary”.

William Powhida makes fun of the art world to highlight the paradoxes and absurdities of economic and social value systems that keep the sphere of visual art afloat on a tide of inequality. His work relies on research and participation to diagram, list, perform and critique the forces that shape perceptions of value. He is responsible or partly responsible for exhibitions including “Overculture” at Postmasters Gallery, “Bill by Bill” at Charlie James Gallery, “POWHIDA” at Marlborough Gallery and “#class” at Winkleman Gallery.

Powhida is also an infrequent contributor to ArtFCity and Hyperallergic on issues that alarm him. His complicit criticism has been rewarded with gallery representation, numerous exhibitions and critical debate. He was born in 1976 in upstate New York and still lives and works in New York City despite the crushing cost of living and working. He is represented by Postmasters Gallery in New York, Charlie James Gallery in Los Angeles, Gallery Poulsen in Copenhagen, and Platform Gallery in Seattle.

williampowhida.com

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WILLIAM

Doran Asher Walot
in conversation with
William Powhida

POWHIDA

Forward

We met in a classroom and discussed movies, obsessions and some of the poisonous underbelly of the art world.

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Doran Walot: I'm curious what some of your childhood obsessions were.

William Powhida: Oh. Drawing. So, my mom has a photograph of me by a fire when we were camping somewhere in the Adirondacks just drawing at night, you know, by candlelight, by firelight. So I've been drawing for a long time. Then as I get a little bit older, my family situation was a little bit weird. Mom was single, parents were divorced at a young age. So at some point, it feels like five years old, my mom was dating the projectionist at this place called Super 50, the drive-in, and I saw Friday the 13th probably a dozen times. My brother would drag me out and make me watch Jason jump out of the water and take the girl down...and so that developed a kind of early obsession with horror films and also, in all its forms, like reading, horror was it as a kid.

Nice. I can relate to the terror of an older brother and horror movies. Specific to your work-as someone who applies a fictional construct or fluctuates between yourself and a fictional construct, I'm curious how you carve out space for, like, you as an actual human being.

[laughs] Yeah, it's a tough one. I think the work that I do I tend to think of in the frame of art, in the field of representation, so it's kind of symbolic activity. The work that's critical of other people or of institutions, people get really upset about that personally. Usually, people are pretty...a little bit more savvy when we meet in real life. Some people have been upset but, for the most part, I think people treat it as kind of a professional relationship, like I'm an artist-slash-critic. I level some criticism but I think meeting people in real life tends to diffuse a lot of the tensions between how I'm represented in my own work, the kind of voice I have as a character and then who I am as a person. It can create, kind of, super-difficulties: like this artist, Sharon Loudon, who was working on a book made sure she was with her husband, and my friend Jen Dalton, when we met in a coffee shop, she was terrified of me. [Unclear if he was implying that when he met Jen Dalton, she

was terrified, or if he's still talking about Sharon Loudon and saying that Dalton also had to tag along]. Another friend of mine described me as the "Art World Satan" and so that perception is a little bit difficult to manage. The flip side of it is, like, in social media as well, having a kind of voice in there; that, for a little while, was an interesting place to confuse an artist's identity and my real life, but that also gets messy so I've been trying to create a little space there so I'm not so engaged.

Yeah, you're a prolific tweeter. I noticed you have an evil...or there is someone using...

There is an Evil Powhida. It's actually a friend who lives in LA...so it's his project.

On that same token, I'm curious: as your star... "rises"...

...or wanes.

[laughter]

As some level of name recognition emerges, I'm curious about that tension between making institutional critique and benefitting from that market increasingly (in theory).

I mean...there's no easy answer to that. It's like, what level of complicity I'm comfortable with in critiquing that system and also selling that work. I'll talk a little bit about tonight. Certainly with the show at the Aldrich which is another form of institutional critique that certainly put the institution...well, I didn't...it wasn't all about the Aldrich but there was certainly...it was part of the structure of the show. I think the thing that has changed over the last few years is, like, the work is kind of split- so after 2009, around the time I did that New Museum drawing that really critiqued that institution, I started doing more socially engaged works like #class, #rank... my friend Jen Dalton and I did Month to Month, which was a month-long socially-engaged public art piece. I feel like I've split my time doing work that is less market-oriented and really engaged in...the work is not for

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sale and it's dematerialized in some way. That may allow me to then go back into the studio and make things that I can sell and support my practice and life.

Fair enough. I was listening to your new podcast and you talked about this a little bit, but I'm curious how we can function as artists if we feel really incapacitated by the current political reality.

This is a good one. My friend Ben Davis, who is also a critic, I don't know if you are familiar with his writing...

The 9.5 Theses, yeah...

He has a new lecture that he's giving called "Making Art in Terrible Times" and he used an example of a mutual artist friend of ours, this guy Giovanni Garcia-Fenech, who also shows at Postmasters, and Giovanni just stopped making art after the election last year. He just couldn't do it, like "I can't justify going to the studio and making my sort of bubbly large-scale Matisse-like paintings," he just felt like he needed to be working on the political situation. But over the last four or five months, he got a sense of perspective again, like, "you know what? I'm gonna go volunteer, do work..." He might be working with a legal organization doing translation and then he goes to the studio and it's kind of like his "studio offset," like a carbon-offset tax or something. He feels like if he engages in the world politically as a person, not just in his artwork, then he can go to the studio and make his work, which is not political. Trying to use art to engage politics, like small, pure [unclear on the recording if this word was "pure" or something else], real politics, is often a terrible idea. Art, often its value lies in its ambiguity and its complexity and its open-endedness. That doesn't work with public policy- like we need these five things and that has to be spelled out, very clear communication, so that's one way that you can deal with it as an artist is just to be engaged outside of your studio.

Is that a byproduct of privilege though? To have the ability to do both of those things and also pay your rent?

I mean, it's always a struggle, right? To divide up how much time you have to be in the studio or another aspect of your "artist life" whether you are working for somebody else. I think the default though is that most people don't do anything politically and then there's this extra demand. You have to figure out how to spend some of your time if you want to just be in the studio working on your own concerns. I don't know if its so much of a privilege as, just for me, it was something I came to first through my art, kind of a political awareness, and then starting to think about "how can I do some of this outside of the studio?" It is a huge demand. It's a pain in the ass. I don't feel like I have a whole lot of extra time to spend on it but I'm willing to do it because it does kind of feed back into my own artwork. So, you know, I think the question of privilege is something that the Democratic Socialist Association is struggling with, like in terms of who is in it, what the representation looks like, who has the time to be on tons of working groups and sub-committees...so one thing I advocate for is: if you know of a group or some thing where you can really support it, whether it's like a small monetary donation or coming out for certain events, you don't have to be doing the work all the time. You can just start to support things that are going to, I think ideally, create a better social condition for being an artist, where maybe you don't have to work quite so much to support yourself. You can choose to live a materially poor life and not be totally screwed, so...an ongoing project, not easily resolvable.

"ART,
OFTEN ITS
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BIOGRAPHY

Stanya Kahn is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in video with a practice that includes performance, writing, sound, drawing, painting and ceramics. Humor, pathos and the uncanny emerge as central modes in a hybrid media practice that seeks to re-work relationships between fiction and document, the real and the hyper-real, satire and sincerity, narrative time and the synchronic time of impulse.

Kahn is a 2012 Guggenheim Fellow in Film/Video. Recent exhibitions include Marlborough Contemporary, NY; Susanne Vielmetter, Los Angeles; Weiss Berlin; Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK; the New Museum, New York, NY; and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. She has shown at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; the 2010 California Biennial; and Rodeo, London, UK recently. Her collaborative work with Harry Dodge has shown at Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York; the 2008 Whitney Biennial; the Sundance Film Festival; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; ZKM Karlsruhe; among others. She was a contributing writer, performer and costume producer on the feature film *By Hook or By Crook*. Her writings and drawings are in multiple publications including *Die Laughing* (2nd Cannons Publications), *It's Cool, I'm Good* (Cornerhouse Publications), *Abstract Video* (University of California Press), among others.

stanyakahn.com

STANYA

Aja Segapeli
in conversation with
Stanya Kahn

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KAZHN

Forward

Stanya Khan is cool. Really cool. She was incredibly transparent about her experience as an artist and questioning her own work, which is both refreshing and comforting to see in artist that successful. I probably could have spent the entire night, in the library conference room, badgering her with questions. Mostly, I couldn't wait to learn more about how she approaches screen based narrative...and the secret to a good joke.



Aja Segapeli: Your work is really funny. But I'm wondering if at some point the humor and play employed in your work becomes an expectation from outside viewers. Is that something you've experienced? Do you find it limiting to be expected to be funny?

Stanya Khan: [laughing] I'm feeling that right now...no, just kidding!

[laughs] Oh No. I should have started with the coffee question!

