



# Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature

April 17 - May 22, 2021

*Curated by Craig Coleman*

ATHICA: Athens Institute for Contemporary Art is an independent, non-profit gallery promoting and supporting innovative contemporary art and artists through exhibitions, education, and events.

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# Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature

New Approaches to Activism in Art

April 17 - May 22, 2021

Athens Institute for Contemporary Art  
Curated by Craig Coleman  
with Assistant Curator Lilly McEachern

# Curator's Statement

Art doesn't change the world; it sets the conditions for change to happen.  
—Glenn Ligon

Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature explores weeds as a metaphor for being lost or buried in complications in both political and personal senses. The duality of human nature as both a positive and negative force underpins this idea, as it has steered Science into progressive and destructive uses. Survival itself often involves rational and seemingly irrational choices. While we can point to human nature as the force behind selfish and destructive actions taken for short term gain, it also has another side, as we are shown daily when we work together to heal wounds, solve problems, and find courageous ways forward. Through this exhibit, we examine the impact of collective and individual choice and demonstrate how artists show up as stewards of the environment.

I grew up in Florida about fifteen miles from Wakulla Springs, the world's largest and deepest freshwater springs, and about twenty-two miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Interacting with water and nature has been a foundational part of my life and work. When I was in elementary school in the 1970's, Jimmy Carter was President and we learned about a future filled with solar, wind, and geothermal power. Renewable resources were the path our country would take toward a (somewhat) utopian future. Somehow, along the way, we got lost.

Now, in the Spring of 2021, the waves of a year-long global pandemic are beginning to subside, as vaccinations make their way across the country and the world. Nearly 3 million people have died, a half million in the United States alone. Our daily lives have changed significantly over the past year due to the corona virus, which developed (in part) through climate change and our insatiable desire to use the land and its resources. As our country comes out of the Trump administration's four year assault on the environment, the effects linger. His administration canceled or hollowed out more than 125 policies protecting our land, air, and water. Forty more challenges to environmental protections are still tied up in court. Ever-growing environmental problems continue to accumulate. These issues often feel overwhelming as regionally, nationally, and globally we cannot yet come to a collective consensus.

The exhibition is curated through this context.

The exhibition is exploratory and aims to raise awareness of climate change issues. The artworks combine art and technology, art and science, or present a science museum aesthetic. Works were also

chosen because of their humor, making difficult subjects approachable. Some of the artists take an interactive approach, creating an encounter to physically engage viewers, demonstrating how individual and collective participation in problem solving are necessary to resolve environmental issues. The included pieces work together to create an environment of ideas that hold up a mirror made of material evidence and fabricated forms, connecting Art and Science to suggest that both disciplines are approaching these issues using similar methods. Collectively, the selected works pose the argument that resolving these problems will take an interdisciplinary effort. Art and Science need each other, and the world needs us.

—Craig Coleman, April 2021

### **About the Curator**

Craig Coleman is an artist who works in photography, installation, and digital media. Coleman received his BFA from Florida State University and his MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Currently he is Professor of Art and Chair of the Art Department at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

His projects connect ideas and processes from experimental film with digital art and installation. His photographs, mixed media works, and installations have been shown in many venues across the U.S., including the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (Atlanta, GA), Paul Sharpe Contemporary Art (New York), Asheville Art Museum (NC), the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (Boulder, CO), SOIL Gallery (Seattle, WA), Down Arts Centre, (Downpatrick Northern Ireland), The Pensacola Museum of Art, and the John Erickson Museum of Art (JEMA). Craig is also Director of XVAC Projects (Experimental Video Art in the Corridor), a series of video-mapping projects funded by a grant from the Knight Foundation.

More information: <http://www.craigcoleman.us/>

### **About the Assistant Curator**

Lilly McEachern is a recent graduate of The University of Georgia where she earned a B.A. in Journalism with a minor in Art History and a certificate in Museum Studies. She currently works as Project Coordinator at the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art and at the Lyndon House Arts Center, where she is conducting research on the enslaved population of the Ware-Lyndon Historic House. McEachern is from Columbus, Georgia and resides in Athens.

Crista Cammaroto  
Charlotte, North Carolina

### **Artist Statement**

The Terra Forma series began in 2016 and continues today. It was born from a need to engage myself and others with our own sustenance, the earth. I pull forms out of the existing environment and site, gathering natural objects from our subliminal background and placing them into a designed foreground experience for the viewers. I begin these terra forms as a sensing of place, restricting myself to what nature provides as materials for each form and working primarily within an imposed spherical boundary as a reflection on our planet.

As an artist with a long history in photography, digital manipulation, performance art and installation, my practice of creating forms from an authentic relationship to the earth fuses all mediums. The heightened moment of completion is photographed and becomes an archival print, an artifact of the temporal moment. Making in places where others circulate 'outside' is a significant performative aspect to my work. I often place forms in high circulation areas and leave collected found materials where people feel comfortable adding to each Terra Form.

### **Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"**

My work literally and figuratively begins in the weeds of the local biome from where it was created. After years of separating ourselves with climate-controlled lodging and impervious surfaces, this "Terra Forma" series seeks to encourage others to feel the air that is, the leaves that tremble, and the earth beneath our feet.

### **Artist Biography**

Crista Cammaroto is an interdisciplinary artist with strong roots in photography and environmental art. She has had 17 years teaching in academia and 15 years in art administration. She currently continues her studio practice as an artist while also working as an Art Instructor at Gaston College. As former Director of Galleries at UNCC and former Artistic Director of The Light Factory she has been awarded two NEA grants, a Mapplethorpe Foundation grant, four NC Arts Council grants and four Charlotte Mecklenburg Arts & Science Council grants. Her work can be found in the Bechtler Contemporary Collection, the Denver Museum of Art and special collections of UNC Charlotte. Crista's new Terra Forma Series was on view at The Mint Museum of Art Uptown and on Randolph Road in Spring 2019.

Web: [cristacammaroto.com](http://cristacammaroto.com)

Instagram: @crista4205

Gallery: Elder Gallery of Contemporary Art, Charlotte, NC





*Crista Camaroto's Terra Forms photographs depict constructions made from organic materials arranged in abstract compositions. The circular shapes serve as metaphors for cycles of life and death and entropic systems changing over time as organic materials decompose and provide sustenance for new growth.*  
—Craig Coleman

*Eclipse, August (2017)*  
archival inkjet print, 34in x 32in,  
\$1600



Naomi J. Falk's *Adrift* installation resembles wooden rafts, using denim material as the "floats." The objects recall the Southeast region's history of indigo and textile production and inextricable ties to slavery. The "sails/flags," made from handkerchiefs, signal acts of cleanliness, disease, old customs, last ditch efforts, hope, and despair.  
—Craig Coleman

*Adrift* (2020)  
Handkerchief, jeans, wood, dimensions variable,  
\$250 (for one)



Naomi J. Falk  
Columbia, South Carolina

### Artist Statement

My work examines our relationships with the manufactured and natural landscapes we inhabit, exploring the current climate, socially, environmentally, and politically. It questions the balance between staked territory and collective community, from coastal flooding to contested areas and borderlands.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme “Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature”

What measures do we take to feel safe? How do we negotiate this world of physical and psychological boundaries? How do we find our place? Adrift holds layered references to the climate crisis, flood risk and response, emergency situations, and asylum seekers searching for safety, connection, restoration, and home. We seem to be losing ground. What can be done to create better and sustainable lives now and for those yet to come?

