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ADJACENT, THE ADJACENT

FORUM 2019

December 7 – 21, 2019
Opening Saturday, December 7, 2019 from 6-9pm

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ADJACENT, ADJACENT

Whatever worthiness a museum may ultimately have derives from what it does, not from what it is. —Stephen E. Weil

An intentionally non-thematic exhibition, *Adjacent, Adjacent* alludes to the artistic process and experiences of the participants of the FORUM 2019—a collaborative residency of fourteen art professionals at the Torrance Art Museum (TAM). The exhibition was created by the members of the cohort, and initiated by the museum as means to mentor collective practices, serving as a bridge for developing artistic networks—both locally, and internationally.

The exhibition incorporates a range of creative practices, artistic materials, concepts, and methodologies which operate independently of one another while offering multiple shared visual languages located in relational ways. The approach emphasizes collectivity between spatial interactions, while positioning individuals and their subjective singularity, inside an exhibition at a social civic center—the museum in Torrance.

During the ten-month project, the FORUM participants engaged in a variety of activities offsite—a camping excursion in Carpinteria, fundraising with *(1+2)=TAM FORUM* in Little Tokyo, and establishing *Museum Adjacent* as an independent artist collective through collaborative activities including a reading list, newsletter, and gallery exhibition in Los Angeles.

The culminating *Adjacent, Adjacent* exhibition at TAM serves as a representation of the collisions, positions, and embedded interactions of these experiences. It is a communal action, curated by Henderson Blumer, Kim Marra, Hagop Najarian, Larissa Nickel, Surge Witrön, and the collective efforts of its adjacent artists.

—Larissa Nickel, Curator

100 Questions for the recently adjacent

Henderson Blumer

Some questions don’t have answers and only produce more questions!

What is an artwork? How is it different from an object?

Is there a correct interpretation of an artwork? Does an artwork need to make sense?

Where do you place yourself in relationship to an artwork?

What do you want from an artwork?

What do you want from a museum?

What do you want from this museum?

What do you want from this artwork? (Repeat question as needed)

Are you comfortable? Do you feel cared for?

Do you think the President cares about art? Has the President ever set foot in a museum?

Do you think the Mayor cares about art? Has the Mayor ever set foot in a museum?

Do you look at the artwork before taking a photo or after?

What smells do you smell?

What sounds do you hear?

Can you breathe past your chest? Can you breathe to your stomach? Can you breathe to your toes?

What do you see that is not an artwork?

When do you think about an artwork outside of the museum?

Did you vote this past year? Why or why not?

Can an artwork change someone’s mind? Can an artwork change the world?

Can art change the world?

Ask someone why the artist made this artwork. Why do you think the artist made this artwork?

How did Torrance begin as a city?

When did you become a member of the Torrance community?

Which part of Torrance do you belong to?

Have you been here before?

Do you see yourself in the museum? When was the last time you saw yourself in a museum?

What makes a museum a museum?

What is an exhibition? How might an exhibition be different from an exhibit?

What does a curator do at a museum? What does a curator do when they’re not at a museum?

What does an artist collective do? How might a collective help an artist?

When does a person become an artist?

Do you need to go to school to be an artist?

When does a person stop being a student and start being an artist?

How does an artist make money?

Are artists making money from this show?

Is the museum making money from this show?

Who paid to make this exhibition?

Should an artist who has gone to school be paid more?

Is there an art world?

Is there more than one art world?

Is there a city - or which is the best place to be an artist?

Where does an artist make their best work? In their room? In the studio?

Do you/would you want your child to be an artist?

What did you do before coming to the museum?

What did you eat before coming to the museum?

What did you drink before coming to the museum?

Have you ever made a drawing? What was it?

Have you ever made a painting? What was it?

Have you ever made a sculpture? What was it?

Have you ever developed a photograph? What was it?

Have you ever made a video? What was it?

What did you see on the way to the museum?

Do you know any artists?

How many?

How many artists can you list?

How many of those artists are not men?

How are you doing? Thank you for your time. Are you willing to share your answers?

Can you make artwork? (Feel free to try below)

Henderson Blumer is an artist and curator. His artwork focuses on the production of text and drawing, and the actions of a viewer as a result. His curatorial practice often focuses on how relationships are built between the creator and the artwork, using various sources of ephemera as evidence for how potential viewers should interpret and interact with the artwork. An edited version of this text was provided to visitors of the exhibition.

From the Ruins of Our Alternative Futures

Larissa Nickel

I thought of a labyrinth of labyrinths, of one sinuous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way involve the stars. —Jorge Luis Borges, The Garden of Forking Paths, 1941

Adjacency is a shifting condition. Used to orient ones location, position, and relations next to, beside, or nearby, adjacency endeavors to construct stable arrangements or boundaries for our social lives, and philosophical aspirations. The mathematical angle of



Vladimir Tatlin, *Drawing of the Monument to the Third International*, published in Nikolai Punin, *The Monument to the Third International*. (St. Petersburg, 1920)

adjacency incorporates a shared side, formulated within the infrastructure of the existence of a particular connecting point or common vertex. As a determinist societal relationship, adjacency is often an arrangement of being positioned and oriented by a singular, rather than collective, agent. Considering the vertex as a museum, the adjacent exhibition galleries are acquired, assembled, and established to facilitate visitors in navigating the spatial arrangements, and the artworks on display. *Adjacent, Adjacent* is one step removed from these poetics. It is a transposition from the margins, and the possible alternative futures located in the gaps, glitches, and experiences beyond the neoliberal constructs of contemporary culture. As a collaborative and performative exhibition, the parts and process displayed are intended to be reassembled by our spectators who are invited to co-curate the exhibition into a combinatorial curiosity deviating from the vertex of the museum, and the vortex of our collective existence.

