

Soft Boundary

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4	Soft Boundary
7	<i>Soft Material Boundary</i> Distorted
12	Distorted <i>Soft Boundary</i> of Histories
16	A Soft Boundary, Blurred
17	Bibliography
18	Checklist
20	Biographies
23	Acknowledgement

Soft Boundary

Written by Sophia Park

Distortions take place all around us. The caffeine in your morning coffee raises cortisol levels, prompting the brain to awaken. The sound of an ambulance passing by fluctuates in pitch, due to the Doppler effect, as it speeds past you. When stuck completing a boring task at work, time seems to crawl by like a slow tortoise. In comparison, when having fun with friends, time flies. The list goes on, and it can be a Herculean task to identify all the distortions that occur loudly and quietly in our daily lives and our immediate surroundings.

To distort is the “act of twisting or altering something out of its true, natural, or original state.”¹ The act of twisting something to change it temporarily or permanently opens up the possibility of actually seeing that something more clearly. Distortion works in conversation with inversion, subversion, and reconsideration to provide this clarity. While distortions are used in scientific terminology widely, especially in engineering and physics contexts, it can have a negative connotation in conventional usage. To change from the perceived “original” or the “natural” into an unknown state can be seen as unwanted or displeasing. Yet, distortion holds great potential for opening windows to alternative

horizons for understanding the greater structures that organize us.

Soft Boundary presents the works of Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, Utsa Hazarika, Christopher Lin, Naomi Nakazato, and Steven Uccello, all of whom deploy material distortion as one method for restructuring relationships with the larger organizational structures we negotiate daily, such as ecological systems, our own bodies, and societal narratives. Distortion as used by these artists illuminates the perpetual crossing of thresholds between these structures. It can emphasize the very materials that are distorted and put the basic units of the material both in conversation and entanglement.

Distortion plays a particularly large role in society at this moment, as the globe is slowly pushing its way through a pandemic that has forced many people to fundamentally restructure their lives. One major factor that has been warped is our perception of time. The traditional markers of time, like the seasons or federal holidays, have been dismissed and reformatted as just one fluid time—the time of the pandemic. Both mainstream media and formal scientific journals have covered the repercussions of this time distortion.² Simon Grondin,

1 Merriam-Webster online, s.v. “Distortion,” accessed March 1, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/distortion>.

2 Nicole Wetsman, “The Pandemic Ruined Time,” *The Verge*, December 15, 2020. <https://www.theverge.com/2020/12/15/22167586/pandemic-time-perception-2020-covid>.

3 Simon Grondin, Esteban Mendoza-Duran, and Pier-Alexandre Rioux, "Pandemic, Quarantine, and Psychological Time." *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (October 20, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.581036>. There have been multiple studies in the short period of time since the COVID-19 pandemic took over our lives, which demonstrate the consequences as mediated by the time distortion on overall health. A study during England's second national lockdown noted that the distorted temporal experience was evidenced across the board. Ruth Ogden, "Distortions to the Passage of Time during England's Second National Lockdown: A Role for Depression," edited by Fuschia M. Sirois. *PLOS ONE* 16, no. 4 (April 20, 2021): e0250412. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250412>.

Esteban Mendoza-Duran, and Pier-Alexandre Rioux identify one aspect of psychological time that is disturbed, specifically by the lockdowns of the pandemic, as the internal clock, which is akin to a "pacemaker-counter" device.³ When this internal clock is distorted, it not only affects memory but can also lead to a loss of time perception, which causes anxiety and uncertainty. When time is distorted in this way, it is possible to see the variable living conditions that existed before the pandemic. As time elongated during shelter-in-place policies that show no end, the amount of time spent on work for a company or care work for the family was exposed. The relationship between capital and labor became more visible to a growing proportion of the public as the low wages for those considered "heroes" or

"front-line workers" became more widely known. The seemingly never-ending pandemic caused us to look more closely at how we were living, and, in turn, these disruptions to internal time-management apparatuses that affected individuals rippled out to larger society.

Closely related to time, history is also subject to distortion. In history, the twisting away from the original is complicated by the challenges of determining historical truth. Throughout history, truth is continually contested and, eventually, overwhelmingly distorted in favor of those in power through the manipulation of mass media and educational programs that disseminate the histories that we become most familiar with. Additionally, when the moment of historical occurrence and the present time pulls away from each other due to



Christopher Lin, *Fossil Memory*, 2020. Various collected mosses and lichens, springtails and dwarf isopods, soil, rocks, activated carbon, glass, water, brain coral, pillow, grow light, and aquarium, 18 x 16 x 16 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.



