

ANN ALTSTATT
MARC D'ESTOUT
CID PEARLMAN
ED RAMIREZ

RYDELL

VISUAL ARTS FELLOWS
2020-2021

RYDEL

VISUAL ARTS FELLOWS 2020/2021



"Art has always been the raft onto which we climb to save our sanity. I don't see a different purpose for it now."

~ Dorothea Tanning, American painter, sculptor, and poet

THE 2021 RYDELL FELLOWSHIP

The 2020-2021 Rydell Fellows made art in a tumultuous time. There were blazing orange skies and smoke-filled air. A raging pandemic and cries for justice. Sheltering-in-place and nearly 1,000 homes burned. Grief, pain, isolation and still, deep kindness and care for each other.

Roy and Frances Rydell understood that artists not only bear witness to life, but they play an integral role in helping humanity process our collective experience. Artists help us heal, connect, rebuild and nurture community in celebration and for survival. That's why they left their entire estate to the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County to create the Rydell Visual Arts Fund. The Rydell Fund honors their vision and is an enduring benefit to the visual arts and artists of our county.

The Rydells also said that the visual arts should include many artistic forms and mediums and this is expressed by the variety of the artists awarded the Fellowship over the years. In this catalogue, you will see the talents of the four 2020-2021 Fellowship awardees. These Fellows, like the 27 who came before them, were nominated by arts organizations and accomplished artists. Fellows were selected by a jury of arts professionals from across the country who review the nominees in a blind process.

Finally, the Fellows were approved by a committee of three advisors who have served to guide the Fund since its inception. The nominators, the jury and the advisors ensure the integrity of the Fellowship through their diligence and expertise. We thank you.

As I absorb the artwork of this Rydell Fellows cohort, I celebrate how what the artists have done with their fellowship is as varied as art itself. The diversity of the work itself shows me the differences and commonalities of how we process the human condition. What are the stories being told? What do our responses to the pieces tell us about ourselves? We thank the artists for providing an experience with their work to more deeply connect us to each other—for building a raft that can carry us all.

The Community Foundation Santa Cruz County is honored to be trusted by the Rydells to carry out their vision. We are grateful for the opportunity to support the creative work of Santa Cruz County's artists. We believe that with each fellowship or grant, a little bit of Roy and Frances lives on.

Susan True
Chief Executive Officer
Community Foundation, Santa Cruz County

SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY

Santa Cruz County is defined by a rich creative culture that takes its sustenance from the artists who call it home—those who live, work and create in the shared space of our community. Our artists produce thought-provoking work in a range of disciplines, cutting across the visual, performing and media arts to offer enlightening interpretations that suggest new ideas, invite reflection, spark dialog and shift perspectives. In this way, they are not only innovators, but culture bearers who make immeasurable contributions to the vibrancy of our community.

Civic planners around the world have embraced the idea of cultural vibrancy, which refers to the positive emotional qualities of a community. To nurture it, one must recognize, embrace and elevate the fundamental traits and practices that that make a place singular, breathing life into a community. Time and time again, arts and culture are found to be key to vibrancy. Not only do they inspire, they contribute to people's sense of connectedness and wellbeing. They also play a role in economic development—fostering creative innovation, attracting investment, and invigorating the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The benefits to be gained from embracing art and creativity extend well beyond what one might think.

Since 1985 when Roy and Frances Rydell had the foresight to establish a fund for artists and arts organizations, bequeathing their estate to the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, we have been enriched by priceless fellowship opportunities that create space for artists to pursue their work. Because of it, some have been able to extend their reach nationwide and abroad. In turn, empowered artists make a significant impact here at home in our own community, from the inspiration they provide to the stronger creative economy that results.

The Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) is proud to recognize the immense contributions of our artist community—from the professional artists selected as Rydell fellows, to our community practitioners who participate in cultural exchange in myriad ways. Creativity is a world to which all are invited, and from which all can benefit.

It is an honor for me to present the work of the 2020 – 2021 Rydell fellows, both in this catalogue and in our exhibition at the MAH: Ann Altstatt, whose intriguing lithographs explore intersections between mysticism and scientific inquiry; Cid Pearlman, whose choreographies disrupt traditional notions of desire, gender and friendship as they navigate human relationships;

the highly crafted work of Marc D'Estout, who creates minimalist sheet metal forms that make subtle commentaries on modern life; and Edward Ramirez, whose engaging photographs and prints offer a strong social commentary on controversial issues.

