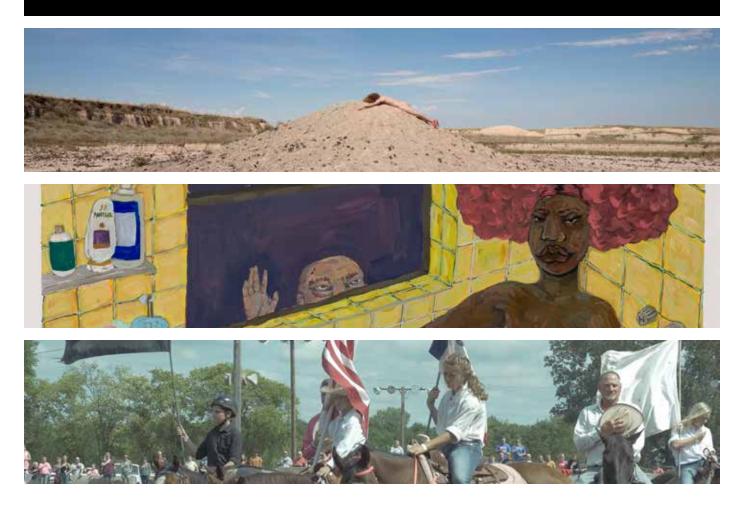




The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund FELLOWSHIPS FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS 2019





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Cecelia CONDIT Ras 'Ammar NSOROMA

Vaughan LARSEN LaNia **SPROLES** Natasha WOODS

September 25, 2020 – May 30, 2021 Haggerty Museum of Art





For more than a century, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation has helped individuals, families and organizations realize their philanthropic goals and make a difference in the community, during their lifetimes and for future generations. The Foundation consists of more than 1,400 individual charitable funds, each created by donors to serve the charitable causes of their choice. The Foundation also deploys both human and financial resources to address the most critical needs of the community and ensure the vitality of the region. Established in 1915, the Foundation was one of the first community foundations in the world and is now among the largest.

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Inside front cover: Cecelia Condit, *I've Been Afraid* (video still), 2020.

Opposite title page: LaNia Sproles, *Ro'Dawg's Picnic*, 2020.

Inside back cover: Vaughan Larsen, *Two Bosoms Meet in the Desert*, 2020.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In 2003, when the Greater Milwaukee Foundation decided to use a portion of a bequest from artist Mary L. Nohl to underwrite a fellowship program for individual visual artists, it made a major investment in local artists who historically lacked access to support. The program, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowships for Individual Artists, makes unrestricted awards to artists to create new work or complete work in progress, and is open to practicing artists residing in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington counties. It is administered in collaboration with the Bradley Family Foundation.

Nohl, a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, died in December 2001 at the age of 87. She rarely exhibited her work, yet she gained national recognition for the art environment she created in and around her home in Fox Point on the shores of Lake Michigan. Her bequest, by supporting local visual artists and arts education programs, keeps Nohl's passion for the visual arts alive in our community.

The fellowship program was designed to support artists at two critical career stages; to encourage artists to remain in greater Milwaukee where they can continue to enrich our lives; and to establish—through the jurying process—an opportunity for curators from outside the area to see the work of local artists. Over the course of seventeen cycles, 106 fellowships have been awarded, and the majority of the recipients have stayed in greater Milwaukee, contributing to its cultural life. Fifty-one curators from around the country have come to Milwaukee to view the work of more than 150 artists each year, acquiring knowledge of the area's artistic production that would be impossible to gain in other ways.

Nearly 380 artists, including many former Nohl Fellows, have received support from the Suitcase Export Fund, which assists with the transportation of artists and their work to exhibitions and screenings outside the area. These artists have exhibited in venues throughout the United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the former Soviet Union, bringing greater Milwaukee to the world. These fellowships and awards have kept artists working and sharing their work with a wider public—an impressive legacy for Mary L. Nohl, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, and our community.

The seventeenth cycle of the Nohl Fellowship got off to a familiar start. Dean Daderko, Curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Janet Dees, Steven and Lisa Munster Tananbaum Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University; and Jessica S. Hong, Associate Curator of Global Contemporary Art at the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth spent two days in Milwaukee reviewing work samples and artists' statements, making studio visits, and talking to local artists. They selected five fellows from a field of 159 applicants, awarding two fellowships to established artists Cecelia Condit and Ras 'Ammar Nsoroma and recognizing three emerging artists: Vaughan Larsen, LaNia Sproles, and Natasha Woods.

Studio visits began, museum layouts were studied, and essayists were commissioned. Then the pandemic came and, with it, months of uncertainty. Artists were exiled from their studios, moving back into attics and bedrooms. George Floyd was murdered, and Milwaukee became the site of daily marches that continue to this day. The exhibition was delayed, and delayed again, as the Haggerty Museum of Art waited to reopen to the public. Curator Emilia Layden and I conducted our studio visits over Zoom, peering into the screen and listening as jobs were lost, tests came back negative, artists joined the Black Lives Matter marches, and a fellow fell ill.

We like to think that each year the Nohl exhibition invites us to consider what it means to be an artist in greater Milwaukee at a particular moment in time-somewhere between the November weekend when the jurors select the fellows and the June night when the exhibition opens its doors. Instead, during this period we were without the certainty of an exhibition, and with five people struggling to understand what it meant to be an artist in a landscape defined by pandemic and social unrest. When it became clear that a physical exhibition would be impossible, we moved online. Artists reconfigured their exhibition plans, taped video interviews, and worked with Haggerty staff to mount the exhibition on the museum's Google Arts & Culture platform. Nonetheless, we lost many of the markers of personal and professional accomplishment that define this as an extraordinarily important program for local artists: the celebratory opening, the personal contact at public programs, the unexpected resonances between works by different artists in a shared physical space, the post-exhibition studio visits from curators.

It is hard, in this seventeenth cycle, to write about the work without writing about the lives. Personal loss and mental distress were exacerbated by isolation and loss of income. (A 2018 fellow, while helping us set up a Nohl Instagram account, confided that if he had not lived frugally and banked most of his fellowship award from the prior year, he would not have been able to survive the long layoff this year.) That the year was not experienced as pure loss owes much to the steadfastness of the five fellows. Condit finished her film prior to the arrival of illness, but when she was back on her feet she took to the woods for healing walks, and a new project emerged. Once lockdown ended, Nsoroma created a new body of work, the subject of a recent solo exhibition; completed a mural commission; and led rides of the Milwaukee chapter of Red Bike and Green that promoted Black wellness, explored local Black history, and drew attention to seminal Black figures. LaNia Sproles navigated her disappointment and isolation by pushing the boundaries of her painting practice, organizing artist fundraisers for Chrystul Kizer, and carving out space for herself in the national conversation about what it means to be a young, Black, queer artist. Vaughan Larsen, whose practice was enmeshed in a highly social existence, had to abandon their original photography project when they could no longer assemble groups. Instead, they used their months of isolation to examine their feelings about their body and their gender, eventually turning the camera on themselves. Natasha Woods rethought her durational documentary as an immersive installation, and then reconfigured it again for her virtual exhibition, creating a deconstructed archive that provided a window into her making process.

