
Jerome Fellowship Exhibition

2013 / 2014

Kjellgren Alkire
Pao Houa Her
GraceMarie Keaton
Robin Schwartzman
Nate Young



/

14

Jerome

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Essays by Yesomi Umolu

JEROME
FOUNDATION

Celebrating the
creative spirit of
emerging artists



The Jerome Foundation generously supports this fellowship program.

Kjellgren Alkire



Numbers, 2014
Chromogenic print
36" x 24"
Photo by Micah Taylor



Drymopping the Gymnasium, 2014
Chromogenic print
24" x 36"
Photo by Micah Taylor



Home Visitors, 2014
Chromogenic print
24" x 36"
Photo by Micah Taylor



Change, 2014
Chromogenic print
60" x 60"
Photo by Peter Bugg



Kjellgren Alkire

Kjellgren Alkire is an artist with multiple personae, each of which feeds into his installation, performance, and printed media works. Alkire's work began by exploring the character of the "cowboy evangelist," a figure who was prominent during the artist's upbringing in Arizona and who takes on various proxies in communities across the United States. In a series of recorded and live performances, Alkire appropriates various texts to deliver a series of sermons that teeter on the edge of the sacred and the profane. Delivered by various guises, such as the "Reverend Roughstock" dressed in a vintage Western-style shirt, they carefully mix deep theological insight with sharp and humorous observations to speak about faith. The tone of each performance changes sharply, some presented to the camera in a considered and poised manner, and others pushing the artist to his limits, as in those sermons delivered while drunk.

Alkire's performances are intended to host conversations about our paradoxical relationship to systems of belief, looking specifically at the language around these and their inherent failures. Alkire asserts that he is less interested in addressing subjective views on religion and more concerned with the individuals who so often deliver the message—the prophets, leaders, and truth sayers whom believers coalesce around. Alkire plays on the very fact that these individuals command power on often tenuous grounds, and as such he works through exposing their faults as well as their triumphs. By co-opting these figures—their costumes, mannerisms, and speech acts—Alkire seeks to unravel the complex layers of performativity that are embedded within various forms of religiosity. Given that Alkire studied religions and theological philosophies before turning to art practice, it is not coincidental that his work takes on Christian evangelical subculture in the United States as its primary subject matter. However, Alkire's arsenal of references is not confined to this sphere; he also culls material from political theory, art criticism, and popular culture.

Most of the bodies Alkire inhabits are male, and thus Alkire's work has much to do with interrogating masculine archetypes in society at large. When I spoke to the artist, he admitted that his studies of the male figure come from a deep personal space as he himself tussles with definitions of what it means to be a man—how to act and perform one's self both privately and publically. In what is the most ambitious mixed-media installation of his work to date, *Camp* (2009), Alkire brings together a number of male characters in an immersive environment based on the spaces that men go or escape to—shacks, attics, basement, and the woods. Originally presented at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, an impressive yet crude architecture built using scavenged materials such as scrap lumber, furniture, and household items suggests these spaces. This was the site for presenting four sermons—The Singalong Sermon, The Campfire Sermon, The Nursery Sermon, and The Chuckwagon Sermon—each associated with a particular character: Youth Director, Mudman, Man in Black, Professor.

Having not experienced this work in person, I cannot speak directly about its effect, yet there is a deep honesty that the artist displays in person that speaks volumes about his dedication to his craft. Alkire is under no illusion about the capacity of his material to provoke or cause offense, but this is of no consequence to his work, which he insists is about merely starting conversations that are so often dismissed for fear of hurting individual sensibilities. At the core of Alkire's exposition is deployment of the term *camp*. This sensibility, as Susan Sontag writes, is a "love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration," and it permeates Alkire's practice. On the surface we see it as the artist's openness to do drag and to play with his body and voice in personifying his chosen characters. It is also present in his refutation of conventional qualifiers of truth and beauty in respect to an artistic practice: the audacity of Alkire's performances, the materiality of his sculptural works, the finish of his videos and prints are intentionally kitsch and belabored. But most significantly, Alkire's use of various modalities of camp in his work actually derives from what he recognizes as an inherent quality in the subculture he addresses. His works are therefore not just mere projections but rather elaborations of what already exists. — YU

Kjellgren Alkire was born and raised in the suburbs of Phoenix, Arizona. As an undergraduate at Concordia University in St. Paul and a graduate student at Arizona State University, he studied fine art, community development, and religion. His studio and curatorial work has benefited from several awards, including a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant, a Contemporary Forum Award from the Phoenix Art Museum, and Project Funding from the Missouri Arts Council. He lives in Lake City, Minnesota, and teaches at Winona State University.

Pao Houa Her



Old school Photoshop, 2014
Digital inkjet print
Dimensions variable



Beauty contestant practice, 2014
Digital inkjet print
Dimensions variable



Celina, 2014
Digital inkjet print
Dimensions variable



Pao Houa Her

Put simply, Pao Houa Her's work is unabashedly frank. Spanning a broad range of genres—landscape, still life, and portraiture—Her documents her experiences as a Hmong refugee living in Minnesota. Her states that her work deals with “the desire to belong, the desire to be recognized, and the desire to be desired,” which is very much intrinsic to the experience of living in diaspora. In the case of the artist and her subjects, desire is articulated as a longing for home (both as a physical site of belonging and as a metaphysical state), as seen in a rich collection of images that range from still lifes of lush fruits, to romantic views of the Laotian landscape, to casual portraits of friends and family members and snapshots from community gatherings.

