

JEROME  
FELLOWSHIP  
EXHIBITION  
2016/17



NIKKI J. McCOMB



KELSEY OLSON



EDIE OVERTURE



JOVAN C. SPELLER



AMANDA WIRIG



JEROME  
FELLOWSHIP  
EXHIBITION  
2016 / 17

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**JEROME**  
FOUNDATION

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ARTIST

NIKKI J.  
McCOMB



*Guns are an issue at hand...  
in the wrong hands, 2017*  
Archival inkjet print  
Dimensions variable

**in the inner city  
or like we call it  
home**

**—Lucille Clifton, “In the inner city”**

**You only watch the news to find out  
where the fires are burning, which way  
the wind is blowing, and whether  
it will rain. Forecast ahead but first:  
A mother’s boy laid out  
in the street for hours.  
These facts don’t wash away.**

**—D. A. Powell, “Long Night Full Moon”**

These are the facts: On May 26, 2016, Birdell Beeks spent her day running errands with her granddaughter, Ne’Asha. On May 26, 2016, Birdell Beeks was shot and killed in her North Minneapolis neighborhood, where she was known lovingly as “Flutter” by friends and family. She was shot as she sat in a blue minivan with her granddaughter. On May 26, 2016, the fifty-eight-year-old mother and grandmother became yet another victim of what many have called America’s greatest disease: gun violence. Like many victims of gun violence, Beeks could have easily become one more statistical footnote tacked to dead-end policy briefs, one more anonymous tally marking the mounting body count. Instead, her family, friends, and community were able to tell her story through the work of photographer Nikki J. McComb.

Birdell Beeks’s story moved McComb to action as a community member and artist. The result is the powerful #ENOUGH campaign, featuring a series of photographs of community members, including family members and friends of victims of local gun violence. With its compelling

images and messages, the #ENOUGH campaign uses social media to spread the message and inspire community members to speak up and call a tip line with any information regarding local gun violence. It also aims to encourage those using guns in the community to come forward and lay down their arms.

The images exhibit the directness of photojournalism. Community members hold signs reading poignant messages like “Enough,” “That was my mother,” and “No More Guns” in stark black letters. Some photographs contain a single person, like Sa’Leshia, Beeks’s bereaved daughter. Others, like *Let Me Live*, show groups of youth clustered with their signs as if standing defiantly at a protest march, declaring their right to survive. While “staged,” the photographs maintain a fierce authenticity of a community speaking, at long last, for and about itself.

We live in an era when black death seems inevitable and when guns are still deemed a birthright despite the increased call for legislative change. And while McComb’s work highlights these realities, it also

carves space for healing and amplifying stories long ignored, if told at all. Writer and activist James Baldwin often described the work of artists as stemming from a radical sense of love for one’s society and a hallowed responsibility to serve as a “disrupter of the peace.” As social justice art and a public service campaign, the #ENOUGH campaign speaks to both the larger community in need of a wake-up call and to McComb’s own community. Engaging the community and empowering people to come forward with information regarding gun violence and deaths like Beeks’s foster a deep sense of accountability, trust, and connection in the face of institutional and systemic indifference and negligence. In key ways, it allows a community to look around, to see each other, and to respond as a collective to violence at its doorstep.

In a set of new photos, McComb uses the body itself as the message board, posing models with white and red lettering inked across bare skin. The photographs span themes of gun violence, post-traumatic stress, and mental illness within communities of color—these often taboo subjects are rendered visible on the body through words and statistics. McComb’s background in commercial photography and fashion photography is most evident in these photos, which are reminiscent of glossy print magazine ads. In one, *16 X*, a young woman stands before the camera; “16 X” is scrawled across her belly, referring to the statistic that black women are sixteen times more likely to be shot in the United States than in other countries. The range of themes may seem disparate, but they are all

inextricably linked, highlighting issues impacting black life in America.

McComb’s use of digital photography and social media for her campaign carves critical space for activism and change making in media commonly used to consume and sell. Her work uses the existing ways of capturing images and responding to them to spread the message far and wide. With partnerships and collaborations with Protect Minnesota, Art Is My Weapon, Everytown for Gun Safety, and Protect Your Crown, the images and their message spread even more, becoming part of larger dialogue and action regarding gun violence across the nation. Imagining the #ENOUGH campaign’s photos on billboards and posters as well as in the digital world also presents vital possibilities for physically marking the landscape with her powerful message. Throughout 2017 and 2018, McComb is leading the Art Is My Weapon project through Pillsbury United Communities. The project works with local Twin Cities artists who have been issued decommissioned guns to create work about the impact of gun violence in their communities.

In a society that repeatedly reduces human lives lost to gun violence in many low-income communities of color to pithy facts and figures for the evening news hour, McComb’s camera memorializes those lost while advocating for cultural and political change to end violence in the community. And while her work stems from the stark realities of gun deaths and personal and collective trauma, it sparks greater change, heals, and empowers community in profound and remarkable ways. —NNH





ARTWORK

1  
0

*Let me live... community kids  
pleading to just grow up without  
gun fire, 2016  
Archival inkjet print  
Dimensions variable*



NIKKI J. McCOMB

1  
1

*Dana Logan was shot and killed  
on 36th and Russell in North  
Minneapolis... her husband shares  
his voice in silence for his wife, 2016  
Archival inkjet print  
Dimensions variable*



ARTWORK

1  
2

*Black males are 14x more likely to be shot than any other person of any other race, 2017*  
Archival inkjet print  
Dimensions variable



NIKKI J. McCOMB

1  
3

*More than half of women killed by guns were killed by their partner, 2017*  
Archival inkjet print  
Dimensions variable



ARTIST

KELSEY  
OLSON



*Kiwano*, 2017  
Inkjet print on vinyl backing paper  
17 x 22 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra



**What I am trying to convey to you is more mysterious;  
it is entwined in the very roots of being, in the impalpable  
source of sensations.**

**—Joachim Gasquet, *Cezanne: A Memoir with Conversations***

**“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”  
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.**

**“I don’t know where—” said Alice.**

**“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.**

**—Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland***

The beginning, so they say, was an epic chemistry experiment, at once born from nowhere and everywhere—a big bang comprised of countless minute blips, accidental sparks, and primordial bubbles. And, then, behold: matter, material, (life) form. Peering into the hardened gelatin of Kelsey Olson’s photographs, one can’t help but think of the logics (and the limits of the logics) behind how a thing is made, comes into being, morphs, and, then, decomposes, falls out of existence, stops all its matter-ing. The eyes move to the cracking, brittle edges of Olson’s three-dimensional photographs, now hybrid things—part photo, print, painting, proto-sculpture—and the viewer’s eye begins to ask ever more questions of the work, of the mortality of photographic material, and, eventually, of itself.