It is also difficult, with so many familiar signposts erased, to know if this Nohl year-with its long-delayed catalogue-is over. We still hope that the exhibition work will depart the screen and see the light of day; we still want to take all the fellows out for a celebratory dinner; we still plan to bring curators to Milwaukee to visit them in their studios.

The Nohl Fellowship program would not be possible without the support of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation or the collaboration of Susan Longhenry, director of the Haggerty Museum of Art, and her staff. But this year, it was the imagination, dedication, and resilience of the five artists who received the Nohl Fellowship in 2019 that gave the program its meaning.

Polly Morris January 2021

ESTABLISHED ARTISTS

Cecelia CONDIT Ras 'Ammar NSOROMA

EMERGING ARTISTS

Vaughan LARSEN LaNia SPROLES Natasha WOODS



Cecelia CONDIT

The Sweetest Knife to the Heart

In Cecelia Condit's work, always, the world is revealed, the real world, the one we choose not to see. Worms will eat us women if men don't consume us first; a dead rat is our only friend; the friend we love leaves us in the forest to die. Not a single thing in this brutal life is stable. Dread seeps into the bloodstream of the viewer.

But wait! A flash, a ravishing image, an astonishing frame—the white scaly legs of a turtle that knows exactly what it's after, moving through the loamy earth. A skirt flutters around a woman's calf. The crazy aunt runs in the green wood. The riffs, if disturbing, are beautiful, too, a mystery each time they occur, the refrain of a melody.

The songs, the narrations, either or both are likely delivered in a calm, deadpan way, the sweetest knife to the heart. Always, there's the promise of a story, Condit's serenity belying the urgency of the situation. "Somehow," she says in *Beneath the Skin*, "a bizarre story happened to my life."

Once, Condit came to film a sequence on the farm where I live. That day there was laundry on the line. She couldn't believe it, the clothes twisting and flapping in the wind. She crept around the line filming, as if she thought the shirts might become self-conscious. Two weeks later she returned for more footage. "Where's the laundry?" she said. It wasn't a permanent installation! I didn't know her well then, but it was clear that everything in the natural world served her art. If she had a creed it might go like this: The world exists to be used. Further, life is survivable only if the world can be used for Art. Story is all. And, the Artist's self is stable only when she is creating.

What struck me about Condit's work recently wasn't only the fact that it is feminist in its outlook, and that it brilliantly subverts the old tropes, and that violence, friendship, death, romance—each force has the same weight, which is the source of her humor. Those things are so, but beyond her playfulness, her messing with meaning and form, her Art radiates a simple and profound truth. I feel dread watching her videos because I'm reminded that each of us is alone. There is no escaping that human condition. An empty chair lolls back and forth in the waves—so often there is a single empty chair in her work. Each of us is alone before we are erased.

"Everywhere I go is me," Condit sings. The self is glitchy: "Everything she is, she isn't," she says, but the person who is connected to nature, the person in her solitude who can sing—that person can throw her fear, at least for a time, to the wind. That person, telling her story of the world, will endure.

Jane Hamilton, friend of Cecelia Condit for thirty years, is the author of seven novels.

Artist Statement

Exploring the dark side of female subjectivity, Cecelia Condit's contemporary "feminist fairy tales" focus on friendship, age, and the fragility of life. Her films encompass innocence and cruelty, the beautiful and the grotesque, and they put a subversive spin on the traditional mythology of women in film and the psychology of sexuality and violence. Her latest film, *I've Been Afraid*, is a blend of songs and the stories of women who have been threatened.

About the Artist

Cecelia Condit (born 1947, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) is an American artist working in video and photography. She has shown internationally in festivals, museums, and alternative spaces and is represented in collections including The Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Centre Pompidou-Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has received numerous awards including grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Film Institute, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund, the Wisconsin Arts Council, and the Retirement Research Foundation (National Media Award). Condit studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania, receiving a BFA in sculpture from the Philadelphia College of Art and an MFA in photography from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. She is professor emerita in the Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she was the director of the graduate program in film for 30 years. Most recently, her 1983 film *Possibly in Michigan*, made with singer/songwriter/composer Karen Skladany, has received new exposure on TikTok, where a 15-second clip from one of the songs has spawned a host of videos and a new generation of fans.

Checklist

I've Been Afraid, 2020 Digital video 6:35 Music composed by Isaac Sherman.

















Ras 'Ammar NSOROMA

Ancient Spirits Animate Afrofuturist

Shortly after Cuban-born drummer Mongo Santamaria composed the Latin jazz classic *Afro Blue*, writer, activist, and performer Oscar Brown, Jr. penned lyrics that have made it a favorite of jazz singers since Abbey Lincoln recorded the first version in 1959.

Dream of a land my soul is from I hear a hand stroke on a drum Shades of delight, cocoa hue Rich as the night, afro blue.

The song articulated aspirations of the budding Black Arts Movement—a longing for home and a celebration of the long-ignored African contributions. It might just as easily be applied to the current work of Milwaukee artist Ammar Nsoroma. Driven by a pulsing rhythm, its mix of representative and abstract imagery has a surreal, dreamlike guality.

But the artist is loath to accept the label of surrealist, preferring instead the category of Afrofuturist. It's a term often applied to writers, musicians, and visual artists who combine contemporary Western techniques with traditional African images and themes. Nsoroma's work for the Haggerty Museum of Art's exhibition does just that, mining cultures from across the African Diaspora, from that of the Yoruba of Nigeria and the Fon of Benin to that of adherents of Candomblé, Vodun, and Santería in the Americas.

The artist has produced several mixed media works for the exhibition, each focused on one of the major spiritual entities central to indigenous African faiths. These entities are thought to manifest themselves as forces of nature, latent aspirations, and personality traits. They are called Orisha by the Yoruba and Loa by the Fon worshipers. Nsoroma is as much priest as he is artist as he evokes: Esu, Ogun, Obatala, Shango, Yemanja (Yemaya), Oya, Osun (Oshun). All seem poised to step down and dance to the sacred drums.

These highly kinetic works are rendered in acrylic paint on a sheer fabric, like that used for parachutes. They are designed to be suspended from above rather than hung on a wall. The figures seem to hover above the two feet of material draped on the floor to form an apron beneath each. There, selected items are arrayed as they might be on an altar.

The artist's technical prowess shines through in this collection, but also his reverence for African spirituality. He approaches the art like a religious acolyte. The abstract elements are conjurations of ancient rites. An image of Shango, for instance, is dominated by red hues which reflect his fiery and impetuous nature while green dominates a depiction of Ogun, who is associated with the forests.

Nsoroma acknowledges that much of the work for the exhibition was inspired by the sacred music of Lucumi, Santería, and Candomblé, and the figures seem to respond to the rhythm and chanted prayers. He has called upon powerful forces and created sacred ground. But that should come as no surprise. In the Akan language, the artist's last name, Nsoroma, means *star child* or *child of heaven*. Clearly his work renders the spiritual realm visible and inspires us to dream of a land our soul is from....

Reggie Finlayson is a writer and performance artist who often addresses themes focused on African and African American history and culture. His works include nonfiction, drama, and poetry.