It actually comes up sometimes interviews and then suddenly I feel very serious. Comedy is a thing that works when it's happening and not necessarily when you are trying to describe it...like explaining how a joke works is never funny. so, that's a good question about an expectation. Yes of course in some ways that gets built in, but it's interesting because the piece I decided to show you tonight... there's funny things in the movie, but it's a film that I finished right after Trump won the presidency ...and I've had a hard time finding what's funny this year. You know? Most of my humor relies on distress and problems, and that which is uncomfortable. So, it's not as if I don't already think the world is a terrible place. I do, which is why I make art work, but another kind of line was crossed that has been a little stunning. Some other part of my psyche locked into another kind of awareness that has made it trickier to feel like joking. Because my jokes are usually morbid or about struggle, and that joking is not only a way of coping, but I think that when you can joke near difficulty, it means that you're part way through that difficulty or in fact in possession of tools with which to wrangle it. And Maybe right now I'm not sure how to find my humor because I'm not sure how to handle what's happening.

Totally! It's been a strange time to make work for sure.

So, There's some really interesting moments in your piece Stand in Stream, which shows cuts of you on Chatroulette "connecting" with

strangers while wearing various monstrous masks. I'm wondering if you could talk more about that.

Yeah, it's sort of a multi layered answer. There's the surface layer which is that it allowed me anonymity to go online and be private in these spaces. I could have just covered my face in some other way, but I happened to have these rubber monster masks around. And then in part because I had initially developed this idea that there were going to be these two different monstrous beings that found each other online and then were interacting. That was a construct that ended up seeming silly and fell away as I started really interacting with people. And there's another way in which playing with monstrousness occurs in all my work whether it's a human that's been damaged or injured or like in the film Don't go back to sleep there's this person who in what looks like a rat bear costume. Part human part animal. So, I think for me psychically there's a space I'm holding open for something that's undefinable or that which we don't know or understand. I feel it's important to hold that space open. I think it's also not always conscious when I'm making it, but in retrospect, I have the privilege of distance to look, regard the work, and say "well maybe those monsters hold open a kind of citizen's base that is considered abject to the status quo and the kinds of things we're experiencing now in the rise of fascism. Everything in the film is symbolic in various kinds of ways in which spaces of otherness can be mobile....maybe we'll just leave it at that [chuckles]

Yeah! That's a great answer!

Since we are on the topic of Stand in the Stream, it's a piece that is constructed from an archive of videos. I'm wondering if you could elaborate on the process of collecting and assembling. In other words, what is your process? How do you think about narrative and in turn, abstracting language?

All the films are made really differently. Some pieces like It's Cool, I'm Good, I did a lot of writ-



ing ahead of time, but still didn't know what was going to happen, especially when I put on all the bandages. It turned out that I went into a really particular kind of state that I couldn't have planned for. Like a state of mind. And so, a character-ish voice emerged that I didn't recognize, and had its own flow. It was like being possessed. I had a set of notes and things that I could rely on, but other times that character didn't need any notes and could just talk. So, usually there's lots of writing leading into a thing, and a ton of improvising once cameras are rolling. I would say that's a key part of my practice that does occur in all of my pieces. The way I feel the most energized and most able to touch a kind of dream space, is to be willing and in the moment to kind of notice things that I couldn't have planned for and incorporate that.

Stand in the Stream I would say stands out the most differently from the rest of everything I ever made in terms of the process because I shot over the course of 6 years and would edit, and then when I would get stuck, I'd put it aside and make other work. So, I set out to make this film and I knew that it was going to be made from all different kinds of footage that I was shooting on multiple camera formats, and then I really hit a wall with it where I couldn't figure out a way forward and it seems like after all it wouldn't work, so I made another film called *Don't Go Back to Sleep*. You know what happened was... I got sick of the internet. [laughs] A lot of the investigating I was doing was taking place in these online spaces and I hit wall and thought 'Okay, the internet is not that interesting. It's just a tool we all use. Whatever'. Then I made a film featuring strangers that I hadn't met before on locations I had never been. They would just show up on set and we'd be like 'ok great here we go! Some of what I learned was that I was questioning was whether the internet was a place where connections and community could be formed or if we are just marketing fodder for cooperate cookie processing. Those questions came into play in the space of *Don't Go Back to Sleep*. But I kept returning to *Stand in the stream* and I never stopped shooting for it. It was an unusual process, but I gave myself per-

mission to not know what to do, and to make other things when I didn't know what to do.

It's funny because my next question was to ask what you do when you get stuck, but you just answered it so eloquently!

Oh! Well I would just add that one of the things that I do...is that sometimes when I get stuck it's because it's not the right form. So, I'll switch mediums and I'll start drawing or make music or sculptures. Especially with video, it takes such a long time. It's slow and there's plenty of time to start doubting yourself and thinking it's all terrible. So, when those things happen I go to another form and that helps keep things flowing. And I go to a form where I can feel happy for a while or at least feel pleasure. Sometimes it's not an intellectual decision, but an intuitive one that allows me to think and be creative, and then I can return later. So that's really useful.

Ok last question, what are you reading at the moment?

I'm reading the underground railroad by Colson Whithead. It's a novel in which he imagines that the underground railroad was an actual railroad. It's a slave narrative and really heavy but beautiful. And I'm also reading this book *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain* by Imogen Tyler. It's a book that I learned about from the last person that interviewed me. It's dense political philosophy but it's good. Oh, and I'm reading Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's from #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation.

That was great! Thank you so much!

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“AND I GO TO A FORM WHERE I CAN FEEL HAPPY FOR A WHILE OR AT LEAST FEEL PLEASURE.”

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BIOGRAPHY

"I am an artist, and collector of visual sensation. Observation, for me, is a critical tool for identifying spaces between mass culture and the individual. Daily errands, chores, and daily exchanges for carrying out getting from A to B are the vehicle for examination. For me, art takes place in these gaps. Specific gaps which define a present situation, personal or global which is always moving. Moving fast, out of grasp, constant flowing information, changing always. Art, for me, happens in conjunction with decoration, and is always fighting decoration. The activity of the agreement of art and decoration, or the battle of it are truly engaging for me."

- Nancy Shaver

Nancy Shaver is faculty at the Milton Avery School of Graduate Studies, Bard College. Shaver's work was presented in a solo show at Derek Eller Gallery in summer 2016. She has been part of the Greater New York show 2015 MoMA PS1, Queens, NY as well as in Robert Gober's "The Heart Is Not a Metaphor" at MoMA, New York, NY. She currently has work in VIVA ARTE VIVA! the 57th Venice Biennale 2017. She has received a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, and Anonymous Was A Woman award. She has been in collaboration with Maximilian Goldfarb and Allyson Strafella to present art in an experimental viewing station in Hudson, New York called Incident Report for the last 10 years. Shaver lives and works in Jefferson and Hudson, New York.

nancyshaverartist.com

NANCY

Natalie Wood
in conversation with
Nancy Shaver

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SHAVER

Forward

Nancy and I had already spent a lot of time together before this interview. She visited my studio and we had lunch together. Throughout the day Nancy had a cane, which she kept leaving behind and joked it was her very own Charlie Chaplin gag. At lunch she ordered the wild mushroom sandwich even though she wasn't very hungry, saying it seemed nice to eat something so Oregon. In the morning she wore a brown scarf with a pattern that was possibly plaid. I remember thinking how the colors perfectly matched her tortoise shell glasses. For the interview and talk she changed into a blue scarf with red dots on it. Not polka dot, the dots were more organically scattered. During my time with Nancy, I found her to be delightful. Using phrases like "very, very, very" and "really, truly, fantastic" it is clear she is an optimistic person who loves her job and the people in her life.



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Natalie Wood: What is your earliest memory of making art?

Nancy Shaver: I don't really know, to tell you for sure, but I think I always made things. I think I made dresses for dolls. I remember a costume I made for a doll out of Kleenex and it was tied with string on a doll.

What was it like to be in the Venice Biennale?

It was an immense amount of work and I just worked and worked and worked. The hardest I've ever worked in my whole life. For probably a year - well it wasn't quite a year, it was about 9 months. I had about 9 months to do the work. It was so intense and so great.

When I got there a very good friend, Taylor Davis (who I think was here at some point), she volunteered to help me and my husband (who is my silent partner in my work) helped me. And there was this wonderful art handler from the gallery who's name is Robert Richburg and he is a cartoonist who makes his living doing art handling. So it was this group of really, truly, fantastic people and we went and we worked so intensely together. It was like being on the inside of the art.

It was one the best experience I think I've ever had in my whole life. The experience of getting to do that work and getting to do that work with people I love and who were very committed to getting it up. And then the other parts, you know, are just a little bit hard. Dealing with bureaucracy. But it was fun. It was really great to walk into the arsenal and there'd be so many artists who were with the same intensity working on their spaces. So it was a mixture. It was good and hard.

Maybe you already answered this, talking about the hard aspects, but I was also curious if there was there anything unexpected about the experience?

Unexpected... huh... you know I was very very very well prepared. In terms of the work that I

had done before it and I guess it was unexpected for me to again, evaluate and realize how well prepared I had been. 'Cause I think of as being very fly by night.