Olson is an alchemist in her studio—mixing and remixing technical processes, experimenting with form as content and with what wider possibilities might rest in that space between representation and ambiguity. She makes, makes, and makes. Before the gelatin on one transfer has set, she is at work experimenting with something else and pushing the boundaries of her work even more. They are all “tests in a way,” she says as she considers melting

down one print to make something altogether new. The results surprise Olson herself when her mix of processes produce unexpected lines, shapes, and textures. She embraces the “happy by-product accidents” her process creates. Much of her photographic work is “camera-less,” approximating what it might be like to “see” through other senses beyond the optics of the eye, which always assumes itself to be the objective authority. The object is nothing more than the photographic material itself, turned and folded into itself.

There is a sense of boundless play evident in her process as her technique poses and enacts questions upon itself with each new step. Olson finds more connections to printmaking than standard photography or painting. Printmaking and its litany of steps reflect her own process, as does the way printmaking encourages the use of all the parts and materials present. And while the chemistry requires precision and technique, Olson is simultaneously in control and relinquishing control: first to the process, then to the resulting piece, and, finally, to the viewer. The images transform, often leaving their original components and all it took to make them wholly untraceable. That, of course, is the magic of any art

form—obscuring the strings, the mechanics, the whole clockwork by which it ticks. Olson’s work asks us to look beyond the filter of representation and a navel-gazing search for meaning. It is as much an existential exercise as it is an aesthetic one. Her work as a whole is working its way toward something as she seeks to create work that is as interesting to see and experience as it is to make. Her photos disrupt our eye and its very basic desire to look and to derive pleasure or satisfaction from what it sees. Her work appears by turns organic and otherworldly. But the images are very much of this world and of Olson’s own everyday world: a dresser, a piece of fruit, a backpack. While she may reject the conventions of photographic representation, the work maintains a certain kind of strange beauty. Further still, she is not behind the curtain pulling the strings, directing us on the what and how and where. Instead, she invites the viewer into the process she has begun and set into motion through her series of experiments.

Like some forms of matter, Olson’s photographs are unstable. Olson labors over work that may not exist in a few months, let alone years. Some works will begin to change with more exposure to light, air,

and time. Once “done,” some are fragile, some flexible, deteriorating and transforming over time, thus continuing in a process the artist does not—cannot—control. Olson describes one piece that broke clean in half and how it “healed itself” back into one as she worked to put it back together.

In recent decades, anthropologists have explored photographs as material objects and material culture. It seems, on the surface, an obvious association. Photography, after all, has its own modes of production, consumption, and circulation. The materiality of Olson’s work and its impermanence raise questions about how such work will be displayed, consumed, sold. Their impermanence rejects their commodification in a world where photography has become a mass media for consumption and celebrity. Olson is unperturbed by the mortality of her work and the riskiness of the whole endeavor to make and make without a straightforward end goal. All that said, there is a concreteness about Olson’s work that has little to do with any effort on her part to delve into so-called abstraction but rather reflects our own growing incapacity to really “look” and pay attention to what we are seeing right in front of us. —NNH





Untitled, 2017  
Cyanotype in gelatin, plastic  
beads, paper  
15 x 10 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra

ARTWORK

1  
8

KELSEY OLSON

1  
9



Untitled, 2017  
Gelatin, vinegar, inkjet transfer,  
adhesive labels, silver gelatin  
photo paper, electrical tape  
35 x 23 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra





Above: Untitled, 2017  
Agar-agar, gelatin, vinegar, inkjet  
transfer, adhesive labels, metal  
shavings, drywall screw  
26 x 20 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra

ARTWORK

2  
0

Next page: Untitled, 2017  
Gelatin, cornstarch, vinegar, inkjet  
transfer, inkjet print and acrylic on  
paper, rubber gloves, PVC cable  
sleeve  
22 x 12 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra

KELSEY OLSON

2  
1





ARTIST

# EDIE OVERTURF



*Persisting Canary in a Coal Mine*, 2017  
Woodcut, monotype  
32 x 36 in.  
Photo: Rik Sfera



**Legends of prediction are common throughout the whole Household of Man. Gods speak, spirits speak, computers speak. Oracular ambiguity or statistical probability provides loopholes, and discrepancies are expunged by faith. However, the legends are worth investigating.**

—Ursula Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*

**MORPHEUS: After everything that's happened, how can you expect me to believe you?**

**THE ORACLE: I don't expect you to do anything. I expect what I've always expected, for you to make up your own damn mind. Believe me or don't.**

—*The Matrix Revolutions* (2003)

Apocalyptic floods, the wrath of gods, fiery Armageddons, nuclear winters, zombie outbreaks, despotic leaders hastening oblivion. These doomsday events are well chronicled in our holy books, ancient scrolls and hieroglyphs, in our art, literature, film, and popular culture. Our epic stories of a future end are rich and vast. Humankind, it seems, has been predicting its own demise since its earliest beginnings, leading us to ask what such prophetic proclivities suggest about the primal imaginations of our species.

In a series of prints depicting “The End” and multiple states before, during, and after, artist Edie Overturf weaves ancient prophecy, religious belief systems, popular culture, and today’s own harrowing headlines. Overturf’s work inscribes itself along the fault line of fiction and reality, or, rather, “truthiness”—where the power of authorship is explored and interrogated. Her evocative woodcuts and prints reflect the universality of “end of days” predictions and the expansive world of myths, legends, and cultural productions they unleash. Woodcuts and printmaking themselves have a history steeped in antiquity—ancient civilizations

(re)producing the mundane and the fantastical, the profane and the sacred, committing them to walls, parchment, and paper.

In a previous series of work titled *Tales of the Absolute and Preposterous*, Overturf presents a moment, a scenario, a frozen-frame vignette populated by characters or landscapes that upon closer inspection are ravaged or soon to be. The characters are anonymous enough to be anyone—“everyman/everywoman.” And the viewer is invited to occupy that moment and imagine what one would do when faced with the apocalypse and its impact. The prints tell Overturf’s own end-of-days predictions. Her authority as artist-oracle and creator of these narratives is directed through a balance of intent and plausibility. And while her predictions are influenced by existing prophecies throughout human history, her prophecies take a decidedly unique and eerie turn all their own. What we make of them is shaped by Overturf’s intent but also by our own choices as viewers.

