



Center for 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. CFAR is directed by the faculty in the University of Oregon's Department of Art and is sustained by the contributions of individuals and institutions from around the world.

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.

Five Minutes

2019-2020

Interviews with artists
by MFA candidates

Issue Editor

Nathan Alexander Ward

MFA Interviewers

Eden Evans
Erin Langley
Emily Lawhead
Ian Sherlock Molloy
Hannah Petkau
Tannon Reckling
Caroline Turner
Nathan Alexander Ward

Design and Typography

FISK

Executive Editors

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

Special Thanks

Brian Gillis, Center for Art Research Director, Professor
Amanda Wojick, Department of Art Head, Swindells Chair, Professor

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Department of Art
5232 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-5232

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

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Editor's Introduction

5 Minutes is a limited-run publication featuring interviews between art and art history graduate students and art professionals invited to the University of Oregon through the Department of Art's Visiting Artist Lecture Series. In this series, artists, curators and historians from widely varying geographies, disciplines, and methodologies lecture on their work, histories, and ideas, providing insight into their lives and practices. *5 Minutes* is a platform to aggregate the casual, short-format interviews conducted throughout each academic year into a tangible, printed document that gives form to the otherwise ephemeral interactions.

With a few exceptions, these interviews took place just before the visiting lecturer gave their presentation; the interviewer met the interviewee near campus and walked with them—sometimes quite frantically to stay on schedule—to Lawrence Hall where they would speak. As suggested by the title *5 Minutes*, these encounters were brief, but they were also spirited. Each of the following interviews offers a meaningful glimpse into the individuals on either side of the conversation.

5 Minutes began with Christopher Michlig and Wendy Heldmann's vision to provide an opportunity for creative minds to share an experience and as a project to support print media. This publication marks the project's sixth year; it is my sincere hope that you enjoy the following and I encourage you to look back to the many wonderful interviews from previous years.

Hannah Petkau
in conversation with

Julia
Haft-Candell



Julia Haft-Candell (b. 1982, Oakland, CA) received a BA from University of California, Davis before graduating from the MFA program at California State University, Long Beach in 2010. She spent a summer residency in 2016 at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Madison, ME, and has been awarded multiple grants from the Center for Cultural Innovation and most recently the California Community Foundation Fellowship in 2019. Haft-Candell has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions nationally, and is represented by Parrasch Heijnen Gallery in Los Angeles.

juliahaftcandell.com

Hannah Petkau: I really loved your talk yesterday, particularly how you began with the video of tide pools and how you talked about the therapeutic and meditative qualities being similar between ceramics and the ocean. Are there other aspects of those two things that are similar for you?

Julia Haft-Candell: I think about erosion a lot, the way water erodes clay, there is just a general relationship between clay and water I think about a lot. And I think about water a lot, the ocean in particular; I swim to keep sane, it's very meditative. And I think about how our bodies are mostly water...I don't know, it's funny because with these connections, the more I talk about them the more of them I find.

HP: Swimming is such a highly repetitive and rhythmic process. Are you primarily a hand builder?

JHC: I am, yeah, I wheel throw mostly when I teach it. It's a highly meditative process in its own way, so when I do it I really enjoy that aspect but maybe not as much as when hand building.

HP: Do you find that tidal shifts inform your practice at all, the oscillation?

JHC: I like thinking about the concept and the lunar connection, how everything from our feelings and health could be tied to it; so in that sense, my studio work could be connected to that. The main thing that I love about

the tides and the ocean is that it will just keep repeating itself over and over and over and will keep doing it until there is no ocean.

HP: Yeah, there's a reliability.

JHC: There's a reliability that I love, it's very calming. And in that reliability there is a whole ecosystem that exists.

HP: I thought of tidal shifts yesterday when you mentioned that you tend to work on series of small scale and then switch to large scale, there is a flow back and forth between the two.

JHC: That's a nice way to think about it, I like that.

HP: Does that come up in other ways, like, material choice? Or is it mostly just shifting in scale?

JHC: Mostly scale. But maybe also color choice. Probably the more I think about it I'll find other examples.

HP: Any colors you favor?

JHC: Blues.

HP: Fitting.

JHC: Yeah. I watercolor a lot, draw and add water color; I didn't realize for a long time how that may have a connection with my ceramic work in terms of the glaze, both having only

I think about erosion a lot, the way water erodes clay, there is just a general relationship between clay and water I think about a lot. And I think about water a lot, the ocean in particular...

some amount of control to them. I've been trying to use glaze to mimic the look of watercolors lately, choosing glaze colors based on my watercolor choices and then adding a white matte glaze over the colors to further mute them into a foam-like appearance.

HP: My last question is about your Glossary of Terms and Symbols which compliments your ceramic work, as a catalog of motifs—is that something you've done with other works?

JHC: That was the first time I did that but I've referred to it elsewhere, I'm going to make an updated version of it. It's such a weird thing, I'm making these forms unconsciously, it's a system that is intuitive rather than controlled, and I analyze the shapes and write definitions for them. I continue to ask myself why I did something and it is kind of a record for me to think about why I'm doing what I'm doing.

HP: So there are new things you want to add to it?

JHC: Yeah, new terms, new motifs, I've renamed some things; I'll make a new book of that at some point.

HP: Will there be a series to compliment that new version or will it just be a book on its own?

JHC: At this point, I don't know that they need to be shown together, maybe it depends on the exhibition. I don't think that they'll ever be presented again in such a literal way.