Interestingly, Her conceives of her vibrant photographs as part of a single, ongoing investigation. Although they are often presented in clusters, there is little indication that these are fixed groupings, and in fact the artist often culls works to put together anew, making different relationships between images each time. Taken together Her's photographs construct an image of the fragmentary nature of Laotian identity in America. Her's handling of her material, which intentionally avoids any form of overdetermination regarding the intent behind an image or a group of images, also extends to her compositions and production techniques. Here Her displays her consummate skill and sophistication as a photographer, in that although her images are highly considered vis-à-vis framing, lighting, and composition, they present fleeting glimpses of everyday life that are decidedly unpretentious.

In spite of their seemingly unassuming subject matter, Her's images enact a subtle critique of various facets of Hmong American society, addressing in particular gender politics. Her exposes a deep consciousness of the social structures in her community, which, much like other cultural groups, have distinct roles for men and women. The majority of Her's photographs depict female figures

spanning several generations, both those close to her, such as her mother, sister, and cousins, and also strangers. There are equal levels of comfort and unease in these depictions; in some ways they pay tribute to the women as pillars of the Hmong family unit, but in another, more crucial manner they expose the rigid and confining roles assigned to them in this highly patriarchal community.

The various ways Her unravels these tensions is what is most innovative about her practice, as she moves seamlessly between mainstream and fringe cultural practices in Hmong society. For example, in a series of images collected from Internet dating sites that connect middle-aged Hmong American men to Hmong Laotian women, Her exposes a prevalent culture of exoticization. The vast majority of the images are those uploaded by women, who often present themselves dressed in traditional wear set against pastoral backdrops that reference the Laotian countryside, such as wheat fields or rice paddies, and hark back to the community's agrarian roots. These are curious images—fantastical to a certain degree—as they are in fact heavily digitally manipulated to change facial features or to lighten skin tones—all in the name of appearing more Western and therefore more desirable to male suitors. Her not only collects these images but goes one step further to make additional manipulations to the figures, as if projecting her own desires onto them. Going yet further, in another set of images, Her casts herself as one of these women, dressed in traditional wear and placed in the customary scenic setting. Together, these images poignantly ask questions about the expectations—in terms of beauty and traditional roles—that are cast on women in Hmong society, herself included.

Elsewhere Her turns her lens to capturing portraits of Hmong veterans who fought for the United States in the Vietnam War. Each photograph presents a stoic figure in front of a makeshift studio backdrop. Much like other former military men, these individuals form social clubs and gather frequently for engagements such as funerals and weddings. However, the narrative goes much deeper in this case in that these individuals have never been officially recognized by the United States as allies or veterans of the Vietnam War. Her's portraits show them dressed in military regalia that suggest they are highly decorated and belong to the military's highest command, but underneath this portrayal lies a deep fallacy. Their uniforms are in fact costume, rented for the occasion, and not officially issued to them by the U.S. military. These men meet and recount their military days, pledge allegiance to the American flag, and take pride in their contribution, in a sense partaking in their own private form of extraordinary rendition. Her's images are not intended to shame these individuals, to speak about the fictions that they have surrounded themselves with. Nor are they proposed as an activist tool intended to call attention to the need for these men to receive formal recognition from the United States. But rather they speak about the very significant



Mist in Nong Hai, 2014
Digital inkjet print
Dimensions variable

role these men play in the Hmong community as heads of families and community leaders. In truth, the displacement of the Hmong community is due to the recruitment of these men to the American war effort. This narrative of course carries a bittersweet ending in that exile from their homeland offered the possibility of living the much-touted American dream. These images serve as a commemoration of the Hmong male, yet their uncomfortable truths speak to the fragility of his position in Hmong society.

As a whole, Her's practice can be interpreted as an attempt to address the complexities of the Hmong American society and to set new expectations for both genders. Her successfully does this in a myriad of ways, most certainly through the simple task of taking up the camera and giving herself the permission and power to photograph a community that she deeply respects and values. We should not take lightly the fact that Her's work is one of the first collections of documentary-based images dedicated exclusively to the Hmong American community—the histories and narratives of which are still to be distinctly represented in American popular

culture and artistic practice. Nor should we underestimate the weight the work carries in coming from a female perspective. It is apparent that Her is still evolving a language for this, but what blossoms in her deadpan yet suggestive imagery is the ambiguity of the process, which is aptly suggestive of an immigrant community that is still finding a sense of self and place in the American cultural landscape. — YU

Pao Houa Her was born in Laos and moved with her family to Minnesota in 1986. She studied photography at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where she received her BFA in 2009, and went on to graduate from the Yale University School of Art in 2012 with an MFA. Her uses a wide range of photographic formats, from black-and-white landscapes to formally posed still lifes and casual portraits culled from the Internet, to explore ideas of desire within Hmong communities here and abroad. Her's work has been shown in New York, Minnesota, and California.