### Artist Biography

Naomi J. Falk grew up in the wilds of Michigan and, from an early age, planned to be an archaeologist, a brain surgeon, a heart surgeon, a meteorologist, and travel the world with Jacques Cousteau. None of those worked out, but she did learn to scuba dive, studied sculpture and ceramics at Michigan State and Portland State Universities, and received an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University. She has exhibited regionally and nationally, and done residencies in Germany, Iceland, New York, Vermont, and the Faroe Islands. In Fall 2016, Falk joined the School of Visual Art & Design at the University of South Carolina as an Assistant Professor of Sculpture.

Web: <http://naomijfalk.com/>

Instagram: @naomi.j.falk.art

Brian Frus  
Jacksonville, Florida

### **Artist Statement**

I am inspired by the natural world and I have become particularly interested in seeds. For me, the seed holds great symbolic significance, each a beautiful blend of science and spirituality. I am fascinated by the diverse multitude of forms, colors, and mechanisms for dispersal that nature has engineered. These tiny objects hold the potential for all manner of life within. In this work, I use glass to transparently explore layered information from the exterior textural surface to the protected inner heart of each seed sculpture. I think of each seed's heart as an individual in a ship, adventuring on a journey. Though fragile, I want my viewers to feel inspiration and intrigue, to daydream on that seed's journey, be drawn to explore its secrets, and always be reminded of nature's awesome beauty and power.

**Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"**  
These glass seed pod sculptures represent a duality related to climate change. On one hand, they remind us of the fragility of our environment. We need to treat our world carefully. On the other hand, each carries a message of hope for new life, and a reminder that nature will find a way. Reconnecting with the beauty in life helps us to focus our efforts on keeping the world healthy.

### **Artist Biography**

Brian Frus is a passionate artist and educator with specialization in glassmaking. He is currently a Professor at Jacksonville University where he heads the Glass Art program. With a BFA from Jacksonville University and an MFA from Rochester Institute of Technology, Frus previously held notable leadership posts at prestigious UrbanGlass in NYC and the Pittsburgh Glass Center. His sculptural and award-winning artwork has been exhibited internationally. Frus takes inspiration from the natural world and explores seeds as a recurring symbol in his contemporary glass artworks and installations.

Web: [www.BrianFrus.com](http://www.BrianFrus.com)



*Brian Frus transforms the raw earth materials into glass sculptures based on seed pods. These pieces are suggestive of the fragility of life and future generations.*  
—Craig Coleman

*Bursting Seed (2015)*  
Blown and Assembled Glass,  
10in x 8in x 8in, \$450

## 21 世紀為十誡

第一誡：不能飛。

第二誡：回收。

第三誡：用一輛腳踏車或是交通工具來取代汽車。

第四誡：避免任何塑膠包裝的產品。

第五誡：避免加熱以及冷氣機，如果可能的話。

第六誡：避免從遠端帶來的產品。

第七誡：如果你沒有非常確認需要它，就不要買。

第八誡：不要製造超過二個小孩。

第九誡：不要養殖，建造否則將會消耗處女地以及水資源。

第十誡：盡量讓美各步驟簡單化以及便宜行事。

*Tea Makipaa's 10 Commandments for the 21st Century offers Biblical instructions to lead us forward through these troubling times.*  
—Craig Coleman

*10 Commandments for the 21st Century (2007)*  
Postcards, English/German/Chinese, part of a larger  
body of work commissioned by Sharjah Biennial 8,  
NFS



Tea Mäkipää  
Weimar, Germany

### Artist Statement

Today, it is rather complicated to be a good human being. We have already filled the earth and use it for our benefit. Now the biggest moral problem of humankind is our relationship to our environment and declining natural resources. Parallel to the old moralities, good and bad is now defined according to the impact on nature and environment. Human-centric capitalism has meant each person's right to consume natural resources to the extent that his or her income allows.

Practicing love and caring for "thy neighbor as thyself" today means accepting new limits on consumerism. If put into action, the simple rules displayed in *10 Commandments for the 21st Century* could slow down and gradually restore some parts of the ecological disaster caused by the human population. The commandments refer to current technical solutions, rather than better ideas or practices that may yet develop. If humanity succeeds in steering itself clear of its crash course with the environment, *10 Commandments for the 21st Century* will have a different meaning. In the best-case scenario, future viewers of the artwork will find our current problem, and these ten ideas to solve it, as laughable signs of a primitive point in history around the year 2000.

**Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"**  
Fundamental.

### Artist Biography

The key themes of Tea Mäkipää's work are the encounter between culture and nature, environmental ethics (competing for human situation as part of the world), the effects of globalization and climate change. She moves between different techniques as needed, often combining text, sound, and moving image with three-dimensional installations, indoors and outdoors.

Tea Mäkipää has been involved in numerous group exhibitions in recent years, for example in China (Big House, Wuhan 2017-2018), Kenpoku Art in Japan (Hitachi, 2016), Australia (e.g., Fremantle Arts Center, Fremantle, Museum of Western Australia, Perth 2015) and the USA (PS1; Arctic Hysteria exhibition). Her extensive solo exhibition was on display at the Museum Schloss Moyland in Germany in 2017.

Web: [www.tea-makipaa.eu](http://www.tea-makipaa.eu)

Christopher McNulty  
Knoxville, Tennessee

### Artist Statement

For over a decade, my work explored the persistence of Cartesian ideas that regard the mind as essentially separate from the material world. My recent work extends those earlier projects to examine how the mind and individual are similarly construed as autonomous from their environment. Inspired by Timothy Morton's "The Ecological Thought" (2011), Juliana Spahr's post-9/11 poetry, "This Connection of Everyone with Lungs" (2005), Eula Biss' "On Immunity" (2014), and the NIH's Human Microbiome Project, my latest work portrays how environmental space penetrates the body, creating relationships among individuals, species, and objects.