Nathan Alexander Ward
in conversation with

with

Nicholas
Muellner

Nicholas Muellner is an artist who operates at the intersection of photography and writing. Through books, exhibitions and slide lectures, his projects investigate the limits of photography as a documentary pursuit and as an interface to literary, political and personal narratives. His recent image-text books include *The Photograph Commands Indifference* (A-Jump Books, 2009) and *The Amnesia Pavilions* (A-Jump Books, 2011). His 2017 book, *In Most Tides An Island* (SPBH Editions, 2017), was shortlisted for the Aperture/Paris Photo Photobook of the Year Award, and he is a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow in Photography. He Co-Directs the Image Text MFA and Press at Ithaca College.

nicholasmuellner.com

Nathan Alexander Ward: My experience with your work has largely been in the context of image and text; regarding your career, which came first?

Nicholas Muellner: That's something that I'll actually talk about at the beginning of my lecture later. I started out studying literature and wanting to be a photographer, so my time and mental space was divided between reading and writing about other people's writing and going to the darkroom.

I was a comparative literature undergrad at Yale and I took photography classes on the side just to be at the fringes of it because I wasn't going to be an art major, there was hardly an art undergraduate degree there at the time. I knew language was important to me but I also had this idea that I wanted to be an artist, even if I didn't really know what that meant. Then I went to grad school for art at Temple University and I was in a photography program, I played with language and tried to work with language but found it frustrating and so I really turned away from writing as part of my work for a long time—I'd say for at least a decade—and I was just a photographer in a relatively traditional sense in terms of what I made. But writing crept back into my work slowly, first by writing about other people's work and then slowly incorporating it into my own. I think that once I found a format for it, I could figure out a way back into it; but I had to approach it through the process of becoming a photographer.

NAW: How did you end up writing about other

people's work? I think that *The Landscape Game*, which you wrote for Ron Jude, may have been my first encounter with your work.

NM: I mean, I had an interest in how photography functioned in the world, being a photographer, but it was partly just incidental. I had started to do a little writing in *Art Journal* about underground Soviet photography—I spent a lot of time in the Soviet Union/Russia—it was something that I was invited to do and I was excited about it, from there I think that Ron just asked me if I wanted to write about his work for a show and I did. After that, I wrote a couple short things for other shows; I had done some curating, in the 2000s I did quite a lot, and I think that curating forces a different relationship to art than being an artist does, even though I try to approach curating as an artist in terms of how I want the experience to feel and what I value. You have to be able to articulate, for yourself and for an audience, what you think is happening, what's at stake, using language when you're curating—to get funding and to write a curatorial statement about work that's not yours. I think that's probably what led me back into writing about photography. And then it wasn't really until 2006, I had a show of photographs, and I was asked to give a talk right before the show opening... it just felt wrong to explain the work to people right before they were going to see it, so I ended up writing this lecture that was about ideas adjacent to the photographs in the gallery but that didn't include a reference

You have to be able to articulate, for yourself and for an audience, what you think is happening, what's at stake, using language when you're curating...

to them directly. That turned into my first image/text book.

NAW: With all of your experience working with image and text at this point, have you found any notable pitfalls in coupling the two, recurring obstacles in their combined use?

NM: I think that the most obvious potential pitfall, to me, is assuming that you should use both. One of the projects in my latest book started out as a piece of writing and I was determined to make it into an image/text project. I spent several years revising the text and making images that I thought went with the language, then one day I was just like "What the hell have I been thinking?"; the whole point was that there aren't images to see, there shouldn't be images, it's a piece of writing. And the opposite has also happened. So, sometimes when I show images that were in my last book in an exhibition, there is one moment of language that appears in a separate room, as a sort of sculptural installation that's just language, but the rest of the show has no words in it, no narrative, no text, it's just an experience of photographs. And, you know, because I run this image/text program there's a lot of pressure to think that they always belong together.

NAW: Yeah, I was definitely thinking about your role in the Image Text MFA program at Ithaca College when I asked that question. You've probably encountered so many projects that

do assume that the two need to be together. Does it often turn out that people doing those projects, in that program, end up going with one or the other?

NM: We've actually had a lot of students graduate with a body of work that is just images and a body of work that is just writing. A lot of students do end up making hybrid works but there are also a lot of students who make separate works that feel related to each other or that come out of the same thoughts or experiences but that function as totally independent projects. If everyone made image/text works, I would think that I've done a terrible thing because I don't think that's the answer to everything, just as I don't think that still-photography is the answer to everything or that a novel is the answer to everything.

NAW: Are you in the middle of anything right now that uses both?

NM: I have one project, I hesitate to even call it a project... it's a bunch of directions and I haven't gotten to a point where I understand where they all lead. I usually pursue my work more by impulse than by concept. The newest thing that I'm embarking on is becoming a portrait photographer. One of my goals as an artist, every so often and especially when I've recently finished something, is to become a different kind of artist. I don't want to get bored being the same artist. So I've been making portraits and it's taken me about a year, and a lot of bad pictures, to finally get some

idea about how I want those portraits to be made, formally and visually and technically. I can't really put my finger on what the portraits are or what they're for exactly, they're pretty stylized and far from a documentary type of experience, and I don't know what that's about yet. I've started to do some writing that feels parallel that's loosely inspired by time spent in global port cities, Odessa in Ukraine, Long Beach south of LA I'm sort of compelled to think about these places where things pass through, all these goods of the world and people, and the way that these port cities have this history of being places where queer cultures can exist. And I have this other project that's a collaboration with a writer, we've been traveling together to Ukraine. It started out as a project about me trying to learn, in a positive or hopeful way, how gay people in Ukraine construct their lives. And I have this friend whose father grew up just outside Ukraine, whose grandfather was in a ghetto during the war, and she had been working on this novel and wanted to go to where her family had been in the ghetto, this town that still has a Jewish population; so we went together because we both wanted to do these things and some of our interests overlapped in personal ways, not creative ways, and what we found was this territory to work in together that had a lot to do with the way that these minority populations construct their identities in this contemporary setting—and how the gay people see their sense of self in the future and how the Jewish people understand themselves through the past. So, that's a project where we travel

together and I photograph, sometimes write, but the photographs are a very different kind of photography for me because I'm always with another person and I don't have control of the interactions or my time, so it's a very notational in a way. And we started to write the correspondences, a dialogue, about our often very different experiences of the same things. We did a performance together where we read the text to a set of the images.