GraceMarie Keaton



With No Name (installation view), 2013
Archival inkjet print on wood panel
18.75" x 15"
Photo by Rik Sferra



Untitled (Collage), 2014
Digital offset prints on panel
17" x 14"
Photo by Rik Sferra



There and Not (Still Life Objects), 2014
Archival inkjet print front mounted to Plexiglas
30" x 16"



GraceMarie Keaton

GraceMarie Keaton is a photographer who astutely explores the poetics of the photographic image. Working mostly within the still life genre either photographing objects in her studio or appropriating still lifes from books and the Internet, Keaton engages a series of experimental production techniques to rethink the status of the captured objects, their composition, and their relationship to the picture plane. The rules that guide this process are not necessarily fixed. Keaton moves between very traditional modes of image capture and manipulation to more improvised forms that are guided by how she handles and responds to her source material in the moment. This is perhaps the most exciting aspect of Keaton's practice, in that it expounds an openness to play in strong opposition to the rigid technicalities that often guide photographic practice. This is not to say that Keaton is not a skilled technician; in fact it is because of her highly trained eye that she is afforded the possibility to take such risks. And indeed Keaton's work is not presented as an adolescent revolt—a compulsion to break with the rules just for the sake of doing so—but is in fact symptomatic of broader shifts in contemporary image making that are the consequence of the growing prevalence of digital technologies and virtual environments.

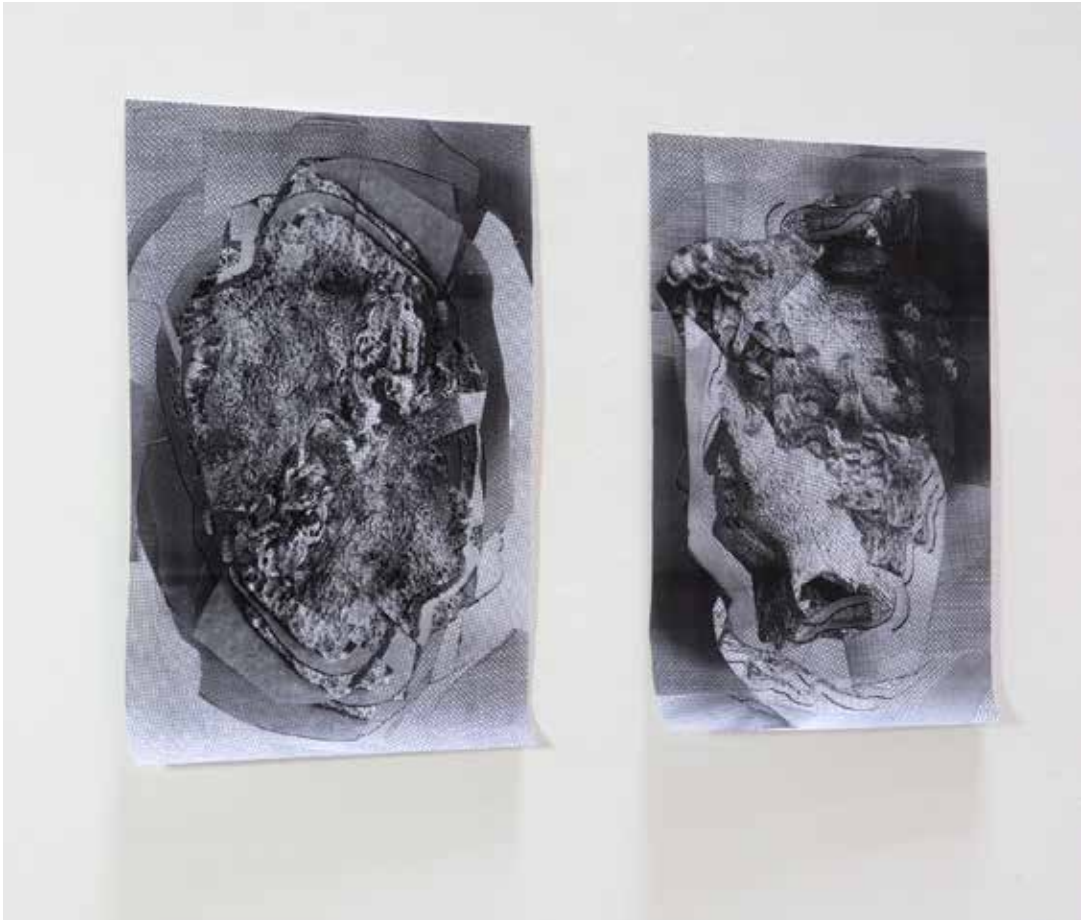
Take the piece *There and Not* (2014), which evolved from still lifes that were culled from the Internet, reproduced, and then cut up by the artist. In the work we see a selection of green shapes in front of a green background. To achieve this, Keaton traced each composite shape of the original still lifes onto a green screen. In a secondary process, she cut out each trace and then placed them in front of a green background. Playing with the lighting and color exposure in her camera, Keaton was able to make the composite objects appear as if they were floating.