This interpenetration of the body and the "environment" undermines simplistic notions of borderlines between our bodies and the space around us, and radically challenges our imagined separateness from the world. At the level of the breath, for example, the "outside" is always already "inside" rendering such distinctions ambiguous and problematic.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"

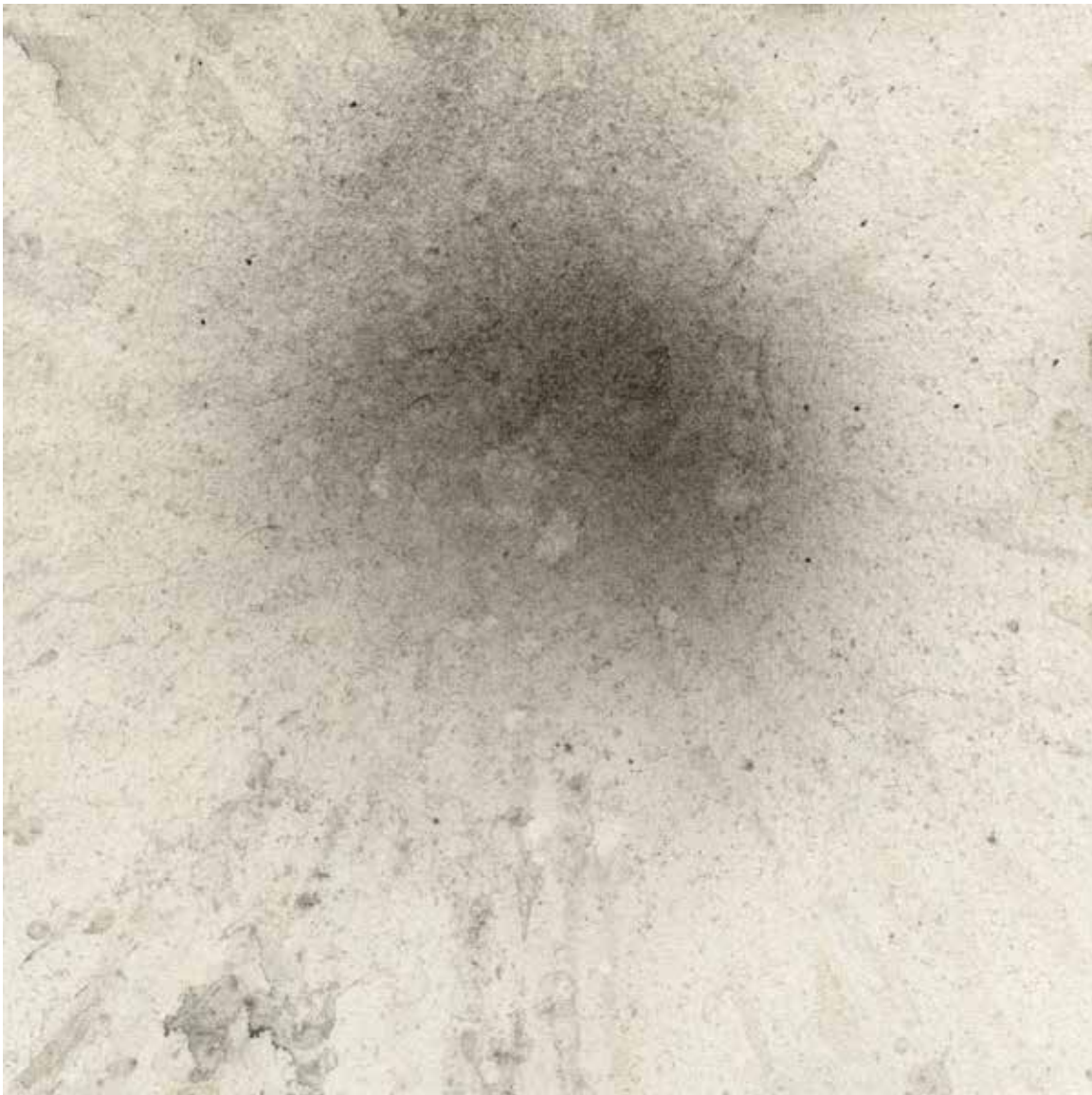
My current work examines how the interpenetration of the body and the "environment" undermines simplistic notions of borderlines between our bodies and the space around us, and radically challenges our imagined separateness from the world.

### Artist Biography

Christopher McNulty is a visual artist who creates sculptural objects, video, and works on paper. His current work explores how environmental space penetrates the body, creating relationships among individuals, species, and objects. He has exhibited work in galleries and museums throughout the U.S., including the Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Rochester Art Center, and Saltworks Gallery in Atlanta. His diverse art practice has been featured in many publications including Art Papers, New American Paintings, The Atlanta Journal Constitution, and The Week.

Web: [www.christophermcnulty.com](http://www.christophermcnulty.com)

Instagram: @cmcnulty.art



*Christopher McNulty's piece uses the exhaust from his car to create a frame-by-frame animation documenting his own carbon footprint.*  
—Craig Coleman

*Stain (2009)*  
Video, 00:09:41,  
\$1,000



*The work blurs boundaries by demonstrating ecological processes used to create art, and ways art galleries and museums sustain life, in this case, literally, the termites which compose musical scores through consuming the wood planks in the piece.*  
—Craig Coleman

*The Music Conservatory for Termites  
(After Ben Patterson) (ongoing)  
wood pulled from the architecture of numerous museums,  
dimensions variable, \$10,000*



Sean Miller and Connie Hwang  
Gainesville, Florida

### Artist Statement

This work is inspired by friend and Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson, whose project "Ants," conducted between 1960-2010, used the photographed movements of ants to produce aleatoric music. We have adopted Ben's strategy and applied it to termites. For this project our "blank music staves" are engraved into sheets made of a specially produced composite of various woods pulled from the architecture of an international array of museums, art centers, and galleries. We designed the musical staves to relate more directly to tree rings visible in wood grain and the holes that termites produce. These special wooden musical staff sheets are designed dually for termites and humans. Eventually the termites will eat the museum wood and produce dot/hole/notes that in turn will produce musical compositions (in the round) for humans to hear. As the termites consume the museum wood (producing the music) the museum will transform into a termite. The wooden music sheets are stacked together in a small "building" especially made to house a termite colony: The Music Conservatory for Termites (After Ben Patterson). The termites in the conservatory receive free room and board and will eat and live within the museum architectural wood they are granted. However, humans that look closely at termites realize they help our environment in changing plant and wood matter into new fertile soil.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"

Sean Miller and Connie Hwang's Music Conservatory for Termites addresses one example of how human nature and more specifically anthropocentrism impacts our ability to understand and appreciate the natural systems and ecological cycles that allow for our survival as a species. Entomologist Barbara Thorn calls termites "green machines" and theorist Timothy Morton states, "Nature... is a sort of fourth wall concept (you know theater?) by which we try to separate the human from everything else, and it functions in house design at every level... The struggle against racism is exactly the struggle against speciesism, which is one of the ways this stage set maintenance works."