Christopher Lin, *Some beginning's end*, 2021. Metal wire garbage can, garbage, vines, 48 x 24 x 24 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

the natural passage of time, distortions can occur. Distortion can serve as a tool for identifying these oscillations in histories to recontextualize the historical event that took place and to gain a deeper understanding of that particular event.

While time and history take on more abstract forms, the immediate and tangible materials surrounding us can be distorted as well. Material distortion is perhaps easiest to understand from the perspective of the artist as someone whose practice requires experimentation with various materials. However, material is not just an inert substance with no agency that can be manipulated by humans. It is an important basic unit of all the familiar objects around us. The very structures that we are exposed to and influenced by—the natural environment, biological systems, cultural narratives—all contain materiality.

Donna J. Haraway wrote, “Material semiotics is always situated, someplace and noplacé, entangled and worldly. Alone, in our separate kinds of expertise and experience, we know both too much and too little, and so we succumb to despair or to hope, and neither is a sensible attitude.”⁴ The coils that we are entrapped in as bodies existing in this

world in relation to each other are important to our livelihood. These entanglements that may be seen as impure are in fact key to our survival. Can we encourage ourselves to see entanglement as a phenomenon that doesn’t pollute us, but enriches our worldviews and personal ecologies? The relations that exist between humans, nonhuman animals, inorganic material, matter, space—all of the materials that form our world are connected and overlap. When any part of these materials is distorted, it becomes clearer that there is an incredible amount of porousness between each of these aspects. Additionally, the thresholds at which distortions can take place become easier to notice. This fact raises important questions: What are the markers of these thresholds? And why do they exist in the first place?⁵

Soft Boundary proposes one mode of living in a heterogeneous assemblage while accepting that the thresholds between various fields are being crossed constantly and thus negotiations and counter negotiations are an inherent part of being. Distortion is just one method by which these relations are made visible. The thresholds at which these relations take place are blurred, tender, and soft.

4 Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 5.

5 While this proposal for the blurring of boundaries is important for our consideration, it is equally important to ask what the implications of this distortion are. Atheel Elmalik posed the question, “There is a romantic undertone to this invocation for connection—but, is connection always welcome? The slippage of the clearly contained unit of the individual (cell, particle, human being, race, gender, etc.) seems to cause a lot of distress in our society.” There are instances when boundaries can protect us. Atheel Elmalik, “Lydia Ourahmane’s Reactive Sound Installation: Extraction Entanglement Edge,” *In Duets* (Swiss Institute, 2022).



Christopher Lin, *Zuru zuru (Drifting)*, 2020. Various collected mosses and lichens, springtails and dwarf isopods, soil, activated carbon, glass bottles, water, sand, sea glass, and aquarium, 10 1/2 x 16 1/4 x 8 3/8 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

6 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), 5.

7 *Ibid.*, xii.

Soft Material Boundary Distorted

In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Jane Bennett argues for an inherent energetic vitality in objects, an energy that exists within each of these objects that allows them to be perceived as things rather than objects.⁶ If we perceive materials as containing this vitality, our understanding of the thresholds and the edges that delineate materials become less dear to us. The organic body that makes up humans or nonhuman animals and the inorganic all become affective or have a certain “affect.”⁷ The capacity to contribute to and mold the larger world exists in all material whether at the singular-unit level or in an assemblage.

If we posit that all matter contains this vibrancy, the familiar categorizations and boundaries that are imposed

on materials by humans are upended. For example, the delineation between “synthetic” and “organic” materials is itself a synthetic formulation. This boundary is drawn on the assumption that what is human made is inherently different from materials not made by humans, which is exemplified by our understanding of the “outside” natural environment and the “inside” space, usually fabricated by humans. **Christopher Lin’s** *Zuru zuru (Drifting)* (2020) folds worlds into worlds and depicts the tension between the “outside” and the “inside.” In an aquarium, a layer of sand unfolds from the top to the bottom, resembling the layers of sand under the ocean drifting away from the beach. Floating gently on top of the water are glass bottles, each containing isolated microcosms of collected mosses and lichens. One small glass bottle has sunk to the bottom. A small piece of what is



Christopher Lin, *Ziggurat*, 2020. Molted cicada shells, resin, gold leaf, wood, and table, 41 x 30 x 26 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

considered the “outside” natural environment is placed into an artificial environment. However, even if the mosses and lichens are not outside, they are still able to grow. Additionally, they demonstrate loneliness and belonging due to their entrapment in the bottles. The mosses and lichens exist in an isolated world; however, even in isolation, each of these tiny systems exist in relation to each other.