NAW: Did you ever travel there by yourself, or did they, where you weren't working together and were having individual experiences?

NM: Well, I've been in Ukraine a bit by myself; but we went together twice and I went back once by myself just to work on making these very elaborately staged portraits of members of a gay community that I've gotten to know in Odessa. The portraits weren't necessarily part of that project I was doing with this friend...it's weird, because we have this collaborative project over here and this non-collaborative project over here but they're kind of enmeshed—I don't know where the line gets drawn—I'm sort of in a funny moment with my work right now.

NAW: Alright, well unfortunately we've gone well over time but I didn't want to rush anything. I do have one last question though; I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on writing in a place, in the sense of how you almost necessarily have to make photographs in a place rather than from home.

I don't want to get bored being the same artist.

NM: Do you mean the literal act of writing or getting content to write about?

feel that there is a necessary distance to make sense of why you're asking others read the stuff. It's an interesting question.

NAW: Whichever, just the idea of writing in a place compared to doing photography in that same way.

NAW: Great, thanks. We're coming up on twenty minutes now so I think that you should get to your talk!

NM: For me, it's both similar and different in that I go somewhere to make work; I take photographs and write in my journal, then I go back home and go through this process of editing and editing and editing of photographs but also rewriting and writing from what I've written. So the raw material comes from being somewhere but the act of writing happens at a distance, that seems important to me, necessary, because I like the immediacy of what I write when I'm experiencing something but that's not the form I want it to take. It's important to have that nugget of immediacy but I

Ian Sherlock Molloy
in conversation with

Danny
Orendorff

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Danny Orendorff is a curator and writer working as Executive Director of Vox Populi, a non-profit gallery, performance space and art collective in Philadelphia, PA. Founded in 1988, Vox Populi serves as an enduring model for how a radically independent and experimental arts organization can sustain itself through collective effort and constant evolution. Formerly, Orendorff was Curator of Public Programs for the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City and Program Director for non-profit Chicago gallery Threewalls. As an independent curator, Orendorff has organized large group exhibitions for such venues as DePaul Art Museum (Chicago, IL), The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (Asheville, NC), SFCamerawork (San Francisco, CA), and The Charlotte Street Foundation (Kansas City, MO), amongst others. He has taught in the Fiber & Material Studies Departments of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Tyler School of Art at Temple University.

dandannydaniel.com

Ian Sherlock Molloy: So, I have just three questions, super fast, five minutes...

Danny Orendorff: But I talk a lot...

ISM: We can go over. First, the title of your lecture tonight is "Doing It Together: Queerness, Craft, Collectivity" and I was wondering if you could just expand on that, what inspired it?

DO: Two things, I guess, first is that I was thinking about all of my organizing, choices as a curator and a writer and somebody involved with DIY spaces and communities, activists groups, all these things that have been like north starts for me, things that I can't help but end up working on consciously or unconsciously. I think I've been doing this personal audit of my own work over the past ten or fifteen years, trying to suss out some of the recurring strategies, values, politics, that pop up again and again. And the second thing... you know, I'm sort of recommitting myself to those things as well. When I moved from Philly to New York and was working in the most institutional capacity of my career as Curator of Public Programs for the Museum of Arts and Design in Manhattan, all of these paradigms just crashed for me; there was this thought that this was it, I had finally landed in a curatorial role at a renowned institution but I was just really miserable. I needed to re-choose my choice of being involved in spaces with the people and communities that actually inspired me. I came up through DIY spaces, worked my way up to this pinnacle moment of working

at an institution like that...and then left to go back to the sort of places where, in my early twenties, I would go to party and hang out and meet people and hook up and all that stuff. I'm thinking about those things a lot, I guess that's where the title is coming from.

ISM: Out of those three attributes; queerness, craft, and collectivity, collectivity feels like the hardest, in terms of how you collaborate and change fine art to being about the community rather than the individual.

DO: It's funny—and not to give my talk away—I think collectivity is inherent to queerness and to craft. I mean, when you look to people who are coming up in craft related media or craft tradition, you're talking about guilds and shops and studios, projects that are not usually accomplishable by one person; then with queerness, you're talking about a community of comrades and lovers and people that are constantly challenging inherited hierarchies and power dynamics. For me, the two together are where things are the most exciting. Where collective, collaborative practices are not subscribing to the status quo of, like, a master technician with an underling studio assistant; where a community of amateurs and anarchists are fucking shit up and doing experimental, weird thing together in the pursuit of something liberating or new. That is the kind of collectivity that I'm interested in.

ISM: Do you have any advice, or sage wisdom, for someone who's looking to create these

I'm increasingly drawn to this notion of just abdicating any kind of curatorial apparatus...

kind of spaces or start curating in them?