Say for instance, my husband is a wonderful planner and planned about the crates and all. We knew he had already figured that all out. We worked for days and days packing. In fact when we got to Venice, there were only two things missing. And they were minor. They were because I had removed them from the crates in the studio and forgotten to put them back. So I thought that was so absolutely amazing given the scope of the installation that it all went so smoothly. And I feel like I was really super prepared to deal with whatever happened because the scope of what I did had so much flexibility. I thought, 'Well, whatever. I can handle it.' Which was a really good feeling.

That's incredible. I saw online your shop, and you mentioned it briefly to me earlier today, the shop with found objects. So I was curious what role found objects play in your work?

Let me see - they play an enormous role in my work. In terms of being in the shop and being a part of a laboratory. We talked about learning, and in a lot of ways I have learned about history and art from the objects in terms of just thinking about them. I think of objects as being incredible informative, culturally. Even the smallest, dumbest, mass produced decoration, has amazing history to it. So sometimes I think of myself in relation to objects as being a documentarian.

Do you have unusual hobbies or things you do when you aren't making art?

Well I think the only thing would be my job, which is Henry, is my shop. It's also my hobby in the sense that - I have a friend who describes the shop as being the best combination of gambling and shopping that she knows. And it really really is. It is really, sort of, an itch involved, on occasion when I am bored or I can't focus in the studio, I say, "I need to look at something." And



STANYA KAHN

that becomes a euphemism for going out and looking but also buying something for Henry. Which, I hopefully hadn't seen or thought about before. So it is very addictive.

That's great. Last question, if you could be something besides an artist, what would you be?

You know, I don't know what it would be. I just don't know what it would be. I think if I had had a shop as a young person - the shop I have now - that I probably would've given up art. So I am so glad that I didn't have that interference because in the shop does satisfy a lot of visual needs.

Thank you!

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“SO SOME-
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BIOGRAPHY

Jan Verwoert will address the existential condition of critical writing. “The model of one person passing judgment on others has become ridiculous,” he says. “Art, life, politics—we’re in it together after all, even and especially now that societies are forcefully split. What does it take for a voice to articulate intuitions and observations in a manner that allows for very different people to relate to a public thinking process? Urban satire can do it. Is this because laughing at the state of the world awakens a sense of grotesque, yet fateful connectedness?”

Jan Verwoert is a critic and writer on contemporary art and cultural theory, based in Berlin. His writing has appeared in different journals, anthologies and monographs. He teaches at the Piet Zwart Institute Rotterdam. He is a professor for theory at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and guest professor at the UdK Graduate School, Berlin. He is the author of *Bas Jan Ader: In Search of the Miraculous*, MIT Press/Afterall Books 2006, the essay collection *Tell Me What You Want What You Really Really Want*, Sternberg Press/Piet Zwart Institute 2010, together with Michael Stevenson, *Animal Spirits — Fables in the Parlance of Our Time*, Christoph Keller Editions, JRP, Zurich 2013, a second collection of his essays *Cookie!* published by Sternberg Press/Piet Zwart Institute 2014 and editor of the anthology on artistic knowledge *No New Kind of Duck — Would I know how to say what I do?*, Diaphanes & UdK Graduate School, Zurich-Berlin 2016.

JEN

Jen Vaughn in
conversation with
Jan Verwoert

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VZVJGJHN

Forward

I sat down to have a quick, 5-minute conversation with Berlin based critic and writer, Jan Verwoert. Our chosen interview location was a studio art classroom—cold and somewhat industrial in its metal racks, worktables, and stacks of student work. He remarked on the lingering scent of the room--that art studio smell. Vague hints of paint, glue, frustration, and possibility. The following conversation far exceeded the five minutes as our conversation meandered into “very fundamental things.”

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Jen Vaughn: Welcome, we are very excited to have you. I have a few questions for you. I thought we could start with the topic of humor. How do you utilize humor in your work or writing? How do you see its purpose?

Jan Verwoert: It feels like humor is the one thing that you cannot utilize. And in that sense, I believe something like humor has so much to do with politics and the philosophical because no one can own it. It's like the one thing that you cannot declare intentionally, I cannot say “I will now make you laugh” or “I will now make you thoughtful.” It is just something that comes to you from the other, it's such a relational quality...and that's why I find it fascinating. The moment that it happens it means that there is a connection.

Right.

And when it doesn't... it's like wanting to make somebody dance. You cannot just force it. It has to come to you. And I feel like when you read someone like Hannah Arendt write about authority in politics she equates it with credibility to some extent. In that sense, it is the opposite of violence. Violence is unilateral, but in something like authority it also has to be given to you by someone who invests your speech with credibility. And is something that you cannot do willfully. You can't just speak in the hope that someone will find it credible but I think it's the power of the listener to laugh or to invest credibility in the speaker, and hence I think a lot of power realizes that when it cannot find that moment of credibility it starts getting violent. I find that fundamentally I think it's the viewers', the audiences' power to accept something in laughter or to give credibility back to the power of the speaker. So, it's inherently relational and it's a risk that we take. You put out a piece of art, you put out a thought, what if no one laughs? What if no one dances, what if no one feels it? That's the risk of it but I think it is also fundamentally what makes art social because it is vulnerable to the social. What if no one looks, no one laughs? You can't force it. And we all know that moment when

you are forcing it is usually the best way to lose it. It takes a lot of nerves to put these things out there, thinking “Oh my god, oh my god, please...” so on that level I think humor is pure social power, but it is always power of the other. It comes to you from the other and you live with the fact that you can't claim it.

That's interesting. A lot of your work seems to speak to that relationship.

Yeah.

Or, a specific ethic of care in the way that you interact with people, be it artists in studios or students and teaching. I think that aspect is important for a breakdown of past traditions of hierarchy that are in our systems. We have been talking a bit about what it looks like relationally to interact through the conversation of art, in studio dialogue...and now in this current historical moment, what is at stake for us as writers, as artists, as maybe some would say “thinkers?”

If we continue talking along these lines they are questions of authority. I think that in particular forms of violence or abusive systems they always exist in the face of the doubt that they probably have of themselves regarding their own credibility. I would say that I am totally with Arendt when she says that the violence comes out when you try to force it...because you know that you already lost the game. If patriarchy, a particular form of exploitative, energy-consuming-- patriarchy is totally on its way out and everybody knows it. But, it's just suddenly rearing its ugly head again in the face of a crisis that probably everyone knows is happening. And hence, you have an attitude of “I fully well know that this is wrong but this is precisely why we are claiming it again” and the kind of abusive forms that we are currently witnessing. It's not that people wouldn't actually deem it to be legitimate, they know that it is fundamentally illegitimate, but that's exactly why you would hold on to it with full force and you don't want to let it go. Why would you consign yourself to a kind of work that kills you? What's the deal? Other than holding on to a pattern that exists already, you

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stick to it because you feel that it's going away. I feel like questions of authority are so difficult because there is so much projection at art, that for art to be accepted it should embody a particular form of miraculous authority.

Right.

And then, people just blame it because it refuses to do that. Or, rewards it if it still has some semblance of the male genius. It is so much about going into this field where authority is radically at question and hence value can be born in different ways. It's one of the many things that may be at stake. At what point do people invest belief in art, or at least enough to render it credible? How can you teach someone to relax around these things? It's not clear what the prize or reward for this is, and that is a crisis, yes. We don't know what it is that we are looking at, whether it's worth looking at it or not. And, what are the modalities of sharing that crisis rather than reasserting stabilizing models that are obviously invalid? I have no idea, but I think that it's a constant struggle when there's also always tendencies to the moment that you become identifiable as someone who could be put into the position of the paternal authority. Especially in teaching at a university when you are the guy that talks and that can talk and there is some force that wants to put you in that position. I mean, Lacan calls it "the subject who is supposed to know." In that moment, it is the dark side of that ascription of authority because then when you are the subject who is supposed to know it creates an interpassive relationship, that everybody who puts you in that position is totally happy that they know who knows, so they don't. And, you are isolated in a completely empty position of authority where you can no longer speak because no one actually wants to listen. Traditionally, it's the expert, yes, we've got to have some experts so that they can tell us how to clean our teeth so we know that we surely don't do it.

[Laughter]

It's like the joker on the toothpaste commercial. Do you actually want to be in that position?

No. [Laughter]

But, it's also patriarchal fate that if you identify as male you can claim that position and suddenly you realize you have the power but it's entirely void. And then you need all this other supplementary stuff to tell yourself that you've actually made it somewhere even though you have no idea where that is and you are painfully aware of the fact that other people put you there and leave you alone in this place. The great actor, the great painter, and then all this horror happens that is currently in the news... it's like...wow. But absolutely, for me, it is to keep these relations fluid on the one hand and maybe accept the responsibility that for the duration of a seminar situation you are not just the vessel of discourse you are also providing a framework by investing some kind of energy or concentration or focus into a situation. You are the...what do they call it in Hollywood? You are the focus puller. For a moment, you allow for something to come into view and a lot of that is actually structural. You are a frame, a humanly embodied framework, and you invest in the framework for let's say a time of one or two hours and it is possible to focus on something. It is a spotlighting function. And to understand that that is a place that certain structures allow you to take and that needs to be humanly embodied to be credible. That would probably be a problem to think that it's about you.