The aim is not accuracy or achieving a chronologically linear narrative. Instead,

the gritty, layered prints use a combination of processes beyond woodcuts to offer less line precision and to imbue the dismal scenes with more of a haunting ethos. The stories themselves take on different scales. Smaller prints offer glimpses into moments in medias res, located somewhere between the start of it all, the “end” event, and the aftermath. Larger prints, including *Revisited* and *Persisting Canary in a Coal Mine*, contain whole narrative trajectories, thematically connected to others, yet self-contained.

*Revisited* depicts a rocky desert landscape, pocked with craters, a child, and a stroller with an atom bomb inside. Influenced by current headlines, Overturf leaves us this image with no guidance on how we found ourselves here with the child and the atom bomb. Yet, somehow, we know. It is very believable, disturbing in its plausibility. In a new print, Overturf grapples with questions of who gets to survive the apocalypse with their underground bunkers, and escape pods, and resources. Such a question brings to the fore that we are not all equally faced with impending doom in the same way and that the end days may not actually be a great human equalizer. Instead, catastrophe may throw our existing disparities into full view.

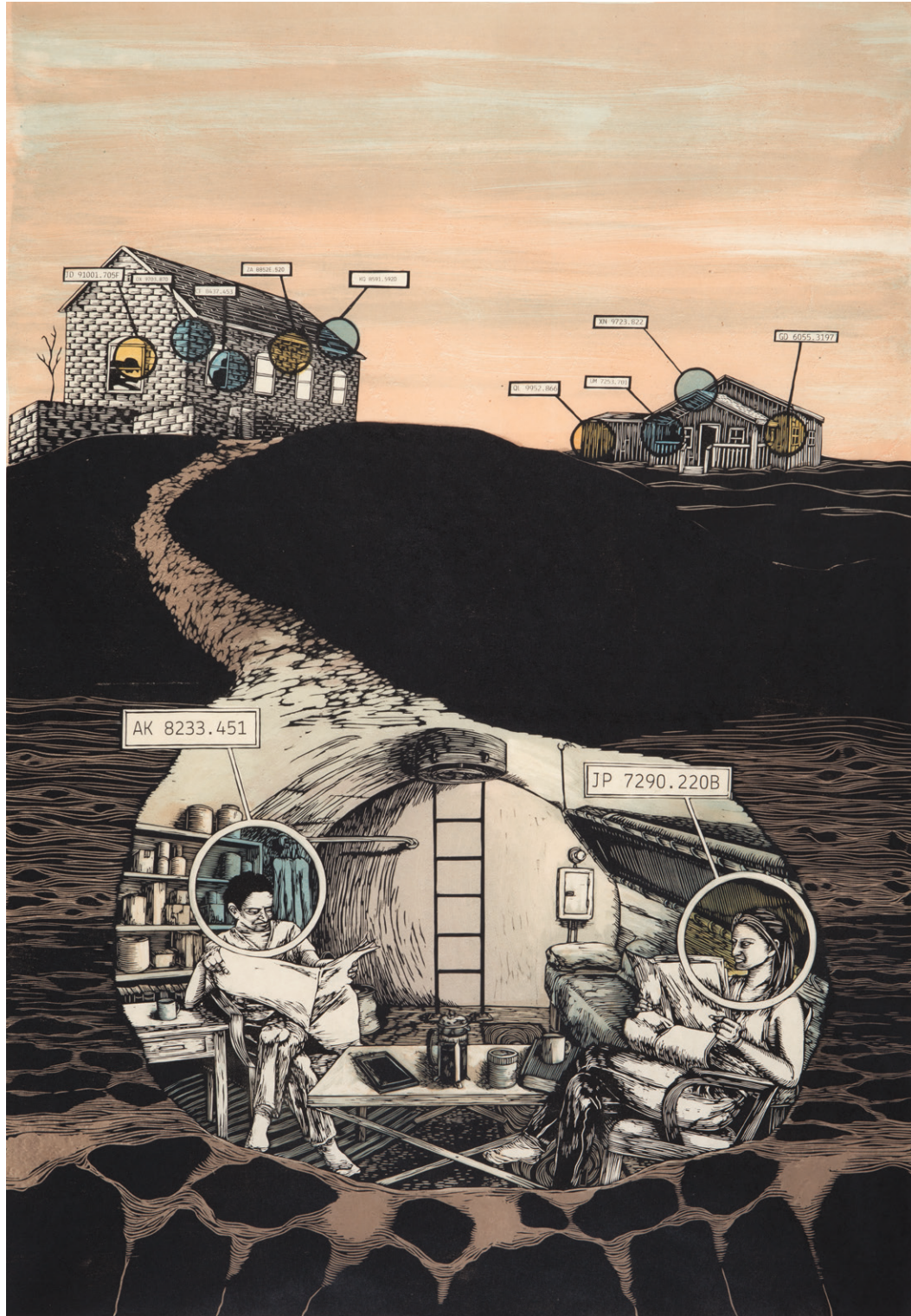
But what happens after the end—when the button is pushed, and the ice caps melt, and the bombs have reached their target? What happens when the dust settles and the survivors emerge from the haze? Overturf’s predictions leave room for imagining new futures and even utopias. Utopias are born from desire to escape the current realities. Indeed, Thomas More’s *Utopia* is mostly a critique of his contemporary society. Both C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien wrote in defense of escapism in the arts and in everyday life, expounding the idea that escapism is essential to human freedom and allows us to imagine ourselves out of the box.<sup>1</sup> Overturf’s prints allow us to escape into a future time and place. How each person imagines escape or utopia is different, however, and Overturf’s work suggests that there are choices still left to be made—that history, fate, and inevitability are only part of the prophetic equation.

Perhaps our collective preoccupations with “The End” function as dreams do, to help humanity puzzle its way through, to work out the labyrinthine matrix of (im)possibilities. And perhaps artists (who have long dabbled in the business of prophecy) like Overturf offer up the telltale breadcrumbs and star charts by which we might attempt to navigate. —NNH

**NOTES**

1. C. S. Lewis, “On Science Fiction,” in *Of Other Worlds: Essays & Stories* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966).