The collapsing of depth achieved here is one that is often also present in digitally manipulated images when one image is superimposed onto the other. However, this

work is solely the result of analog processes, and the reference to the digital is only present in Keaton's use of the color green to connote the proverbial green screen—that negative space of potentiality that can be rendered more complex in postproduction. In this work, Keaton explores the nonsymbolic potentialities of the still life object; in stripping it of all information she presents it as a site to act upon. In Keaton's world, it is through the machinations of the imagination, set free by digital technologies, that new meaning can be projected onto an image.

Keaton's references to the digital realm are sometimes evocative, as in the case of *There and Not*, and at other times literal, as with *Copy of A* (2013), where she does use this technology in her production process. With this work Keaton plays with photocopying and scanning reproductions of a single image. The work began with a photograph she took of a classical bust she had reclaimed from a dumpster. Keaton then made multiple reproductions of this photograph through photocopying and scanned those at different resolutions before reprinting. As a result of this process, a moiré pattern began to emerge as the copier struggled to retain all the image information through its successive rescaled versions. This pattern brings to mind the pixel grid of a Photoshop image, which denotes the expanded workspace where editing can happen at the level of a single pixel. Not willing to terminate her process there, Keaton then began collaging the various output to re-create an image of the original bust. This was done manually at first and then digitally as she returned to add more details. The final image thus appears to be a rather ambiguous collage that gives some hints of the form and texture of the original bust yet has enough visual noise in it to infer something else. *Copy of A* is a self-referential image in that it presents traces of multiple reproductions of itself. Consequently, when viewing the work it is impossible not to think about its various iterations while at the same time considering the history of the original bust. In essence the work deals with the displacement of an object and its reproduction in time and space, dispelling the notion of the still life as a representation of a fixed moment.

In works such as these, Keaton displays her strong awareness of the impact that digital technologies have on photography, which have allowed for increased levels of flexibility and endless possibilities of image manipulation. In our current digital age, the use of such techniques is nothing new, but while some photographers turn away from this, arguing for the authenticity and image purity afforded by analog technology, Keaton and her generation are hurtling full throttle toward it. Keaton's image world is one in which you can cut, copy, and paste from a myriad of sources, share images with ease, and imbue them with multiple meanings or indeed with none at all. Keaton is thus working in a world in which the photographic image has gone viral; it is less a fetishized object and more a site of multiple simultaneous projections. As such, what



Copy of A (installation view), 2013
Laser tone prints on bond paper
40" x 26"
Photo by Rik Sferra

becomes apparent in Keaton's work is that these new forms of production have fundamentally shifted ways of seeing that have had profound bearings on the practice of photography and the still life genre. To say that Keaton's work follows a labored and involved process would be an understatement of the highest degree, but this is truly the essence of her craft as she propels photographic practice into its inevitable future. — YU

GraceMarie Keaton is an artist currently based in Minneapolis. Her work is mainly photographic in nature and orbits around questions of representation, illusion, meaning making, and image culture. She has shown work in multiple group exhibitions in the Midwest and on the East Coast. Keaton has participated in several residency programs including 10 Chances Urban Artist Residency and Yale University's Norfolk Summer School of Art. She received her BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 2013.

Robin Schwartzman



There's nothing to see over here..., 2014
Motorized sculpture
Photo by Rik Sferra



Jump on in! (installation view), 2011
Katherine E. Nash Gallery,
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Photo by Mark VanCleave



(No) Vacancy (window installation), 2014
Witt-Mitchell Building, Hennepin and
7th Street, downtown Minneapolis
Commission for the 2014 Made Here Initiative
Photo by Steven Lang



Robin Schwartzman

Eye-popping color, alluring textures, and exquisite fabrication collide in Robin Schwartzman's larger-than-life sculptures and interactive installations. Schwartzman appropriates various graphic and architectural elements from popular leisure activities that date back to the nineteenth century—amusement parks, seaside resorts, miniature golf courses, and so on. To say that the artist's work is saccharine and nostalgic is to entirely miss the point of her practice, which through restaging environments that refer to a bygone era, attempts to deal with the commoditization of leisure in contemporary culture. The period that Schwartzman looks back on, which may evoke memories of family-run establishments, respectable values, and "good clean fun," has given way to a rampant enterprise of instant gratification shepherded by corporate entities—think Disney, Universal, SeaWorld, for example. So when confronting a piece such as *Jump on in!* (2011), which appears to employ elements from the themed playpens so often found in malls and fast-food outlets, we are to think more intently about what lies beneath the surface. Indeed, Schwartzman's works are made in all their fantastical glory to entrap the viewer into participating for better or worse. *Jump on in!*, for example, invites you to take off your shoes, become comfortable, and interact with a multitude of curious objects, from an anthropomorphic lonely tree with apples for eyes, to a clover patch with a lucky four-leaf clover hidden within, to a giant rainbow slide. Each object delivers a peculiar response once the viewer begins to interact with it. The ball pit moans in anguish when you jump in, the lonely tree laments its "lonely pathetic life" when you sit on the inviting picnic blanket at its base, and so forth. Such interactive elements, which are at once amusing and disturbing, speak volumes about the critical lens Schwartzman casts on clichéd sites of play and reverie.