DO: Uhh, to get out of other people's way...I'm increasingly drawn to this notion of just abdicating any kind of curatorial apparatus, like, part of the reason I like working for Vox Populi is that I'm very much not the curator of that space. We try as hard as we can to not have any sort of interpretive apparatus between the artists and their audience. That being said, you need a keeper of the vessel, somebody to do the writing, to keep the books up to date, keep the facilities safe—and I find that work to be really rewarding. It's different from my curatorial work but very much informed by the ethics I try to bring to my curatorial work. So, I don't know if that's wisdom as much as a strategy or design of relationships between artists and

organizations that I find to be the most fruitful in terms of real artistic freedom.

ISM: Alright, last question, are there any projects that you're working on right now that you're super-psyched on or something a colleague is working on that you're excited about and want to share?

DO: Yeah, and to go off the previous question, at Vox we do a curatorial fellowship—and, you know, I'm sometimes skeptical of fellowships and residencies because I think that the host institution is usually very strategic as to who they're inviting because they're hoping for some rub off of that magical being inhabiting their space or whatever—so to finish that thought, Vox had been inviting very

established curators and academics to come and do a suite of performance programs for part of the Black Box curatorial fellowship and when I got there I changed it. I thought that it should be for young people, rambunctious event organizers, persons in town with no real training or credentials but who are out there organizing their communities into interesting formations. So, we chose this applicant, Malachi Lily, who is probably twenty-five or younger and is a black trans-identifying artist and poet, and they did this project called Children of Sirius which is about this concept that black trans people chose to come to Earth in these bodies that are kind of the most subject to violence and persecution and marginalization and are therefore divine; they did these incredible performance programs and installations of various artists' work in our space that, you know, I just could not have managed. It was like pure anarchy among Malachi's collaborators. I'm really excited about a lot of the things that they're working on because I have this interest in the relationship between trans and queer individuals and the nonhuman... or like, people that have historically been excluded from the concept of human in terms of legislation and philosophy and psychiatry. How do we learn from nonhuman counterparts, wildlife and plants, about orienting our sense of the natural? And so, Malachi and I are just really vibing on some of the same ideas and they are just a really unlikely collaborator for me and I really just adore this person; we're working together and that's what I'm really excited about right now. We have this whole

concept of what we call eco-sexuality and are doing a big project about sexualities that are informed by nonhuman organisms...so...we'll see where that goes!

Caroline Turner
in conversation with

Jacob Riddle

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Jacob Riddle is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and curator. Jacob's work deals with ideas surrounding labor, class, automation, value, capital, physicality, and virtuality. Jacob has exhibited his work and been Artist in Residence nationally and internationally including Flaggfabrikken, Bergen, Norway; Arteles, Haukijärvi, Finland; Rodbianco, Oslo, Norway; École Supérieure d'Art d'Avignon, Avignon, France; Tele Vision, Sydney Australia; Dom Funkcjonalny, Warsaw, Poland; Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Jacob's work is held in the collections of the Rhizome Art Base at the New Museum and PAMAL at École Supérieure d'Art d'Avignon.

thisisjacobriddle.com

Caroline Turner: I wanted to say first off that Jacob and I both went to the University of Cincinnati for our undergrads, we missed each other by a year or two, but I always heard about Jacob's work and paid attention to what he was doing—so it's very exciting to have you here while I'm doing my MFA. I was hoping that we could begin by you telling us a little about your practice and any priorities you have in your work?

Jacob Riddle: Yeah, that is kind of a difficult question for me because my practice tends to be quite varied, always shifting, I'm often a sculptor or a photographer or a photographer sculptor. Lately I've been making a lot of 3D models using photogrammetry and sculpting in VR. I'm a little all over the place right now.

CT: When you have to give an elevator pitch, do you have a thing you say or do you just say all that?

JR: I usually just start talking about whatever I'm working on at the time or something that I've just finished and am excited about.

CT: You co-directed an artist run DIY gallery in Cincinnati called Third Party Gallery, could you talk about what the central theme or mission was for that space and your experience curating shows there?

JR: Sure, so the artist-run gallery scene in Cincinnati, at the time, was very active but kind of stagnant, there were a lot of these

spaces but they were all a bit incestuous, just showing the same local artists, the director's friends, and they would have a lifespan of maybe a year or two. Things just recycled and fizzled. So we really wanted to ignore our geographic location while curating our shows, focused more on our online presence and building a larger network and community.

CT: Any shows that you remember being particularly interesting? I was in high school when Third Party was going, so I had never heard of it. But I look back and see that you were showing really interesting things, like, Dutch female meta-photographers—how did you all find that praxis?

JR: There was quite a group of us that ran the space but we tried to only have two or three of us on any exhibition. We'd come up with some concept and build a list of dream artists and then kind of just work our way down the list.

CT: Would you just send out emails?

JR: Yeah, like I said, we were very focused on our online presence—we were clean and slick and professional—and would just send out emails and show images of the space and explain the exhibition. I don't think there was any certain show that stands out to me as being the most memorable; it was the small events that were more like happenings that were always the most exciting. We did a series called PIPRIRL, Post-Internet Poetry Reading In Real Life, and we did a Powerpoint Open Mic

My practice tends to be quite varied, always shifting, I'm often a sculptor or a photographer or a photographer sculptor.

Night, Staring Eyes which was like a curated video movie night—that one started because one of the people involved had these amazingly well thought-out movie nights at his house and we just thought, “Why is this not happening in the gallery?”

CT: Was that something that was documented online?

JR: Some of them, PIPRIRL was all about the documentation. We invited local poets and writers to present and also a lot of internet artists focused on language to Skype in and be projected on the wall, but the entire thing was being live-streamed so they were being projected into the space but also being streamed out. We found that our online viewership was always, like, ten times the physical viewership.