### Artist Biography

Sean Miller is an artist, curator, collector, and an associate professor at University of Florida. His multi-disciplinary work focuses materiality, politics, ecology, and the museum. His projects adopt methods that sustain institutions and museums to produce works that are ongoing, generative, and intentionally authored to include multiple participants or collaborators. Connie Hwang is an art director and graphic designer. She received her MFA in visual communication design from the University of Washington, Seattle. She teaches at San José State University and is currently the chair of the design department.

Web: [seanmillerstudio.net](http://seanmillerstudio.net) | [conniehwangdesign.com](http://conniehwangdesign.com)

Laura Mongiovi  
St. Augustine, Florida

### Artist Statement

I seek the overlooked, or untold stories, about a particular time and place. My intent is to raise awareness of past events, to reflect upon the span of humanity and culture, and to generate current feelings of empathy and community. I utilize various materials and processes to create an inclusive visual language that acknowledges the people, events, and land in which they have emerged.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"

*Return to Familiar Ground* contains salt I made from the Atlantic Ocean and references map making. I made this piece after researching the geological history of Kentucky, which was underwater during the Ordovician Period. Left behind in some areas are salt springs where wildlife, over time, created trails as they repeatably accessed salt licks. I am interested in how the connections humans and animals form with the land are connected to the past. The title is from Kentucky poet bell hooks' "poem #10."

The *Reflected Poetry* installation uses words written by my colleague at Flagler College, Ben Atkinson, scientist and poet. I selected Ben's poetry because he writes about sensual perception of the natural world. Reading the reflected words in the installation requires a bit of effort from the viewer. I am interested in this physical interaction between the artwork and viewer as I feel the experience of looking has a greater impact when accompanied by discovery.

### Artist Biography

Laura Mongiovi is an Associate Professor of Art and Design at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. She has an MFA from University of Colorado, Boulder and a BFA from Florida State University. Mongiovi exhibits her work, teaches across the curriculum at Flagler College and presents at national conferences. She guest lectures about her work and leads workshops. Mongiovi co-organized the Deeper Than Indigo: Southeast Textile Symposium and is a recent recipient of the Northeast Florida Individual Artist Grant.

Web: [lauramongiovi.com](http://lauramongiovi.com)  
Instagram: @lmongiovi



*Laura Mongiovi's Return to Familiar Ground speaks poetically about place, history, and materiality through its materials of salt and wood.*  
—Craig Coleman

*Return to Familiar Ground (2019)*  
Wood, paper, graphite, salt made  
from the Atlantic Ocean,  
25in x 13in x 2in, \$500



PlantBot Genetics Inc. uses recycled materials and altered robotic toys to parody big AG, the ultimate combination of capitalism and farming. The interactive works use humor to comment on how science can be co-opted by capitalism with devastating consequences for our environment.  
—Craig Coleman

GardenBot #2 (2020)  
Recycled and refashioned materials,  
interactive sound work, 5' x 8' x 4', NFS



*PlantBot Genetics Inc.*

Wendy DesChene and Jeff Schmuki

Auburn, Alabama

### **Artist Statement**

Wendy DesChene (Canada) and Jeff Schmuki (USA) operate under the guise of PlantBot Genetics Inc., a parody of Big Agricultural Firms who skillfully manipulate current food production and distribution systems. PlantBot Genetics, Inc. combines tactical media and public space to promote critical thinking and political action on environmental issues.

### **Relationship of Your Work to the Theme “Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature”**

PlantBot Genetics combines tactical media and public space to promote critical thinking and political action on environmental issues. By imitating actual corporate practice, we underscore the potential consequences of the global corporatization of agriculture, the natural environment, and public space. Our products underscore the lack of transparency and corporate “grafting” of food production and distribution by releasing humorous next-generation, robot-plant hybrids to prompt critical discussion on the environmental costs of intensive agricultural practices.

### **Artist Biography**

DesChene and Schmuki began practicing as PlantBot Genetics in 2009. Each has prior experience and awards as solo artists prior to forming their collaboration and both were raised with strong connections to the land around them.

PlantBot Genetics has exhibited and/or completed projects at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, The Pulitzer Foundation for Art in St Louis, the Goethe Institute of Cairo, Egypt, and Bach Modern in Austria. In 2010, a significant contribution to their body of work was produced at the American Academy in Rome as visiting artists. Recent exhibitions include Foodture at the Elaine L Jacob Gallery of Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, PlantBot Genetics: a Critical Contact Exhibition Series at the Cafritz Foundation Arts Center in Takoma Park, Maryland, and artist lectures and studio visits at Long Island University in Brookville, NY.

Web: [www.monsantra.com](http://www.monsantra.com)

Instagram: [@plantbot\\_genetics](https://www.instagram.com/plantbot_genetics)

## **SIGNALS**

Nicolas Sassoon and Rick Silva  
Eugene, Oregon

### **Artist Statement**

SIGNALS is a collaborative project by artists Nicolas Sassoon (Vancouver, BC) and Rick Silva (Eugene, OR) that focuses on immersive audio-visual renderings of altered seascapes. Sassoon and Silva share an ongoing theme in their individual practices: the depiction of wilderness and natural forms through computer imaging. Created by merging their respective fields of visual research, SIGNALS features oceanic panoramas inhabited by unnatural substances and enigmatic structures. The project draws from sources such as oceanographic surveys, climate studies and science-fiction to create 3D generated video works and installations that reflect on contamination, mutation and future ecologies.

### **Relationship of Your Work to the Theme “Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature”**

Our work envisions near-future ecologies altered by technology and climate change.