Through the mixture of natural and synthetic materials, Lin subverts our expectation that materials should be inert or should conform to the artist’s hand. We expect these natural elements to exist in the outside environment only, and there is a sense of alienation from them especially as we become more tied to technology and human-made goods. By bringing the outside into the inside, Lin highlights how the very borders humans have formulated can be easily distorted and, in effect, inverted.

As well as disturbing the boundaries of the outside and inside, Lin utilizes

nonhuman animal remains to challenge our understanding of what is considered appropriate material for art production. *Ziggurat* (2020) is structured as a pyramid. The individual building blocks of the pyramid are made of cicada shells. Without their hosts, the empty cicada shells are surprising as an architectural component because of their fragility, yet Lin harnesses their collective power to construct the pyramid. This surprise illuminates the boundaries of material that we’ve set for ourselves. The pattern of the cicadas constructing the pyramid also shifts. At the bottom, the cicada shells are molded together in a more haphazard form as if each cicada is fighting for their spot on the pyramid. Toward the top half, the cicadas take on a more organized pattern like workers falling into a set routine. The top is demarcated by gold foil with a lone cicada sitting above it all. The cicadas’ struggle to the top can precipitate both a visceral reaction at the violence of the climb and sympathy for the insects, as they are being subjected to the same power structures as humans are. Insects as material illuminate a deeper human condition connecting us to them.

The manipulation of inert materials can also tell us more about humans and our entanglement with these materials. **Steven Uccello** uses polishing pitch to understand the bodily changes he underwent in the past year. Polishing pitch is traditionally used to clean optical lenses, not necessarily as an actual material in photography. On a surface level, polishing pitch looks like a solid, but it is liquid in nature. Thus, when exposed to



Steven Uccello, *Gut*, 2022. Shirt, pitch, rod, Dimension variable. Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of the artist.



Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #6*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 18 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

physical pressures like gravity, pitch will shift shapes—albeit very slowly. When Uccello began printing photographic images directly onto the pitch, the photos would start to drip vertically due to the weight of the pitch and gravity. As time passed, the photos would change into an indiscernible object.

During 2021, Uccello lost 125 pounds. This transformation is captured in *Gut* (2022). A white T-shirt that belonged to Uccello before his weight loss is filled with black pitch. The shirt hangs on a metal pole where the pitch slowly falls, bringing the shirt along with it. The contrast between the white T-shirt and black pitch substantiates the weight of the material. The twisting of the shirt to ensure that the pitch stays inside accentuates the drapery of an absent body. Uccello complicates the methods

by which organic bodies are represented by using an inorganic material. Normally, inorganic materials entering the body are considered dangerous— and, in fact, if the pitch is handled incorrectly, it is carcinogenic. Yet, if we suppose that the pitch itself contains the thing-power that Bennett proposes, then this complication becomes richer. The pitch is just as able to speak about the human body as any other organic material.

Uccello's *The Body Sans 125 lbs* (2022), a series of black-and-white photographs, depicts this bodily transformation. Using infrared light, his camera penetrates the epidermal layer of the skin. Such depth allows for greater visibility of the texture and dimensions of the body. The crevices of the body are highlighted with the black-and-white contrast further accentuating

the skin folds and stretch marks that become visible. The fissures in the skin evoke a rolling mountainous range with deep valleys. The topographies of the skin serve as reminders of corporeal transformation, where the edges of the natural environment and the internal bodily environment are distorted. The boundaries in landscape photography and self-portraiture meld. Weight especially in a society where expectations for how one looks physically is tested time and time again.

As obvious as this may sound, material, like any other matter, takes up surface area. Put another way, all materials take up some space. Thus, material and space are tied together. **Naomi Nakazato** probes at this relationship through the distortion of material and space in her installations and mixed-media panels. Nakazato utilizes digital tools such as Google Maps to experience Japan from

a distance. A place that is experienced through a filter like Google Maps does not necessarily translate verbatim and is inherently distorted from the original source. Nakazato creates portals, which serve as a mediator for experiences that we cannot have in person—a communal experience that is very intimate for many of us during the pandemic. This mediation demonstrates a certain opacity. Something is lost in the process of utilizing the screens and digital tools, making it impossible to truly understand the experiences that are being carried through them.