CT: Interesting! So, we've kind of privately joked about this, we share a mentor in Jordan Tate— he was actually a visiting artist here a few years ago—and we've joked that we've been gaslit by him in certain ways. I'm wondering if you can share a way that you feel that you've been gaslit by him?

JR: [Laughing] I've been thinking about that a lot lately. Maybe it's because we've been talking about it. I think that gaslit is the wrong word because I think of that word as sowing doubt and it has a very negative connotation. I think Jordan did the exact opposite, I think he gave this sense of potentiality. Third Party is a perfect example, when we were talking about

wanting to start a space, he said to do it. I was also part of a blog he ran called *ilikethisart.net*...technically I'm still a part of it I guess, it's been dormant for years. I think there's, I don't want to say a false sense of optimism, a way of viewing the art world with a sort of blinders on that is more like green lighting rather than gaslighting.

CT: Great. That's been a little over five minutes, thanks so much!

Tannon Reckling
in conversation with

Theo Triantafyllidis

Theo Triantafyllidis (b. 1988, Athens, GR) is an artist who builds virtual spaces and the interfaces for the human body to inhabit them. He creates expansive worlds and complex systems where the virtual and the physical merge in uncanny, absurd, and poetic ways. These are often manifested as performances, virtual and augmented reality experiences, games, and interactive installations. He uses awkward interactions and precarious physics to invite the audience to embody, engage with, and challenge these other realities. Through the lens of monster theory, he investigates themes of isolation, sexuality, and violence in their visceral extremities. He offers computational humor and AI improvisation as a response to the tech industry's agenda. He tries to give back to the online and gaming communities that he considers both the inspiration and context for his work by remaining an active participant and contributor. He holds an MFA from UCLA, Design Media Arts and a Diploma of Architecture from the National Technical University of Athens. He has shown work in museums, including the Hammer Museum in LA and NRW Forum in Dusseldorf, DE and various galleries such as Meredith Rosen Gallery, the Breeder, Sargent's Daughters, and Young Projects. He was part of Hyper Pavilion in the 2017 Venice Biennale and the 2018 Athens Biennale: ANTI-. Theo Triantafyllidis is based in Los Angeles.

slimetechnology.org

Tannon Reckling: Hello artist person, what's your favorite color?

Theo Triantafyllidis: I'm really into a combination of earthy and fluorescent colors right now, just melting them together.

TR: I feel like that's a funny question to ask a serious artist with a career because it can seem patronizing but you really just don't get asked that. Is there something happening in the art, the Arts with an "s", zeitgeist that's particularly interesting to you right now?

TT: Maybe not in the art zeitgeist but the general zeitgeist; I'm really into what's happening in the gaming community right now. I'm super inspired by games people and what they're up to, seeing the way the gaming industry is growing and, in terms of market outreach, how much it is outdoing the film industry at this point. I'm thinking about how making software work could potentially get someone interested in investing hundreds of hours in an experience rather than just a few seconds as they might in a gallery.

TR: Yeah, I don't even look at art for very long in a gallery...that's interesting. Next up: What're you working on right now?

TT: Generally, I'm interested in real-time graphic and 3D engines, performance and improvisation, thinking about the act of playing a video game as a kind of long form improvisation within a given space and set of

rules—similar to theatrical improvisation but not necessarily comedy. Also, it feels like—for our generation—that live TV isn't a thing anymore, that things like Facebook Live, Instagram Live, Twitch, TikTok, are trying to fill that gap in a way and give some sense of things happening in the moment. At least compared to on demand content that we're now used to. I feel there is something there, where all these platforms can be used artistically.

TR: My studio mate and I have been talking about this kind of lovely unarticulated discourse about memes right now that older art faculty have no idea about. What's a recent challenge you've been working through in your practice?

TT: Hmm, lots of challenges. Maintaining a sustainable studio practice is really challenging that is really my focus right now; to organize my work and life and side gigs in a way that makes a longterm art practice sustainable. I feel like there's a certain pressure to grow, in terms of demand, and it being the only way to make progress with the work I'm doing. I'm trying to build a bigger team and trying to collaborate more with artists in other fields. I was doing the solo artist thing for a long time and with more elaborate project, like immersive performances and installations, I need a coherent team to make it happen.

TR: I feel that. I'm curating a show and installing the show and just doing every bit of the work...the burnout is real, too real. Next thing, two things maybe: What are your thoughts

It's much harder to create an open environment for people to do their own thing, and of course, art and tech is always a tough place to juggle teaching software and critical thinking against or with software and at the same time a general discourse.

on teaching art and tech classes and how the pedagogy has evolved around it?

TT: I've taught a few courses on VR and mixed-reality performance and it's always a really interesting to think about. My inherent draw is to be very involved with people's projects and try to push them and show them references and expose them to what is happening currently; but sometimes that tends to be too didactic and one-dimensional. It's much harder to create an open environment for people to do their own thing, and of course, art and tech is always a tough place to juggle teaching software and critical thinking against or with software and at the same time a general discourse.

TR: I could talk about that for a long time. Last one, maybe easy maybe not: What's at the top of your recommended reading or watch list?

TT: I think I'd have to email you that!

TR: Fair. Well then, as I approach my MFA thesis, I'm thinking about VR hardware in a formal way, the aesthetics and concepts, being similar to things like kink, BDSM, queer, gay hardware in a contemporary context—any thoughts?

TT: I've also been trying to draw these connections, there's very obvious formal similarities but it's interesting that these come from form following function. The really interesting BDSM hardware is very functional, very simple,

it's easy to instantly read the function. I think that VR headsets as a wearable device are a bit primitive in development and have tethers and straps as a rough, cheap way of attaching a screen to your face.