Prior to the exhibition, the represented fourteen artists, curators, and writers were networked in connectivity—and located in Los Angeles. Within these relationships we crossed, correlated, and eventually intersected in a ten month program called FORUM, created by the Torrance Art Museum (TAM). The 2019 residency was aggregated in the museum's library, and engaged the cohort to develop additional activities outside the museum as *Museum Adjacent*, a collective project existing in the wanderings of our individual orbits alongside TAM. As a textual, performance, and cultural perspective, the meandering process of documenting this adjacency can be collectively reactivated through montage, reoriented by collage, or instigated as a theater of marginality. The resulting museum exhibition, and its progressive development of relations can then be considered in its metonymy, as a generative labyrinth which also involves the stars.

First photographed this year, the black hole vortex is an expansive void decidedly ambivalent to any orientation, position, relationship or

adjacency claims that we seek to define, discuss, or express. The remnants, traces, and reminders of that unconscious star-sucking emptiness of a big black hole, remind us what we are really adjacent to, and always precariously circling. The Newtonian reflector's double mirror is trained on the event horizon vertex, and this cosmological wonder of our ever-ending nothingness is what always remains

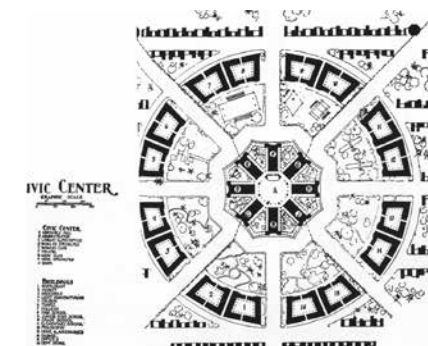


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on view. Within the ruins of these post-cultural parameters, there subsists a negotiation for the space to simply be—to create otherness, interactions, and options for relativity. Into and beyond the darkest infinite abyss, our protopian imaginations still configure a prism of light composed of a spectrum of colors where we may someday prospect our futures from the alternative ruins of our adjacent voids.

Deserted Adjacent

When the imagination reaches and oversteps the boundaries authorized by the institution of culture, we speak of poetry, of utopia.... When the event reaches and oversteps the boundaries authorized by judicial law and by the anomic rules, we speak of revolution. —René Lourau, Utopie: Sociologie de l'urbain



Alice Constance Austin, *Llano Cooperative Colony Civic Center Plan*, 1914.

Situated in the rural high desert of Los Angeles, the town of Llano is an adjacent void. Positioned next to or nearby the metropolis of the urbanite city, the stars appear brightest in the vast black emptiness of the desert. Except that the desert is never really empty—just yet to be rediscovered. Founded in May 1914, the Llano del Rio Cooperative Colony was a utopian socialist community—created in the desert margin—whose cooperative economic ideals, and alternative visions of collective living included feminist equity, sustainable ecology, communal architecture, and social city living. The colony design included one of the country's first Montessori schools, high-quality agricultural production, an artistic and intellectual cultural climate, and innovative social services that included low-cost housing, Social Security, minimum-wage pay, and universal health care—of which Los Angeles has yet to attain over a hundred years later.

Examining what exists and remains of Llano necessitates that we acknowledge the ruins, the desert, the void, and how we situate our labyrinths and locations. What is adjacent to what, and to whom? What can we learn about our attempts to situate, dislocate, and speculate? As Mike Davis (1990) theorized in *City of Quartz*, “the best place to view the Los Angeles of the next millennium is from the ruins of its alternative future.” (p. 3) Is Los

Angeles less a place than a condition, as filmmaker Thom Andersen explores in *Los Angeles Plays Itself*? In rediscovering what remains in the ruins of our futures, can we actualize the margins, and activate the representative voids of our concluding relativity? Could what is learned from Llano, that deserted future chance, be idiosyncratically applied to practical problems elsewhere, where residency, collective space, museums and heterotopias collide?

Museum Protopia

The earliest museums were social interfaces, living embodiments of generative learning spaces created for inquiry, knowledge, and discovery. Launched in the third century BCE the *Musaeum* or *Mouseion* of Alexandria became noted for its influential philosophical, scientific, poetic, and literary scholarship supported by a library, housing, and other research facilities. As a temple to the muses, it incorporated a large architectural complex of buildings, and gardens connected by porticos, and decorative colonnades. For over six centuries the ancient Library of Alexandria epitomized learning, understanding, dialogue of civilizations, and the study and exchange of ideas—in essence it was an early database of knowledge. After its demise, *musaeums* continued to flourish and evolve becoming associative in usage from the French *musée*, to temple, grotto, library, gallery, book, and in our present meaning as social forum and institution.¹

The function of the museum has been discussed in museal literature as “a site of control, discipline, and authority which is transmitted through various relations—the physical environment of the museum, the arrangement of the collection, and the public exposition of knowledge through lectures, displays and exhibitions where experts in the field organize, authenticate, and transmit knowledge.” (Longair, 2015, p. 1) Within the instances of dissonance between the institution and its constitutive audiences, and internally in multiple perspectives and transpositions of disruption and disorientation, the political and nonpolitical ways of being in and over time are formulated.