Nakazato examines the authenticity of the digital tools she uses as intermediaries for actual travel with a physical body to a place, which is problematized through her combination of organic and synthetic materials. *Nothing to Write Any Home About* (2021) is a site-specific installation consisting of two screens



Naomi Nakazato, *Nothing to Write Any Home About*, 2021. Plexiglass, thermoplastic, laser print on vellum, wood, salt, found objects, Dimension variable. Image courtesy of the artist.



Naomi Nakazato, *Gut Fare*, 2020. Acrylic, screenprint on thermoplastic mounted on panel, 12.875 x 10.75 x 1.625 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.



Naomi Nakazato, *Lint*, 2020. Acrylic, screenprint on thermoplastic mounted on panel, 12.875 x 10.75 x 1.625 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

8 Mohammad Asim, Mohammad Jawaid, Naheed Saba, Rameng-mawii, Mohammad Nasir, and Mohamed Thariq Hameed Sultan, "Processing of Hybrid Polymer Composites—a Review," *Hybrid Polymer Composite Materials* (2017): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-100789-1.00001-0>.

that are facing each other, found objects, synthetic objects, and a thin layer of salt surrounding the objects on the floor. By combining found objects and synthetic derivations of actual items from a specific space, the objects become iterations of the original. Nakazato views these objects as being similar to souvenirs, which are original items taken from a certain place. Souvenirs contain memories of a visit and are transformed into charged objects that at once belong to the place they come from and to the “new” location. By utilizing found and created objects, Nakazato destabilizes the notion of place through material.

Nakazato’s material exploration of tension in *Lint* (2020) and *Gut Fare* (2020) are more pointed through the usage of thermoplastics. Thermoplastics are a class of polymers that soften or melt when heat is applied to them. They can be processed in the melted state or

in a liquid form. These malleable polymers are derived from plants and can be used as a matrix for natural and synthetic fibers.⁸ Thermoplastics are easily recycled, and do not necessarily show any permanent property changes even as they are exposed to cycles of heating and cooling. In effect, thermoplastics undergo distortion as part of their natural function. Nakazato uses this synthetic material to imitate bulky textures reminiscent of raised relief maps used for visualizing mountain ranges. In order for us to fully visualize a landscape through a relief map, synthetic materials must be used. In this case, material distortions obfuscate place because it’s not possible to completely ascertain where these geographies are taken from. However, this layer of obscurity demonstrates, like Google Maps, how our understanding of place is not stable.

Distorted Soft Boundary of Histories

As it has been said time and time again, “History is written by the victors.” The victorious influence the retelling of histories that are passed down, monopolizing the narratives so they are favorable to them. However, we know that there are many histories that have been suppressed due to this flow of history. Walter Benjamin wrote in “On the Concept of History”: “History is the object of a construction whose place is formed not in homogeneous and empty time, but in that which is fulfilled by the here-and-now.”⁹ The constellations of the past and present that make this “here-and-now” are entrapped in the shapes of the historical events that make up this heterogeneous form. Given Benjamin’s concept of history, perhaps distortions can play a role in helping us understand the development of these very individual shapes within the

constellation of history, which in turn can inform how history is formed in the future.

In the time of the Anthropocene, humans are regarded as the dominating force that influences how the Earth is changing. While it is true that humans have wreaked havoc, causing the current climate-change crisis, this marker of our historical age also centers humans. Here again, Bennett’s vibrancy of matter can help us resituate humans within this narrative. By acknowledging the “capacity of things” to “not only impede or block the will and design of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own” it becomes possible to imagine a history that includes the nonhuman as essential. **Noémie Jennifer Bonnet**’s introspective exploration of personal memories and how they shape our understanding of external ecological crises results in hybrid forms that combine the human and nonhuman.

9 Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” trans. by Dennis Redmond, 2005, Marxists.org. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>



Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Funeral for My Children*, 2020. Mixed media on exam table paper and canvas, 84 x 180 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.



Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Receiver*, 2022. Polyurethane resin, steel, epoxy resin, soy wax, house paint, driftwood from radioactively contaminated beach, 60 x 20 x 20 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.