We hope you will be moved—both by their work, and by the people, organizations and community culture that support it.

Robb Woulfe

Executive Director

Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History



ANN ALTSTATT

A SCIENCE OF PLAY

"I always had my squalid hoard of stuff that I was messing around with," Ann Altstatt tells me with boisterous laughter. Thinking back on childhood, they describe a household where "everybody was tinkering and doing their thing." Their grandmother seemed to always be weaving, while their mother made illuminated manuscripts, sewed, and wrote novels. Between their two older sisters, there were manifold science experiments, construction projects, and adopted animals, including an iguana who lived free-range in their home. Likewise, their father, an engineer, "had his own heaps and piles of electronics."

Growing up, Ann aspired to become a scientist someday—a dream they continue to nourish, not without re-invention, through their work as an artist. Since they began messing around and tinkering, Ann has experimented with different media and materials, including paintings, prints and collages, along with sculptures, quilts, nature walks and bike tours, digital media and collaborations, what they describe as "parallel play," with other artists, as well as activists, mechanics, geologists and more.

"I love combinations of materials and ideas," Ann explains, "and I'm interested in decay... I spend a lot of time detangling tangles and sorting things."

Part of this detangling happens in the object world, whether in their artist residency at the Santa Cruz landfill, their work for many years as a mechanic at *The Bike Church*, or the mass of textiles they organize into different categorized

shelves and drawers at the *Fabrica*, the fabric arts collective space they helped found in 2010.

Another part of the process, just as crucial, detangles from the tactile a set of conceptual conflicts and questions, always in search of different ways of perceiving and engaging the world, as *a squalid hoard of stuff*, knotted up with ideas and problems, beauty and horror.

A lifelong collector of various objects, some of which might be called "trash," Ann found themselves in a crisis, at some point, over the role of collecting in their art practice. "I was just kind of wondering how this trash related to my art," Ann recalls. Focused in part on aesthetic categories of cleanliness, their MFA thesis would later develop an ethical framework for engaging the more totalizing decay of global, capitalist apocalypse, as well as questions of time and matter. But this crisis was also resolved with an aesthetic turning point, away from flat art, and

toward what they describe as “a longer narrative experience [that] didn’t all fit inside the picture.”

Out of this period of confrontation and questioning, Ann’s art shifted from representing an object world, into a deeper sense of entanglement and interaction. Their sculptural installation, *A Crystalline Quilt for the Thick Present*, 2018, culminates much of this transformation. Dramatically lit and precise in its chaos, the installation is a massive composite of reclaimed landfill materials, mobilizing a sci-fi imaginary of salvaging and repurposing, and demanding active curiosity toward the world of things.

Increasingly research-driven, Ann’s art deals in glacial concepts—from the thick present, deep time, Anthropocene, to contradictions of waste and excess, and the false logics of ‘ethical’ consumerism and ‘conscious’ capitalism—layering, sifting through, mending, with care as much as humor. Rather than degrade or render this work unserious, humor functions as a hermeneutic for the complex terrain of Ann’s ongoing artistic and political project. “Humor is about things not making sense of some level,” they tell me, “so it can make you angry, horrified, or it can make you laugh. A lot of my art has been motivated by making jokes out of the mismatch of things.”

For the last decade, Ann’s primary workspace has been a small home shared with their partner Josh, a bicycle framebuilder with a shop in

their backyard, and their daughter Greta, an 8-year-old currently obsessed with dragons. Their house is filled with wonderfully eccentric collections, tucked-away piles, animals and ongoing projects. While Ann has maintained some outside workspaces since Greta was born, this year they began working out of a small studio, beside Josh’s shop in the backyard.

“I think having my own space allows me to play,” they tell me, “I can look at things and combine things and tinker and do research and it’s all kind of open-ended.”

When I entered Ann’s studio, I was immediately struck by their latest fascination. A collection of transparent objects was beginning to crowd along the window sill, kaleidoscopically—various lenses, glasses and plastics, including sculptures made from pipettes acquired from a science lab, which “do cool optical things” as part of the re-visioning, dreaming, detangling.