Oya with Dragon Tattoo, 2020

Artist Statement

I am a muralist, portraitist, and mixed media painter. My work centers around the spiritual, cultural, and political consciousness of the African Diaspora. For the past ten years, I have been exploring the world of the Orisha—African deities of the pantheon of the Yoruba people—through a series of large portraits. Each painting highlights the attributes of a specific Orisha through the use of color, significant objects, and African fabric designs; the paintings, on poly-tab, drape onto the floor, forming a makeshift altar where items are arranged as offerings. For the paintings in this exhibition, I created sketches of Orisha and posted them on social media platforms, asking interested individuals to recreate the sketches as photos featuring themselves. I then used aspects of these photos, as well as photos of friends, to give the subject matter a more modern feel and to encourage the participants to see themselves as African divinities.

About the Artist

Ras 'Ammar Nsoroma has worked as an artist, teacher, and mentor of youth for 35 years. He has shown his work and curated exhibitions at many galleries and museums, most recently at 5 Points Art Gallery & Studios, Ayzha Fine Arts Gallery, and the Milwaukee Art Museum as part of *Wisconsin Thirty*, a counterpart to the touring exhibition *Thirty Americans*. Nsoroma is an active public artist, and his work can be seen on schools, community centers, businesses, and public buildings across Milwaukee and further afield. In 2020, he was named an Artist of the Year by the City of Milwaukee Arts Board. Nsoroma studied at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Checklist

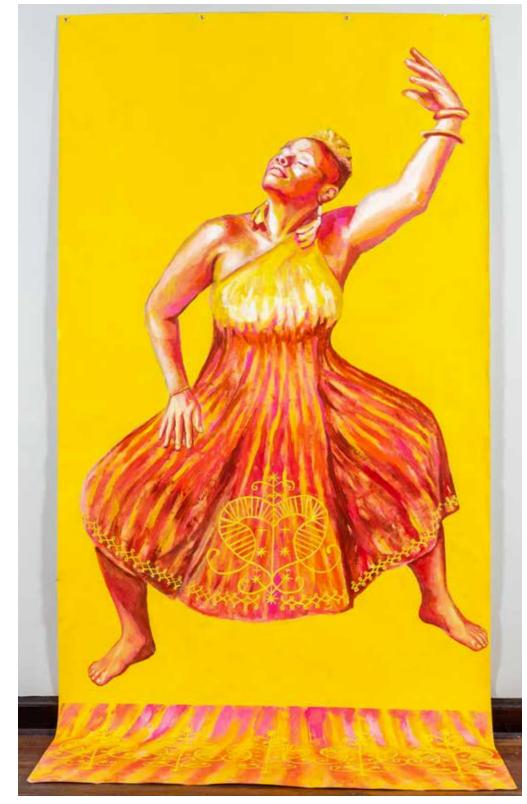
Oya with DragonTattoo, 2020 Acrylic on polytab 5 x 10 feet

Oshun in Power Dance, 2020 Acrylic on polytab 5 x 10 feet

Auset/Isis (Aum), 2020 Acrylic on polytab 5 x 10 feet Yemaya in Ataraxy, 2020 Acrylic on polytab 5 x 10 feet

Mothership Connection, 2020 Acrylic and pastel on paperboard 30 x 40 inches

Tao the Great Mother, 2020 Acrylic and pastel on paperboard 30 x 40 inches



Oshun in Power Dance, 2020



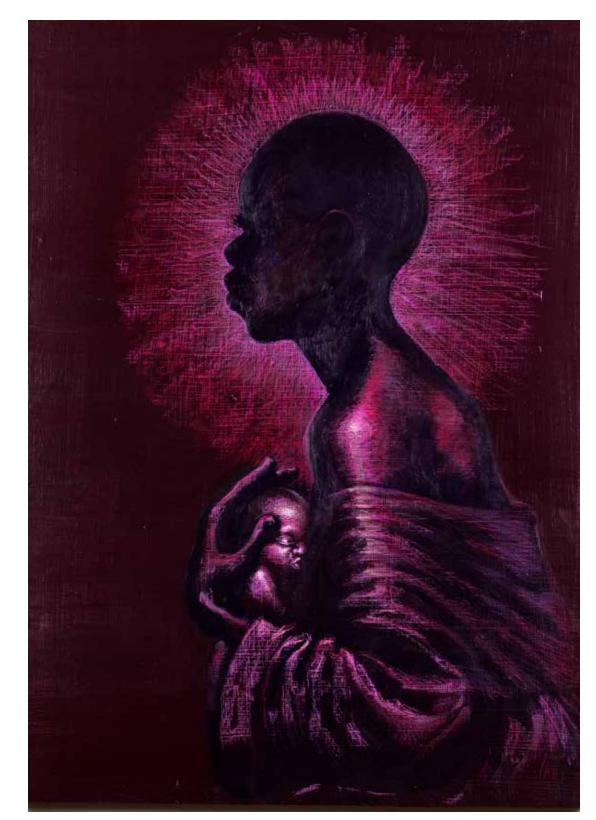


Auset/Isis (Aum), 2020

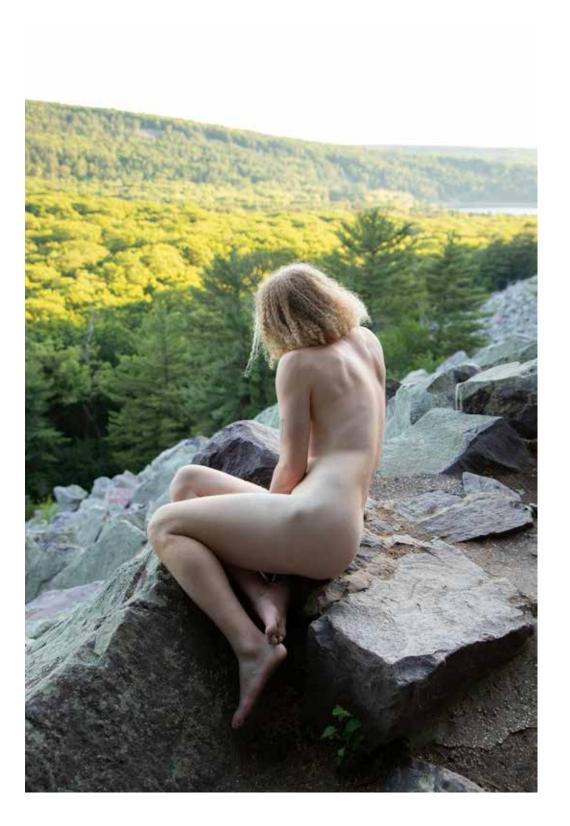
Yemaya in Ataraxy, 2020







Tao the Great Mother, 2020



Vaughan LARSEN

Vaughan Larsen's Embodied Landscapes

In Vaughan Larsen's photograph Self-Portrait as my Mother as a Cheerleader (2018) we see a lone figure in a cheerleading uniform. They are enclosed within a circle of pompoms that simultaneously suggests celebration and isolation. The main event of the photograph is the football that is hitting them in the face. There is tension between wanting perfection-to be the perfect cheerleader, to

make the perfect photograph—and feeling that this "perfect" moment has been ruined by a sort of careless violence. It's unclear how the figure feels about the football and everything it represents. The gendered symbols (literally) collide, generating questions: What is it we want? What is it we should want?