Right.

Yeah.

Right, that it's an individual moment for...

Yeah, and it's totally personal. It's completely embodied, it's fully passionate. But I think also that the traditional patriarchal misunderstanding is that all guys think it's about them. It's the "One day my son, all of this will all be yours." No.

[Laughter]

It's just a constellation where, especially in this moment when it's completely your lifeblood, your passion, everything that floods into it, you are just pulling the focus in that moment. And then, it's up to the others to take the ball and run with it. It's a hard lesson to learn especially in these moments when you put all the desire into it.

Yeah.

You have me talking about very fundamental things.

[Laughter]

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AND RUN

WITH IT..."

FIVE MINUTES

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BIOGRAPHY

Jenni Sorkin is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History at University of California, Santa Barbara. She holds a PhD in the History of Art from Yale University.

Sorkin writes on the intersection between gender, material culture, and contemporary art. Her book, *Live Form: Women, Ceramics and Community* was published by University of Chicago Press in 2016. She has also published widely as an art critic, and her writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Art Journal*, *Art Monthly*, *NU: The Nordic Art Review*, *Frieze*, *The Journal of Modern Craft*, *Modern Painters*, and *Third Text*. She has written numerous in-depth catalog essays on feminist art and material culture topics, and lectures nationally and internationally.

arthistory.ucsb.edu/people/jenni-sorkin

JENNI

Leah Howell in
conversation with
Jenni Sorkin

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SORKIN

Forward

I became a fan of Jenni Sorkin's writing over the last couple of years in reading her essays in "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016," and in her most recent book titled "Live Form: Women, Ceramics and Community." Her investigations into women artist's work reveals varied personal experiences, material choices, subject matter and career paths. Collectively, these histories present issues of identity and making, reflecting the female artist's experience in the contemporary art world. Jenni's writing and investigation into this subject matter is fascinating. When I learned she was going to be part of the Visiting Artist Lecture series, I jumped at the chance to talk with her and learn more. So, here is the chat we had before her presentation.

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Leah Howell: You write a lot about the legacy of female artists. Betty Woodman, a widely recognized pioneer in ceramic arts just died recently. Her career from production potter in the 50's to contemporary artist spans decades. How do you interpret her legacy and what impact does she have on contemporary ceramic art today?

Jenni Sorkin: That's a very good question. I would say that she loomed large in the field. I feel like she pushed makers in her field to be much more aware of source materials and traditional histories in the field—in looking at amphoras and ancient flasks and she was really obsessed with the Italian styles because she spent a lot of time in Italy. She pushed people to be more historical and aware of surface effects. She also had a relationship to a lot of artists in New York. She was more of a modern ceramic artist in the sense that she did not consider her work as distinct from any other visual artists working in the field. She was friends with artists like Joyce Kozloff and people in the pattern and decoration movement. She had a wide range of interests and was a relentlessly intellectual woman in a field that I think was largely anti-intellectual when she entered it, particularly among her male colleagues. She pushed the field to become smarter, more aware of historical sources and to really think through surface effects and the second and third dimension. She was always playing with the ideas of flatness early on in those pillow vessels, making forms that blow up and then going back to vases that have panels that seem to be flat. She was playing with the effects of depth and I think that's very interesting.

I've been thinking a lot about the word "practice" lately and how it applies to art making. Repetition and mastery particularly apply to material based practices that require technical investigation and repetition. Practice embodies physical labor, successes and failures. Where does the value lie in practice?

I think the value in practice is in the idea of a lifetime of making, that you commit to doing

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this over a lifetime. I think it's really hard to go through an MFA program. It's really intense and there are a lot of pressures and then you get out and fifty percent of all artists who complete MFA's, quit making art within five years because there are so many financial pressures. I think the financial rewards of practice to me is a larger thing of not just making artistic work, but also learning the practice and practicalities of being an artist and that means your teaching labor, that means your labor in learning how to garner the skills to run a class, which is really intense. You have to have a lot of technical ability to do that. It takes a particular kind of persistence to learn those skills and sometimes they become second nature, but that really becomes a matter of practice over a long period of time.

I like connecting those words: practicality and practice. What artists are you currently interested in?

I am writing for a whole lot of exhibition catalogues at the moment. I have been investigating so-called "outsider artists" or artists who are self trained or self taught. I just completed an essay on anonymous quilting and some of that is Gees Bend women. There's a big show opening this month at the National Gallery of Art in DC called "Outliers" and it's about the relationship between outsider-ness and the avant-garde so it's artists of both ilk in the show. I've also been working on an essay about Yayoi Kusama who has spent the last forty years voluntarily living in a mental institution in Japan and trying to reconfigure her practice as part of investing in a history of outsider-ness even though she's been designated as an art world insider. She's 88 and has a long history of production.

Did you see her recent show in LA?

I saw the show at the Broad and I also saw the show in New York at the David Zwirner gallery. They're publishing a catalogue that I'm writing. So, that's what I'm working on at the moment.

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That leads to my next question. Are there any future projects that you're interested in exploring? Any specific themes or subject matter that you want to work with?

Im actually going to return to textiles in my next book project. I come out of a fibers background. I fell into ceramics and now I really want to go back to fiber. I'm not a single medium person so I really want to explore fiber work in the 90's. That's actually what I'm going to talk about tonight.

Oh great! Looking forward to it. Thanks so much Jenni!

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“I THINK
THE VALUE
IN PRACTICE
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MOMENT OF A
LIFESTYLE
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BIOGRAPHY

Wendy Red Star works across disciplines to explore the intersections of Native American ideologies and colonialist structures, both historically and in contemporary society. Raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation in Montana, Red Star's work is informed both by her cultural heritage and her engagement with many forms of creative expression, including photography, sculpture, video, fiber arts, and performance. An avid researcher of archives and historical narratives, Red Star seeks to incorporate and recast her research, offering new and unexpected perspectives in work that is at once inquisitive, witty and unsettling. Intergenerational collaborative work is integral to her practice, along with creating a forum for the expression of Native women's voices in contemporary art.

Red Star has exhibited in the United States and abroad at venues including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fondation Cartier pour l' Art Contemporain, Domaine de Kerguéhennec, Portland Art Museum, Hood Art Museum, St. Louis Art Museum, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, among others. She served a visiting lecturer at institutions including Yale University, the Figge Art Museum, the Banff Centre, National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Dartmouth College, CalArts, Flagler College, Fairhaven College, and I.D.E.A. Space in Colorado Springs. In 2015, Red Star was awarded an Emerging Artist Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation.

In 2016, she participated in Contemporary Native Photographers and the Edward Curtis Legacy at the Portland Art Museum, and recently mounted a solo exhibition as part of the museum's APEX series. Red Star holds a BFA from Montana State University, Bozeman, and an MFA in sculpture from University of California, Los Angeles. She lives and works in Portland, OR.

wendyredstar.madewithcolor.com

WENDY

Talon Claybrook and Kayla
Thompson in conversation
with Wendy Red Star

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RED

STAR

Forward

Wendy Red Star is a genuine human being. I was lucky enough to have a one-on-one conversation with her about the many facets of being Native and an artist. She shared stories of her studio practice and of the work she is doing in her community. I learned a lot from Wendy in the short time we shared together. This led me to the conclusion that the world could use more Wendy Red Star-s.

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Talon Claybrook: How are you?

Wendy Red Star: I'm good, I'm about to do a lot of travel so I think mentally I'm sort of thinking about how I'm going to do these intense five trips in the two months travel ahead of me.

Where are you going?

I'm going to Vancouver, I'm going to Tucson, I'm going to Brown University, and I'm going to Toronto and Chicago. I think that might be all [laughing].

Cool.

And this one, Eugene.

Kayla Thompson: You need a secretary.

[laughing]

TC: What does a typical day in the studio look like for you?

It really kind of depends where I'm at in my travel, so if I'm not traveling I like to get up—I'm a single mother so I have my daughter fifty percent of the time, so if it's a day where I have her I get her up, take her to school, and then I'll grab my dog and I'll usually go out hiking. Portland's great because you can get to hiking trails within ten minutes and that's a good time for me to think about projects or work through any ideas. I'll come back from that, do administrative things, I do a lot of emails and kind of catching up. If I have a meeting scheduled I'll do that. And then pretty much studio practice for me is actually really thinking about a concept, and the production time can happen quick for me. So it just depends on what exhibition is coming and what that exhibition requires. It ranges quite a bit. But it's pretty much standard that. Getting out, walking, thinking, and administrative stuff, and then maybe some creative time, and that's usually in the evening.

TC: Do you like to plan everything out or do you like to play as you're going through your projects?