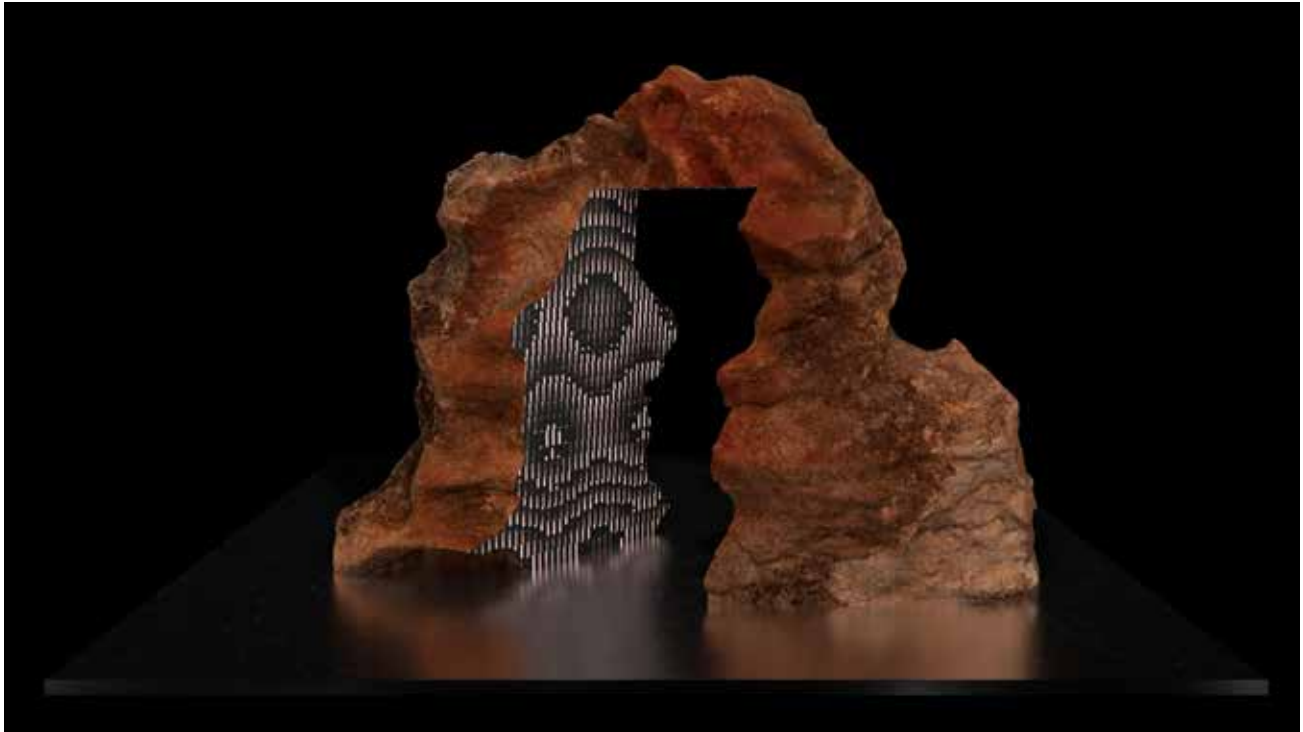
### **Artist Biography**

Nicolas Sassoon is an artist based in Vancouver BC Canada. His practice translates ideas of materiality and immateriality into digital animations, installations, prints, and sculptures. His visual research often leads him to engage in cross-disciplinary projects in the fields of architecture, electronic music, textiles, and art. Sassoon is a founder of the collective W-A-L-L-P-A-P-E-R-S. His work has been exhibited at The Whitney Museum of American Art (US), Eyebeam (US), 319 Scholes (US), Vancouver Art Gallery (CA), Plugin ICA (CA), Contemporary Art Gallery (CA), Charles H. Scott Gallery (CA), Western Front (CA), PRETEEN Gallery (MX), Victoria & Albert Museum (UK), the Centre d’Art Bastille (FR), HeK Basel (SW), MU Eindhoven (NL), Today Art Museum (CN), the Berlin Fashion Week (DE) and the New-York Fashion Week (US).

Rick Silva was born in 1977 in Brazil and lives in Eugene, Oregon, where he is an Associate Professor of Art & Technology at the University of Oregon. Silva received an MFA from The University of Colorado in 2007, and has since shown nationally and internationally, with solo exhibitions at TRANSFER Gallery in New York, Wil Aballe Art Projects in Vancouver, New Shelter Plan in Copenhagen, Interstitial Gallery in Seattle, and The Ski Club in Milwaukee. His works and installations have been acquired by multiple permanent collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Borusan Contemporary Collection, and the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art at Auburn University. Silva’s work has been featured in WIRED, The New York Times, and most recently in Rhizome’s book Net Art Anthology.

Web: <https://s-i-g-n-a-l-s.com/>

Instagram: @ricksilva.jpg | @nicolassassoon



*SIGNALS' artists, Nicolas Sassoon and Rick Silva, create digital 3D animations using scientific data and observations of the natural world to create imaginative and futuristic landscapes.*  
—Craig Coleman

CORES (2020)  
Video, 00:15:00, NFS



*Robert Schaller's film Three Years On documents a devastating flood using a pinhole camera. The film, also submerged in flood waters, is a collaboration with the landscape and the weather. Ominous, violent, and dark, the film recalls the destruction caused by the flood and extreme weather events. The film's appearance in this exhibition marks its world premiere.*

—Craig Coleman

*Three Years On (2016-19)*  
16mm Film transferred to Digital,  
00:08:00, NFS



Robert Schaller  
Ward, Colorado

### Artist Statement

In September of 2013, there was a massive flood in the mountains where the filmmaker lives, above Jamestown, Colorado. It was somewhere between a one-hundred- and a five-hundred-year event. Houses, roads, and infrastructure were destroyed, and at least one person lost his life. For several years afterwards, everything about life was disrupted. The Jamestown flood was something of a best-case scenario, given that it happened in a developed country with insurance and public works funding. And yet it was a disaster, pointing emphatically to the need to address the worsening global climate crisis that makes catastrophic events like this increasingly common. The film sets out to convey the sense of confusion and disorder written onto the landscape by the raging waters that still affect life years after the event that caused them. Shot with a homemade pinhole camera onto homemade 16mm film, with scratching from sand deposited miles from a regular stream by the flood.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme “Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature”

Flooding is a natural process. The scars and channels it makes form the mountains and canyons all around us. Humans have spent more than a hundred years undoing the 60 million years of carbon sequestration of the Carboniferous period and as a result, we get to see natural geologic processes like flooding sped up and amplified. We feel their wrath and have to endure what we really should never have to live through. Seeing six-foot deep erosion channels where there isn't normally any flowing water felt like a revelation about how the geography we see around us formed, as if we got to witness living geology in fast motion. I'm not sure that getting to see that was worth all the chaos and suffering that was involved.

### Artist Biography

Robert Schaller is the founder and director of the Handmade Film Institute. He holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Art and a BA in Classics from the University of Colorado, as well as having extensive experience in both science and computer programming. He has taught at universities, conducted workshops, participated in conferences, and shown films around the world, and is widely known in experimental filmmaking for his use of ecological methods and alternative photographic techniques, and creation of low-impact technologies for filmmaking. He is particularly interested in exploring ways for the responsible and human-scale transposition of hand-made filmmaking into unconventional non-industrialized circumstances.

Web: [robertschaller.org](http://robertschaller.org)

D.L. Simmons  
Flint, Texas

### Artist Statement

My work contextualizes enigmatic objects, images, and icons in order to abstract narrative vignettes from life. I use personal experiences as a lens to explore context and develop visual concepts as metaphors. The outside world should not simply be represented by the artist, but rather assimilated, and interpreted by the artist. When our shared life experiences mingle with false nuances of memory, our perception becomes rife with multiple layers of meaning from the mundane to outré. Looking at the loss of American oral traditions and storytelling, I am motivated to preserve and to explore the fundamental experiences that create the wellspring of shared cultural experience. For myself, my work is a means for me to understand my personal emotional relationship to society's recollecting, forgetting, and retelling of experiences. Through the transformation or re-representation of image and mark, our shared personal experience can become an emotionally tangible visual object.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"

The presence of water in our lives is one of flux. Water creates and destroys with its very existence, transmogrifying the spaces in which it persists. This visage of the atomic dream represents, in the eye of the viewer, a tranquil innocence. That perfect moment before the surface is broken and unknown ripples alter the moment permanently.