These questions run throughout Larsen's series *Rites*, in which they re-imagine the family album through a queer lens. They address the exclusion of their own experience from the snapshots that typically commemorate pivotal moments (a wedding, a birth, a prom) by re-staging and re-photographing



them. In doing so, Larsen points to whose experiences are remembered and whose aren't, while also asking us to consider what has been omitted from our own family albums. By photographing a cast of changing characters, including themself, family members, and friends, they suggest a fluid definition of what a family can be.

Larsen's new version of the album is both heavy and light: the humor and direct address of the portraits is disarming. Maybe it's more of an investigation than a critique. Or maybe it's about making fun of the rituals and longing for them at the same time. Ultimately, the subjective, political nature of both image and archive emerges; what we can remember and visualize shifts our understanding of the past as well as what we can envision for the future.

While these ideas are inextricably tied to photography, Larsen's first love was theater. It's not surprising, given the recurrent theme of bodies coming together in space, seeking mutual understanding. This attention to everyday performances is perhaps clearest in Aiden from Grindr; Illinois (2018), a portrait of a boy from the series ASL? In it, the red walls are like theater curtains, his mask is reminiscent of Phantom of the Opera, and neon lights blink in the background. A second mask on the wall hints at the desire to inhabit multiple identities. Instead of going to his physical space, Larsen photographed the screen of their video chat. Elements of classical portraiture come up against the digital texture of the screen; light and color dissolve into pixels and noise. The distance between artist and subject is visually embedded in the image, but it's not about that. It really has to do with the ingredients of connection: looking, observing, making yourself visible to another.



These themes of visibility and vulnerability drive Larsen's most recent work: nude selfportraits in the American landscape that invite

The Devil is Non-Binary, 2020



us to consider the intersection of gender, nature, and photography. The images reference art history—Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* come to mind, and we see echoes of Edward Weston's pictures of Charis Wilson and Ansel Adams's views of Yosemite. The pictures also evoke Deborah Bright's seminal essay, "Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men."¹ In it, she delineates the trope of the male photographer-explorer, arguing that the field of landscape photography is dominated by a straight, white, male gaze and its exclusionary agenda. Larsen engages and challenges this history by placing themself in the frame and alluding to their own gender fluidity. In this sense, the work is about the experiences and bodies that have so often been left out of the canon. By exploring their femininity and questioning the myth of nature as feminine, Larsen disrupts gender binaries that have historically been applied to both people and spaces. The images reinforce Bright's idea that no landscape has an essential condition but is, rather, always in flux, its meanings dependent on who is looking.

Sophie Barbasch is a New York-based photographer.

¹ Bright, Deborah. "Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men: An Inquiry Into the Cultural Meanings of Landscape Photography." *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, edited by Richard Bolton, MIT Press, 1989, pp. 125-144.



Artist Statement

I create staged photographic self-portraits that explore my identity as a gender non-binary person. Raised in Central Wisconsin, I was influenced by the history and expectations of family, and by the contrasts between LGBTQ+ and heteronormative communities. The intersection of queer values and the Midwest American Dream has been a persistent theme in my work.

These last several months of pandemic isolation have prompted plenty of self-reflection about my identity and particularly my femininity. I've grappled with decisions around feminizing my body by beginning hormone replacement therapy. This latest series of self-portraits marks a stage in that process. As I worked through feelings about the "natural" state of my body, I photographed myself as a feminine figure in the American landscape. These vulnerable moments in nature allowed me to explore my body in a way I never have before, baring myself to the elements. The process of taking these photos allowed me to understand my femininity as inherent to myself, independent of the aid of feminine clothing. As I placed my body among naturally occurring structures, and asked how I'd like to be seen, the gender metaphors we impose upon the landscape led to the inevitable question: What does it mean to be perceived as feminine or masculine? Through these photographs, I've come to understand my body as a vessel for fluid gender expression: malleable, and unbounded by societal expectations.

About the Artist

Vaughan Larsen is a Milwaukee-based artist who received their BFA with an emphasis in Photography and Imaging from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May 2019. Later that year, they earned first place in the Creative Bursary Global LGBTQ+ Stories by Getty Images and first prize in the Unique competition of the Amsterdam Pride Photo Award. Larsen has exhibited throughout Milwaukee and in Brooklyn, New Orleans and, with The Reclaim Kollektiv, in Cologne, Germany. Larsen's work has been written about in publications such as *Urban Milwaukee, Photo Emphasis*, and *Humble Arts Foundation*.

Checklist

<i>The Devil is Non-Binary</i> , 2020	Visible Vein
Archival pigment print	Archival pig
40 x 28 inches	40 x 28 inch
<i>Dreaming of an Odalisque</i> , 2020	<i>Cotyledon,</i>
Archival pigment print	Archival pig
28 x 40 inches	40 x 28 incl
<i>Green Doesn't Always Mean Fertile</i> , 2020	<i>Two Boson</i>
Archival pigment print	Archival pig
40 x 28 inches	28 x 40 inch
<i>Swam in a Canyon</i> , 2020	<i>Salt Lake V</i>
Archival pigment print	Archival pig
40 x 28 inches	40 x 28 inch

ins, 2020 vigment print ches

n, 2020 vigment print ches

ms Meet in the Desert, 2020 igment print ches

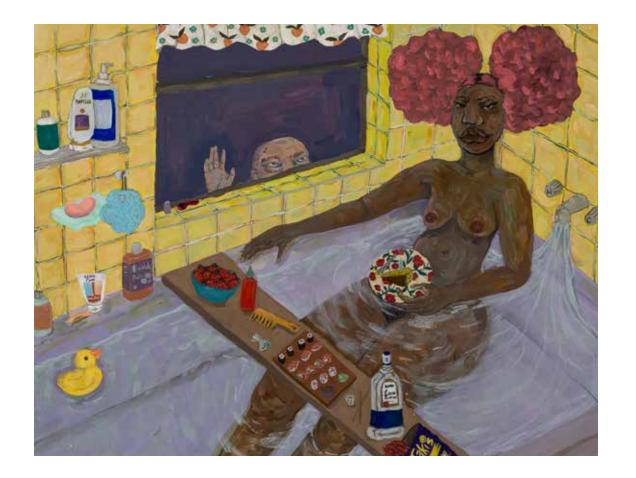
Venus, 2020 vigment print ches





Salt Lake Venus, 2020

Cotyledon, 2020



LaNia **SPROLES**

Love That Matters, That Is Free

The circulation of images of Oluwatoyin Salau in life and death speak to the limitations of visibility for young Black femmes. Viewing her only as an elegant teen model with an edgy hairstyle, or as a firebrand, sharp-tongued activist for all Black lives, elides the facts of her circumstances, her complexity and fragility. She was a homeless teen girl and needed a flowerbed to plant herself in to flourish and blossom, to bleed and be born, to dress herself in more than thorns.

LaNia Sproles's work in images—the large cut-outs and the paintings that take up space, your space—gesture to this contradiction of being seen and needing private gardens for our beloveds. Her work in a variety of activist and community-oriented murals and collaborations is an elaboration of the shero's personal journey to see oneself. This is no small thing. This is perhaps the only visibility that actually matters, because to see yourself as sexy, strong, right and left, sky and ground, is the thing that keeps you alive when the same world you seek to save wants to tear you out by the root. This is the demand of Sproles's work—to cultivate an intimacy and a tenderness with oneself in pain, without shame, to be planted in love of self.