Well I'm going to therapy and I'm learning [laughing]. It's great, I think everyone, if they can see a therapist, because I feel like studio visits are like mini therapy sessions. But just what I'm realizing is I really need structured time and I'm three years into being a self-employed full-time artist. Before that I was working a full-time job so there was this dedicated time where I really actually had to do the work because otherwise it was filled up with working my 9 to 5, taking care of my kid, and now that I'm self-employed, really figuring out how to structure that day for myself. So I would like to be super structured—almost military-like—but just the sort of ups and downs of traveling and being a little bit burnt out from that throws me off track a bit. So I'm not as organized and I kind of like going with the flow a little more.

TC: As a fellow Native artist myself, I'm mostly drawn to Thunder Up Above because it places native people in the future and also in sci-fi future speculative territory. So I was hoping you could talk a little about the concepts and the process of that project.

That was a fun body of work and I was thinking about outer space as a final frontier, and also thinking about when Columbus came over and he described the indigenous people as being these alien-like people and this otherness about them—from the customs that they did, the clothing that they didn't wear or they did wear. I found that to be really intriguing and thinking about outer space and if we do find life that we'll probably colonize them. Or maybe they'll colonize us. But I feel like that's gonna happen and that's the Wild West is outer space. And so when I was thinking about that and having this fantasy of maybe what I would have done being in the future now in perspective to our ancestors, how I would want to combat Columbus coming over. The idea was to create these fierce beings that you would be confronted with that live in these different environments. That was the initial idea. And then when thinking about what they would look like, I modeled them after powwow regalia and that was fun because in some of them I

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really played—like I would take a Victorian puff sleeve and an '80s wedding dress and I would merge that together but it would have maybe jingles on it from a jingle dress. Or there's one that's this white fur outfit and that's actually a men's fur anklet that a lot of the traditional dancers and the fancy dancers wear and they have a bell above that—so it's just this really big fur anklet and the neck has this bell around it. I wanted to cover up their faces because I didn't want them to have too much of a face to attach or to direct your attention, I wanted you to see them and the environment that they lived in. I photographed myself in the outfits in my bedroom and I couldn't see—I had a timer and I didn't have one of those clicker things so I'd have to run to the camera [laughing] and run back and do these poses. I was looking for the aesthetic of '60s sci fi where they have the tin-foil ships and planets and things like that, and I couldn't find that but I found these great stock photos. That was the first time where I didn't have a green screen, any of that, minimal photoshop skills but it all kind of came together.

The way that it typically shows is the images are large format photographs and then the outfits are displayed on some kind of dress form so that the viewer can go back and forth and look at the detail of the outfit and also see the photograph.

TC: Great, thank you.

KT: I'm thinking of that and I can't help but think of the Alexa commercials where you can be like "Okay Alexa, take a photo." Like how technology is improving the selfie.

Oh now I can use that, I love it. It's gonna make it so much easier. [laughing]

KT: Speaking of futuristic.

Many of your projects tackle Native stereotypes and staging of Native identity with humor. Why do you choose to use humor in your practice and do you think that non-Native people understand the punchline?

I think a lot of the work that you're referring to, a lot of that focuses on stereotypes was work that I was doing in graduate school quite a bit. But I also did a work fairly recently in 2014 called the White Squaw series and that had humor to it as well. I come from a family—even my mother's who's white—that whole family, we're always cracking jokes. That's something that I grew up with. But speaking culturally within Crow culture we actually have a policing system of teasing cousins. There's this whole thing, if you brag and your teasing cousin catches wind of it that they will come and they will publicly humiliate you, and even if you're not having a big head their job is to tease you all the time and you can do it back. That's something that's already infused in Crow cultural lifestyle. I think those things come together and in general when I hang out with other native people, we're funny. I think thinking about lower economic people and that kind of thing, you have to have humor about stuff to get through the turbulent times. I really viewed humor more as a healing aspect to talk about tough things, in a way that maybe the non-Native person doesn't quite get the Indian Indian part of the humor, but they understand that there's an 'in' there for them so that's the way that I like to use humor.

TC: Do you consider Four Seasons as humor as well?

Absolutely, yeah. Everything of mine—for a long time felt like, I just can't take art seriously, you know? For me, I'm always making things coming from this skewed view—I just can't help it. That's the only way I can enter into things. Even this recent show I did about my dad, the Maniacs band, I'm still kind of thinking, 'how funny is that?' Because that is not the farmer/rancher dad that I know today when I look at him as this sort of rockstar. Like 'who is that, dad?' All of the work has that tinge of 'Isn't that interesting? Isn't that peculiar? How can we pull that out of whatever it is I'm trying to articulate?

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FIVE MINUTES

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FIVE MINUTES

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BIOGRAPHY

Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa is a photographer, writer and teacher based in New York City. He is the former editor of the contemporary photography website The Great Leap Sideways (2011–2017), contributed essays to catalogues and monographs by Vanessa Winship, George Georgiou, and Paul Graham, was an artist-in-residence at Light Work, guest edited the Aperture Photobook Review, and wrote for Aperture, FOAM magazine and The Photographer's Gallery.

Wolukau-Wanambwa has a BA in Philosophy & French from Oxford University, UK and an MFA in Photography from Virginia Commonwealth University. His photographic work addresses questions of patriarchy, race, history, and identity.

STANLEY

Daniel Miller in
conversation with Stanley
Wolukau-Wanambwa

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WOLUKAU-
WANAMBWA

Forward

There was a bit of a missed connection the day of Stanley's visit. I was supposed to meet him, do this interview and walk him over to the lecture hall. It didn't happen. He did find his way around and I eventually figured out what went wrong but I was thankful to be able to meet again the next day to talk a little bit. He was very gracious.

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Daniel Miller: What does a day off look like?

Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa: I don't know.

(laughter)

We talked about how draining teaching can be and the effort to make work at the same time.

No one I know that does this has days off really. A day off looks like reading the stuff that I didn't have time to read or going out and making pictures which is to say that it looks like work.

Yeah, but it's not.

It is! It is.

Aren't you somewhat enjoying that?

I think a real day off is completely disengaging from the stuff that falls under the umbrella of work. There aren't a lot of those because there's not enough time.

Do you feel bad about that or is it just one of those things?

I think that's what I signed up for.

Before I started grad school I was living in a rural area of the country and that's when I found The Great Leap Sideways. It was such a great resource when living far from cultural centers. I was really bummed to find out that it was taken down. I heard a little bit about it, that the site was hacked.

Yeah it did.

Do you have any plans to rebuild or make a new version of that information?

I don't know. Someone invited me to publish a selection of essays from the site. We haven't really had a chance to talk more about it. I'm more concentrated on these new essays I've been writing. I have a conception of a book of essays I'd like to publish with new work, a pic-

ture and essay book. And that's the thing I've wanted to do most. It's been year and a bit so looking back it seems a little too soon in some ways but I am interested in that invitation. I will also relaunch at some point. I need money and a bit of help.

Time.

Time, yeah. I would relaunch in a different way. I want to be able to feature more people than just myself. I want to be able to pay people. But, I'm happy doing what I'm doing now. I get to do what I'm doing now because I did the site for six years. So, it's still alive just not in that particular form.

That sounds great. I can't wait to see what happens with that and I look forward to reading what you write next in whatever form it takes.

Thanks!

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"A DAY OFF LOOKS
LIKE READING THE
STUFF THAT I DON'T
HAVE TIME TO READ OR
GOING OUT AND MAK-
ING DECISIONS WHICH IS
TO SAY THAT IT LOOKS
LIKE WORK."

BIOGRAPHY

Karthik Pandian's lecture touched on the involuntary in art and how it has inflected his work from monument to animal choreography. Pandian makes works in moving image, sculpture and performance. He has held solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art; Bétonsalon, Paris, Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis and White Flag Projects, St. Louis, amongst others.

His work was featured in the inaugural LA Biennial at the Hammer Museum and La Triennale: Intense Proximity at the Palais de Tokyo as well as in group exhibitions such as Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract Art and Society 1915-2015, at Whitechapel Gallery; Film as Sculpture at Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels; and the 4th Marrakech Biennial, Higher Atlas. He has recently been touring his first stage performance – a collaboration with choreographer Andros Zins-Browne – at theaters throughout the US and Europe.

Pandian holds an MFA from Art Center College of Design and a BA from Brown University. In 2011, he was the recipient of a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award. Pandian is currently Assistant Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

federicaschiavo.com/artists/karthik-pandian

KARTHIK

Laura Butler Hughes and
Kayla Thompson in
conversation with
Karthik Pandian

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PANDIAN

Forward

It has been three months since my interview with Karthik Pandian. I got the whole suite of interactions while he was in town: a studio visit, his lecture, and this interview. His vivid description of his studio and the garden in Milan has been in the front space of my mind ever since—especially now while I'm moving to a new studio. Later, I realized that somewhere deeper back I had internalized advice he'd given me during the studio visit. It was showing up in a sculpture in my thesis work. "This is enough?" he said, encouraging me that some simple impulses were enough to ruminate on if the viewer is given proper space, and their intelligence is not taken for granted. The corners of found, aging, and illuminated display cases and some wobbly ceramic pieces—alone together. Containers with some obvious similarities and differences.