TR: I guess VR will just be in the eye soon. I saw some kind of beta for a screen-contacts recently; also, I saw a commercial for a bio-implant tap-to-pay device. I thought it was like an acid trip or something but I think it was on, like, CNN. Weird.

Erin Langley
in conversation with

Angela
Washko

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Angela Washko is an artist, writer and facilitator devoted to creating new forums for discussions of feminism in spaces frequently hostile toward it. Since 2012, Washko has operated The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft, an ongoing intervention inside the most popular online role-playing game of all time. Washko's most recent project, *The Game: The Game*, is a video game in which professional pick-up artists attempt to seduce the player using their coercive and often dangerous signature techniques sourced from their instructional books and video materials. A recent recipient of the Impact Award at Indiecade, a Franklin Furnace Performance Fund Grant, and a Frank-Ratchye Fund for Art at the Frontier Grant, Washko's practice has been highlighted in *The New Yorker*, *Frieze Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *ArtForum*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times* and more. Her projects have been presented internationally at venues including Museum of the Moving Image, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Milan Design Triennale, the Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennial and the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Angela Washko is an Assistant Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University.

angelawashko.com

Erin Langley: I learned from Wikipedia that your Vine "Tits on Tits on Ikea" was the first Vine to be purchased by a collector, can you elaborate on what that even means and how it occurred?

Angela Washko: Sure, it's so weird that that happened and that it continues to be a thing that gets cited.

EL: It was the first thing that was mentioned on Wikipedia...

AW: [Laughing] "You don't think she's notable! She sold a Vine! Don't question this!" Yeah, so, I had been doing performance interventions in multi-user online spaces that were not very visible in an art context and there was this curator/writer from a publication called *Animal NY* named Marina Galperina who I met through a feminist performance artist who I worked with...anyway, I was on a train with Marina and she was into it and asked if she could write about it. She had this idea to curate a film festival on Vine called "#VeryShortFilmFest" that generated enough attention that Postmasters Gallery in New York recommended to do a version for Moving Image art fair which ended up being called "The Shortest Video Art Ever Sold". It was a framework for thinking about what it meant to be a video artist at that time, when there were/are millions of people making awesome video content on their phones every day and uploading it anonymously, what does it mean to be an artist making videos that are for some reason more valuable than that. I'm not underselling video art but I think that that was

the conversation they were interested in having. So there was an invitation and a lot of great artists participated...and mine sold. It was a really quick idea; I had been doing a residency in Helsinki and had been doing a lot of campy, draggy performances using giant balloons as tits and...yeah, I got a friend to re-perform my character for however long a Vine is, like six or so seconds, and it sold. Then the collector had the opportunity to decide if they wanted to release it back into Vine and to the public or to extract it and make it a piece of privately owned art. They unleashed it. Super long answer.

EL: I'm going to skip around a bit...let's see...so, something that strikes me in your work with the Council of Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft and your Roosh V interviews for BANGED is your patience and ability to adhere to a set of rules that aren't your own; is that something that you had to consciously develop and how does this, what I consider extreme empathy, benefit your art practice and further your feminist commitments?

AW: Oh my gosh that is such a good question, wow. There's definitely a conscious effort. I won't say that I would automatically be like, "Hey leader of the manosphere, guy who started a hate organization, let's have a conversation, we have a lot in common!" Like, no way. So, I think there's a lot going on in terms of thinking about—this isn't a term that's used much any more—tactical media arts. I spent formative years working with The Yes Men, who were doing a lot of work to impersonate

corporations in order to get access to mainstream media to be able to speak on behalf of those organizations and basically correct their positions on issues in a kind of humanitarian effort to force them into accountability. I think that those sorts of practices signaled to me what my own performance practice could do. But tactical media art was a very straight male dominated field so there's differences between them and who I am. But I think that I realized in some way that there were certain things I had to do to have a valid voice in these sorts of spaces, performing a level of submissiveness that's atypical for me in my daily life.

EL: Even what you stand for at the most basic level.

AW: Yeah. In order to get to the moment where we can have a conversation about why I shouldn't have to perform that way, to get a foot in the door, is a really complicated part of my process in those works—even now I'm somewhat critical and uncomfortable with it. It was necessary for me to think about where we are in terms of polarization of people across political identification and I really wanted to complicate the manosphere or gaming industry's idea of what intersectional feminism looks like. And even just having a conversation with someone who has a different perspective. I had to perform that way to set the stage for those things to happen in public.

EL: That makes a lot of sense. Switching gears a little bit, a lot of your video and live performance

work features singing and/or karaoke...

AW: Wow, you went back!

EL: I went back.

AW: You dug deep.

EL: Can you speak a bit about your interest in karaoke as a concept or medium, what do you like about it?

AW: Oh gosh, I don't think that anyone has ever asked me this. So awesome. It's been awhile since I've been able to incorporate that in my work but it's starting to come back in my most recent project. You know, I think I'm interested in ecstatic performances of amateurism and just making a space for failure in a grand and sloppy and cathartic way. I think that, as an artist, there's this idea of needing to be an authority or to perform in an authoritative way; karaoke is this wonderful thing where there is a script, that somebody else did really well, and you just sit there and watch a ton of people perform it terribly or amazingly but bring something new to it... it's just the sort of space that I think is very important to carve out, to take risks and experiment and be a bit uncomfortable with an audience.

EL: That's great. I'm going to be thinking about that phrase a lot: sloppy catharsis. So, we've gone way over time, but I want to ask some rapid fire questions. They might cut this.

AW: They should cut the Vine stuff.

Experiment and be a bit uncomfortable with an audience.