The queer femmes in each image—inspired by close friends, the viral nonbinary, the internet, the networks of the realest daddies, queens, siblings, and kin—do not need others to see them as human. They defend a universe of perversity and love coexisting, and they do not need to remind you that they matter. Wild and fragile queer women of color who speak for themselves often fight for others at our own expense and without remorse.

We know visibility and hypervisibility. We acknowledge the tight spaces, the endless walls we climb before we are killed by our own taming, the treacherous path between Olympia and Venus we often tread in our attempts to be seen. Sproles's images have no problem being both desperate and confident. They are your younger self wishing you had the ability to speak up for yourself. They are the adult telling you no one deserves what happened to you. And then they take the split wound and place unknown pleasure in it.

Sproles's characters, their colors and their attire, their defensive shoulders and large lips, collaborate with other Black women in the live—not with Fenty's marketing team nor CGI influencers' endless selfies with friends, i.e. marketing partners. In that way, they operate in fugitive modes of reversing the claim for visibility, and instead they draw attention to the limits of images. They refuse to be dignified in a claim for humanity.

Each leg, each torn limb, asks for the Black femme to be free to evacuate this body, because it is not hers. She is a fugitive body, like Sojourner Truth selling her likeness, and she is a person we know "nothing" about, and she does not matter—insofar as "Black lives" do. She is not a thing insofar as she is not-a-thing, but a human blossom. She is free to evacuate respectability's demands when she is the only audience that matters.

Rashayla Marie Brown (RMB) is an "undisciplinary" artist-scholar, creating visually poetic and emotionally engaging artworks with a deeply critical eye towards knowledge, medium, and audience. RMB's work and words have been featured in *Artforum, Artsy, Chicago Magazine, Hyperallergic, Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art, Performa Magazine, Prospect.4 New Orleans, Radical Presence* (Contemporary Art Museum Houston), and on the cover of the *Chicago Reader.*

Artist Statement

My work exposes the Black femme body as a location of trauma and compromised autonomy. I use collage to surgically cut and bond body parts, summoning the bodies that demand to be present from discrete limbs. Collage and assemblage heighten gestures of longing and quests for satisfaction. The figures in my work contest our imprinted faith that the Black femme body is a site unworthy of credence. The viewer meets their undeterred gazes and is reminded to tread lightly and proceed with caution. Swathed in patterned crop tops, platform shoes, and opulent weaves, these characters seek refuge in their insufficient dreamlands. They hope their utopias will shelter their softness and protect it from being relocated between the lips of white men. I intertwine their environments with my own nostalgic props, signaling my unobtainable desire for escape and the audacity of bliss. Collectively, these figures activate my reclamation of space as a Queer Person of Color.

About the Artist

LaNia Sproles lives and works in the segregated city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she graduated with a BFA from Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design in 2017. Her work spans several disciplines, including printmaking, drawing, and collage, and is informed by the philosophies of self-perception, queer and feminist theory, and inherent racial dogmas. She examines the works of feminist artists and writers such as Octavia Butler, Kara Walker, and Rebecca Morgan. In 2020, Sproles continued as a teaching artist-in-residence at the Lynden Sculpture Garden and guest curated an exhibition at NADA Miami 2020 hosted by The Green Gallery. She recently created an illustration of Art Preserve artists for the west wall in the John Michael Kohler Art Center's Social STUDIO that will be on view through December, and she will be participating in the Viewing Program at The Drawing Center in New York.

Checklist

She's Like Hell, Hot and Merciless, 2020 Cut-paper collage, gouache, green film 5 x 6 feet (approx.)

Ro'Dawg's Picnic, 2020 Cut-paper collage, gouache, intaglio print 6 x 7 feet (approx.)

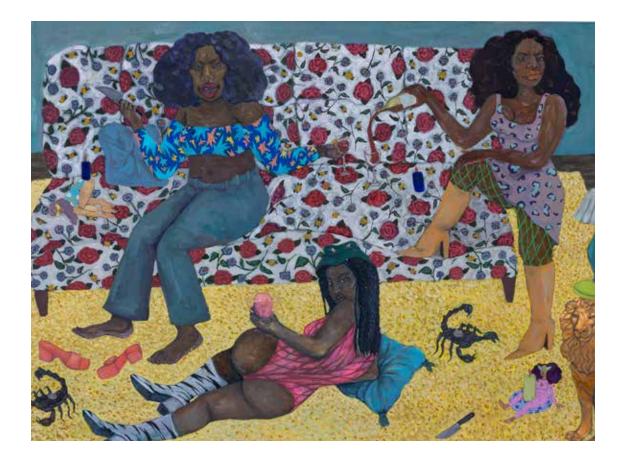
Nont for Sale, 2020 Gouache, Caran d'Ache crayon on paper 18 x 14 inches *Naker's Continental*, 2020 Gouache on BFK Rives 40 x 30 inches

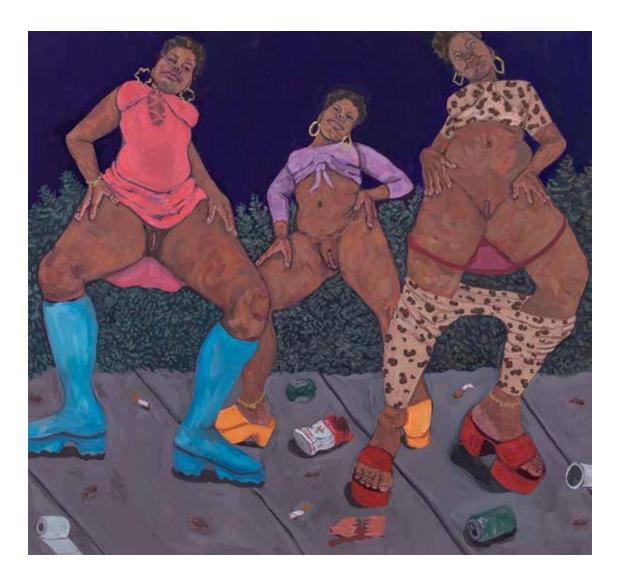
Gurls Thyme, 2020 Gouache, Caran d'Ache crayon on paper 28 x 21 ⁵/₁₆ inches

The 3 Graces, 2020 Gouache on paper 21 ½ x 19 ¾ inches



Naker's Continental, 2020









Top: The Last Ride (film still), 2020. Bottom: Confrontations (film still), 2018.

Natasha **WOODS**

Catharsis Archives: On Natasha Woods

I sat down to write this essay on Milwaukee-based filmmaker Natasha Woods in mid-March, a few weeks after the COVID pandemic lockdown. Those early weeks adjusting to chronic at-home life were spent processing with friends, their tiny, tiled faces stacked on the right side of the screen, and watching, pausing, and freewriting in response to recent films by Woods. I was watching *Confrontations* (2018), Woods's short film about her multi-generational upbringing in rural lowa, and though this was part of my assignment for this essay, the process of writing about Natasha became a healing activity: recalling aspects of our friendship and attempting to cultivate our relationship from a distance. I was sitting in California, looking back at the Midwest—and its lineage of experimental film—through the rearview mirror.