Also, now, while I write applications for teaching jobs I'm thinking about how Karthik prepares his sculpture students for class. That he begins by building a space to be open to one's own material sensitivities, that they not miss something as simple and profound as the color of the world on a grey afternoon.

“ . . . I O P I C K

FIVE MINUTES

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON DEPARTMENT OF ART

Laura Butler Hughes: Well, thanks again for coming.

Karthik Pandian: My pleasure.

LBH: So what does your studio look like?

My studio is divided into two zones. You walk into a place where we eat and talk and meet. I work with Katie Soule who has been working with me for a while and that's the place where we hash out ideas we look at books we look at materials it has got some storage, a chalkboard it's kind of more social but then the studio is divided in half by two sets of scaffolding and the scaffolding is on wheels, big casters—I should say that my studio is an old squash court

LBH: Whoooo.

That's probably important to say.

Kayla Thompson: Sounds echo-y.

Yeah—uh? Yeah. Yeah. I'll get to that. I've never described my studio before so this is interesting, it's also new. I only moved in August. The old squash courts at Harvard, where I teach, each one is given to faculty. So it's got high ceilings and may be a bit echo-y, but then I had this scaffolding staging structure built into the middle of it and it divides it in half, so it's both storage, so all my work that I need to store is actually up high in the scaffolding, and then there's actually places to sit in it. There's a desk built into it so it's kind of like this weird zone of storage and work but it's on wheels so this whole space can be reconfigured. So you pass in between these two sets of scaffolding and then you're in the space where I make objects or project film or edit, so it's more like a work space. Then because it is echo-y there are all these hooks around the top of the ceiling and we can hang acoustic foam down off of it if you want to do some sound work, so it's a very modular space.

LBH: Did you bring in the scaffolding?

UP IHS

I kind of designed it and then it was constructed for me.

LBH: What are some of your favorite things to talk about with students and to do in class?

I teach video, sculpture, and performance so there's a lot of different things we do in class. With sculpture it's really important to let the material kind of guide our exploration, so there's a lot of open ended manipulation of material. And actually to prepare for that we often do kind of quiet breathing exercises and movement exercises to get out of the headspace of a student. Which is really critical I think, to kind of center the knowledge and intelligence of the body. If you have class for two or three hours who knows what they could have been doing before, they could have been hungry or stressed or overworked or all of the above so I think it's important to take some time to re-center and then really commune with materials. With moving image I program a lot of the video and film material that I watch but then it's really critical to me that we create an environment where things that students are watching are seen and talked about with as much care. So we start every day with a different student bringing in a clip of something that they watched on the internet or even social media: Instagram, twitter, it can come from anywhere and we start by talking about that and looking at this whatever piece of media with a lot of attention and you know, there's a lot of funny stuff and weird stuff that people show. That feels like a good ritual.

LBH: Yeah yeah, how long are your studio classes?

I'm actually changing that right now. They meet twice a week for three hours but I think we're going to start doing a six hour chunk starting next year.

LBH: That's how it was where I went to undergrad, it was great.

Yeah it's important, I feel like three hours is not

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enough of a block.

LBH: So I've been reading about and looking at your work over the past couple of weeks, and I keep thinking about collaboration and shared authorship —with other people but also with things. I read an interview where you talk about things like the 16mm camera and camels. I love how you give credit to your collaborators “a cast of multinational fruits and vegetables” do you think this is a strategy for making your work? And is there anything you are collaborating with right now?

So collaboration has become more and more important to me. I think especially in my graduate education there was a really strong emphasis on individual development that I don't think is uncommon. I think in general the professional world wants to see and market you as an individual and I didn't really resist that pressure too much. I was making my work in graduate school and I was continuing to make my work more or less afterwards, except because of the scale of some projects we needed to assemble teams of people to make stuff. It was always really important to me to be not just an artist that was sitting back and detached from that process, but to pick up the shovel so to speak. And I think it was through those kind of experiences, which were really fantastic, it kind of draws on a longer history of mine that has very little to do with art but has to do with creating social and political situations. I think I had a moment where I really wanted to reevaluate how I was working, in fact I stepped back from my solo work and for a period of four years exclusively worked in collaborations.

So I'm really skeptical of this idea that one person makes something. I don't think that anyone does that whether they say they do or not. But it's not really even about that, it's more a kind of joy and aspiration for practice to arc toward the way life is about intersection. You know? Now my long term collaboration with the choreographer Andros Zins-Browne is really probably the strongest expression of that. We've been working together since

2011 on a project that just won't stop, and is a project that will be occupying what will be my life. And yeah, this is a project that began with a collaboration with camels. So the two of us attempted to or recreate a Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas dance film with a cast of camels, and I think that I've learned so much about working with Andros and also from the camels we worked with. They're very obstinate and there's something so powerful about their indifference toward our ideas about art and aesthetics. There's something really powerful about being around and trying to work with animals that really couldn't give a crap about what you are up to.

LBH: So have you encountered anything lately, like read or listened to or seen that has you excited to be in the studio to work?

Yes.

[long pause] Period. [laughing]

LBH: [laughing]

I'm doing my first solo exhibition in four years so I'm kind of now coming out of that retreat. I didn't know if I was going to come out, there was a moment when I thought I was really only interested in pursuing collaborations. I work with a gallery in Italy, and we are going to do a show together that opens in May. They relocated from Rome to Milan and I'd never been to Milan. I had to work on the collaborative stuff in Belgium anyway so I stopped through Milan. I went to see the space and seeing the space was great. The gallery is in an apartment building— and Milan is filled with these gigantic apartment buildings that you have to enter to get to these courtyards but they are very private, you can't really get a sense of them. But it happens that across the street from this apartment building there is another one which is really fancy, it's very beautiful and they have a kind of garden which you can't access, but they have a fence and a kind of hedge which you can peer through. It was a very grey day so the light was very diffuse and the lawn in this

garden was a very vivid green, and they had a fountain which you could hear kind of bubbling, but then living in this garden are a flock of ten of the brightest pink flamingos—

LBH: Oh my god

—like you've ever seen. They live in the garden and they live in the fountain.

KT: So is that a future collaboration?

I don't know, I felt more like a fan of theirs. I saw these flamingoes and it was such an incredibly beautiful vision. So I saw the exhibition space and I was plotting out what to do, and the show has a lot to do with questions of pose and color and it was like well— [laughing] what is a flamingo if not one of the most beautiful evocations of pose and color? So I'm working on a sculpture right now that is trying to translate this kind of vision into material.

KT: Cool, well I think we can wrap up and get you down to the lecture room.

LBH: Well thank you so much.

Thank you for your thoughtful questions.

LBH: I'm from the east coast originally and going to school here is the first time I've been to the Pacific Northwest, and seeing the green on a really grey day when it looks so bright, like you're describing— I'd never seen anything like it. It's so amazing.

It really is yeah. That's a really good choice of a coat color for that too.

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SHOVEL SO

TO SPARK.”

FIVE MINUTES

BIOGRAPHY

Mike Andrews is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Fiber and Material Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is the Executive and Creative Director at the Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency. Andrews received a BFA from SAIC and MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Fueled by dynamic relationships between bright and dull colors, hard and soft materials and a range of scale, his sculptures and tapestries pointedly occupy the gallery. His work is informed by the grandeur of historical tapestries, non-representational abstract painting, and the delirium of home craft. His tapestries simultaneously function as both object and image.

MIKE

Neal Moignard in
conversation with
Mike Andrews

GR

ANDREWS

Forward

Mike Andrews is a Michigan-based interdisciplinary artist who works between handcraft processes in textile and weaving, but whose art practice has come to incorporate increasingly the computer-based tendencies of industrial textile production. His tendencies leapfrog from media to media, using the translation of textile to image, image to vector, and vector to textile, as a way to investigate the physical and cerebral effects of these acts of translation.

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Neal Moignard: First question: do you dream of electric sheep?

Mike Andrews: I think so. I hope to.

Warp or weft?

Weft.

Can you tell me about your work in relation to "the grid"?

Hmmm... something that I didn't show in my presentation were some portraits that were hybrids of my face and some snapchat filters and some filters that were displacing the grid, making it point outwards. Maybe that's how I feel about the grid. Make it point outward.

How do you think about the technology of "the grid"? What insights does working between textile and digital media provide you?

My go-to is to make things that land inside of the grid as a structure, or that go in and out of it. Some of the drawings that I do that are digital might show some kind of chunky pixel that references something more rectilinear, and then that is softened by some kind of smear or swipe, blur or something. To me, it makes me anxious just to have something that is too ordered, but the grid can be necessary.

That act of translation in and out of the grid – how do you find that affects your thinking?