### Artist Biography

D.L. Simmons received his MFA in Printmaking from Louisiana State University and graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art with a BFA in Studio Art. He also studied printmaking at Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland. D.L. is a printmaker using traditional and multiple processes that incorporate intaglio, relief, serigraph and digital processes. Currently, D.L. is an Assistant Professor of Art at the University of Texas at Tyler. He has exhibited nationally and internationally. Most recently he was awarded first in show by the St. Louis Artists' Guild, St. Louis MO, and awarded third place by Jadite Gallery, NYC, NY. He has presented papers at SAMLA Modern Language Association and Southern Humanities Conference, and exhibited at Big Ink, Atlanta Printmakers Studio, Zuckerman Museum of Art, Ogden Museum of Art, Frances Sewell Plunket Gallery, Sochi Gallery, Ampersand Gallery, and Southside Art Gallery. He was selected as the visiting artist for Lawrence University, and has exhibited internationally at Liu Haisu Art Museum, Shanghai, China. His works are included in many private and public collections, such as the permanent collection of Zuckerman Museum of Art and Wriston Art Gallery.

Web: [dls-ink.com](http://dls-ink.com)

Instagram: [@dls.ink](https://www.instagram.com/dls.ink)



*D.L. Simmons' Night Pool: Immersion, uses carbon (the building blocks of life) and phosphorescent paint to depict a vernacular image of a swimming pool. The image of the found photograph relates tidal pools, bioluminescence, and environmental issues regarding water with personal histories and stories.*

—Craig Coleman

*Night Pool: Immersion (2017)*  
Carbon Transfer, Acrylic,  
Phosphorescent Enamel, 48in x 108in,  
\$3500



*Using a video game-like aesthetic, Meredith Starr's works, Plastic Pool and Plastic Swim use VR technology to place the viewer in a virtual ocean while surrounded by real plastic collected by the artist in the gallery. The work uses play to bring to light the serious issue of our disposable mentality toward plastic in the natural environment.*

—Craig Coleman

*Plastic Swim (2020)  
VR, 00:04:00, NFS*

Meredith Starr  
Plainview, New York

### Artist Statement

*Plastic Swim* and *Plastic Pool* are two components of a site-specific installation. *Plastic Pool* consists of shard-like shapes cut from plastic bags. The plastic bags are sourced from packaging waste that the artist has personally accumulated. *Plastic Pool* is a virtual reality experience reflecting the impact of our throw away culture on the ocean.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme “Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature”

The work is a commentary on our throw-away culture and the environmental toll of plastics. The title references suburban vernacular and backyard parties and the incredibly dense accumulation of the materials in the installation and virtual reality artwork draws upon imagery of the North Atlantic garbage patch and reflects how truly lost we’ve become in our relationship with plastic. The artwork has a static energy that holds the fragments in place, but when the viewer interacts with the piece, tiny pieces may cling to them—a reminder that plastic is ever-present and will outlast us.

### Artist Biography

Meredith Starr’s artwork is based on data she observes in her personal life and an investigation of social issues. She fuses science with artifacts of our humanity, exploring themes such as desire, memory, identity politics and ecology. In Starr’s installations, she creates a multi-sensory circuit with an accumulation of material and new media. She strives to create interactivity and give visibility to hidden patterns around us. Starr is a full time professor of visual arts at SUNY Suffolk County Community College and is a regional coordinator for the FATE (Foundations in Art Theory and Education) organization. She is the 2019 recipient of FATE’s Emerging Educator Award and the OPEN SUNY Online Ambassador Award. She recently exhibited *Plastic Lake* at Art Lab Tokyo in Japan and her drawings have been published in *Space Out: Memory and Tool Book*. She is a ghost member of the Wayfarers Gallery in Bushwick, Brooklyn and has shown internationally in cities such as the Hague, Hong Kong, and Seoul, and nationally in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles, and New York.

Web: [www.meredithstarr.com](http://www.meredithstarr.com)

Instagram: @MeredithStarr



Bethany Taylor  
Gainesville, Florida

### Artist Statement

These works are several in a series of tapestries entitled *To Write in Silent Marks*, which serve as warnings about how humans continue to live in ways that are detrimental to their own future. The series references 16th-18th century morality tapestries and Alciato's *Book of Emblems*. Historically, tapestries defined moral codes of a community and became psychologically embedded in everyday life as well as part of a one's cultural inheritance. Utilizing image and text (in Latin and English) the works transform the act of drawing into jacquard, digitally woven tapestries. The works employ digital weaving processes while embracing traditional notions of drawing and textile weaving, and the imagery depicted in these works conceptually connects the historical purposes of emblems and tapestries as forms of prescriptive storytelling with contemporary forms of cultural propaganda, such as print and social media.

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"

The works are about the impact of destructive human behaviors on climate change, the creation of uninhabitable environments, and future mass extinction.

### Artist Biography

Bethany Taylor received a BFA from the University of Southern California and an MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her work reveals ecological and socio-political narratives embedded in everyday materials and employs decorative and textile crafts as social and political activism.

Taylor's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, D.C., Seattle Arts Commission, Post, BG Gallery, and Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Los Angeles, CA, Site: Brooklyn, NY, New Mexico State University Art Gallery, Las Cruces, Museum for Arts and Sciences, Macon, GA, Museum of Fine Art, Tallahassee, FL, Huntsville Museum of Art, AL, Alexandria Museum of Art, LA, The Bellevue Art Museum, WA, The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery, Fort Myers, FL, the Musei di Genova Raccolte Frugone, Genova Nervi, Italy, Limerick City Gallery, Limerick, Ireland, Werkstatt, Berlin, and The Nelimarkka Museum, Alajärvi, Finland among others.