Madeline Lane-Mckinley

Writer, Editor and Lecturer – Writing Program,
University California Santa Cruz



Special Arrangements (four of nine), 2016
Digital inkjet prints; digital photos, found text and objects
8" x 12" each



Previous page:
Studies for The Universe is Mostly What We Can't See: Moving Shadows pt. 7, 2021
Digital photo series
Dimensions variable



Studies for The Universe is Mostly What We Can't See: Viewing Apparatus pt. 1, 2021
Digital photo series
Dimensions variable



Studies for The Universe is Mostly What We Can't See:
Rock Mirror, 2021
Digital photo series
Dimensions variable



Next page:
Studies for The Universe is Mostly What We Can't See:
The Bodies of Trees, 2021
Digital photo series
Dimensions variable





Above and below:

Borders Borados, A Rasquache Time Machine, 2019-21

In collaboration with members of the *Rasquache Collective*, participatory workshop series, performances, and multi-media installation:
bamboo, caution tape, embroidery, emergency blankets, reclaimed fabric, paper, performance, spray paint, video, zines

Dimensions variable

Photos: (above) Federico Cuatlacuatl, Karina Monroy, (below) Everett Ó Cillín



A Crystalline Quilt for the Thick Present, 2018

Sculptural installation; reclaimed landfill materials (scrap metal, wood, plastic, tree branches, grass, Christmas lights), box steel, cables, latex paint, LED lights

Approx 12' x 12' x 5'

Photo: David Pace



A Time Machine for the Loma Prieta Earthquake, 2019

In collaboration with Kyle Lane-McKinley – Interactive multi-media installation; analog video equipment, canvas, cardboard, digital collage of historic photos, electronics, inkjet print on mylar, latex paint, overhead projector, performance, reclaimed wood, video
Dimensions variable

Photos: Kyle Lane-McKinley (exterior) and Libby Kastle (interior)



Above and right:
A Device for The Indirect Observation of Organized Matter
(installation view) and (detail), 2019

Interactive multi-media installation; analog video equipment, projection, video, acrylic mirror, latex paint, reclaimed found plastic, wooden pillars
Dimensions variable