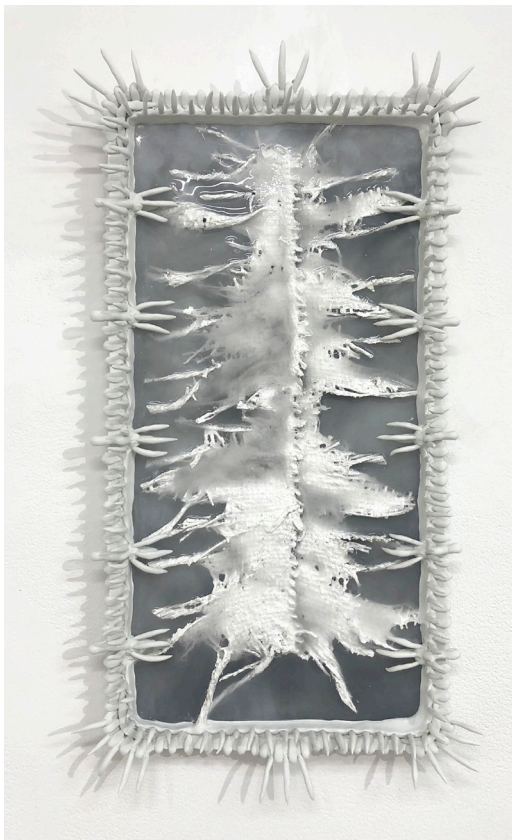
Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Sleeper*, 2022. Polyurethane resin, 10 x 4 x 3 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

Bonnet's hybrid forms question the position of humans within the histories of the Earth.

Within the larger time-distortion that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the global community, Bonnet started creating *Funeral for My Children* (2020). This large, mixed-media work spans five panels, which are a combination of found exam-table paper from medical offices and canvas. White, gray, and faint strips of blue resembling veins or cellular extensions fall across the surface in forms that are simultaneously haunting and sorrowful. Bonnet's scratches and the physicality of her presence and endurance is felt in each of the strokes of white. Funerals and memorials are seen as being for the dead, but in actuality they serve more of a purpose for the living. Bonnet delicately flips this balance by looking closely at what the lack of a person—the absence of someone due to death or because they

had never been alive in the first place—tells us about the conditions of life and of the living. Imagining the absence of humans in a world that is so marked with the human footprint removes us from the picture, giving agency back to all forms that exist.

Bonnet upends the centering of humans within histories even further in *Timekeepers* (2022), in which she combines natural and synthetic materials to tackle a personal fear of cockroaches. Two polyurethane-resin-cast cockroaches hang on the wall with their legs facing outward. Each holds a candle constructed of found driftwood with wax falling from it. The cockroaches are scaled up to about one foot tall, evoking a sense of both unease and fascination. Cockroaches existed before humans were on the Earth and because of their survival skills, they will outlast humans in the post-apocalyptic future to come. Even though humans are much larger



Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Sanative III (Quiver)*, 2022. Burlap, thread, gesso, raw pigment, charcoal, polyurthane resin, epoxy resin, 11 x 22 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

than cockroaches, the power dynamics are inverted when considering their ability to survive beyond us. *Receiver* (2022) and *Sleeper* (2022) are a continuation of Bonnet’s cockroach experiments. “Avoir le cafard” is a French expression that directly translates to “having the cockroach,” which means that one is depressed. Here, cockroaches function both as objects that evoke memories of feeling depressed and as a physical manifestation of human emotions that are linked by language and communication. The ability of a

nonhuman animal to perform as a metaphorical reminder of a deep human experience changes our expectations of how we are connected to nature. In the *Sanative* (2022) series, Bonnet returns to hybridity from a physiological perspective. Burlap, made from the fibers of the jute plant, is frequently used in creating functional items such as rope or clothing. Bonnet’s observation that when burlap was sewn together the edges combined to look like the spine influenced the creation of the *Sanative* (2022) series. The white-resin cast that frames each *Sanative* (2022) panel more closely resembles a bone structure; however, because of the distorted scale, the bones do not look like they belong to humans—in effect, creating another type of hybrid form. The teeth on the frame, evoking a sense of danger, are juxtaposed with a sanitary, clean, meditative sense of a spine that is entrapped in the frame. This blending of materials is indicative of the entanglements that Haraway suggests drive the relations between animate and inanimate beings. These materials, which seem removed from humans, have the power to teach about our own bodily experiences.