I met Natasha through the film community in Milwaukee. I recall an evening in the deep winter of January 2019. In a city that, pre-COVID, prioritized group hangs, Natasha and I always found time for one-on-one debriefs. That evening we sat, as we typically did, at opposite ends of my couch, our bodies half-turned to look out the window, one hand holding a cup of wine, a bottle split between us. Our conversation rapidly scaled personal musings to film criticism. After we had *our* time, we bundled up in layers to shield our bodies from the wind as we ran down Fratney Street to watch *'Rameau's Nephew' by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen* (1972–74), Michael Snow's four-hour epic, at Microlights, a local microcinema. Moments like this, usually centered around watching and processing, scaffolded our friendship.

Woods had just graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee when a mutual friend who knew of my interest in personal ephemera introduced me to her work. Natasha was going through her family's archival materials, specifically a box of letters and photographs she found on her grandmother Maria's bedside table. The letters, written in Portuguese, are employed in *Confrontations* to patch together the story of Maria's emigration from Recife, Brazil, to Fredericksburg, Iowa, in the 1960s. Maria went about this move with the help of her sister-in-law Millie. She arrived in Iowa alone but continued to maintain a relationship with her estranged husband by writing letters. These documents form the narration of *Confrontations*, and the inflections Woods gives to particular phrases in Maria's letters suggest that, over the years, the relationship was held close by Woods's grandfather but perhaps brushed aside by her grandmother. By leaving Brazil, Maria was choosing to start over.

My first reaction to seeing *Confrontations* was a sense of generational feminist agency, told through the archival materials I'd learned about and against the backdrop of the local manufacturing industry in Fredericksburg. Woods began producing *Confrontations* just before her grandmother's passing, making the film a cathartic return to her family's past and a means to achieve needed closure. Structures of intuition, familial personalities, and the decisions Woods makes are thoroughly foregrounded in *Confrontations*.

Similar themes emerge In Woods's current work on chuckwagon racing in the Midwest. Woods anchors this history in her own navigation of personal placemaking and draws a material parallel by turning to moving image installation for its presentation. By utilizing chuckwagon racing as an object in this project, Woods grapples with Iowa's—and her family's—colonialist histories. Today, chuckwagon racing survives as historical reenactment—a way to honor the past; for Woods, it represents an opening to a critical understanding of regional and familial tradition.

Yet, even when the memory is blurred or perhaps painful, Woods approaches the narrative arc with full transparency, a form of transparency that is committed to the care she brings to her friendships and the institutions she shows up to every day. Woods's work bears witness to the autobiographical against the backdrop of family history, told through—like our friendship now—a distance.

Julie Niemi (b. 1988, Fayetteville, Arkansas, raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma) is an independent curator, writer, and editor based in Los Angeles. Through research, design, writing, and exhibition-making, her projects grapple with counter-histories in the United States.

Artist Statement

An interest in the material and sensory qualities of moving images is at the forefront of Natasha Woods's film practice. By investigating microhistories and challenging conventions of storytelling, she aims to reclaim space on the screen. Through the examination of storied landscapes, personal/familial ephemera, and found footage, and the manipulation of appropriated artifacts and performance, Woods explores nostalgia, trauma, and memory. She repositions canonical histories and traditions using a feminist lens, posing questions designed to detect how the subject experiences comfort and belonging. Lately, her work is gravitating toward the tension between the desire for human tenderness and the rigors of working for a better world.

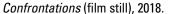
About the Artist

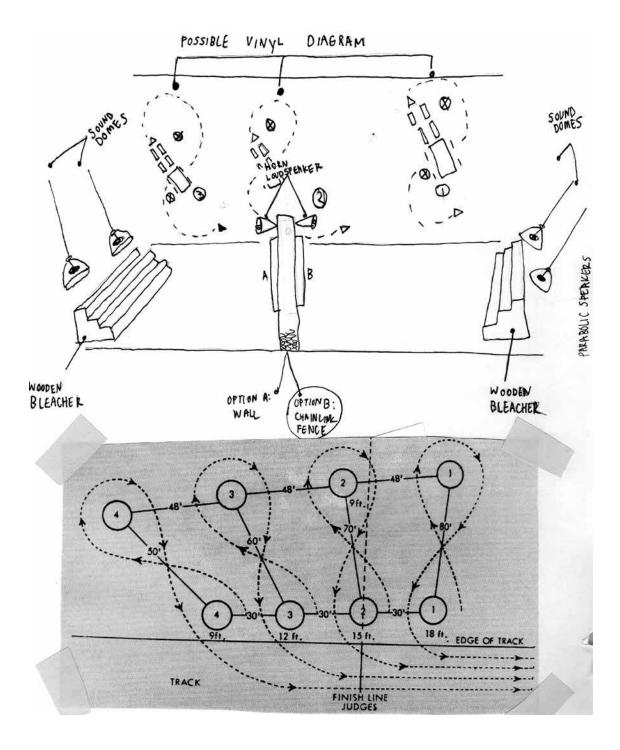
Natasha Woods was born in New Hampton, Iowa, and is based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She received her BFA in Film, Video, Animation, and New Genres from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2018. Her work has screened in various spaces including the Athens International Film Festival, the Milwaukee Underground Film Festival, Milwaukee Film, and ULTRAcinema. Her film, Confrontations, is currently on tour with Sequence01, a radical moving image microcinema series curated by No Evil Eye (Ohio). In addition to screenings, Woods has shown work at Gluon Gallery and curated exhibitions at local galleries Real Tinsel and Facilitating Situations.

Checklist

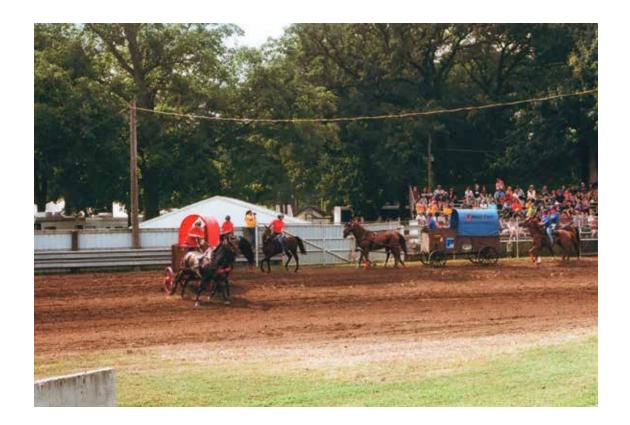
The Last Ride, 2020. Digital video installation, audio, text. Includes The Last Ride #1, 2020, digital video, 25:00 (looped) and The Last Ride #2, 2020, digital video, 25:00 (looped).







Chuckwagon Installation Diagram 4, 2019/2020





Antonio Vargas-Nieto, 35mm photographs taken on location, *The Last Ride*, 2020.





The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund **Suitcase Export Fund for Individual Artists 2018/2019**

The Suitcase Export Fund was created to increase opportunities for local artists to exhibit outside the four-county area, and to provide more visibility for individual artists and their work as well as for greater Milwaukee. In a typical year, the fund assists approximately thirty artists over the course of twelve months, enabling them to take themselves, and their work, around the world.