The unmediated is often the root of conflicts between artists and curators, revolving around the hierarchical power to oversee, select, or define. The dependent assimilation required through the authoritarian control of that social relativity is fraught and conspicuous. The question remains on whether curating can critique institutions, and overcome traditional notions of the artist/curator relations, and subsequent artistic production through any participatory systems. Does curating stand for the “typical manifestations of new, cultural economies

in which a culture of the secondary and of mediation merges seamlessly with the processes of value creation and the logic of social fragmentation that are typical of 'progressive' capitalism?" (Draxler, 2012, p. 5) To return to the desert, as Job Harriman, founder of the utopian Llano Cooperative Colony surmised in *Privileged Son: Otis Chandler and the Rise and Fall of the L.A. Times Dynasty* by Dennis McDougal (2001):

It became apparent to me that a people would never abandon their means of livelihood, good or bad, capitalistic or otherwise, until other methods were developed which would promise advantages at least as good as those by which they were living. (p. 70)

The curatorial landscape itself is representative of another institutional "body" which is also open to conflict and critical debate in its various artistic, theoretical, and political dimensions. Can we even hope to find ways of expressing the alternatives and enact them socially? The complex interaction of a working and broken museum protopia is a movement towards a solution which recognizes that tensions, resistance, and challenges exist in forums, and they often reside in the critical organization by which a society uses to reflexively examine its cultural processes.

Curatorial Constellations



Molly Schulman, *Cursed (in progress)*, 2019.

While the word curate derives from the Latin *curare* 'to care,' the practice of curating is comprised of highly ideological assumptions, claims, and justifications that contribute to the validation and designation of "cared for" relations in regards to other positions or exclusions. All the artists in the *Adjacent, Adjacent* exhibition were temporarily acquired by

the museum. As a performative social gesture, the acquisition theory of our *kunsthalle* forum collection is its people, things, and phenomena that matter together as they enact their relations because they are transactional and dynamic in that collection. A group of creatives from greater Los Angeles, our forum is derived as an assembly with a goal to create space for communally designed and supported projects, exhibitions, and its alternative systems. Acknowledging a very brief genealogy of artist collectives from members of Utopie, the Art Workers' Coalition, Asco, Ant Farm, the Guerrilla Girls, Critical

Art Ensemble, Futurefarmers, to Machine Project, the unexpected and undetermined pedagogical readjustments between these contiguous, yet alternative spaces constitutes artistic innovation within, and beside the context of the institution and its constellation.

In some sense institutionalizing ourselves *adjacently* to the museum and art world cultures, the interfolding sequence of networked relationships, renegotiated dialogues, and generative challenges to the ethical, ontological, and relations of institutional discourse occurs at the "intra-actions" of any professed divides. If we seek to make a difference through these entanglements, we need to do more than reflect upon, but diffract within. According to Donna Haraway in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse™* (1997), "diffraction is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world....Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference.... Diffraction is a narrative, graphic, psychological, spiritual, and political technology for making consequential meanings." (p. 16) In exploring the encounters and the interference of these museological waves rendered dialogue, is it possible to take advantage of the diffraction patterns which are created by the barriers, speed bumps, and social interference in order to make configurations which matter, collectively, and as part of interdisciplinary exchange?

YOur CuratOr Is P0sthuman

With its disposition of logic and historical attributions to enlightenment era, the humanities typically place 'man' as the central measure of all things. Based on the convergence of posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism, *Adjacent, Adjacent* is also a conflux of curatorial dialogues requiring an acknowledgment of the transdisciplinary practices of curating and commoning, and how this collectivity of exhibition-making—as a representative forum—constitutes inclusive or exclusive social collective exchange. To allow for mapping these relations, links, and affects while being considerate to the margins, alternatives, and trans-agents that perform the museology, a posthuman view of curation is necessary in order to recognize the performance as a relational, embodied and embedded, affective and accountable, nomadic entity.² Further, as a matter of ethical responsibility, posthuman curating can sustain "the ongoing reconfiguring of the space of possibilities" (Barad, 2006, p. 71) or a space consisting of multitudes, and speculative utopian design.

In Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics, Rosi Braidotti

(2006) borrows from both music and genetics to theorize on the interconnection of space, subjectivity, and ethical consciousness as transpositions or "a scientific theory that stresses the experience of creative insight in engendering other, alternative ways of knowing." (p. 6) In this scenario, critical cartographies of adjacency are not void or negative, but require creativity as supporting the process of learning to think differently about ourselves and the "intertextual, cross-boundary or transversal transfer, in the sense of a leap from one code, field or axis into another...in the qualitative sense of complex multiplicities" playing the "positivity of difference as a specific theme of its own." (p. 5) Posthuman curating opens up the curatorial against and towards subject as objects in defining the process both outside its emblematic locations within the art world, and at the same time associated and linked to them within a flowing in a web of relations combining human and non-human others. These situated yet complex figurations of cartographic accounts in effect creates a forum aimed at expressing and addressing the complexity of power relations. The adjacent void exposes the repressive structures of dominant subject-formations, but is also emblematic of the affirmative and transformative visions of the creative subject as nomadic process.³

On the Periphery of Empty Gestures

There is something about void and emptiness which I am personally very concerned with. I guess I can't get it out of my system. Just emptiness. Nothing seems to me the most potent thing in the world.
—Robert Barry, 1968



Event Horizon Telescope collaboration et al., *Black Hole at the Center of Galaxy M87*, 2019.

Previously thought to be impossible, the first photograph of a black hole appeared in 2019. Astronomers used a network of telescopes placed from Greenland to Antarctica—known as the Event Horizon—to create an aperture of almost the same diameter as the Earth, capable of capturing an image of the abyss. Effectively turning the entire planet into

Dziga Vertov's (1984) kino-eye, the vision depicts the "free of the limits of time and space," leading to "a fresh perception of the world" (p. 17-18). This new relationship to the documented void is a view we have yet to understand. Within this synecdoche of event, absence, and rupture, the *Adjacent, Adjacent* exhibition confronts our concepts of that new relationality, and its representations through the works of contemporary artists, writers, curators, entities, and their potential frames of reference.

The exhibition and its collective process asks you to explore how social forums create, distribute, and organize content, and where the infrastructures and conditions for curating and art production, consumption, and spectatorship are entangled. Not necessarily in the arranged precise angles, but within the messy periphery of our empty gestures. Adjacency promises little in any communal formation, but defers to the promise that we are together in a shifting labyrinth that has always been adjacent to an omnivorous void. What happens next is up to the light-breaking diffraction, to the creative potential discovered in the ruins of our nomadically alternate futures.

Notes

¹ Lee, P. (1997). The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-Century France. *The Art Bulletin*, 79(3), 385-412. doi:10.2307/3046259

² Braidotti, R. (2018). A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities. *Theory, Culture & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486>

³Tyzlik-Carver, M. (2017). | curator | curating | the curatorial | not-just-art curating: A genealogy of posthuman curating, <https://www.springerin.at/en/2017/1/kuratorin-kuratieren-das-kuratorische-nicht-nur-kunst-kuratieren/>

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ARTIST STUDIO



left hand, Digital Image, 2019. Photo courtesy of the Artists.



left leg, Digital Image, 2019.
Photo courtesy of the Artists.



right foot, Digital Image, 2019.
Photo courtesy of the Artists.

Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does. Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up.
– James Baldwin

We are currently engaged in a durational collaborative project that was established in 2018. Prior to our official collaboration we created site-specific drawings, collaborative drawings, and worked together to complete photographic series. Together our acts of making are devotional and ritualistic. Coupling experiences from our shared life and incorporating art making devices; we are engaged in an ongoing conversation that explores and asks questions that engage ideas of intimacy, sexuality and identity – roving topics of popular culture, humanity, love, lust, and wealth.



Heavenly Brown Body Digital Film Still, 2048 x 858, 2019. Photo credit: Avery Holliday (cinematographer)



Heavenly Brown Body Digital Film Still, 2048 x 858, 2019.
Photo credit: Avery Holliday (cinematographer)



Heavenly Brown Body Digital Film Still, 2048 x 858, 2019.
Photo credit: Avery Holliday (cinematographer)

I see my work, which folds experimental film into installation space, as a gentle invitation into turbulent places.. If I tried to encapsulate my practice in a single sentence, it would be “I’m trying to praise the mutilated world and practice resurrection.” Somewhere in that collision of Adam Zagajewski and Wendell Berry’s poems is the frustrating, beautiful quality I strive to capture in the work I create.

My work, which often utilizes ritual and movement, seeks to embody emotions for which most of us have never found words, asks how we can queer current power structures, and challenges viewers to slip into discomfort and then stay there for a while.

Heavenly Brown Body is a four-channel video installation which uses the poem *Litanies to my Heavenly Brown Body* by poet Mark Aguhar (she/her) as the text for

a queer liturgy. It rests in the tension between the need of oppressed peoples to name their pain and the incredible ability to celebrate their existence and dream of far better futures. The poem, which subverts—or perhaps reveals the underlying subversion of biblical texts—builds the framework of a piece that features all trans and non-binary performers of color.

In crafting the piece, my collaborators—academic and artist Jessi Knippel (she/her) and cinematographer Avery Holliday (they/them)—and I chose to employ religious iconography and the tropes found in fashion and perfume commercials in the hopes of not only making visible but celebrating the people and bodies that heteronormative culture fears, marginalizes, and hides from view.



boulder resting on a blade Forton, acrylic latex paint, rope & wood, 92" x 60" x 48", 2018. Photo credit: Yubo Dong.