While Bonnet questions the human as the focal point of history, **Utsa Hazarika** subverts the histories of cinema in *Installation (Untitled)* (2015). Hazarika explores the limitations of flat surfaces as the preferred viewing platform for the moving image. A scene depicting a coming storm is projected onto a collection of broken mirrors. In turn, the mirrors reflect the image into the room, taking over the entire space. Hazarika physically breaks apart the surfaces that



Utsa Hazarika, *Installation (Untitled)*, 2015. Mirrors, dead plant, Dimension variable. Courtesy of the artist. detail.jpg Installation (Untitled), 2015. Mirrors, video projection, matka, Dimension variable. Image courtesy of the artist.

¹⁰ Chrissie Iles, *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art, 1964–1977* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art / Distributed by H. N. Abrams, 2001).

we are familiar with to distort our sense of time and narrative. Visual narratives are fractured and it is difficult to determine whether the projection originates from a single projection or multiple sources. A suspension of time takes place as anticipation builds because the storm seems to never quite arrive. This heightened sense of expectation and distortion of temporality is exacerbated by the sharp edges of the broken mirrors.

Hazarika's movement away from the traditional viewing screen follows the lineage of moving-image history, starting from the cinematic space to the

white cube to spilling out of the white walls.¹⁰ Hazarika dismantles the superiority of cinematic frontality by scattering the moving image across the room. In this way, she acknowledges Benjamin's proposal of a heterogeneous form of history. Forward-facing orientation codifies the white cube, Western aesthetic traditions, and the linearity of art history, which Hazarika resists. By deconstructing the very screen onto which a moving image is projected, Hazarika illuminates how the singular screen needed to be expanded to accommodate a larger range of voices and histories.

A Soft Boundary, Blurred

Soft Boundary posits distortion as a method for understanding the entanglements of our world. If we accept Jane Bennett's theory that all objects have a vibrancy to them, giving them a certain thing-power, then agency is returned to the various "things" we interact with. Importantly, acknowledging the inherent vibrancy of matter deemphasizes the boundaries that we have delineated. Beyond the thresholds that exist between individual materials, distortion also allows larger hegemonic structures, which we are all subject to, to become more discernible.

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Checklist

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Funeral for My Children*, 2020. Mixed media on exam table paper and canvas, 84 x 180 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Timekeepers*, 2021-2022, Urethane resin, candle, and natural pigment 16 x 4 x 6 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Receiver*, 2022. Polyurethane resin, steel, epoxy resin, soy wax, house paint, driftwood from radioactively contaminated beach, 60 x 20 x 20 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Sanative I (Rattle)*, 2022. Burlaps, thread, gesso, raw pigment, polyurethane, epoxy resin, steel, acrylic, 10 x 13 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Sanative II (Frisson)*, 2022. Burlap, thread, gesso, raw pigment, polyurethane resin, epoxy resin, 10 x 13 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Sanative III (Quiver)*, 2022. Burlap, thread, gesso, raw pigment, charcoal, polyurethane resin, epoxy resin, 11 x 22 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet, *Sleeper*, 2022. Polyurethane resin, 10 x 4 x 3 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Utsa Hazarika, *Installation (Untitled)*, 2015. Mirrors, video projection, matka, Dimension variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Christopher Lin, *Zuru zuru (Drifting)*, 2020. Various collected mosses and lichens, springtails, soil, activated carbon, glass bottles, water, sand, sea glass, and aquarium, 40 1/2 x 16 1/4 x 8 3/8 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Christopher Lin, *Ziggurat*, 2020. Molted cicada shells, resin, gold leaf, wood, and table, 41 x 30 x 26 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Christopher Lin, *Fossil Memory*, 2020. Various collected mosses and lichens, springtails and dwarf isopods, soil, rocks, activated carbon, glass, water, brain coral, pillow, grow light, and aquarium, 18 x 16 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Christopher Lin, *Some beginning's end*, 2021. Garbage can, trash bags, dog poop bags, dog feces, melon seeds, various mosses and grasses, soil, rocks, LED grow lights, water, and time, 38 x 26 x 26 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Naomi Nakazato, *Nothing to Write Any Home About*, 2021. Plexiglass, thermoplastic, laser print on vellum, wood, salt, found objects, dimension variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Naomi Nakazato, *Lint*, 2020. Acrylic, screenprint on thermoplastic mounted on panel, 12.875 x 10.75 x 1.625 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Naomi Nakazato, *Gut Fare*, 2020. Acrylic, screenprint on thermoplastic mounted on panel, 12.875 x 10.75 x 1.625 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *Gut*, 2022. Shirt, pitch, rod, Dimension variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #1*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #3*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 16.8 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #6*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #9*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #11*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 16.8 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Uccello, *The Body Sans 125 lbs #13*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 12 x 16.8 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Biographies

Artists

Noémie Jennifer Bonnet is a French-American artist and writer based in Brooklyn, New York who works across media. She has been included in group exhibitions across the United States, most recently at Hauser & Wirth in New York, and has permanent public murals in three locations in Providence, Rhode Island. She is the creator of Conservation Lab, a weekly column on art conservation published by Vice in 2016. She is currently an MFA candidate at CUNY Hunter College.