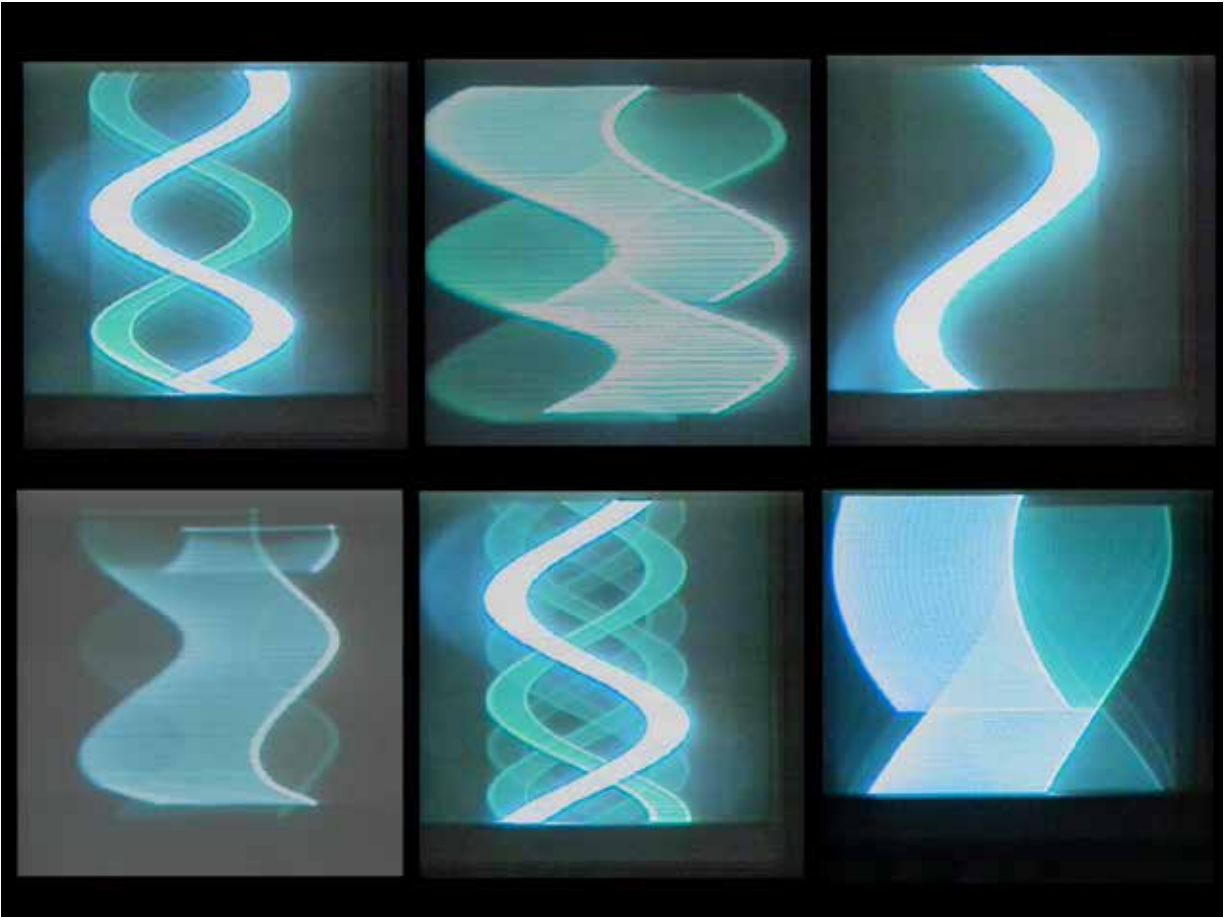
Bethany Taylor is an Associate Professor of Drawing and (WARP) The Workshop for Art Research and Practice at the University of Florida, and she currently lives and works in Gainesville, Florida.

Web: [www.bethanytaylor.net](http://www.bethanytaylor.net)



*Bethany Taylor's Jacquard woven images are both decorative and functional, literally bringing climate issues home. You can even use one to stay warm.*  
—Craig Coleman

*Against the Reckless (2017)  
Jacquard Woven Drawing,  
54in x 80in, NFS*



*The video piece Untitled (water data and sensor-driven abstractions, uses data gathered with experimental sensor prototypes to affect optical surveys of the Susquehanna River. Applying the data from the site to optical footage from the same site, literally shows how information can change one's perspective of the observable world. Their work speaks about observation, presentation, and the ability of art to look at scientific data in a new way.*

—Craig Coleman

*Untitled (2021)*

Thomas Asmuth and Sara Gevurtz  
Video, water data and  
sensor-driven abstractions, 00:11:25

## *Turbidity Paintings Project*

Thomas Asmuth with Sara Gevurtz and Others

Pensacola, Florida

### **Artist Statement**

The *Turbidity Paintings Project* is a collection of activities, exhibits, and research that uses fieldwork as a merger of the arts and sciences. In the past five years, the partners use these activities as the raw materials to create objects which simultaneously exist as artifact and data measurement.

Instead of merely displaying data points as abstractions on graphs, the team takes images and materials (photographs and water samples, among others) and combine these with traditional measurements from water quality studies to create new forms of visual communication. They adapt pedagogies and expression historically based on wonder and discovery to function in the age of crisis, cynicism, and uncertain ecological futures. They are compelled as artists, scientists, and citizen-scientists to educate, communicate, and inspire in the shadow of climatic and ecological changes.

### **Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"**

I am convinced that the phenomenological or experience has been marginalized in the development of our knowledge of the world. When one becomes "lost in the weeds" deep and meaningful understanding can be realized through the process that Merleau-Ponty called "Primacy of Perception."

### **Artist Biography**

Thomas Asmuth is a transdisciplinary artist and designer; his practices are epitomized by the intersection of art, technology, and science. Asmuth collaborates with artists and marine scientists to study issues of water quality. Asmuth has been recognized for his practice and scholarship in transdisciplinary methods which keenly integrate multiple disciplines. He is a recipient of a Florida Humanities Council grant and a UWF Florida Research Fellowship. Asmuth's presentations, papers, and exhibition work have been widely exhibited in the United States and internationally including online venues like NetArtizen and turbulence.org (sic) as well as the Pensacola Museum of Art, Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery at San José State University, SECAC2016, SECAC2013, Missouri State University Brick City Gallery, 319 Scholes in New York City, the International Symposium on Electronic Art, the Laguna Art Museum, Zer01 Biennial, the Electronic Gallery at Salisbury University, Montalvo Arts Center, College of Wooster and the Francis Tang Teaching Museum. Asmuth teaches courses in digital and experimental media at the University of West Florida Department of Art. He is an alumnus of the CADRE Laboratory for New Media at San José State and holds a BFA in Painting from the San Francisco Art Institute.

Web: <http://thomasasmuth.com>

Instagram: @kidNeutrino

Ryan Wurst  
Fort Meyers, Florida

### Artist Statement

*SEA the future* is a speculative animation, diving deep into the thoughts of venture capitalists who will most likely be stuck in the middle of the ocean due to the rising sea levels. It seems as if their position right now is: "Why try to solve issues here? Let's go to space." I see their future, being stuck on a floaty in the middle of the ocean, to be one that is just as absurd: "Maybe I can become a human/dolphin, human/shark, human/whale (or other) hybrid."