My practice is committed to the investigation of social objects formed through fictions that confront the topics of interpersonal connection, community structures, and the fallibility of memory. I use fiction as a productive site for describing states of instability, and I rely on residue from social interactions as a catalyst for my practice. My work appears as vacated scenes where physical interdependencies and contradictions are exposed through sculpture, drawing, and video installations.

By altering an original foundation my work aims to suspend the scene and create a space where questions can circulate within its atmosphere. Where do past sentiments go when looked at from the present? What future can be built from a forgotten past, and how can we move forward without dissolving ourselves? The sentiment of my practice is to give power to the absent; what isn't visible, what may be powerless, and what cannot be easily defined.



all fours, Forton, enamel, acrylic latex paint, unfired clay, pigment, watercolor, epoxy, polyurethane foam and wax, 18" x 42" x 36", 2019. Photo courtesy of the artist.



all fours, Forton, enamel, acrylic latex paint, unfired clay, pigment, watercolor, epoxy, polyurethane foam and wax, 18" x 42" x 36", 2019. Photo courtesy of the artist.



Scenic: Smog, Sunset Acrylic, muslin, wood, LED lights, DMX controller, decoder, fans, aluminum tape, surge protector, 22" x 28"x 6", 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

I make sculptural installations, paintings and works on paper that explore both my sense of wonder in the natural world, and my fear and sadness about its destruction. I focus on the interactions between

humans and nature to find beauty, darkness, nostalgia, and the desire for escape. I'm interested in my work being both representational and evocative, while revealing its handmade form and construction.



The Wood, Installation view, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Mixed media, dimensions variable, 2007. Photo credit: Bruce Morr.



Canopy Handmade abaca paper, string, wood, paint, Kee Klamp, hardware, pulley, rope, 72" x 120" x 120", 2017. Photo credit: Jeff McLane. Model: Drew Davis.



Cinder, Oil on canvas, 69" x 54" x 36", 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

My paintings are geometric collections of texture and color. I collage painted fragments of wood grain and concrete with bold graphic colors to create illusions of depth in space. The illusions I create do not reference any one aspect of our physical world, but are meant to create familiarity with the viewer by acknowledging textures we interface with on a day to day basis. My work is inspired by mathematics and why, even when working within entirely hypothetical spaces, I am compelled to rely on my real world understanding of perspective and geometry. By living in the realm between abstraction and representation, the shapes and colors housed within each composition speak for themselves to elicit an understanding of space in an abstract reality.



Tools, Oil on canvas, 60" x 45" x 45", 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.



Idle, Oil on canvas, 48" x 51" x 33.25", 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.



Sun Ra is Contagious, Acrylic on canvas, 60" x 72", 2018.



Factory Najar 1969-2019, Oil on canvas, 60" x 72", 2019.



Move on Up, Acrylic on canvas, 48" x 60", 2019.

Atonal Chromatics is a series of paintings that investigate the compositional and structural elements of Atonal Harmonics in music and translates the effects to the process of drawing and painting. The paintings are a synthesis of musical genres coexisting on the same surface. They are a response of listening to a variety of musical approaches and creating visual equivalents.

My drawings and paintings explore the interactions of sound and color. I am searching for ways to communicate visually what I experience when hearing and playing music. By using the visual elements of composition, line,

shape, speed, texture, light and color, I exchange comparisons to the musical structures of rhythm, volume, mass, atonality and harmonics. The paintings are made as a response to a variety of musical genres such as Classical, Jazz, Reggae and Punk as the catalyst for the paintings. The outcome of the paintings is the result of this process of translating the visual form from the audible sound.

My recent work has become a pivotal synthesis of the non-objective process and incorporating imagery into the work, it is an ongoing record of my visual DNA.



Exit Utopias, Collected doilies, wood, and pearls, Dimensions vary, 2012-present (ongoing). Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

Museum is my medium. Combining artistic practice with the museological functions of collection, preservation, interpretation, and display, I create works which investigate collective identity, memory, and the archive. I operate amid traces of the culture industry, collective identity, socio-cultural institutions, and posthuman design to overlap my personal narratives via public archival embodiment. Intersecting art, film, technology, philosophy, design, and narrative, my work is an anthology

which explores the architecture of existence—as a recombinant museum. This relational process constructs new architectures of creative practice and cultural exchange between object and concept, personal identity, and the social collective. The recombinant museum is a reflection. Through this looking glass, my work can continuously regenerate, and endlessly adapt as an artistic ecosystem of cultural wonder.



Rockhaven Sanitarium Wallpaper Archive, Acrylic on paper, 30" x 22" (each), 2018. Photo courtesy of the artist



An Exhibition, an Archive, and a Memory, Mixed media on paper, 24" x 18", 2013. Photo courtesy of the artist



At Dawn, They Feast, Acrylic on unstretched canvas and wall, Installation shot, 2018. Photo credit: Christopher Anthony Velasco.