*As Within/So Without*, 2017  
 Woodcut, screenprint, monotype  
 52 x 36 in.  
 Photo: Rik Sferra

ARTWORK

2  
6



*Slate*, 2016  
 Woodcut, monotype  
 30 x 36 in.

EDIE OVERTURE

2  
7





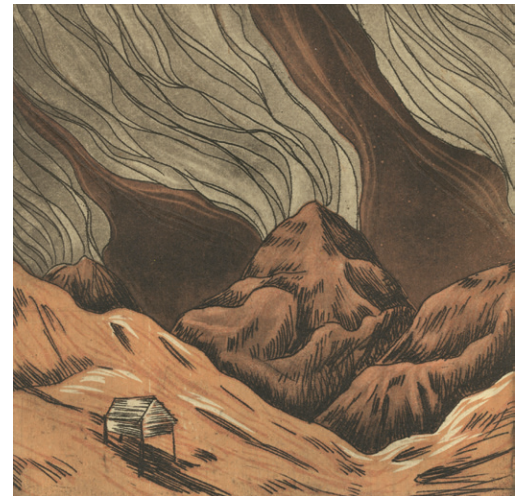
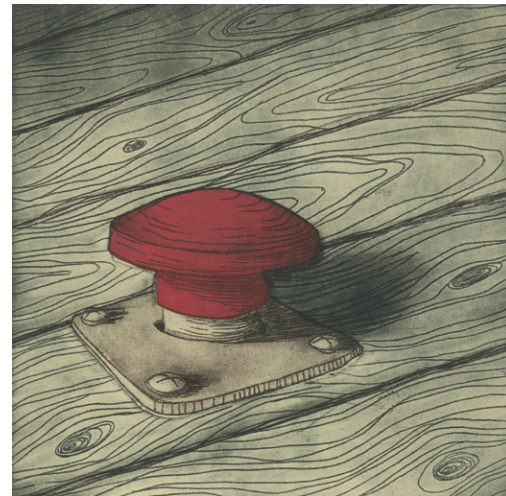
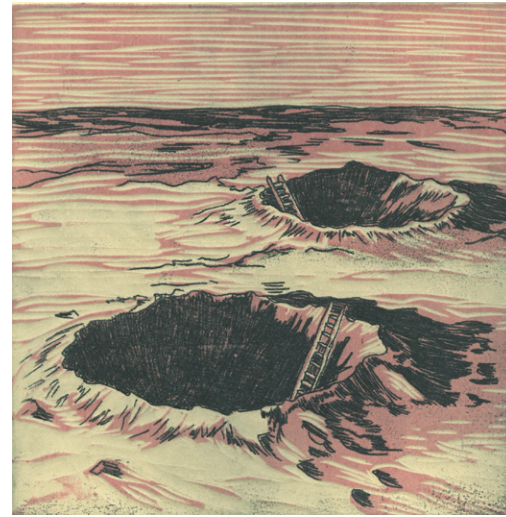
*Revisited, 2017*  
Woodcut, monotype  
40 x 28 in.

ARTWORK

2  
8

EDIE OVERTURE

2  
9



Upper left: *Homestead, 2017*  
Etching, woodcut  
6 x 6 in.

Upper right: *The Bygone, 2017*  
Etching, woodcut  
6 x 6 in.

Lower left: *Best Laid Plans  
Often Go Awry, 2017*  
Etching, chine collé  
6 x 6 in.

Lower right: *Signifiers, 2016*  
Etching, woodcut  
6 x 6 in.



ARTIST

JOVAN C.  
SPELLER



*And so, deeply rooted*, 2017  
Van Dyke brown print  
12 x 12 in.

**Quiet is antithetical to how we think about black culture, and by extension, black people. So much of the discourse of racial blackness imagines black people as public subjects with identities formed and articulated and resisted in public. Such blackness is dramatic, symbolic, never for its own vagary, always representative and engaged with how it is imagined publicly.**

—Kevin Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*

**I'm gonna look for my body yeah/I'll be back like real soon**

—Solange Knowles, "Weary"

In early 2016, amid the growing movement for black lives and one year after Eric Garner was killed in Staten Island, New York, at the hands of police, poet Ross Gay wrote a poem about flowers. Rather than centering on the violence of Garner's death and his haunting final moments, the brief poem, titled "A Small Needful Fact," focuses on life. Garner's own life and life writ large are reflected in the poem through the growth of plants in the city's parks. The reader imagines breathing in the sweet scent of a bright bed of flowers that Garner's own hands planted into the urban earth. The poem's transgressive power rests in its ability to offer us life in the face of death, peace in the face of violence, and an intimate quiet in the face of public scrutiny and outcry.

It is this latter sense of "quiet" that weaves its way through Jovan C. Speller's work. Her photographs ask, "What does the inner life of blackness look like?" for it is a rare thing for the black body to be left to its own solace, its own stillness, its own self. In American media, popular culture, and political posturing, the black body is at once marginalized and hypervisible. It is (re)produced and consumed ad nauseum

until it is reduced to mere metaphor, symbol, allegoric foil, by turns, a stand-in for criminality and racial discourse. These are the politics of black representation.

In a direct address to the viewer, Speller's images challenge us to change our way of looking at black bodies as public property—training the eye to recognize instead a private blackness belonging solely and fully to itself. In her *Black Quiet* series, Speller's aim is twofold. On the one hand, her photographs seek to locate an intimate, private, and at times sacred blackness against a public culture and a white gaze that hacks blackness into metonymical parts for consumption, appropriation, and exploitation. At the same time, the work balances interiority and social commentary aimed at the politics of blackness that often sees itself legitimated only through public struggle and resistance. Thus, Speller gently tugs at the limits of the public mantra of "wokeness" with a private mantra of "quietness."

This sense of quiet, however, is not to be mistaken with silence or an apolitical stance. Silence stems from suppression, while quiet is driven from an inner sense of one's own unbridled freedom, dreams, and

desires—a potent wildness held within.<sup>1</sup> As Kevin Quashie notes in his book *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*, whereas silence is always aware of and performing for a watcher, quiet is "watcherless."