Schwartzman's work oscillates between interactive art objects made for the gallery to functional play spaces, such as her recent contributions to the Walker Art

Center's annual artist-designed mini-golf course. Indeed Schwartzman maintains a healthy obsession with mini-golf courses, traveling throughout the country to play on these increasingly rare spaces. Schwartzman's visits come out of an interest in studying the experiences that these sites elicit, pondering their capacity to return children and adults alike to moments of unadulterated amusement, however fleeting. Schwartzman is a maker at her heart, having trained as a printmaker; she is deeply dedicated to producing objects of the highest quality and resolution. So her visits are also research based, as she encounters different production techniques that span decades of innovation with material technologies and construction methods.

Elsewhere Schwartzman has applied her skills to crafting large-scale public art installations, such as her contribution to Northern Spark 2012, where she attached giant illuminated letters that spelled out the Dr. Seuss quotation "Think and Wonder, Wonder and Think" to the arches of Minneapolis's famous Stone Arch Bridge. Here Schwartzman appropriates the aesthetic of neon signage to deliver the official theme of the festival. In another project, currently in development, Schwartzman has conceived *(No) Vacancy*, an installation consisting of a video projection of ghostly figures and a cleverly placed neon sign on the second floor of an empty building in downtown Minneapolis. While many of her gallery-based works have riffed off very individualized experiences on the part of the viewer, in placing works in public spaces Schwartzman has adapted to the demands of catering to the collective body of the city. In cases such as these, where there is less opportunity for direct interaction with the viewer, the works are much more subtle in tone. Nevertheless, Schwartzman's works maintains an edge of irony. For instance, *(No) Vacancy* is a commission derived from a need to regenerate the downtown area of Minneapolis, which has seen the decline in shopping and entertainment provisions over the past two decades as the suburbs have swelled with these activities. The practice of working with artists to insert some much needed creative energy into otherwise lifeless buildings in first-wave gentrification processes is commonplace in cities across the United States and beyond. So Schwartzman's sign with its haunted scene not only recalls the past lives of its site but most importantly is a meditation on the erasure of leisure from urban centers.

Although Schwartzman's practice often engages a pop aesthetic within a decidedly American context, from the bright lights of Las Vegas to the symbolism of post-modern architecture, parallels can be found throughout the world, where this culture has been adopted and taken to the next levels of eccentricity. It is no surprise that Schwartzman expresses an interest in exploring Japanese pop culture and its penchant for all forms of theming, from nightclubs to everyday dress. There is seriousness to this culture, which blends a celebration



THINK AND WONDER, WONDER AND THINK (installation detail), 2012
 Stone Arch Bridge, Minneapolis
 Commission for the 2012 Northern Spark Festival, presented
 by NorthernLights.mn and funded in part by a Minnesota
 State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant
 Photo by Mill City Times

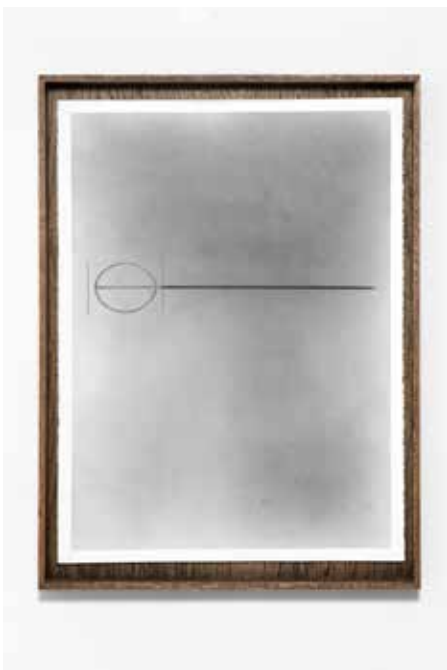
of all forms of artifice with the uncanny. Imbuing works with a healthy dose of the uncanny is a hard balancing act, and it is here that Schwartzman's work displays the most potential. Take her early performance piece *Cake Celebration* (2009), for example, where she and artist Rachel James created a lavish set for a birthday celebration complete with a giant cake, balloons, and party decorations. Not ending the absurdity of the work there, they dressed up as giant furry rabbits and then proceeded to frolic in the space. The resulting photographic series from this performance shows several shots of the human-sized bunnies interacting with each other and enjoying their surroundings. These images are as uplifting as they are melancholic. With this work and throughout her practice, Schwartzman displays her deftness at mixing the seemingly playful with the surreal. — YU

Robin Schwartzman grew up in eastern Pennsylvania, where she spent her summer vacations on the boardwalks of the Jersey Shore. She received her BFA from Syracuse University in 2008, and in 2011, her MFA from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Robin currently resides in Minneapolis, where she is an independent artist, an Academic Support Technician in the 3D Shop at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and an adjunct instructor at the University of Minnesota. Her large-scale projects, commissions, and performances have been featured at the Walker Art Center, Katherine E. Nash Gallery, Northern Spark, Made Here Initiative, and Art Shanty Projects, to name a few.