Awakening of the Beast, Dakota Noot and Christopher Anthony Velasco, Mixed media, 40" x 30", 2018. Photo credit: Christopher Anthony Velasco



Fossil of the Once Modern Man, Dakota Noot and Christopher Anthony Velasco, Mixed media, 45" x 30", 2018. Photo credit: Christopher Anthony Velasco

Painting my body frees it from the limits of reality. My body exists in a collaged state between human and animal, abstract and figurative. By embracing my body's power as an object, it isn't limited to being a representation of myself. My painted body can be owned or identified with. It can be feared, hated, and lusted after. I submit my body, blasting it with horror, humor, and a sheer sense of enjoyment.

I want to transform the body into the ridiculous and radioactive. My paintings carve and manipulate the human body in hopes that I can carve a place within the queer canon. I want queer art to be nerdier, more violent, and encompassing of the rural.



Cursed, Foam, sharpie, plastic, motor, battery, 8.5" x 11.5" x 4.5", 2019. Photo Credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.



Hello Wall (I DO ART), Wood, drywall, paint, carpet, mop board, foam, foam core, extension cord, 78" x 60" x 3.25", 2019. Photo Credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

My work deals with dysfunction, cyclical processes, (mis)perceptions, and language. I often use wordplay, repetition and audience interaction to wittily confront constructs like artist as celebrity, exclusivity, accessibility, and hierarchical systems. Language and how we see and interact with the world are recurring themes in my work.



This is Not a Hat, Fabric, polyfill, elastic, cardboard, sharpie, 30" x 20" x 12", 2018. Photo Credit: Stacie Jaye Meyers.

Most recently, I have been making work riffing off of museum merchandise as a way to explore questions surrounding the commodification and value of art. I have also been working with interactive sculptures whose clumsy construction mimic the distracted way we navigate the world with smartphones and the internet. My work aims to provoke a thoughtful and playful sense of revolution, blurring the lines between art and commodity, form and function, the real and surreal.



Party House, OBX, Oil on canvas, 95" x 75", 2014.



Salton Sink, Oil on canvas, 75" x 100", 2014.



Pike Illusion Swoop, Hamsa Sweep, Mixed media on Yupo, 60" x 45", 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

Myths of humanity's progress, ancient spiritual symbols and the human experience coalesce in a multitude of media. Built collages of personal experiences and ancient symbolic elements. These works either stand alone or translate into oil paintings. Science claims that a dream is shown to be a collection of our visual data collected during the day, these works celebrate this and embrace a shared consciousness in this dream state. A prescription of connection through a vibrant internal experience.

Many sources are re-imagined, re-organized and re-fashioned physically through collage. Sometimes they become anew as painted spaces on canvas. Marks vary from large washes of watercolor like treatment to thick impasto slaps of chroma. Sculptural works act as artifacts of a collective teachings. The color often drives the work and the palette has a close adherence to the seasons. Each season incurs transition, a transfer to a new color palette.



(I Thought That I Was) Dreaming, Acrylic on walnut in a home structure, 6' x 6' x 12', 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

My work addresses issues—including displacement, gentrification, and class—of the erasure of history and community in the developing inner-cities of Los Angeles. I look to communicate these ideas through the different languages of painting and mark making, namely the tradition of fine art painting and graffiti. Both of these styles of painting carry a rich history and I am looking to represent them both in my work to create tension.

My most recent work has developed from the idea of documenting changes in my neighborhood through painting into work about nostalgia, the “ideal,” romanticization, and desire. This work is coming from a place of wanting to go back to the way things were in my personal memory, a better place. Ultimately, the work is about desiring that which does not exist, therefore the work is about desiring that which you cannot have.



Golden Palm (Desire), Acrylic on walnut, 36" x 36", 2019. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber



Buffed Out, Oil and acrylic on linen, 22" x 22", 2018. Photo Credit: Gene Ogami.



Flaming Hot Cheetos, Yupo paper, acrylic, spray paint, acetone, ink, ready-made material, 5' x 5', 2019. Photo courtesy of the artist.



Where This Flower Blooms, Wood panel, acrylic, ink, acetone, spray paint, 2' x 4', 2017. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.



Pink + White, Wood panel, acrylic, ink, acetone, spray paint, chalk, 2' x 2', 2018. Photo credit: Ian Byers-Gamber.

I make paintings in which the explorative process produces works that combine observational and documentation of past, present and current engagements that coexistent within fragments of mark making in abstract painting.

EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION







EPHEMERAL



Where the magic happens: around the TAM conference room table



Camping and bonding in Carpinteria.



Perusing the shelves at (1+2)= TAM Forum at AMAX Gallery in Little Tokyo



A rousing discussion about the art world with curator Hamza Walker, painter Chris Trueman, and arts writer Shana Nys Dambrot.



Feeling good after installing *Museum Adjacent* at Finishing Concepts in Monterey Park. From left: Hagop Najarian, Surge Witrön, Molly Schulman, Leslie Foster, curator Kim Marra.



Hagop Najarian, right, congratulating Josh Vasquez for his new work in *Museum Adjacent*.



Curators Surge Witrön, Larissa Nickel, and Henderson Blumer looking at new work in Sharon Levy's studio.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 GUEST PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS:

Carl Baratta
Shana Nys Dambrot
Tulsa Kinney
Sean Noyce
Jason Ramos
Alma Ruiz

Kristine Shoemaker
Chris Trueman
Hamza Walker
Alison Woods
Mario Ybarra Jr.