When it is a woven work it is kind of a given, so you can either try to either erase it, not even think about – even though it is an underlying structure – or play up to or play to it. Or amplify and exaggerate it. It depends on the project. The large scale handwoven pieces, it is the structure, but the surface is so gnarly and round that you don't see it. However, these new outsourced textiles that I am making, I am exaggerating it. I don't think one is better than the other, it is just something to react to. You were talking with me before about how it was strange it can be to jump from medium to

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medium. That registered with me, because I grew up with video games and computers and those kinds of things, but when I started to study art more seriously, it was always about the tactile making of a thing, or the presence of a thing in physical space that always really excited me – that felt the most charged. Then, when you think about inhabiting 3D worlds, and imagining what that space is like, it amplifies that even more. You can imagine what that proximity or an object feels like or is. So that back-and-forth has always been something that seduces me. I want to find out how to have a dynamic physical experience that people can move through, as well as a dynamic visual experience. Those are the things that I think about, where I go, what I want to offer.

How do you deal with the differences between the physical and cerebral experience? Do you think they are separate things?

It seems like you're missing out if one is talking about the ends. If you're only talking about an either/or, there's always stuff in the middle that you're not talking about. I am hesitant to use a dichotomy except as a tool. I am always interested in what happens on the path travelling between these two ends. To me that seems more comfortable. This is why I discuss flirting in relation to my work. I like switching ideas. I like changing my mind.

What do you think about the distinction between "new media" or "digital media" and "traditional media"?

I think it's becoming the same conversation between art versus craft. How long do we want to have that discussion? How long do we want to talk about a difference between a digital media and analogue media? Are there other ways to talk about it?

One thing that I was excited about was haptics, visual haptics. Does that way of describing visuals and touch as synonymous provide us another way of thinking about media so that they are not at odds with each other?

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BIOGRAPHY

Anna Sew Hoy lives and works in Los Angeles. She has produced solo projects at the Aspen Art Museum in 2015 and the San Jose Museum of Art in 2011. She has exhibited at the Hammer Museum, LAXART, and Various Small Fires, Los Angeles; Koenig & Clinton, NY; and the 2008 California Biennial among others. Her work is in the collections of the Hammer Museum, SFMOMA, LACMA, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego. Sew Hoy was awarded a Creative Capital Grant for Visual Arts in 2015, the California Community Foundation Grant for Emerging Artists in 2013 and the United States Artists Broad Fellowship in 2006.

Sew Hoy received her MFA from Bard College in 2008.

annasewhoy.info

ANNA SEW

Kayla Thompson in
conversation with
Anna Sew Hoy

CS

HOY

Forward

I had been looking into her past works for a little while now. Her blob-form ceramic pieces have a presence that seems both imposing and inviting for interaction. Ceramics on that scale, in building, one would have to walk around the piece to build up the coils. You would be making something that is both bigger than yourself but hollow- an empty volume that could contain you. I am interested in how she considers empty space, interior volumes, and human interaction. In looking into more of her past works, I was fascinated by her Tissue Dispensing Sculptures and how they relate to utility, humble offerings, infinite consumables, human interaction and human consumer waste. The flow of the questions led to a more formal discussion of the work, her use of empty space, and interaction with the viewer.

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Kayla Thompson: The first question that I have for you is not quite function yet [which we talked about in our studio visit], because it seems like a more important place to start is the space within your work: the volume of your work, the ways the objects interact with each other, and the space in between the objects-how they are spaced apart, and how the objects themselves take up space-being technically hollow. And that you are able to see and show off their interior volume and that the objects carve out space for themselves, that their holes show off the interior space.

Anna Sew Hoy: Yes. Well, I feel like is about ten questions in one question, so first I will pick it apart and answer to maybe the space between the sculptures first.

Okay.

Cause that seems like the first kind of space that you mentioned. The space, when I'm installing work, deciding the spaces in between works, I think you can really build a lot of meaning. If I think about sculptures about foils for each other, like where one is placed will effect the meaning of the other. Or if you have a small work next to a big work, it's different than if you have two things equal size that are close together, two thing of the same size that are far apart. There is content in that space and I'm building the content of the exhibition as a whole through the placement of work. And all of those things, you can get a lot of meaning there- the relationship between things that you are trying to be really specific about.

And how do you think about the interiors of the works.

Those works that I was showing at the talk, those orbs, that were called embodied heads, I was thinking about a lot of these things. The sculptures are like shells around space. Or like the objects are delineations of the space. So maybe the content of the work is like that volume. And when I am thinking about works, one thing that I go back to a lot is this- I was

visiting japan in 2006 and before I visited I was reading about temples and Shinto shrines and I found this one detail about how in a lot of shinto shrines there is a mirror placed in the rafters. And the mirror is reflecting- you know not there for you to fixed your hair-- but placed high up where you can't utilize, its reflecting the ceiling

A reflection of space.

To me, it is like holding a space or reflecting an empty space.

Is that why you use mirrors in some of your work?

There is a lot a reasons why I use mirrors. But, the idea of a mirror actually acting as a way of imaging space was really useful for me. I use mirrors for all different kinds of reasons but thats one of them.

It almost seems to give your objects a personality because they now have a face: they now can look.

But how is a mirror- how did you just skip to "a mirror is like a face?"

Maybe I did skip, that's the logic of my own brain. Cause you can see what the objects are looking at. You can see what's in their line of eyesight.

Yeah. And then that show is called Face, No Face-- not a show that I described in my talk last night. That show was before Aspen, a gallery show in LA. Those mirror blobs they do kind have this face but it's an invisible face. The mirror makes the face faceless. The space isn't empty, it's always reflecting something but often it's reflecting where the wall meets the floor or somebody's elbow who is walking past, or another piece of another sculpture. Because of the placement of the mirrors, low to the ground, it would reflect the things that you would normally feel are unimportant.

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“A SCULPTURE

IS THERE TO

I can see that.

The edges of things is what its reflecting. So it's more like a meditation of the things that may be unimportant, the B-side views, the off-views, the sidelined things. And that's creating a metaphor for ways of paying attention to thing things that are not usually paid attention to.

And I think the mirrors and the holes into the interior volume do suggest a way of interacting with the work, encouraging moving around the objects. So Can we talk about the human interaction with the work as well. I know in your talk that you suggested rituals that might be ways of interacting with the work.

Well, there is ritual... you were talking about the tissue dispensing sculpture, which I didn't show any images of in the slide-talk, but a way of dealing with that sculpture is to use it as a tissue dispenser. In general, a sculpture is there to be walked around--that's the magic of sculpture, that you can see it in the round. Like an object or body in a room and we, as a art view, are also a body in a room so that is part of the whole experience of sculpture. If it wasn't built to be walked around then I should make a painting-I can't separate the fact that you walk around it from what it is, that is part of it. But I think the way I make those works- I make them so that you become really conscious of that part of experiencing it- you have to be that body walking around another body.

And with the mirrors, you do notice those placements of bricks and corners as you walk around. All of the little perspective changes since the mirrors are lower, it reflects more to the floor.

This sounds like such a formal conversation because we are talking about space and now we are talking about looking. Specific things around space and then specific things around looking- so when you are walking around it and you can see through it, but you can also see the reflections of things. So it is also making you very conscious that you are

having a visual experience.

This might be me jumping topics again, but some of those blob forms also have seats attached to the back of them- I'm thinking about the ones with the casters. Are those to be interacted with by the public?

These definitely have the potential to be interacted with, used that way. So you can sit in it, but when it was shown at Aspen, I don't know if the gallery let people sit in it, if they were asked to get up.

Right, the location of all of the objects seem very important and since they were on casters...

They kinda became like a set composition, but yes those things are on casters and they are made out of fiberglass so they are really strong. The reason why those forms were made (in 2008) was because I was trying to make something that was a sculpture but an object to be moved around- to be used in a performance. So it was a hybrid of sculpture and prop. And that's when I started my work with Flora Weigmann in 2008. I originally made those sculptures to be used in performance with Flora. They are as much sculpture as they are prop or as much prop as they are sculpture.

For one thing I love the idea of props because they are things to be interacted with but also part performance. They have a potential use but they are also on display. It seems like you like the idea of potential use.

I think about and I think around use and potential use and what is useful a lot.

But not as items of utility.

Well, I think I have lots of different way of approaching this topic. Like the mirror blobs that we've been talking about were originally made for a very specific performance. And the tissue dispensing sculptures ave a specific use and interaction. But sometimes when I'm using

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the idea of a hook, on those wall works, there is a hook thre but there is nothing hanging on the hook so that is more like a potential use or a symbol. It's a symbol of a hook.

Or it already has something hanging on it, already installed.

An already used hook. And then the tie that is draped on it- its draped on it but it's like a composition element at the same time. So then it formalizes it; it becomes a part of the formal conversation- maybe it's pushing the function of the hook into a formal conversation.

And then your bird baths approach utility in a similar ways as the hooks because they are in themselves ornamentation and have a function.

Well the goal for the bird baths is to actually be able to go outside and be used by birds. I don't even know if birds will like them. I hope they would. And so the bird baths are more based on the large bronze that I was talking about, Physic Body Grotto. Which is the piece that is scaled to be a room sized sculpture, for people.

Almost like a people bird bath cause it has a basin in it to catch water and the elements.

That one came first though and the bird bath idea came second. So now I want to make a Physic Body Grotto for birds, thats a bird bath.

[laughter]

Ha, I love it.