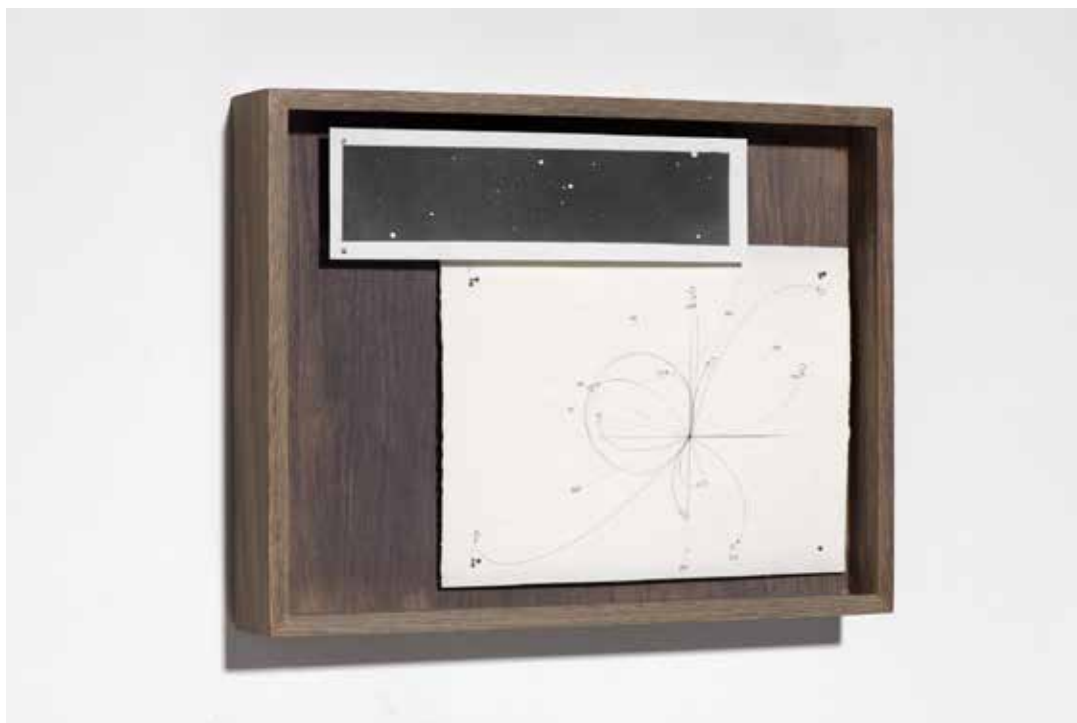
Nate Young



Morgan Freeman, 2014
Black velvet on panel and audio
73" x 32"
Photo by Rik Sferra



Diagrams 1–4, 2014
Graphite on paper
32" x 24"
Photo by Rik Sferra



Untitled from the series 5–11 Constellations, 2013
Graphite on paper
Dimensions variable
Photo by Rik Sferra



Nate Young

Nate Young began his practice working primarily in drawing but has extended into mixed-media installations and sculpture. He often uses drawing as an initial means to consider different forms of ideology that dictate human experience. This stems from an understanding that humans do not enter into the world and engage with it without their experiences being mediated by ideology in its most subtle and violent forms whether political, religious, or cultural. Young is less interested in ideological content than in its construction (primarily through language) and the spaces that engender this. Through his conceptual drawings, Young begins to deconstruct some of these systems, attempting to find an underlying logic but more often than not terminating in a visual and linguistic paradox. Take 5–11 Constellations (2012–present), an ongoing series of austere black-and-white drawings that map out an imagined cosmology based on the concept of love. These cosmologies began as texts that the artist culled from song lyrics and then translated into pictorial form. The resulting images of vast universes littered with stark white dots are in a sense sentimental in that they play with popular imagery that speaks to the profound nature of human emotions. What could be more monumental and unquantifiable than the skies and the stars? Yet, placed alongside carefully handwritten reproductions of their source texts, Young's constellations ultimately appear as approximates, which, as we know, will never fully express the depth of a very subjective feeling.

Addressing the subject of belief, in the drawing *Sign, Signifier, Signified* (2013), Young extracts a verse from the Christian Bible (John 1:1). The verse appears in full—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God—set below a block of gradating black graphite. Young chooses to capitalize “WORD” in each sentence, as if to compel us to consider its meaning. In reality, many elements are taken as a given in this sentence; that is, an understanding

of God and Word is equally dependent not only on prior knowledge but also on faith in language as a representational tool. *Word*, of course, infers this, but in the case of this verse and religious dogmas it also posits a singular, self-affirming truth. It is no coincidence that Young's emphasis on the word *word* also hints at modern-day colloquialisms, as derived from hip-hop terminology, where the term connotes a casual sense of agreement. In fact the alliteration in the verse also references the lyrical machinations of this cultural form. Young intertwines and exposes in this simple presentation of a very well-known verse a myriad of cultural registers from the biblical to the contemporary; spanning millennia, they serve different needs and communities but in essence speak to the power of language to co-opt bodies and minds.