Forum members (from left) Christina Shurts, Hagop Najarian, Molly Schulman, Surge Witrön, Dakota Noot and Kim Marra at the *Museum Adjacent* opening.



Forum member Leslie Foster shows off his gear.



Tulsa Kinney, one of our guest speakers generously shared her story and a slew of past publications she worked on.



Throughout the year, our curatorial team conducted studio visits with members. Here's Surge Witrön explaining his paintings.



Guests Alison Woods of Durden & Ray, and Carl Baratta of Tiger Strikes Astroid talk to the group about forming artist collectives and alternative spaces. Also pictured, Sue-Na Gay and Max Presneill of TAM.




Surrounded by color at Hagop Najarian's studio visit.



Installation view of our satellite show *Museum Adjacent* organized and curated by Kim Marra.




Studio visit with Kim Garcia who organized several group critique sessions.




The following selection from our Museum Adjacent reading list for the *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*'s upcoming Issue #11, *Culture Beside Itself*, was shared with other participating arts collectives.


- Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* by José Esteban Muñoz
- With or Without Capitalism: Old and New Values of an Art Involved with Society* by Frédéric Herbin
- An Architektur On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides*
- Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* by Gregory Sholette
- Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine
- Culture Class* by Martha Rosler



Looking at drawings with Devion Law and Joshua Ross of Amoral Poem.



Generational Aesthetics was a satellite show at Cerritos College conceived by member Hagop Najarian. We each invited artists who inspire our work to participate.



Dakota Noot, showing off his purchases from our satellite show (1+2)=TAM FORUM at AMAX Gallery in Little Tokyo.

Forum 2019 Member Bios



Top Row, L-R: Christina Shurts, Surge Witrön, Leslie Foster, Kim Marra, Henderson Blumer, Josh Vasquez
Bottom Row, L-R: Hagop Najarian, Sharon Levy, Larissa Nickel, Dakota Noot, Molly Schulman, Joshua Ross, Kim Garcia. Not pictured: Devion Law

Amoral Poem consists of two Indianapolis (IN) natives: music artist Devion Law and visual artist Joshua Ross. They are currently engaged in a durational collaborative project that was established in 2018. Their work together has been shown in Indianapolis at the Kuaba Gallery and Herron School of Art. Amoral Poem has participated in LA pop-up shows, curated exhibition at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Eastside International Projects and is currently participating in Torrance Art Museum’s ten-month residency.

Henderson Blumer (b. 1989, Napa, CA) is an artist and curator working in Los Angeles. He received his BA in Studio Art and Art History from the University of California, San Diego and his MFA in Public Practice from Otis College of Art and Design.
www.hendersonblumer.com

Leslie Foster is a 2006 graduate of Southern Adventist University with a BS in Film Production and a BA in International Studies, Leslie’s aesthetic sensibility comes from a childhood spent growing up in Southeast Asia, straddling multiple Asian cultures and his own American roots. His work has been displayed in a

number of exhibitions including two solos shows. Leslie currently serves as the Director of Art Residency for Level Ground and fantasizes about running away with a sea-faring band of nomadic artists.
www.leslifoster.art

Kim Garcia is based in Los Angeles, CA and received her MFA from the University of California, Irvine. She has exhibited at Blue Roof Studios and DAC Gallery in Los Angeles, Best Practice, San Diego, CICA Museum, Korea, Human Resources Los Angeles, CSU Long Beach and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. She is the founder of *The Cold Read*, an online-based critique platform that engages gestures of care and support through writing and prompt-based exhibitions.
www.kimgarcia.info

Sharon Levy is from Atlanta, GA and graduated with a BA in Studio Art from Bard College, and with an MFA in Visual Arts from the University of California San Diego. Levy has had solo shows at the CSUF Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, CA (2019) and the Santa Monica Museum of Art (2007). She has participated in group exhibitions in New York, San Diego, Atlanta, Austin, Tijuana,

and the Los Angeles area. Her work is included in the West Collection, in Oaks, PA, and the James Hotel, New York, NY. Sharon Levy lives and works in Los Angeles and Inglewood, CA.
www.sharonlevy.com

Kim Marra was born and raised in New York. After graduating from SUNY New Paltz with a BFA in Painting, Kim spent three years in New York City working as a fabricator, sign installer, waitress, wallpaper designer, printer, and dog walker before permanently relocating to Los Angeles to work professionally as an artist. She has exhibited in venues nationwide, and been featured in several publications. In 2018, Kim began curating and has produced three successful exhibitions around the Los Angeles area. In summer 2020, Kim will present an awarded solo-exhibition at the South Bay Contemporary SoLA Gallery.
www.kimmarra.com