The Physic Body Grotto came first. This outdoor room for people to use however they decide. I wasn't going to tell people how they should use it. It's not like the tissue dispenser where it is obvious how it should be used. The people who are experience the piece have to come up with their own answer.

Okay. Cool. Do you have any future projects

that you are excited about...that you'd like to give hints towards...

I'm always working on something that I'm really excited about. I'm making work and I have some deadlines for shows in January. All that means is that I have to start, now that I made all of these starts-of-things and I know where I want the individual sculptures to go in terms of their being finished, now I have to start figuring out how they would go in a certain specific space.

And that leads us back to the beginning, them interacting with each other.

Ha. Yes they then will start to build relationships between each other. All of these considerations I have in mind during the whole process of making something.

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BE WALKED

AROUND.”

BIOGRAPHY

Crystal Z Campbell considers the internet as the site in which everything and nothing can be erased—prompting questions about what stories these digitally curated remains can reveal for progeny. Campbell's creative practice uses found footage or historical references, often gleaned from both tangible archives and internet sources. These narratives of yesteryear are often processed through film, light, sound, performance, installation, ceramics, painting, writing, and community projects to interrogate present notions of justice and the politics of witnessing. Most recently, Campbell has investigated Henrietta Lacks' immortal cell line, the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, and gentrification. Campbell uses art as a tool for transmitting historical memory, time-travel, and proposing social change.

Crystal Z Campbell is an interdisciplinary artist and writer of African-American, Filipino & Chinese descents. Campbell's work has been exhibited and screened internationally: ICA Philadelphia (US), Artericambi (IT), Artissima (IT), Studio Museum of Harlem (US), Futura Contemporary (CZ), Project Row Houses in Texas (US), Children's Museum of San Diego (US), Art Rotterdam (NL), de Appel Arts Centre (NL) and SculptureCenter (US) amongst others. Selected honors and awards include Pollock-Krasner MacDowell Colony Fellow, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Rijksakademie van beeldende Kunsten, Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program Van Lier Fellowship, Sommerakademie Paul Klee, Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst, Mondriaan Fonds, Fondazione Ratti and a recent Smithsonian Fellowship. Campbell is a currently a second-year Tulsa Artist Fellow in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

crystalzcampbell.com

CRYSTAL Z

Daniel Miller in
conversation with
Crystal Z Campbell

ZC

CAMPBELL

FORWARD

Crystal Z Campbell gave a riveting lecture about her work. This interview was conducted over email.



Daniel Miller: What is your ideal breakfast?

CRYSTALZ CAMPBELL:

1. Two Eggs Over Easy
2. Open Air
3. Three Slices Thick-Cut Bacon
4. Sunshine
5. Gluten-Free Waffles
6. Silence
7. Amber Maple Syrup
8. Warmth
9. Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice: Pulp
10. News

What does a normal studio day look like?

I'm a project-based artist, often trying not to repeat myself, and often failing in my attempts. On one hand, I have physical studio, which I go to when I need to make dirty work. The studio is full of crates, paint, metal, and other ephemera I've collected along the way, perhaps for inspiration or for the narrative I attach to the object. At the moment, I have a growing collection of analog media such as overhead projectors that I grew up on in the 80's and 90's. I'm fascinated by the transparency, and what transparencies were intended to illuminate about knowledge: the transparency of a teaching tool.

By nature, I wander and have no set boundaries as so much of my life bleeds into my creative practice. I often find myself wandering, trying to make space for things to come, for accidents, for failures. Each day brings something distinct. I'm relying more on my computer as a repository, a source, a tool, a mailbox, a DJ, an influencer, an archive, and increasingly, my mobile studio. At this moment, I'm traveling more for my practice, and this travel also changes my work, coaxing me to write more and to produce more on this apparatus that allows me to travel light.

Emails: love or hate?

I've never been a fan of emails. The analog lover in me, is secretly nostalgic for handwrit-

ten letters, and harking back to communication that was less transactional, and more at leisure. Maybe I'm romanticizing this a bit, but both of my parents worked for the post office, as did I for at least a summer. Mail was a huge part of our lives, conversations, and a kind of structure for communication that came with much surprise. And somehow, I still haven't completely accepted the transition of a physical inbox to a digital one. Part of the fact has to do with the physicality, I'm a tactile oriented person, and much of the time, emails don't have the same resonance as a physical object. Despite the lack of overall appeal, the digital infrastructure permits me a lot of freedoms, and allows me to be a contemporary artist in Tulsa, Oklahoma and convene with colleagues globally in seconds or at the same time from different time zones.

How do you view your art practice in relation to your time as a social worker?

That's a good question. When I was an undergraduate at the University of Oklahoma, a professor encouraged me to apply to Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. I was accepted. I went I was twenty-two and technically still an undergraduate. It was an amazing nine-week immersion into contemporary art, and I had a bit of culture shock because I hadn't actually seen much contemporary art in person, met many artists outside of school, and had no idea what a residency was and how to use it.

I also had a certain kind of guilt, knowing that my parents were working certain types of labor, as did my grandparents, and so on. I was a bit overwhelmed by the privilege and what it means to be able to sit in solitude if I choose, and glue strips of tar together. I was overwhelmed by the problems I could create and resolve, that I had this option to make things up but sitting in this gorgeous wood studio also felt very isolating. It made me wonder about what art can do, what artists can do, and how art can of service. After Skowhegan, I studied abroad or a year in Valencia, Spain.



When I returned from Spain, I got a position as a social worker with the state of Oklahoma which I kept for a year. The trappings of bureaucracy made my naivete about "helping people" within the state institution disappear quite quickly, but the notions of social work are crux of my practice. Only, I am working with a lot of communities of people that are displaced, or no longer here. My case loads are legacies of injustice that I actively revisit, reopen, and work with, and work through.

Could you talk a bit about the origins of "Go-Rilla Means War" and the experience of working on that project over multiple years?

Go-Rilla Means War is a work that comes out of my wanderings. I was wandering with a friend near my old neighborhood when she invited me to wander with her into a defunct theater that was being squatted. On the floor of this black Civil Rights Theater, the Slave Theater, I literally walked into a 35mm roll of film. This was eight years ago. The film was damaged, and my efforts to have it professionally scanned failed. A couple years ago, I stuffed it in my suitcase, and went to a DIY shop with my studio neighbor. Together we came up with an incredibly low budget reel from plumbing flanges that allowed me to eventually scan 20,000 frames over four months. I was also able to have it professionally scanned afterwards. This experience was an incredible meditation on the physicality of analog film. The film itself, dust, scratches and all, I realized, was a witness of urban neglect. The film was unfinished, with no credits or soundtrack.

I spent two weeks in New York City reverse engineering this film, in search of its origins, its maker. And I have a strong hunch of who the filmmaker is, but I'm still trying to cross-reference my hunch. Maybe there's some shape-shifting at play, the theater was demolished when I showed the project for the first time publicly in January 2017 at Sculpture Center. Watching this film disappear and reappear slowly over 4 months was next wave slow cinema, Go-Rilla Means War reminds me

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of the importance of archives, of the politics of remembering, of tracing, and mostly, of what this material can only begin to tell me.

"I'M FAS-
CINATED BY
THE IRANS-
PARENCE,
AND WHAT
IRANS-
PARENCE
WERE IN-
TENDED TO
ILLUMI-
NATE ABOUT
KNOWL-
EDGE:..."

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FIVE MINUTES

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON DEPARTMENT OF ART

FIVE MINUTES

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CENTER FOR THE ART RESEARCH MISSION

The Center for Art Research (CFAR) is a collaborative artist-run platform for experimentation and exchange rooted in art making. The Center cultivates diverse modes of engagement related to the practices of artists at the University of Oregon by supporting speculative RESEARCH, DISCOURSE, EXHIBITION, and PUBLICATION.

RESEARCH

CFAR brings together artists and scholars from around the world to catalyze unexpected connections and outcomes related to the practice-led research of affiliated artists. CFAR takes an expanded view of art research by supporting individual and collaborative projects, residencies, and a variety of initiatives that happen within and outside of studio practice. CFAR research responds fluidly to dynamic currents in society and culture that are relevant to a range of people and communities.

DISCOURSE

CFAR challenges, synthesizes, and expands engagement with contemporary art through diverse approaches that include studio dialogue, public lectures and symposia, experimental gatherings, and more focused seminars and workshops. By approaching art practice as a catalytic mode of inquiry, center affiliates also work with colleagues from adjacent fields to develop transdisciplinary discourse that is relevant to broad constituencies.

EXHIBITION

CFAR makes visible the work of contemporary artists through the Center and with partners by facilitating exhibitions and alternative forms of public display in local, national, and international spheres. Activities range from gallery exhibitions and site-responsive installations to experimental screenings, performances, and social actions.

PUBLICATION

CFAR publications vary in form and content, proliferating art thinking related to the experiences and conditions of contemporary life. Publications, authored by center affiliates and others, are both printed and web-based, and include essays, monographs, periodicals, public archives, editioned art multiples, and other experimental forms.



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