The strength of Young's work lies in its ability to be brilliantly suggestive, which is due in part to the artist's mastery of various forms of collusion and trickery in his work. Young's work jumps out of the canvas in its witty use of language, but it is at its strongest when the artist inserts his own body and voice in this process. In these cases, Young literally performs the role of the trickster, as seen in the compelling video works *Jumping Gemini* and *Untouched* (2012), which depict the artist's hands as he performs a card trick. There is one key difference between these works; the former shows the performance with the cards while the later omits these to present just the hand movements. Here Young considers notions of legibility with any form of communication, and how distinctions can be made through the simple addition or omission of information. So, one only understands Young's gestures because of the presence of the cards, otherwise without them they could be read as incoherent gesticulation.

Works such as these address the magician as a figure who entraps viewers by exploiting sleight of hand and distraction, and most crucially by being savvy on what information to withhold and share. But in Young's universe, the magician is not unique in deploying these tactics, so too can the artist. The correlation of artist to trickery finds its clearest articulation in the sculptural installation *Closing No. 1* (2012). A reclaimed church pew emanating from the wall is bound tightly into a corner, inviting the viewer to sit and listen to an audio piece. The recording is a rousing sermon delivered by the artist in an impression of a preacher's voice. At first, it is difficult to ascertain the content of Young's rhythmic incantations, but the manner in which it is delivered of course hints at popular forms of religious proselytizing. As time passes, there is a slow transition where the words in the piece can be heard and understood, and it becomes apparent that the cacophony of words is in fact about aesthetics. The statement in the piece is actually written by the artist and based on various written and spoken sources. But to arrive at deciphering the subject of the sermon does not lead directly to meaning being derived; this would take additional moments of contemplation. Of course Young's



Untouched, 2012
Digital video still

play with moments of coherence and mystification in the work gestures toward the artist's intent to open up a space where an underlying logic may begin to reveal itself. With this, *Closing No. 1* gets to the crux of Young's broader interest in our susceptibility to being seduced not only by language but also crucially by the form in which it is delivered. *Closing No. 1* is not intended to compel complete understanding or agreement but rather highlights the process of getting to the point where a message can be transmitted—at which time we ultimately have lost the game to the cunning trickster. — YU

Nate Young received his BA from Northwestern College in St. Paul in 2004 and his MFA from California Institute of the Arts in 2009, and completed an artist residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2009. His work explores the contemporary discourse of racialization in a way that focuses not on the particular politics of social engagement, but instead aims to deconstruct the essentialism that allows modern oppression. He interrogates these ideas through poetic gestures as well as analytical and intentional positions reacting against popular notions of art production. He has been awarded grants through the Minnesota State Arts Board and is a 2009 Bush Fellow.

Acknowledgments

The Jerome Foundation, created 50 years ago 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. The Jerome Foundation celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2014 by honoring the creation, development, and production of new work by emerging artists, and the organizations that support them. Visit the 50th Anniversary website for more information about Jerome Foundation's history of grantmaking.

jeromefdn.org

There are many people who ensure the continued success of the MCAD-Jerome Foundation Fellowships for Emerging Artists. Administered by the Minneapolis College of Art and Design since its inception and now in its 33rd year, this program for Minnesota-based artists has been a model for others to emulate around the country. This year, for example, the Queens Museum (QM) in New York City and the Jerome Foundation inaugurated the QM-Jerome Foundation Fellowship Program for Emerging Artists. They, too, are providing artists with significant financial support along with special opportunities for the artists to develop their work and present it publicly, and to receive other professional development and mentorship. Under the guidance and support of Cindy Gehrig, president of the Jerome Foundation, and her board of directors, so many things are possible for artists living in the five boroughs of New York City and the state of Minnesota. The Foundation is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2014, and there are thousands of emerging artists in a range of artistic fields who have benefited from the Foundation's commitment to and trust in the power of the arts to enrich people's lives.

For Kjellgren Alkire, Pao Houa Her, GraceMarie Keaton, Robin Schwartzman, and Nate Young, the five MCAD-Jerome Emerging Artist Fellows who were selected in 2013, it has been a momentous year. Many of them have juggled their own creative work with a host of other activities, from teaching in the classroom and sharing their technical know-how in a 3D shop to running their own gallery. These ambitious artists have taken on so much, and hopefully they will reap the benefits for years to come. Moreover, they are lovely people who are both lighthearted and serious-minded, and I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to work with them.

Selecting these artists from a pool of 232 applicants was a formidable task entrusted to three arts professionals who served as jurors: Ross Elfline, assistant professor of contemporary art at Carleton College; Elyse Gonzales, curator of exhibitions at the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara; and John Hitchcock, professor of art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They showed enormous enthusiasm for all of the artists who received studio visits and provided good feedback to the semifinalists.

While not diminishing the financial significance of winning this fellowship (\$10,000 awards are given to each artist), the highlights of the year are hosting studio visits with local and national art critics and curators. This year's roster included Ross Elfline; Matthew Higgs, director of White Columns in New York City; Christina Schmid,

assistant professor in the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; and Yesomi Umolu, assistant curator at the Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University. The fellows selected Umolu to write individual essays about them for the exhibition catalog, and her fresh insights into their work make for very pleasurable reading. While the show is on view, she will be hosting a discussion with the artists, expanding upon the fellows' art practices and discovering what might be in store for them in the future.