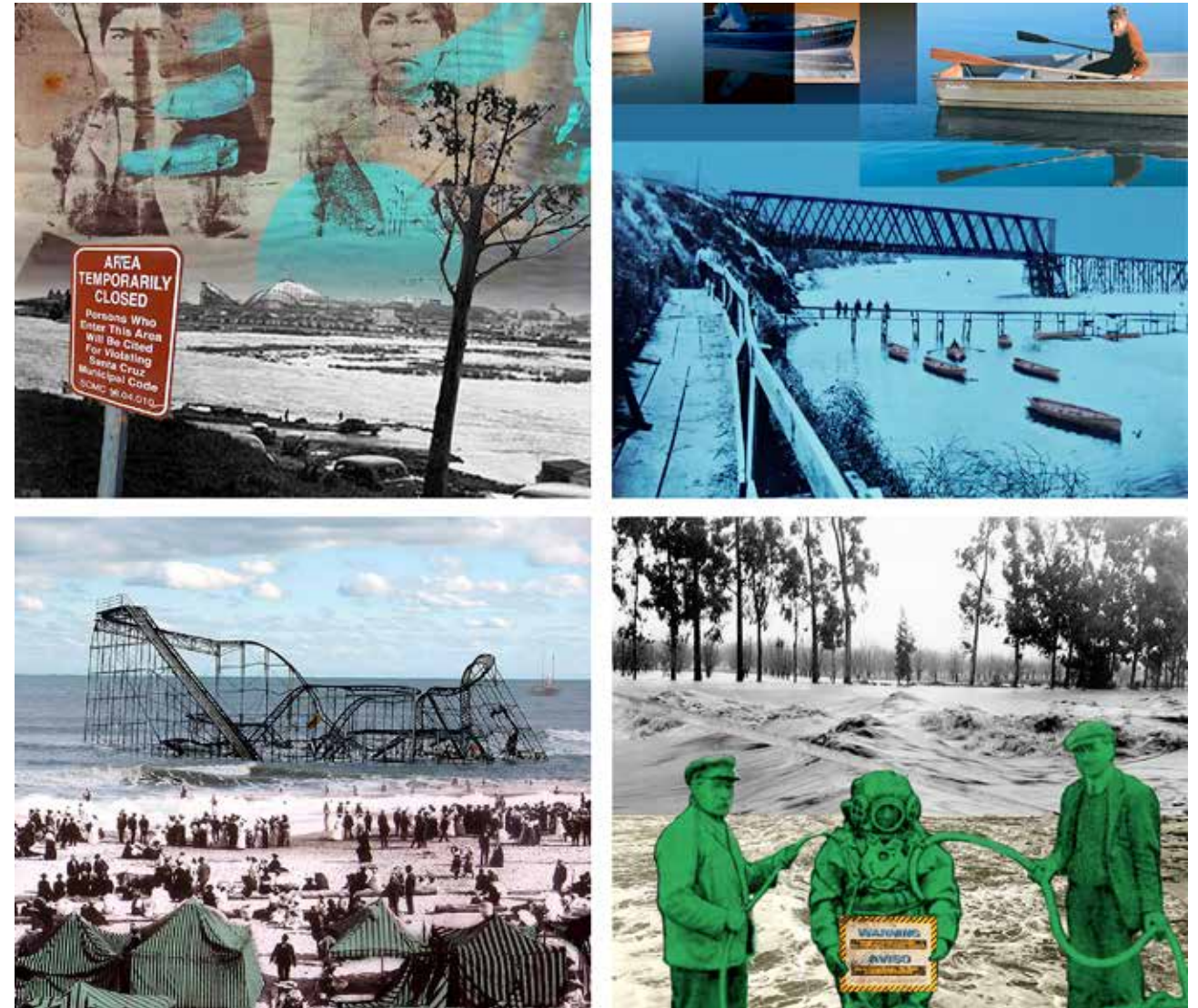
Photos: Carrine Knight





This Location is Moving, This Location Has Moved, 2018

In collaboration with Kyle Lane-McKinely
 (Performance documentation) Participatory site-specific performance; viewmasters, headphones, web-hosted digital audio collage, digital collage of historic photos
 Dimensions variable
 Photo: Crystal Birns



This Location is Moving, This Location Has Moved, 2018

In collaboration with Kyle Lane-McKinely
 Viewmaster stereo slide images, 4 of 7, used in performance



River Ghosts, 2015
 In collaboration with Josh Muir
 Site-specific sculptural installation; digital plasma-cut steel, box steel
 Approx 13' x 30' x 20'
 Photo: Brindin Calmes



River Ghosts (detail), 2015
 Photo: Josh Muir

ARTIST BIO

Ann Altstatt is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores geologic and non-linear time, the intersections of scientific inquiry and mysticism, and the hidden stories of everyday objects. Their other research interests include paleontology, discard studies, human relationships with the non-human and multi-species survival in the face of global climate chaos. Ann graduated from the DANM MFA at UCSC in 2018; additionally, they hold undergraduate degrees in art and geology, a graduate certificate in science illustration, and have participated in numerous regional shows, including the 2015 *Ebb and Flow River Arts Festival*, the 2017-18 *SCRAP* landfill residency and Indexical's *Melt Me Into the Ocean* in 2018. As a founding collective member at The Fábrica textile workshop since 2010, Ann's arts practice remains informed by community engagement, collaborative processes and material reuse. They are honored to be recognized as a 2020 – 2021 Rydell Visual Arts Fellow. Ann lives in the historic floodplain of the San Lorenzo River with their partner and young daughter, a cat, a dog, eight chickens and innumerable termites.



MARC D'ESTOUT

A POTENT RESOLUTION

Is it okay if I call Marc D'Estout an emerging artist? A strange description, I know, for a man who has behind him four decades of work. In fact, he's done the rounds more than most. Since studying at San Jose State University, CA, in the 1970s, D'Estout has surfed successive waves of influence, an initial involvement in Conceptualism yielding to postmodern design, then a turn to intensely crafted abstract sculpture, which merits comparison to the works of Martin Puryear. These days, he is making the most assured, multivalent art of his long career, compressing all these previous interests and involvements into new forms of potent resolution.

Still, *emerging* seems like the right word. "I'm old," D'Estout says, "but in my brain, I'm still about thirty." And in keeping with that spirit, he tends to operate from first principles, as if he were exploring the possibilities of sculpture for the first time, every time. The result is a palpable feeling of having just arrived. Look at how his sculptures burst out of the wall, irrepressible and undeniable. Or, land in space with the unexpected impact of a small meteor strike. Compounded equally of strangeness and facticity, they run somewhat in advance of logical thought. Each object marks a discovery, even if we're not sure of what.