EL: If you're listening, Nathan, cut the beginning. Since we're on the topic—go-to karaoke song?

AW: Uhh, ehh, "Like a Prayer", Madonna; "Zombie", The Cranberries; and, uhh, "Heartbreaker", Pat Benatar.

EL: Good answers. Favorite desert?

AW: Pshhh, something creamy, like a cheese-cake situation.

EL: Favorite Disney princess? [Silent pause.] You can pass.

AW: Princess Jafar, a drag queen performance icon from Pittsburgh.

EL: Hell yeah. I'm asking this next one because we were born in the same year and it occurred to me given your internet presence: Do you remember your first instant messenger screen name?

AW: [Laughing] That's embarrassing as fuck. It was, like, wildpumpkin_17?

EL: Love it. This has been a pleasure, thank you so much!

AW: You're good at this, you should do more of them!

Emily Lawhead
in conversation with

Julie
Rodrigues
Widholm

Julie Rodrigues Widholm is Director and Chief Curator of DePaul Art Museum where she leads the strategic and artistic vision to promote equity and interdisciplinary education in art museums. Prior to taking the helm at DPAM in September 2015, she was Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art. She has organized more than 100 solo and group exhibitions, including *Julia Fish: bound by spectrum*, *Brendan Fernandes: The Living Mask*, *Barbara Jones-Hogu: Resist, Relate, Unite*, *Rashid Johnson: Message to Our Folks*, *Doris Salcedo, ;Unbound: Contemporary Art after Frida Kahlo*, *Escultura Social: A New Generation of Art from Mexico City*, which have been presented at museums across the U.S. such as DePaul Art Museum, MCA Chicago, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Perez Art Museum Miami, the Nasher Museum at Duke University, MIT List Visual Arts Center, among others. She grew up in Brazil, Mozambique, Portugal, Germany, and across the U.S.

resources.depaul.edu

Emily Lawhead: I want to start off with something quick and easy: What books are you reading right now?

Julie Rodrigues Widholm: I'm right at the beginning of *Latinx* by Ed Morales, we at the DePaul Art Museum are launching a multiyear latinx initiative and, because latinx is such a contested term, I really want to orient myself to what the conversation is right now. He seems to be someone at the forefront of unpacking how the term came to be, and he's in favor of it so it's good to get that perspective. That's the main one that I'm digging into right now. What's on my shelf though...oh, Alex Kotlowitz is a writer who often writes about violence in Chicago with a sort of journalistic perspective, as someone who gets embedded in different communities, and his most recent book *An American Summer* is sort of a renewed look at violence in Chicago.

EL: I want to extend that question: Are there any artists that you're particularly excited about and following right now?

JRW: Hmm, I'm looking into work by the artists who are featured in our Spring/Summer exhibition—it's actually a touring exhibition, we didn't organize it at DePaul Art Museum, the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida in Gainesville organized it—which is called *The World to Come: Art in the Age of the Anthropocene*; it's a group show of about forty international artists that are dealing with human impact on the environment. There are

artists that are new to me and I'm really thinking about how artists are addressing issues of climate change and the environment, and more specifically I'm trying to figure out what is happening in Chicago so that, through our programming, we can bring the local community into the exhibition.

EL: There's a huge interest in that topic here as well, we have a recent hire that focuses on contemporary art and environmental studies. It's something that our program talks a lot about, as I'm sure others are as well.

JRW: It does seem to have become even more urgent over the last couple of years.

EL: It definitely feels that way. I want to pick your brain a bit about the recent push for cultural institutions and museums to critically examine their role in the socio-political context that we find ourselves in currently. The International Council of Museums is going so far as to create, or propose, a definition for museums that includes language about contributing to human dignity and social justice, global equality, and planetary well-being. Reading up on your background, I'm interested in hearing your take on this proposal and/or the role of museums in the future.

JRW: I appreciate that ICOM went so far in their description, to create a provocative description that allows a lot of conversation and debate. I think that art museums are first and foremost art museums and not necessarily

I think that academic art museums are a really wonderful space for being able to ask difficult questions that a civic art museum may not be able to...

activist organizations or organizations that are out to change policy—that doesn't mean that they shouldn't show work that's about those things and provide a platform for the issues and concerns of the day. I remember there being some language about responsibility to the environment and doing no harm that I thought was provocative but somewhat unrealistic, if we really drill down into what it takes to create exhibitions...I mean, we're shipping work from around the globe, which is not great for the environment. I do think that we

need to be mindful of our roles and I might be a little more interested in our local roles and our concern for how we can serve our communities that are directly impacted by what we're doing and to be a space for better listening and dialogue around those issues that are most urgent to our local communities.

EL: At the very least it spurred this conversation for museums to have.

JRW: Exactly. I think that it raises the issue that

we do have an impact and that we do play a role in culture and we can't sit back and feign neutrality, it's really not the case and never has been.

EL: Do you find that working in a university museum changes your ability to have those types of conversations? Do you feel that there's a difference between working within an academic institution versus working outside of that?

JRW: It's a good question. The difference between working in a civic organization and an academic art museum, for me, is that my role has changed. Now that I'm the director of an academic art museum, I have more agency and ability to affect the programming versus when I was a curator at a larger civic art museum. I think that academic art museums are a really wonderful space for being able to ask difficult questions that a civic art museum may not be able to, there's a lot of critique of curators being too academic in their language but not so much in an academic setting. That being said, I do think that it's very important to be accessible and to use language that the general public can engage with, that's very important, but I also think that academic art museums by the nature of their structure are alleviated of certain pressures in what they can show. I find that freedom to be very exciting. I think that some of the best working happening right now is happening in academic art museums and smaller museums around the country.