Shaped by microaggressions the artist faced while living and working in Minnesota, ...and I shall call You Home features a farmland field covered in snow and a seated female nude. The snowy landscape is cold, alienating. The nude is off center, cornered near the frame's upper margins. And yet, it is she who draws the viewer's attention amid the stark white space. Her back faces us draped in a barely visible body chain, her face unrecognizable, unknowable. This sense of "watcherless"-ness is a peculiar sensibility for a photograph to have—isn't the camera lens ever watchful? And what of the viewer's eyes fixed to the woman's back? Yet, Speller explores the limits of that gaze while protecting, even withholding, that which is dearest and most sacred to the subject, who looks ahead to a different horizon—a richer, lush landscape made of her own innermost desires of home.

In *Beyond Black* and *Gimme A Minute*, black masculinity takes a rest, takes a breath, recalling another of Gay's poems:

*Call it sloth; call it sleaze / call it bummers if you please; I'll call it patience; / I'll call it joy, this / my supine congress.*<sup>2</sup> In these photographs, Speller explores the privacy of black masculinity, where repose and vulnerability are not just possible, but they are normal. They say, "This is who we are when we're not on public display, fighting for our right to be black and alive." In *Beyond Black*, a man twists his hair in a bathroom. This moment of self-care and meditation is powerful against the public misrepresentation of black men as criminal and deviant.

Speller relies heavily on the power of digging inside and of honoring an internality, which is reflected in her own technical process as a photographer. A self-proclaimed "analog girl," Speller's process is meticulous, slow, and precise. The darkroom itself offers the artist a kind of solace—a space of interiority and quiet away from the digital noise and speed. There, she undergoes her own self-revelation as an artist as the images reveal themselves and their own aesthetics of quiet. As a black artist, Speller often feels the pressure of needing to represent the expected black publicness in her work. *Black Quiet* resists this pressure and diffuses it with a salient counternarrative that is expansive and transformative in its scope. —NNH

NOTES

1. Kevin Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).
2. Ross Gay, "Patience," *Solstice* (Winter 2013/2014).





*I just came across the River, 2017*  
Van Dyke brown print  
12 x 12 in.

ARTWORK

3  
4

JOVAN C. SPELLER

3  
5



*An Offering, 2017*  
Van Dyke brown print  
14.5 x 14.5 in.





ARTWORK

3  
6

*...and I shall call You Home*, 2016  
Slide projection  
Dimensions variable

JOVAN C. SPELLER

3  
7



*Beyond Black*, 2016  
Slide projection  
Dimensions variable



After five  
intense  
minutes playing  
strip Beatles  
Trivial Pursuit,



Bill was  
sobbing like a  
little boy.

**Nostalgia—it's delicate, but potent . . . in Greek, "nostalgia" literally means "the pain from an old wound." It's a twinge in your heart far more powerful than memory alone. This device isn't a spaceship—it's a time machine. It goes backwards and forwards.**

—Don Draper, *Mad Men*

**A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE RESISTANCE  
(Carrie Fisher Sent Me)**

—2017 Women's March slogan

Perhaps because the headlines over the past year have seemed an eerie mash-up of America circa 1968 and Huxley's *A Brave New World*, Princess Leia made a surprising comeback. Forty years after her debut as a princess turned resistance general who needed no rescuing, Leia (and actress Carrie Fisher) found herself on protest banners and activist artwork. She became a powerful symbol at women's marches held across the country in early 2017. Artist Amanda Wirig attended the Women's March in St. Paul with her own poster of the iconic heroine, reading "The Future Is Female," to add to the resistance army.

Wirig is inspired by both the aesthetic and social valences of 1960s pop art. She counts Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella, and Barbara Kruger in her artistic genealogy. Using a range of different techniques, including painting, printmaking, and collage, Wirig resurrects advertisements, comics, taglines, and slogans of the 1960s, often adding her own humorous twist. The 1960s are often regarded as the golden age of advertising, when creativity and artistic vision were at their height. It was a time of increased consumerism as well as vehement critiques of the capitalist establishment.

Some of the most legendary advertisers of the period connected to a politically and socially restless counterculture with humor, irony, and self-deprecating campaigns that sold more than mere products.

With its defined graphic lines and punchy colors, Wirig's work pulls you in close and takes you backward in time. And yet the retro aesthetics are often juxtaposed with content, text, and messaging addressing current realities important to the artist. While she has taken a markedly "political" turn in the wake of the 2016 election, her work has often taken up social issues, particularly the micropolitics shaping the everyday lives of artists and women. In *Patron Tip #23*, a Donna Reed-esque woman provides a helpful art patron tip: "If they're not starving, you paid too much!" In *Artist Temperament*, the viewer reads the ironic words "Just one pill and I'm on an even keel all day" framing a female artist facing her work. In another piece advertising "Talking Artist Barbie," featuring "Ken" as the "gallery owner," Wirig pokes fun at the commodification of art and artists.

Women speak back in much of Wirig's work, even if it is tongue-in-cheek. While

the women in her paintings and prints are certainly repurposed from their era with their suggestive poses and impeccable waistlines, they invariably prefer good music to any man and are very aware of the patriarchy wrapped around their necks. Over the past few months, Wirig has been pushing her practice and her content to address today's persisting issues. In a new silkscreen, Wirig depicts a women's rally reminiscent of 1960s feminist protests. The print contains the same graphic aesthetic of her older work, yet the accompanying text minces no words: "Kick Out The Patriarchy, Motherfuckers!"

Artist Pauline Boty once referred to the pop art movement of the 1960s as a "nostalgia for now." It was a curious and deeply salient insight from an era when mass consumption and popular culture were moving at what seemed then (decades before the dizzying age of the Internet) breakneck speed. If ever more technology and mass production/consumption have indeed collapsed space and time, as some postmodern political economists have argued, then we are always already left aching for the past

moment just a second, a minute, a day, a week, a month, a year, a decade, or a century ago. Today, retro could be an hour ago.