In the nearly eighteen-month period beginning in June 2019, the Suitcase Export Fund made twentyseven awards to individual artists and collectives. Of those projects, five have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. For many months we received no applications at all, or applications followed by cancellations. We only began to receive applications again in September, and these were for shipping work rather than transporting artists. The artists—nine of them past Nohl Fellows who managed to travel before the pandemic brought everything to a halt, or were able to ship work more recently, fanned out across the United States and further afield: Wickenburg, Arizona; Los Gatos, California; Carbondale, Colorado; Portland, Indiana; Winchester, Massachusetts; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Kansas City and Poplar Bluff, Missouri; Santa Fe, New Mexico; New York, New York; Brownsville, Texas; and Johnson, Vermont. Destinations abroad included Schrattenburg, Austria; Sudbury, Canada; Cernay-Lès-Reims, Gaillac, and St. Erme, France; Bologna and Assisi, Italy; and Mexico City, Mexico.

Artists take advantage of Suitcase travel to layer on residencies, meet their counterparts (activists, organizers of DIY spaces) in other locations, or undertake research on new projects. These trips often open doors. Awardees seek out connections with local artists, and they keep an eye out for ideas and projects that could be adapted back home. As they meet other artists and collectors, or begin relationships with galleries, they are able to explore future collaborations, concoct plans for artist and curatorial exchanges with the host city, or make the essential contacts filmmakers require to get their work in front of an audience.

Over the years, we had become used to supporting "transformative" travel experiences for artistawardees. Now, we are just happy to be able to help artists get their work out in the world. As one recent Suitcase recipient wrote, "These are tough times for artists, and the more artists this award can help, the better." We look forward to the day when artists can again travel as freely as their work.

2018 Summer Cycle (June-November 2019)

Debra Brehmer explored the relationship between drawing and writing during a one-month residency at Arte Studio Ginestrelle in Assisi, Italy. The drawings were included in an exhibition of works by current and past residents. Finding herself in Italy as the pandemic closed in, Brehmer published a much-read essay on her situation on *Hyperallergic*.

Kyoung Ae Cho brought two works to Minneapolis for *Silver Jubilee*, an exhibition celebrating the Textile Center's 25th Anniversary. The exhibition featured eleven artists who have made significant and unique contributions to the field of fiber art over the past quarter century.

Makeal Flammini (Nohl 2018) brought her husband and two small children to the family-friendly Hotel Pupik in Schrattenberg, Austria, for a two-week residency that led to two public exhibitions. Flammini created 20 drawings and paintings, several short stories, and two performances, and shared a studio with a long-time artist colleague based in Europe. Writing about her production during the residency, Flammini observed "it was the perfect time to step out of regular life and to look at my own life from a distance."

Sæter Jørgensen Contemporary, a non-profit gallery and nomadic curatorial practice focused on realizing projects in Norway and France, invited **Skully Gustafson** to participate in a solo exhibition in the Gaillac region of the Tarn in France. For *Le mouton* à *cinq pattes*, the artist showed portable works on paper—and he sold several.

Maeve Jackson made work onsite during a residency at Hotel Pupik in Schrattenberg, Austria, that became part of the three-day group exhibition at its culmination. This was her second visit to Hotel Pupik, and she was able to continue a film project and create a new body of work influenced by the landscape of rural Austria.

Kim Miller (Nohl 2009) screened a new work, *ReWilding* (2019), as part of an artist residency at the Performing Arts Forum in St. Erme, France. Initiated and run by artists, theoreticians, and practitioners, PAF is a user-created, user-innovative informal institution and all public events are open to the local population.

Melissa Mursch-Rodriguez was one of eleven women artists featured in *GIRLS will be GIRLS*, a group exhibition at the Rusteberg Art Gallery at the University of Texas Rio Grande in Brownsville, Texas. Mursch submitted soft sculptures/wall hangings that explore her experiences as a racially ambiguous queer woman. A year later, she is still working with the show's curator, who contributed to Mursch-Rodriguez's new zine publication.

Rosy Petri was represented by six textile works in a group exhibition hosted by the Black Archives of Mid-America and held in conjunction with the National African American Quilting Convention. This was Petri's first exhibition outside Wisconsin, and she took advantage of her time in Kansas City, Missouri, to visit the Negro League Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum to discuss works for their collections.

Kristina Rolander traveled to Sudbury, Ontario, to create a multi-use and immersive installation for *Up Here*, an independent urban art and music festival. Each summer, *Up Here* brings together dozens of muralists, musicians, and installation artists to transform the city's downtown. Rolander, on this second visit to the festival, ended up creating three installations and developing a clearer sense of how to negotiate the scope of future projects.

Hungry Gardens, **Tori Tasch's** solo exhibition at the Portland Art Center in Portland, Indiana, included thirty wall panels, four silk panels hung from the ceiling, and artist books. She offered workshops and a gallery talk that focused on sustainable art-making practices.

Michael Ware's flight to Colorado was cancelled at the last moment, but his work was in place for the opening of *Clay National XIV Nature Reconsidered: Reimagining the Natural World through Ceramics*, the annual juried exhibition at the Carbondale Clay Center.

Rina Yoon exhibited a large installation work in *With, Through and Beyond: Celebrating the 20th Year of the Women's Art Institute,* a twelve-artist invitational exhibition at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Yoon discussed a future show with a curator, made a studio visit, explored a collaboration with a Minnesota artist, and was invited to be a visiting artist at the Women's Art Institute.

2019 Winter Cycle (December 2019-May 2020)

Peter Barrickman (Nohl 2003, 2009) travelled to New York City for a solo exhibition of paintings and drawings at the Nathalie Karg Gallery. It was an opportunity to strengthen his professional network by reconnecting with artists he had known in graduate school, and to make new connections with artists and curators.

Santiago Cucullu (Nohl 2006) was invited by Galeria Umberto Di Marino (Naples, Italy) to participate in Arte Fiera Bologna 2020. He traveled to Italy to install his work and meet collectors, gallerists, and artists at the fair-and was written up in Artribune. According to the artist, seeing his work installed in proximity with the works of Arte Povera and Italian contemporary artists "gave me a wonderful sense of context in a larger art historical field."

Jon Horvath (Nohl 2015) attended the opening for his first East Coast solo exhibition at the Griffin Museum of Photography in Winchester, Massachusetts. He showed his long-term transmedia project, This Is Bliss, originally supported by his Nohl Fellowship. The large space enabled him to experiment with installation strategies and sequences for the work, and the increased national visibility led to a publishing agreement with Yoffy Press.

Shelby Keefe was invited to participate in the fifteenth annual Cowairl Up! Art from the Other Half of the West exhibition at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, Arizona-one of the major national events for Western women artists. Her plans to attend the opening were thwarted by the pandemic, and the exhibition, though extended, was largely virtual.

Katie Avila Loughmiller used the exhibition at the start of her month-long Labor Residency at the Santa Fe Institute of Arts in New Mexico to showcase the work of LUNA, a Milwaukee Latinx artist collective she co-founded. The artist was able to talk about her own work as well as the work she has done with LUNA.