EL: Fascinating. To continue on that: What advice do you have for aspiring curators or museums professionals that are interested in taking an alt-ac route?

JRW: [Laughing] That's what my entire lecture is about this afternoon! My advice is to be very self-reflective about why you're doing what you're doing and to understand what impact you want to have in the field. You need to be very clear with yourself. To be an institutional curator means to always be negotiating the things that you're most passionate about and what makes the most sense for the institution and their audience. I think that there are absolutely ways to create an impact with rippling effects in an institution when you really know why you're doing the work and what changes you want to see in the field. That's really my advice, to know yourself and to know the institution that you're working for and to hopefully find a place where there is an alignment of values; and if not, to be prepared to do some advocacy work internally and externally to influence how that institution does what they're doing.

EL: Great, thank you, that's perfect!

Eden Evans
in conversation with

Namita
Gupta Wiggers

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Namita Gupta Wiggers is a writer, curator, and educator based in Portland, OR. She is the Director of the recently launched Master of Arts in Craft Studies at Warren Wilson College, North Carolina. She is the Director and Co-Founder of Critical Craft Forum, and from 2004–14, Wiggers served as Curator and then Director and Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, OR. Wiggers contributes regularly to online and in-print journals and books. She serves on the Editorial Boards of *Garland* magazine and *Norwegian Crafts*. Recent curatorial projects include: *Across the Table*, *Across the Land* with Michael Strand for the National Council on Ceramic Education in the Arts; *Everything Has Been Material* for Scissors to Shape, a textile-focused exhibition at the Wing Luke Museum of Asian American Experience, Seattle; a forthcoming publication with Wiley Blackwell Publishers; and *Gender + Adornment*, an ongoing research project with Benjamin Lignel. Wiggers is the Center for Art Research's inaugural writer-in-residence for 2019–20.

warren-wilson.edu

Eden Evans: Hi!

Namita Gupta Wiggers: Hi!

EE: First question: Do you have a set of core values that guide your curatorial work?

NGW: Definitely. I want to make sure that I honor what artists are trying to do and the need to clearly communicate ideas in a spatial way. Museums are mostly where I've done my curatorial work and, in my view, museums are about connecting with audiences, so I feel that it's my responsibility to help create a scenographic installation that conveys the layers of meaning from the artist but also the point of view of the institution trying to frame the artist within their space.

EE: I really appreciate that you think about your work so much in a spatial sense because I feel that, if you're not an artist, people don't often understand that. Have you always worked that way?

NGW: [Laughing] No. I started in the field of museum education, first at a children's museum and then at a university art museum, and my job was trying to teach graduate student's how to teach; I worked on developing a program that focused on middle school and high school students. I wanted to make it something where the students who lived around the University of Houston, who never felt that they were welcome on campus, could have the gallery be a way to envision

themselves as students on campus somewhere down the line. I never curated until I got my job at the Museum of Contemporary Craft in 2004.

EE: That's interesting. I'm curious, how do you define or negotiate the difference between making space and having an agenda?

NGW: That's a great question. I think that making space is about listening and recognizing that you're not the only voice, that you have a responsibility to collaborate. That doesn't mean that there isn't a point where you have to say, "No we can't do that." You know, sometimes somebody will want to bring live snails into the museum and you have to say, "No we can't do that!" But I think that making space is about humility and understanding that you don't know everything. Learning from others is a joy; I'd say that that is another core value for me on a personal and professional level.

EE: It seems that community is very important to you.

NGW: Very, very important.

EE: Do you have any projects, currently, that you're very excited about?

NGW: I have so many projects going on right now! I'll talk about some of those in my lecture later. But, I'm particular excited about this ongoing research project on gender and adornment with Benjamin Lignel, we've

I think that making space is about listening and recognizing that you're not the only voice, that you have a responsibility to collaborate.

worked very hard to develop a research protocol to be able to ask questions in a way that recognizes our own positions, biases, subjectivists, lack of knowledge; and rather than create a text out of the interviews that we're doing that says "this is what gender and jewelry is all about" we're actually leaving it at a dialogical level and giving the transcripts to every person we interview so that they can make comments and ask questions of us in a back and forth way. The final document is basically just the conversation, it won't result in a single narrative. I'm really excited about that one.

EE: That seems to follow a thread in your work where, instead of making a claim, you're just asking a question and you're asking others to ask questions about the work around them. I think that's probably the best way to get people to engage with art.

NGW: It's a great way to get everybody to feel that they have a say in a place. You know, I grew up going to museums, I was very lucky to have a mom that took me to museums from the time I was a kid, but I had no idea until I got to college what the jobs were that people in museums did. So, even though I grew up going to museums and was very comfortable as a visitor, I didn't understand the other side of it until much later.

EE: What advice would you give to somebody who is freelance curating and wants to work with an institution?

NGW: Understand that budgets are extremely limited and unfortunately—because staff at museums, much like in academic environments, are in a situation where more and more responsibility are being piled on them—it's hard to clear space enough to treat a guest curator with the full amount of respect that they should have. That said, any independent curator should be confident enough to know what to ask for and to look at their contracts very carefully so that they can make sure that they will be recognized in all of the public literature, the labels, things like that, and that a budget is in place for them to present and paid fairly. But also be mindful of the financial capacity of an institution. The museum I used to work at had a very different budget than, say, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. You just need to understand the parameters and know what is most important for you, like, writing the catalog essay or being present for the installation—and make sure those things are in the contract. It's extremely difficult to make a living as an independent curator in the United States.

EE: I think knowing what to advocate for is very sound advice. Thank you so much!

NGW: Thank you! Great questions!

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