Utsa Hazarika is an artist and writer based in New York. Her research-based practice ranges across video, installation and sculpture. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Queens Museum (US Cemetery - Institute for Art and Society (Indonesia), Berkshire Art Association (US), and Serendipity Arts Festival (India). She has been awarded residencies and fellowships in Asia and the United States, including the Queens Museum (US), Asian Cultural Council (US), MASS MoCA (US), Lijiang Studio (China), and Khoj International Artists' Association (India). She holds an MFA in Fine Arts from The New School, where she was awarded the President's Scholarship, and an MPhil in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, where she was awarded Christ College's Levy-Plumb Award for the Humanities. Her art and academic research has been published in *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* (UK), *Trans Asia Photography Review* (US) and *The Caravan* (India).

Christopher Lin is a Brooklyn-based artist and educator with a background in research science. Fueled by a lifelong obsession with fossils, his experimental installations, sculptures, and performances question the world

we inhabit and envision the one we will leave behind. After receiving a BA from Yale University and an MFA from Hunter College, Lin was awarded the C12 Emerging Artist Fellowship in 2016. He has shown work and performed throughout New York City, including at: SVA Curatorial Practice, ABC No Rio, Recess Art, Flux Factory and the Queens Museum. He was a 2020 fellow in the Bronx Museum AIM Emerging Artist Fellowship and is currently a Winter Workspace Artist-in-Residence at Wave Hill. He currently teaches undergraduates at Hunter College and is co-director of the research-based artist collective, Sprechgesang Institute.

Naomi Nakazato's multidisciplinary work spans drawing, painting, sculpture, print-making, and installation to examine belonging, faulty language, and location within hybridity. She received a BA from Anderson University, South Carolina and an MFA from The New York Academy of Art, New York. Her work has recently shown at 5-50 Gallery (Queens, NY), Galerie Tracanelli (Grenoble, FR), Olympia Projects (New York, NY), and NARS Foundation (Brooklyn, NY). Nakazato was awarded two Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grants, an initiate Brandon Fellowship at the Greenville Center for the Creative Arts in Greenville, South Carolina, a 2017 summer residency at the Leipzig International Artists Program in Leipzig, Germany, and a 2018-19 Keyholder Residency at The Lower East Side Printshop.

Steven Uccello is a mixed media artist exploring bodily entropy and aging. His fascination with the subject began during the COVID-19 pandemic, when he became convinced his health was in jeopardy because of his obesity. In only a span of 12 months, Steven lost 125 lbs from dieting. His extreme weight loss left him with an abundance of

excess skin which he uses as a primary subject within his artworks. “Paradoxically, the healthier I became the more my physique visually transformed into someone much older and frailer. The more weight I lost, the more I was reminded that, someday, I will succumb to the forces of entropy—morphing my body into my own, personal, living memento mori.” Steven’s works consist of infrared images of his flesh, sculptures made with a slowly deforming material called pitch, and amalgamated self-portraits taken before and after his weight loss.

Curators

Wanhang Chao (Shanghai, China) is a curator based in New York. She received her B.A. in Economics from Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in 2021. She has worked with design and painting, and interned at Chambers Fine Art, Beijing, in 2020. She hopes to continue her exposure to contemporary art in New York.

Tzu-Ying Naomi Chan (New Taipei City, Taiwan) is a curator, artist, and designer. In 2018, she received a B.A. in Plastic Art from Da-Yeh University with a major in oil painting. Since graduation, she has worked in Taiwan as an intern and assistant on numerous exhibition, and in 2020 worked as a designer and social media specialist. to merchandise and decorate the pre-selling houses with remarkable success. Her current research interests focus on the conceptualization of alternative exhibition spaces.

Yindi Chen (Hulunbuir, China) received her B.A. in Curating and Art History from the University of York. She has interned at several art institutions, including The Hepworth Wakefield (2019), X Museum

Beijing (2020), and the ICA at NYU Shanghai (2021). She also works as a translator for art reviews and independent films, and as a collaborator with the Netherlands-based art project Notes on Hapticity. Her current research interests focus on topics related to the Anthropocene.