The nostalgia in Wirig's work is marked by these sensibilities of the past, the present, and, yes, even the future. In the lurching hangover of an election year that was marked by the politics of a dangerous nostalgia for an idyllic (read: racist, puritanical, conservative) America of yesterday, what does it mean for artists and activists to counter this solipsistic nostalgia by reviving their own sheroes, cultural artifacts, and social movements of years ago? Nostalgia and escapism share a thin line. And despite all the naysaying about escapism, it remains vital to our ability as individuals and a society to work through the uncomfortable truths of our present and face even the most dismal of futures. Wirig's work has an archival power straddling both the then and now. Beyond a superficial aesthetic interest in the "retro" era, her work allows us to become time travelers, moving backward and forward examining social and cultural micro- and macropolitics that inevitably shape everyday life. —NNH





Patron Tip #23, 2010  
Mixed media on panel  
11 x 14 in.  
Photo: Daniel Dinsmore

ARTWORK

4  
2



Artist Temperament, 2007  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 24 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra

AMANDA WIRIG

4  
3

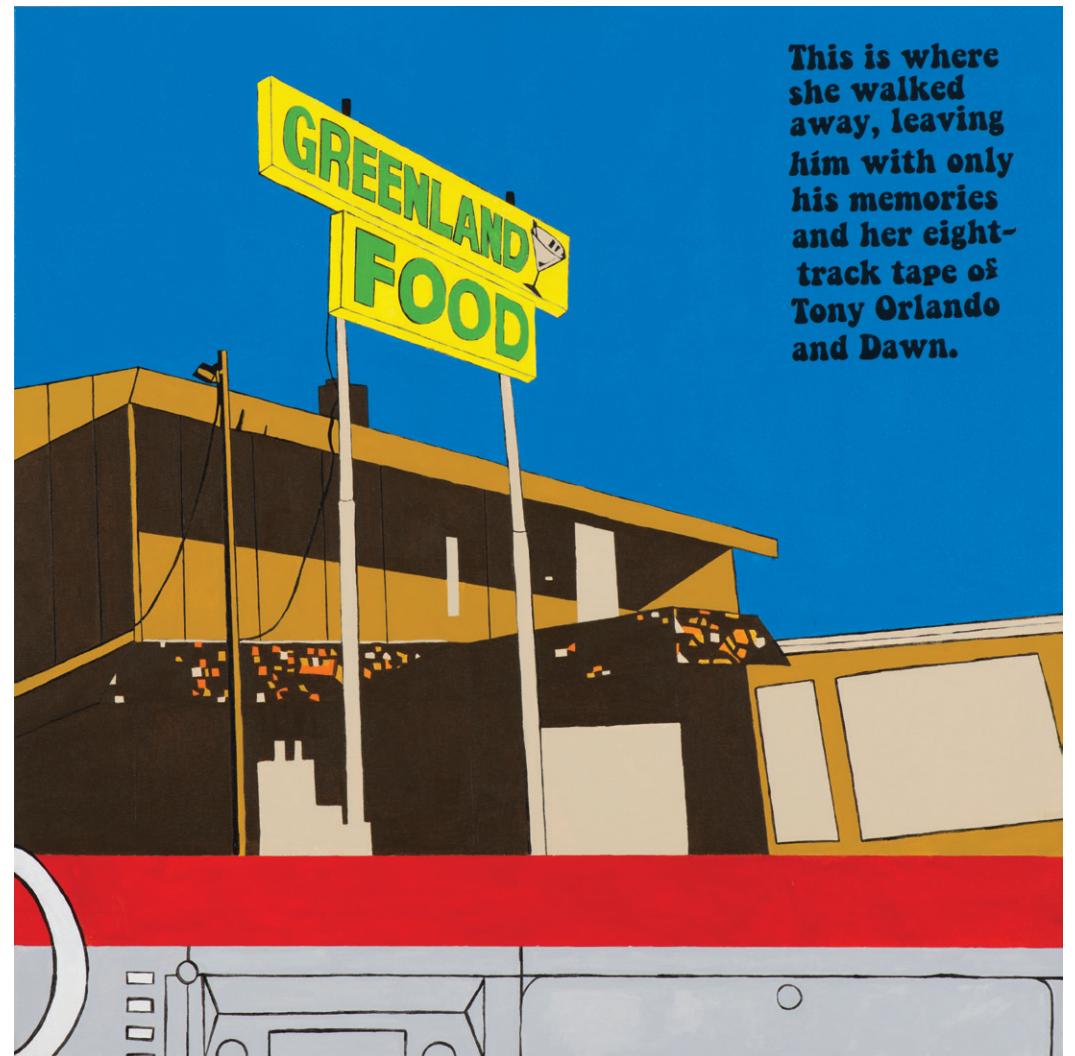




Talking Artist Barbie, 2012  
Mixed media on canvas  
48 x 24 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra

ARTWORK

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She Goes On, 2015  
Mixed media on canvas  
36 x 36 in.  
Photo: Rik Sferra

AMANDA WIRIG

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# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



**Nikki J. McComb's** public safety campaign titled #ENOUGH uses art as a catalyst for change and social disruption. Taking on the seemingly unsolvable problem of illegal firearms, McComb uses photographs and video to reach people from the street level to the legislative arena and to help provide communities an outlet where they feel safe enough to seek help, empowered enough to give help, provoked enough to work harder to unify, and unified enough to make change collectively through art. For seventeen years, McComb has applied her artistic interests and skills to working relentlessly in North Minneapolis and surrounding communities in youth and family achievement. In addition to being an art educator, she has organized exhibitions, including *Art Is My Weapon*, a program whereby local artists select decommissioned guns to then create new work for display. McComb is a 2016 recipient of a MicroGrant for photography and a 2014 and 2015 recipient of Community Leadership Awards.

[enough411.com](http://enough411.com)

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**Kelsey Olson** makes paintings and photo-based works that take the materiality of analog and digital printing techniques as a point of departure. By incorporating mediums and processes from multiple disciplines, the resulting works show a vast range of image production possibilities outside of usual genre parameters. Olson has had solo exhibitions at venues and temporary spaces in Minnesota including GAS Gallery and Press, Party At My Parents' House, and the Rochester Art Center, and has participated in group exhibitions at David Petersen Gallery and St. Cloud State University. Along with several friends, she helped create and run They Won't Find Us Here Gallery in Minneapolis from 2010 to 2012, and has organized other publishing projects and exhibitions since that time. Olson is from Montana and received her BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

[kelsey-olson.com](http://kelsey-olson.com)

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



**Edie Overturf** uses traditional printmaking techniques to create visual narratives that question the act of storytelling as well as voices of authority and their effects on communities. The open-ended narrative quality she employs allows the viewer to relate to any or all of the represented spaces, the developed characters, or the suggested scenarios. Overturf has exhibited nationally and locally, including a solo exhibition at the Red Garage Studio in Minneapolis and group exhibitions at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia and Kala Art Institute in Berkeley. She is the recipient of two Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative grants and an Academic Innovation Grant from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. She received her BFA from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and her MFA from California State University in Chico. Overturf currently lives in Minneapolis and is a visiting assistant professor of printmaking and drawing at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

[edieoverturf.com](http://edieoverturf.com)



**Jovan C. Speller's** work is influenced by women, childhood, and the land. It explores the juxtaposition of beauty and deterioration and the beauty of deterioration. As a result, her artistic practice has a meditative quality—one that looks inward, beyond ego and assertion, to subjectivity. Her photographs are an effort at unity between personal reconciliation and global observations. The images and the impressions they conjure denote feelings of searching dissatisfaction, impatience, or deficiency. Speller was a partner recipient of a 2014/15 Minnesota State Arts Board Cultural Community Partnership grant and had her work published in *INTO: Minneapolis* (2016). She holds a BFA in photography from Columbia College Chicago. In addition to her art practice, Speller is an independent curator with a ten-year exhibition history that spans across the United States. Originally from Los Angeles, Speller currently lives and works in Minneapolis.