There are also many behind-the-scenes individuals who lend their support and knowledge to ensuring the continuation of this fellowship program. I am indebted to the hard work and upbeat spirit of Nathan Lewis, Fellowship and Gallery Coordinator, and to Ashely Peifer, Gallery Assistant, who helped facilitate so much this past year—from organizing studio visits and making plane reservations to keeping track of multiple budgets. They are the friendly voices and faces that assist fellowship applicants in their moments of need, and make the entire operation work smoothly. Thanks to the expertise of gallery technicians, the exhibition component of the fellowship looks as professional as the artists themselves. Christopher Alday, Jennifer Hibbard, Allegra Lockstadt, Colin Marx, Mat Ollig, and Matt Reimers—all artists in their own right—are master problem solvers. The exhibition catalog plays an important role in disseminating the fellows' artwork to a wider audience. That would not get done or nearly so well without MCAD's in-house design team, DesignWorks. My thanks go to Aimee Gauthier and Brent Meyers for their orchestration of the project and to Logan Myers for his design talent. Much of the artwork photographed for the catalog and the artists' portraits are the fine work of Rik Sferra, who is always more than willing to arrange his schedule to meet the needs of the fellows as well as my own. Jerome fellows are part of the larger MCAD community for the year, and I appreciate the many departments on campus who make them feel welcome: 3D Shop, Computer Support, Library, Media Center, Print Shop, Public Safety, and Service Bureau. I am humbled by the generosity of time and commitment that all my colleagues provide. Although strong art and artists develop in all types of conditions, there are greater opportunities with the assistance of a foundation and art school working together.

Thanks, Kjel, Pao, GraceMarie, Robin, and Nate. It has been a good year.

Kerry Morgan

Program Director, MCAD-Jerome Foundation
Fellowships for Emerging Artists

Past Recipients

2012	Susannah Bielak Amanda Hankerson Michael Hoyt Melissa Loop Lauren Roche	2004	Michael Gaughan Kirk McCall Abinadi Meza Lisa Nankivil
2011	Richard Barlow Gregory Euclide Lauren Herzak-Bauman Alison Hiltner Jehra Patrick	2003	Tamara Brantmeier Lucas DiGiulio Jesse Petersen Matthew Wacker Troy Williams
2010	Greg Carideo Teri Fullerton Julia Kouneski Brett Smith Jonathan Bruce Williams	2002	Joseph del Pesco Helena Keffe Charles Matson Lume Justin Newhall Grace Park
2009	Steven Accola Caroline Kent Tynan Kerr/Andrew Mazorol Tony Sunder	2001	Jay Heikes Markus Lunkenheimer Alec Soth Peter Haakon Thompson John Vogt
2008	Evan Baden Barbara Claussen Kirsten Peterson Benjamin Reed Lindsay Smith	2000	Santiago Cucullu Alexa Horochowski John Largaespada Gene Pittman Cristi Rinklin
2007	Matthew Bakkom Monica Haller Colin Kopp Liz Miller Rosemary Williams	1999	Amelia Biewald-Low Jason S. Brown James Holmberg Anne Sugnet Inna Valin
2006	Ernest A. Bryant III Brian Lesteberg Cherith Lundin Monica Sheets Marcus Young	1998	Amelie Collins Brad Geiken Rollin Marquette Don Myhre Thor Eric Paul
2005	Janet Lobberecht Megan Rye Angela Strassheim Dan Tesene Megan Vossler	1997	Jean Humke Carolyn Swiszc Amy Toscani Cate Vermeland Sara Woster

1996	Therese Buchmiller Todd Deutsch Celeste Nelms Mara Pelecis Mike Rathbun	1988	Phil Barber JonMarc Edwards Jil Evans Dave Rathman George Reboloso
1995	Robert Fischer Anne George Stephanie Molstre-Kotz Todd Norsten Carl Scholz	1987	Michelle Charles Leslie Hawk Paul Shambroom Viet Ngo Diana Watters
1994	Terence Accola Mary Jo Donahue Jonathan Mason Karen Platt Elliot Warren	1986	Gary DeCosse Christopher Dashke Jennifer Hecker Michael Mercil Randy Reeves
1993	Mary Esch Damian Garner Shannon Kennedy Linda Louise Rother James Whitney Tuthill	1985	Betina Judy Kepes Peter Latner James May Lynn Wadsworth
1992	Angela Dufresne Tim Jones Chris Larson Andrea McCormack Shawn Smith	1984	Doug Argue Remo Campopiano Timothy Darr Audrey Glassman Robert Murphy
1991	Hans Accola Sara Belleau Franciska Rosenthal Louw Colette Gaiter Annette Walby	1983	Jana Freiband Janet Loftquist David Madzo Jeff Millikan Steven Woodward
1990	Andy Baird Mark Barlow Keri Pickett Ann Wood Christopher Wunderlich	1982	Jane Bassuk Frank Big Bear Jr. Laura Blaw Matt Brown Kevin Mangan
1989	Lynn Hambrick Vince Leo Stuart Mead David Peltó Alyn Silberstein	1981	Ricardo Bloch Bruce Charlesworth Alison Ruttan T.L. Solien Scott Stack

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