### Relationship of Your Work to the Theme "Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature"

I think that it is human nature to want to escape the situations we are in. Many times, art is exactly that. Artists are often the ones imagining futures and utopias, but rarely do they have the same kinds of power to change things drastically and quickly. We are in a moment that needs quick action. I do find it alarming that it seems like those with the most economic and political power are looking to literally escape the world. Think Bezos and his desire to go to space. We can't rely on literally escaping the world. Imagine if we put some of the space energy towards changing our reliance on oil. *SEA the future* takes that same escapist and absurd mentality to, in my opinion, its logical conclusion: Being stuck on a pool floaty in the middle of the ocean surrounded by plastic bottles, thinking of ways to create human/sea creature hybrids.

### Artist Biography

Ryan Wurst is a transmedia artist, who builds worlds that are informed by technology. Wurst is an avid organizer and curator who has run galleries, produced many events, and continues to run the record label Always Human Tapes. Currently, he is a Professor of Fine Art at Florida SouthWestern State College in Fort Myers, Florida. He has a PhD in Intermedia Arts Writing and Performance at the University of Colorado at Boulder, an MFA in Experimental and Media Arts from the University of Minnesota, and a BM in music composition from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Wurst performs and shows work nationally and internationally, including Beijing, New York, Zagreb, Belgrade, Minneapolis, and Boulder.

Instagram: @wurstryan

Web: ryanwurst.com



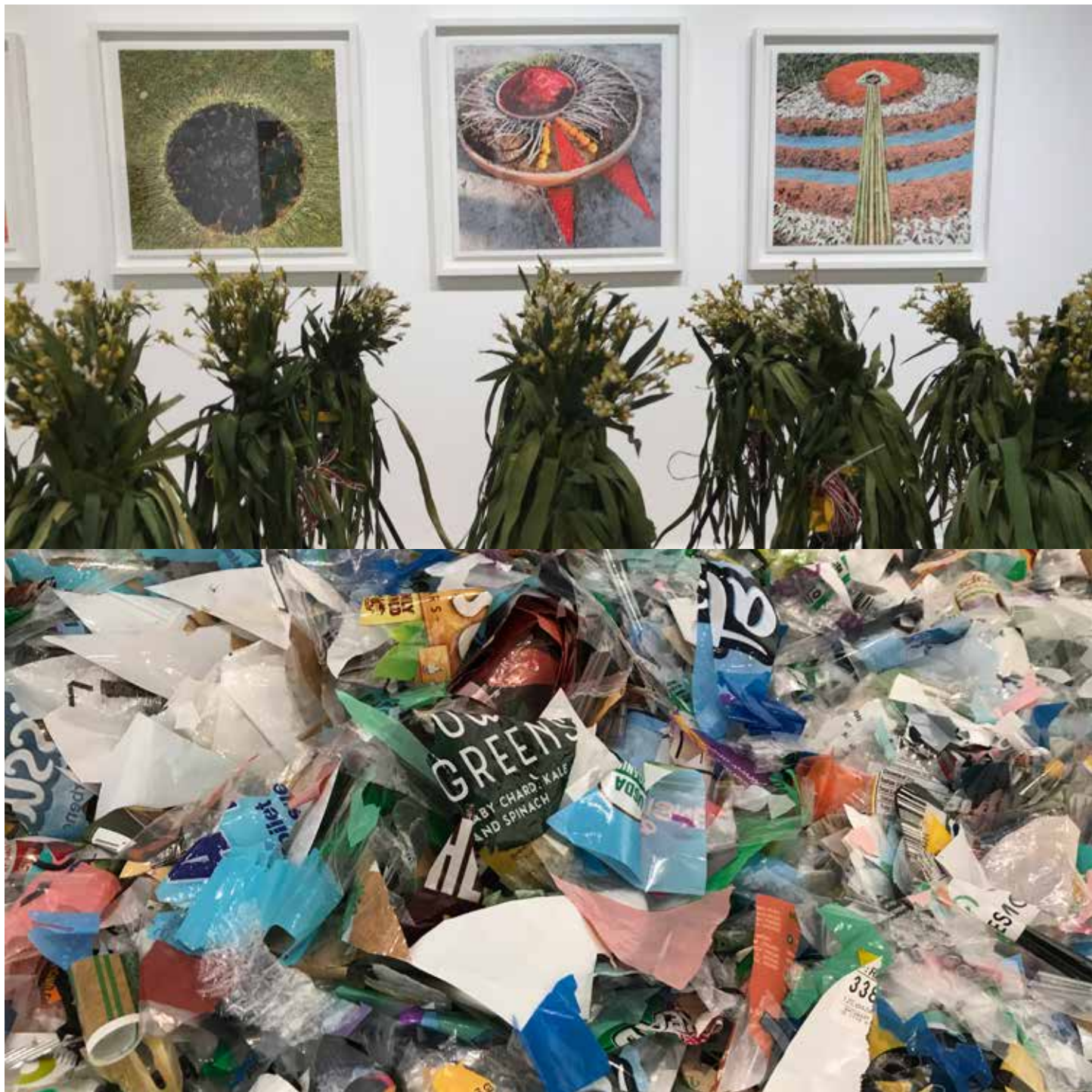


*Ryan Wurst's animation SEA the Future uses humor to comment on the absurdity of abandoning solutions to climate change in favor of self-preservation.*  
—Craig Coleman

*SEA the future (2021)*  
Video, (00:06:22)







## Complete Schedule of Events

**Socially-Distanced Opening Reception:** Saturday, April 17, 2021, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

*UGA's Ethnobotanical Garden: Conserving Plant Biodiversity and Traditional Plant Knowledge* by Paul Duncan: Streaming talk on Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 7:00 PM.

*Using Nature in Alternative Photo Processes* by Craig Coleman: Streaming Talk on Thursday, April 29, 2021, 7:00 PM.

**Curators and Artist Panel Discussion with Online Catalog Release:** Streaming on Thursday, May 6, 2021, 7:00 PM

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### Exhibition Credits

Curator: Craig Coleman

Assistant Curator: Lilly McEachern

Preparators: Craig Coleman, Lilly McEachern, Sally Pat Williamson, Naomi Falk, Lauren Fancher

Termite Waterer: Sally Pat Williamson

Lighting: Jon Vogt, Jason Huffer

Exhibition Logo: Tynan Fortune

Catalog: Lauren Fancher, Lilly McEachern

Interns: Sally Pat Williamson, Lisa Yee, Tynan Fortune, Claire Barrera, Laithem Caldwell

Staff: Lauren Fancher, Director

### Support

*Lost in the Weeds: Climate Change and Human Nature* is sponsored in part by The James E. and Betty J. Huffer Foundation and the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency – the National Endowment for the Arts.

### ATHICA Board of Directors

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