Eunice Chen (Chongqing, China) is a curator and received her B.S. from Chongqing University and M.M. in Accounting and Finance from the University of Melbourne. Previously, she worked at the LUXELAKES A4 Art Museum in Chengdu. In 2019, she interned as an artist workshops assistant in the 3rd Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art. Chen also interned as a consultant in Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. She has co-curated the TEDxCQU 2016 Annual Meeting. Her research interests include socially engaged art, community-based art, and participatory art.

Virginia Ingram (Nashville, TN) was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. She received her B.A. with honors in Art History from Vanderbilt University. After graduation, Ingram worked as a curatorial assistant at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville. She is interested in the historical representations of the female nude from antiquity to contemporary society, and how the depiction of women often reflects distinct cultures, eras, and geographical locations. She intends to explore the diverse roles of the female body throughout history and how twenty-first-century artists have reclaimed autonomy of their femininity through the subversion of the male gaze.

Kyungah Lee (Seoul, South Korea) received a B.F.A. in Curatorial Studies from Dongduk Women’s University. Before moving to New York, Kyungah worked at the Willing

N Dealing and Arts Council Korea (ARKO Art Center) in Seoul. Taking her professional work experience as a starting point, she wishes to explore how the art institutions could better serve the public, and, by doing so, what kind of art experiences can be achieved by the audience.

Uttara Parekh (Gujarat, India) is an architect, designer, illustrator, gardener, and curator in the city of New York, from India. She earned her B.A. in Architecture with a First Class Distinction from Anant National University, Ahmedabad, a UNESCO world heritage city. In 2019, Parekh and a team of colleagues won a competition hosted by the Kochi Muziris Biennale with an installation that responded to the historical significance of the site, offering a locus for reflection—an ode to the fishermen who lost their lives on the dockyard. In 2021, she was a Research & Design Intern at the London Design Biennale, working on the India pavilion with Mathew & Ghosh Architects, involved in the conceptualization, research, and design strategizing process. The roots of her practice emerge from her keen interest in researching human behavioral interdependency and change as affected by time, culture, and geography.

Sophia Park (Gumi, South Korea) is a writer, curator, and arts administrator based in Brooklyn, NY and Gumi, South Korea. She received her B.A. in Neuroscience from Oberlin College, where she studied the effects of environmental toxins on neurodegenerative disorders. She has worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and currently is the Associate Director of Community at Fractured Atlas, where she leads the External Relations department. She also co-founded and helps run Jip, a curatorial collective. Her writing can be read in numerous publica-

tions, including Womanly Mag, Strata Mag, Monument Lab's Bulletin, Asymptote Journal, and others. She is currently thinking about communal practices of care, diasporic memory, and artist support.

Caroline Taylor Shehan (New York, NY) studied Art and Art History at Occidental College in Los Angeles, where she developed an interest in library and archival studies and in art education. As a student, Caroline was the 2018-2019 Library and Archives intern at the Autry Museum in Burbank, CA. After graduation, Caroline worked as an arts instructor with young people, focusing on incorporating botanical and recycled materials into projects. Her curatorial practice is influenced by community-based, dialogical learning models where the classroom and the art space become transgressive environments to inspire creative and intellectual freedom.

Instructor

Noam Segal (Tel Aviv, Israel) is an independent curator and researcher based in Brooklyn, NY. She holds a Ph.D. and MA in hermeneutics and culture studies (Bar Ilan University), and a BA in Philosophy and Political Science (Tel Aviv University). Her practice is focused on curating, contextualizing, and producing new media and performance. Segal's work deals with social positions and communal models in contemporary art.

Acknowledgement

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We would like to thank Noam Segal, our instructor for the exhibition practicum course, for her guidance, patience, and engaging conversations to ensure that this exhibition came into existence. Thank you to Steven Henry Madoff, the Chair of the SVA MA Curatorial Practice (MACP) program for his encouragement throughout our first year to get to this exhibition. A big thanks to Re McBride for her help with the technical aspects and for all the communication that needed to happen between so many different parties to ensure the exhibition's success.

Lastly, but not at all the very least, we are grateful for our families, friends, and the MACP department for supporting our academic endeavors throughout this first year of the program. Thank you for reading the catalog, visiting the exhibition, and engaging in dialogue with us.