[jovanspeller.com](http://jovanspeller.com)

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**Amanda Wirig** is visual artist and musician as well as an educator and nonprofit administrator. Her paintings and mixed media work utilize pop culture and humor to address social and political issues in a meaningful and forthright manner. Born in Mankato, Minnesota, Wirig received a BFA in art and a BA in music from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and later received a graduate certificate in nonprofit leadership from the same university. She has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout the Midwest, including at the Emy Frenzt Gallery in Mankato, the Evelyn Matthies Gallery in Brainerd, and the David Leonardis Gallery and 33 Contemporary Gallery in Chicago. She is also the recipient of grants and fellowships from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, the McKnight Foundation, and the Split Rock Arts Program.

[amandawirig.com](http://amandawirig.com)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many things have changed since 1981. Thirty-six years ago, Sandra Day O'Connor was nominated to become the first female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Scientists identified the AIDS virus. MTV was launched. Julian Schnabel was a young darling of the blue-chip art world and had not yet directed his first film. But one thing that has not changed is the utility in providing emerging, talented visual artists the time, money, incentive, and institutional support to make new work and engage in conversations about it. In 1981, the Jerome Foundation started funding a fellowship program that provided aspiring artists such a gift, and as of today 179 Minnesota-based artists have benefited from it. Over this period, it has been an honor for the Minneapolis College of Art and Design to administer this program.

In this catalog, we celebrate the work of Jerome fellows #175–179. But Nikki J. McComb, Kelsey Olson, Edie Overturf, Jovan C. Speller, and Amanda Wirig have never been numbers. The Jerome Foundation has always sought to put the needs of artists first, and their recent adoption of “humility” as an explicit value underscores this commitment:

We work for artists (rather than the reverse) and believe that artists and organizations are the best authorities to define their needs and challenges—an essential humility reflective of Jerome Hill, our founder. The artists we support embrace their roles as

part of a larger community of artists and citizens, and consciously work with a sense of purpose, whether aesthetic, social, or both.

Many thanks to the Jerome Foundation's Board of Directors, President Ben Cameron, Program Director Eleanor Savage, and Program Officer Venessa Fuentes for their dedication to and unwavering belief in artists and the gifts they bestow upon our communities.

Undoubtedly the 2016/17 Jerome fellows embody the “sense of purpose” that the foundation seeks to support, from Kelsey Olson's risky photographic experimentations with gelatin to Nikki J. McComb's #ENOUGH campaign, which humanizes the toll of gun violence on families and communities. These are artists committed to figuring out *how* and *where* art making can go, as evinced by Amanda Wirig's socially charged printed and painted satire, Jovan C. Speller's unabashedly beautiful photographs of black bodies, and Edie Overturf's compelling and prophetic storytelling with woodcut prints.

The three-person jury that selected these five fellows in fall of 2016 understood these artists' dedication to artistic and social engagement. Those arts professionals included Gabriel Ritter, curator of contemporary art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art; Amos Kennedy Jr., letterpress printmaker and founder of Kennedy Prints! in Detroit; and Dr. Jeannine Tang, art historian of contemporary art at the Center

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

While each crop of fellows is unique, much of what is done on behalf of the fellows every year is carried out by more than two dozen MCAD staff members. It is thanks to their continued interest, patience, and concern that the fellows—depending on their needs—get to know Ben Inness and Alex Bowes in the media center, Tyler Page and Bethy Wanvig in the service bureau, Don Myhre (a former Jerome fellow himself) in the 3D shop, Diana Eicher in the print shop, and a host of knowledgeable library staff.

The exhibition catalog serves as a long-lasting testament to the accomplishments of the Jerome fellows over the year. Selected by the fellows, Rochester-based writer Nicole Nfonoyim-Hara illuminates the complexity and significance of the fellows' artistic practice in her eloquent essays. The design of the catalog and other promotional materials is made possible thanks to the talents of MCAD's in-house design firm DesignWorks. The student designer this year was María Castillo '18, MFA, who worked under the supervision of Kayla Campbell, Rita Kovtun, and Dylan Olson-Cole. In addition, Rik Sferra expertly photographed both people and artworks, and Mary Keirstead copyedited the catalog.

The exhibition itself would not have happened without the help of MCAD Gallery installers Michaela Chorn, Isabela Cruz, Sarah Evenson, Julian Howley, Hannah Olson, Sara Suppan, graduate assistant

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Zoe Cinel, and work-study students Anna Fredlund, Pader Fang, and Olivia Schroeder. Many thanks to Jeff Jones for the expert lighting help.

Behind the scenes, I am indebted to Kate Mohn, grants and projects administrator, who helps write our grant proposals. In the web communications department, Tabitha Aleskerov, Steven Candy, and Josie Keifenheim facilitate and troubleshoot the online fellowship application process, and with Director of Communications and External Relations Ann Benrud, assist with publicizing the fellowship and our fellows.

Over the 2016/17 academic year I have had the good luck of bringing on Melanie Pankau to be the coordinator of gallery and fellowship programs. A practicing artist herself, she brings good humor, a keen eye, empathy, and amazing organizational skills to this position and makes the process run particularly smoothly. This year she and former graduate assistants Michaela Chorn and Aaron Olson-Reiners interviewed each of the Jerome fellows halfway through their fellowship year, which provided useful insights and updates about their work in progress.

Finally, I wish to thank the administrative heads of the college, who understand the value in hosting and promoting this unique fellowship program: President Jay Coogan, Vice President of Academic Affairs Karen Wirth, and Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs Jim Burke. The college has much to give and receive in this fruitful and ongoing relationship with the Jerome Foundation.