Hagop Najarian Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Hagop Najarian and his family immigrated to the United States in 1969. As an Armenian living in La Mirada, he drew strength from the strong ties and grounding that his family and close community provided. Watching his

father and grandfather create elaborate wood furniture with simple tools was the foundation and driving force in Hagop as an artist. Pursuing his undergraduate studies in art at Fullerton College and receiving his BFA in drawing and painting at Cal State University Long Beach provided a traditional technical foundation. In 1993 he began his graduate study at Tyler School of Art at Temple University through their prestigious study abroad program in Rome, Italy and Philadelphia campus, which made a significant impact on his work and teaching philosophy. Hagop Najarian is a working artist and college professor living in La Mirada, California. He has been a Professor of Art teaching in Drawing and Painting at Cerritos College since 1999. His Tenure at Cerritos College includes serving as Department Chair, Faculty Senate, Club Advisor and numerous administrative committees. In addition to exhibiting his work locally and nationally, Hagop has curated group exhibitions, and lectures about his work at seminars, panel discussions and colleges in the Los Angeles region.
www.hagopnajarian.com

Larissa Nickel is an artist, designer, curator, and college educator with degrees in studio art and arts administration from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Johns Hopkins University. An exhibiting artist and freelance designer, her work has been shown at the Armory Center for the Arts, California State University Northridge, Cerritos College, the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, the Lancaster Museum of Art and History, and alternative spaces. She is founder of grant funded cultural arts initiatives *Hinterculture*—a Mojave desert arts collaborative, and *DEHSART*—a discard eco-studies Wunderkammer. Nickel has directed contemporary and historical exhibitions, public art programs, and operations for museums and galleries, and published essays, catalogues, new media, and scholarly articles for peer reviewed journals. She has explored new forms of museums and arts experiences through community engagement platforms *Yestermorrow: Llano*, commissioned by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and mobile interactions at the Smithsonian Institution.
www.larissanickel.com

Dakota Noot (b. 1993, Bismarck, North Dakota) is a Los Angeles-based artist and curator. He continues to show in both North Dakota and Los Angeles, including solo shows at Highways Performance Space and MuzeuMM. He has exhibited in group shows at Charlie James Gallery, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Torrance Art Museum, and *Queer Biennial: What if Utopia?* at LAST Projects. His series of cutout drawing-installations have been shown at LA Freewaves, Cerritos College Art Gallery, and Otis College. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at Oxnard College and Orange Coast College. Noot graduated with a BFA in Visual Arts in 2015 from the University of North Dakota. In 2017, he received an MFA from Claremont Graduate University. He was the key artist for the 2018 Slamdance Film Festival and is a current member of Monte Vista Projects.
www.dakotanooot.com

Molly Schulman Originally from Upstate New York, Molly received her BA in Studio Art from Bard College in 2002. She then drove across the country landing in Los Angeles where she continues to live and work. In 2016, Molly co-founded *Maiden LA*, a network of happenings that aims to dissolve hierarchies in the art world with its inclusive decentralized format. Recently she has participated in B-LA Connect, Other Places Art Fair, Every Woman Biennial, Kamikaze at PØST, has been featured on LA-based art podcasts *What’s My Thesis* and *Art Traffic*, and is a member of Monte Vista Projects, an artist-run collective. In February 2020, Molly will have a solo installation and performance for *Window Dressing* at Cerritos College Art Gallery.
www.mollyschulman.info

Christina Shurts California Artist, Christina Shurts has shown work nationally and internationally at galleries and museums. Highlight exhibitions include, Galleri Oxholm, Copenhagen, DK, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK, the U.S. Embassy, Austrailia, Rare Gallery, NY and the Torrance Art Museum. Residencies include, The Collective, Barcelona Spain and FORUM 2019, Torrance Art Museum. Honors include Lighthouse Award for Art Education an Distinction In Creative Activity, 2010, CSULB. Shurts earned

her MFA in 2010 from California State University Long Beach and BA in 2001 on an athletic scholarship from UC Irvine. She resides near the cliff of Palos Verdes Peninsula in Los Angeles, CA with her family. She currently serves as adjunct Faculty at Mount San Antonio College.
www.christinashurts.com

Josh Vasquez is a Los Angeles-based artist who primarily works in painting. He was born and raised in the Pico-Union area. In addition to his paintings, he explores different media such as drawing, performance, video, and most recently large scale sculptures. He studied and earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis on drawing and painting from California State University of Long Beach in 2017. He has recently shown at Angel’s Gate Cultural Center and South Los Angeles Contemporary.
www.joshvasquez.com

Surge Witrön is an emerging artist currently residing in the LA/Orange County area, and working out of Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles. He has exhibited his work in numerous exhibitions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Miami. Selected exhibitions include *Office Hours* at Main Museum, *Play* at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG) and *Conversation* at Tufenkian Fine Arts.
www.surgewitron.com



Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday,
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Admission to the
Torrance Art Museum is Free.

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About Torrance Art Museum:

Founded in 2005, the Torrance Art Museum is the premier visual art space to view contemporary art in the South Bay. The museum encourages all people to develop and increase their understanding and appreciation for modern programs, artist talks, lectures, and symposia. Through its emphasis on contemporary artistic expression in Southern California and globally, the Torrance Art Museum brings together visual artists and community members; fosters experiences in the arts to strengthen creative and critical thinking skills; and builds bridges between the visual arts and other disciplines in the humanities and sciences. Torrance Art Museum is a program of the City of Torrance Cultural Services Division of the Community Services Department. For more information visit www.TorranceArtMuseum.com or call 310-618-6388.

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