Molly Hassler drove to Johnson, Vermont, for a month-long residency at the Vermont Studio Center. She exhibited work during two open studio events and was invited to participate in an exhibition in Gainesville, Florida. Hassler particularly appreciated the time to "do a lot of writing and planning for future projects...To come back with new work to make was really great."

As part of a soft launch of the publication Open Recipe, published by sodA mundial in Mexico, Open Kitchen (Alyx Christensen and Rudy Medina) co-hosted a food exhibition/talk around the duo's Open Recipe contribution at a communal space in Mexico City. Open Kitchen shared their artistic research on food, identity, and ecology with a Mexico City arts community, allowing the collective to see the relevance of their food and art practice to a broader/international community: "It strengthened our belief that food can act as a medium and mediator across cultures."

2019 Summer Cycle (June-November 2020)

Steven Burnham (Nohl 2004) shipped a painting to the inaugural group exhibition at La Grange Gallery in Cernay-Lès-Reims, France.

Christine Buth Furness, a long-time award-winning member of the Watercolor USA Honor Society, was invited to send work to an exhibition of paintings of past award winners at the Margaret Harwell Art Museum in Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Marsha McDonald had a piece juried into a group exhibition at the New Museum Los Gatos in Los Gatos, California. Art in the Time of Corona was the museum's inaugural benefit auction exhibition of artwork created during and inspired by the massive social and political upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic. The auction exhibition was on view both virtually and in the NUMU galleries.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowship Recipients 2003-2019

2003

Jurors Lorelei Stewart (Gallerv 400 at the University of Illinois-Chicago), Tim Peterson (Franklin Art Works, Minneapolis), Barbara Hunt (Artists Space, New York)

Established Artists

Dick Blau Michael Howard Mark Mulhern

Emerging Artists Paul Amitai Peter Barrickman Mark Escribano Liz Smith

2004

Jurors Patricia Hickson (Des Moines Art Center), Habib Kheradyar (POST, Los Angeles), Sue Spaid (independent curator, Cincinnati)

Established Artists Terese Agnew Cecelia Condit Jennifer Montgomery

Emerging Artists William Andersen James Barany Steven Burnham Frankie Martin

2005

Jurors René DeGuzman (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco), Nato Thompson (MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts), Jane Simon (Madison Museum of Contemporary Art)

Established Artists Nicolas Lampert Fred Stonehouse Jason S.Yi

Emerging Artists

Juan Juarez Michael K. Julian Mat Rappaport Steve Wetzel

2006

Established Artists Santiago Cucullu Scott Reeder

Chris Smith **Emerging Artists** donebestdone

Dan Klopp Christopher Niver Marc Tasman

2007

Society, Chicago)

Established Artists Gary John Gresl Mark Klassen Dan Ollman

Emerging Artists Annie Killelea Faythe Levine Colin Matthes Kevin J. Miyazaki

2008

Grand Forks)

Established Artists Xav Leplae lverson White

Emerging Artists Tate Bunker Andrew Swant Frankie Latina Barbara Miner

Jurors Dominic Molon (MCA Chicago), Alma Ruiz (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), Nadine Wasserman (independent curator, New York)

Jurors Clara Kim (REDCAT, Los Angeles), Ingrid Schaffner (ICA, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia), Hamza Walker (Renaissance

Jurors Eva Gonzalez-Sancho (FRAC Bourgogne, Dijon, France), Valerie Mercer (Detroit Institute of Arts), Laurel Reuter (North Dakota Museum of Art,

Brent Budsberg & Shana McCaw

Special Entertainment: Bobby Ciraldo &

2009

Jurors Jennie C. Jones (artist, New York), Toby Kamps (Contemporary Arts Museum Houston), Barbara Wiesen (Gahlberg Gallery, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois)

Established Artists Peter Barrickman Harvey Opgenorth

Emerging Artists Kim Miller John Riepenhoff

2010

Jurors Sheryl Conkelton (art historian/curator/ writer, Philadelphia), Nathan Lee (critic/curator, New York), Lucía Sanromán (Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego)

Established Artists

Brent Coughenour Paul Druecke Waldek Dynerman

Emerging Artists

Sarah Buccheri Neil Gravander Ashley Morgan Chris James Thompson

2011

Jurors Xandra Eden (Weatherspoon Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro), Tumelo Mosaka (Krannert Art Museum, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois), Elizabeth Thomas (Berkeley Art Museum, California)

Established Artists Nicolas Lampert

Brad Lichtenstein SonjaThomsen

Emerging Artists American Fantasy Classics Richard Galling Hans Gindlesberger Sarah Gail Luther

2012

Jurors Lisa Dent (Creative Capital, New York), Astria Suparak (Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh), Irene Tsatsos (Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, California)

Established Artists

Danielle Beverly Faythe Levine **Colin Matthes**

Emerging Artists

Lois Bielefeld Tyanna J. Buie Brad Fiore Paul Kjelland

2013

Jurors Naomi Beckwith (MCA Chicago), Evan J. Garza (School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston & Fire Island Artist Residency, New York), Gretchen Wagner (Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis)

Established Artists

Ray Chi Sheila Held Special Entertainment: Bobby Ciraldo & Andrew Swant

Emerging Artists

Cris Siqueira Tim Stoelting Eddie Villanueva Josh Weissbach

2014

Jurors Courtney Fink (Southern Exposure, San Francisco), Daniel Fuller (Institute of Contemporary Art at the Maine College of Art, Portland), Naima J. Keith (The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York)

Established Artists

Anne Kinasburv Shana McCaw & Brent Budsberg John Riepenhoff

Emerging Artists

Emily Belknap Jenna Knapp Erik Liuna Kyle Seis

2015

Jurors Jamillah James (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles), Eric May (Roots & Culture Contemporary Art Center, Chicago), Jodi Throckmorton (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia)

Established Artists

Jon Horvath Frankie Latina

Emerging Artists Ben Balcom Zach Hill Maggie Sasso

2016

Jurors JoAnne Northrup (Nevada Museum of Art, Reno), Valerie Cassel Oliver (Contemporary Arts Museum Houston), Julie Rodrigues Widholm (DePaul Art Museum, Chicago)

Established Artists Jesse McLean Joseph Mougel

Emerging Artists Rose Curley Robin Jebavy BrookeThiele

2017

Jurors Michelle Jacques (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Canada), Allison Peters Quinn (Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago), Gabriel Ritter (Minneapolis Institute of Art)

Established Artists

Tom Berenz Lois Bielefeld

Emerging Artists

Sara Caron Sky Hopinka Ariana Vaeth

2018

Established Artists Chris Cornelius Keith Nelson

Emerging Artists Nazlı Dincel Makeal Flammini **Rosemary Ollison**

2019

Jurors Dean Daderko (Contemporary Arts Museum Houston), Janet Dees (Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois), Jessica S. Hong, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, Hanover, New Hampshire)

Established Artists Cecelia Condit

Emerging Artists Vaughan Larsen LaNia Sproles Natasha Woods

Jurors Lucy Mensah (independent curator, Chicago), Risa Puleo (independent curator, Chicago), Ashley Stull Meyers (2019 Portland Biennial, Oregon)

Ras 'Ammar Nsoroma



<- SPINE

MARY L. NOHL FUND FELLOWSHIPS FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS 2019