Kerry A. Morgan  
Program Director, Jerome Foundation  
Fellowship for Emerging Artists

# PAST RECIPIENTS

**2015** Star Wallowing Bull  
Emmett Ramstad  
Holly Streekstra  
Lindsay Rhyner  
Samual Weinberg

**2014** Miranda Brandon  
Regan Golden-McNerney  
Jess Hirsch  
Sieng Lee  
Jason Ramey

**2013** Kjellgren Alkire  
Pao Houa Her  
GraceMarie Keaton  
Robin Schwartzman  
Nate Young

**2012** Susannah Bielak  
Amanda Hankerson  
Michael Hoyt  
Melissa Loop  
Lauren Roche

**2011** Richard Barlow  
Gregory Euclide  
Lauren Herzak-Bauman  
Alison Hiltner  
Jehra Patrick

**2010** Greg Carideo  
Teri Fullerton  
Julia Kouneski  
Brett Smith  
Jonathan Bruce Williams

**2009** Steven Accola  
Caroline Kent  
Tynan Kerr/Andrew Mazorol  
Tony Sunder

**2008** Evan Baden  
Barbara Claussen  
Kirsten Peterson  
Benjamin Reed  
Lindsay Smith

**2007** Matthew Bakkom  
Monica Haller  
Colin Kopp  
Liz Miller  
Rosemary Williams

**2006** Ernest A. Bryant III  
Brian Lesteberg  
Cherith Lundin  
Monica Sheets  
Marcus Young

**2005** Janet Lobberecht  
Megan Rye  
Angela Strassheim  
Dan Tesene  
Megan Vossler

**2004** Michael Gaughan  
Kirk McCall  
Abinadi Meza  
Lisa Nankivil

**2003** Tamara Brantmeier  
Lucas DiGiulio  
Jesse Petersen  
Matthew Wacker  
Troy Williams

**2002** Joseph del Pesco  
Helena Keeffe  
Charles Matson Lume  
Justin Newhall  
Grace Park

**2001** Jay Heikes  
Markus Lunkenheimer  
Alec Soth  
Peter Haakon Thompson  
John Vogt

**2000** Santiago Cucullu  
Alexa Horochowski  
John Largaespada  
Gene Pittman  
Cristi Rinklin

**1999** Amelia Biewald-Low  
Jason S. Brown  
James Holmberg  
Anne Sugnet  
Inna Valin

**1998** Amelie Collins  
Brad Geiken  
Rollin Marquette  
Don Myhre  
Thor Eric Paul

**1997** Jean Humke  
Carolyn Swiszczy  
Amy Toscani  
Cate Vermeland  
Sara Woster

**1996** Therese Buchmiller  
Todd Deutsch  
Celeste Nelms  
Mara Pelecis  
Mike Rathbun

**1995** Robert Fischer  
Anne George  
Stephanie Molstre-Kotz  
Todd Norsten  
Carl Scholz

**1994** Terence Accola  
Mary Jo Donahue  
Jonathan Mason  
Karen Platt  
Elliot Warren

**1993** Mary Esch  
Damian Garner  
Shannon Kennedy  
Linda Louise Rother  
James Whitney Tuthill

**1992** Angela Dufresne  
Tim Jones  
Chris Larson  
Andrea McCormack  
Shawn Smith

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## PAST RECIPIENTS

**1991** Hans Accola  
Sara Belleau  
Franciska Rosenthal Louw  
Colette Gaiter  
Annette Walby

**1990** Andy Baird  
Mark Barlow  
Keri Pickett  
Ann Wood  
Christopher Wunderlich

**1989** Lynn Hambrick  
Vince Leo  
Stuart Mead  
David Pelto  
Alyn Silberstein

**1988** Phil Barber  
JonMarc Edwards  
Jil Evans  
Dave Rathman  
George Reboloso

**1987** Michelle Charles  
Leslie Hawk  
Paul Shambroom  
Viet Ngo  
Diana Watters

**1986** Gary DeCosse  
Christopher Dashke  
Jennifer Hecker  
Michael Mercil  
Randy Reeves

**1985** Betina  
Judy Kepes  
Peter Latner  
James May  
Lynn Wadsworth

**1984** Doug Argue  
Remo Campopiano  
Timothy Darr  
Audrey Glassman  
Robert Murphy

**1983** Jana Freiband  
Janet Loftquist  
David Madzo  
Jeff Millikan  
Steven Woodward

**1982** Jane Bassuk  
Frank Big Bear Jr.  
Laura Blaw  
Matt Brown  
Kevin Mangan

**1981** Ricardo Bloch  
Bruce Charlesworth  
Alison Ruttan  
T.L. Solien  
Scott Stack

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## About the Jerome Foundation

The Jerome Foundation, created by artist and philanthropist Jerome Hill (1905–1972), seeks to contribute to a dynamic and evolving culture by supporting the creation, development, and production of new works by emerging artists. The foundation makes grants to not-for-profit arts organizations and artists in Minnesota and New York City.

Nurturing exploration and experimentation by emerging artists diversifies the seeds of creativity and leads to rich experiences. Central to the foundation's review of each proposal is an assessment of the quality of the artistic work. The foundation seeks to encourage the potential for excellence.

### Values

The foundation's core values, which we strive to model in our practice as grantmakers and to support in our grantees, are:

Diversity: We consciously embrace diversity in the broadest sense. We support a diverse range of artists and organizations, including but not limited to those of diverse cultures, races, sexual identities, genders, generations, aesthetics, points of view, physical abilities, and missions. We support a diverse range of artistic disciplines and forms, created in a variety of contexts and for different audiences.

Innovation/Risk: We support artists who and organizations that push the boundaries of their respective disciplines, and we applaud unconventional approaches to solving problems.

Humility: We work for artists (rather than the reverse) and believe that artists and organizations are the best authorities to define their needs and challenges—an essential humility reflective of Jerome Hill, our founder. The artists we support embrace their roles as part of a larger community of artists and citizens, and consciously work with a sense of purpose, whether aesthetic, social, or both.

jeromefdn.org

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### Mission Statement

The Minneapolis College of Art and Design educates individuals to be professional artists and designers, pioneering thinkers, creative leaders, and engaged global citizens.

### Nondiscrimination Policy

The Minneapolis College of Art and Design does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, marital status, or age in its programs, activities, scholarship and loan programs, and educational policies.

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