Ever fresh though it may be, this work has long roots. "Maybe my art doesn't reveal deep, dark secrets about Marc D'Estout," he has said, "but it does involve private, creative processes." That is for sure, and the processes in question link all the way back to his childhood and adolescence. He often speaks of the influence of his father Henri, an aviator and technician, and of his own early involvement with custom cars. Through the latter connection, including a friendship with the respected fabricator, Ron Covell, D'Estout acquired metal-shaping skills he still employs today. Sometimes these sources crop up explicitly in the work: *Champ*, 2021, for example, which is constructed from the fenders of a 1947 Studebaker, or works like *Gesture*, 2013, and *Bluebird*, 2015, which so resemble wings tilting upward that you can feel a plunge into open space.

In most cases, the lines of influence are more oblique, traveling through the domain of art history. D'Estout, has the benefit of a lifetime of observation. Constantin Brancusi and Isamu Noguchi are never far away, and sometimes so close you can almost touch them, as in the crisply articulated *Kilroy*, 2010, the pneumatic swells of *A Specious Bubble*, 2010, or the mask-like *Liar*, 2015. D'Estout also sometimes tunes

into the Alberto Giacometti signal in attenuated works like *Toxic Pet*, 2017, and *The Seeker*, 2017. These drawings in free space seem, like existentialist walkers, almost to quiver under the pressure of our looking.

My favorite D'Estout sculptures—I know, a critic isn't meant to have favorites, but I can't help it—are those that escape these affinities, finding their own space to curl up in. *A Small Dark Menace*, 2012, is one. It is forged in steel, though it's hard to see how. "When I saw it in my head," D'Estout recalls, "I wasn't sure how I would make it. I wanted to manipulate metal in a way that seemed impossible." The finished work, an object of total resolve, is more reminiscent of an ancient pot than a newly-fabricated metalwork, complete with the pendant drips articulating its bottom curve.

The foreboding title of this powerful work points to one last salient issue—and another sense of emergence. Very often, his forms point elsewhere, or to some other time, on the forgotten past or still unglimped future. This is another sort of emergence: not of mere form, but of a whole consciousness. Without ever tipping into explicitness (and hence, banality), his works suggest narratives about politics as in *Abused Muse*, 2011, or *Little Dictator*, 2016; about climate change, which the oily density of *A Small Dark Menace*, 2012, may bring to mind; or about more personal matters of transformation.

As I was preparing this essay, D'Estout was just bringing a work called *Deity*, 2020, to completion. In some ways it's simple: a steel ring with a long, forged, rat-tail descending from it. Look closer and you'll see a polished disk of stainless steel set into the ring. What could be read as an aperture, or perhaps an angel's halo, instead reflects you back at yourself. D'Estout told me that he wanted to create the "illusion of a different dimension." I think he succeeded, not only in this work, but in everything he's been making lately. We are all of us, in life, swimming along with the current. Art like his gives us a chance to put our heads above the waterline. Never know what we might see.

Glenn Adamson

Curator, Writer, Historian, former Director of the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY

Marc D'Estout's art shown courtesy the artist and Jack Fischer Gallery, unless noted otherwise



Previous page:
Champ, 2021
Studebaker fenders, fabricated steel, paint,
chemical patina
31" x 84" x 16"

Deity, 2020
Forged and fabricated steel, stainless steel, cement,
chemical patina
13.5" x 23" x 9.5"

A Small Dark Menace, 2012
Forged steel, chemical patina
4" x 6.5" x 3.5"
Collection of Nancy Sevier



Toxic Pet, 2017
Forged steel, chemical patina
24" x 33" x 4"

Green Ripple, 2021
Forged steel, paint, chemical patina
53.5" x 11" x 3"





Bluebird, 2015
Forged sheet steel, paint
(reflective gold paint on verso)
17" x 5" x 3.5"
Collection of Steve Werney and Floriana Petersen



Sneeze, 2021
Forged sheet steel, paint
12" x 12" x 5"

Little Dictator, 2016
Forged sheet steel,
saw blades, paint
17.5" x 12.5" x 5.5"



Threat, 2016
Fabricated and forged sheet steel, altered found object,
gunshot counterbalance weights, paint, chemical patina
21" x 6" x 6"
Collection of David Pace and Diane Jonte-Pace





Muse, 2011
Nickel plated forged steel, copper paint
10" x 11" x 7"



Abused Muse, 2011
Forged steel, chemical patina
15" x 8" x 5.25"



A Specious Bubble, 2010
Fabricated steel, paint
12" x 12" x 12"



Liar, 2010 - (altered) 2015
Forged steel
22.5" x 14.5" x 3.75"



The Seeker, 2017
Forged steel, paint, chemical patina
64.5" x 26" x 32"

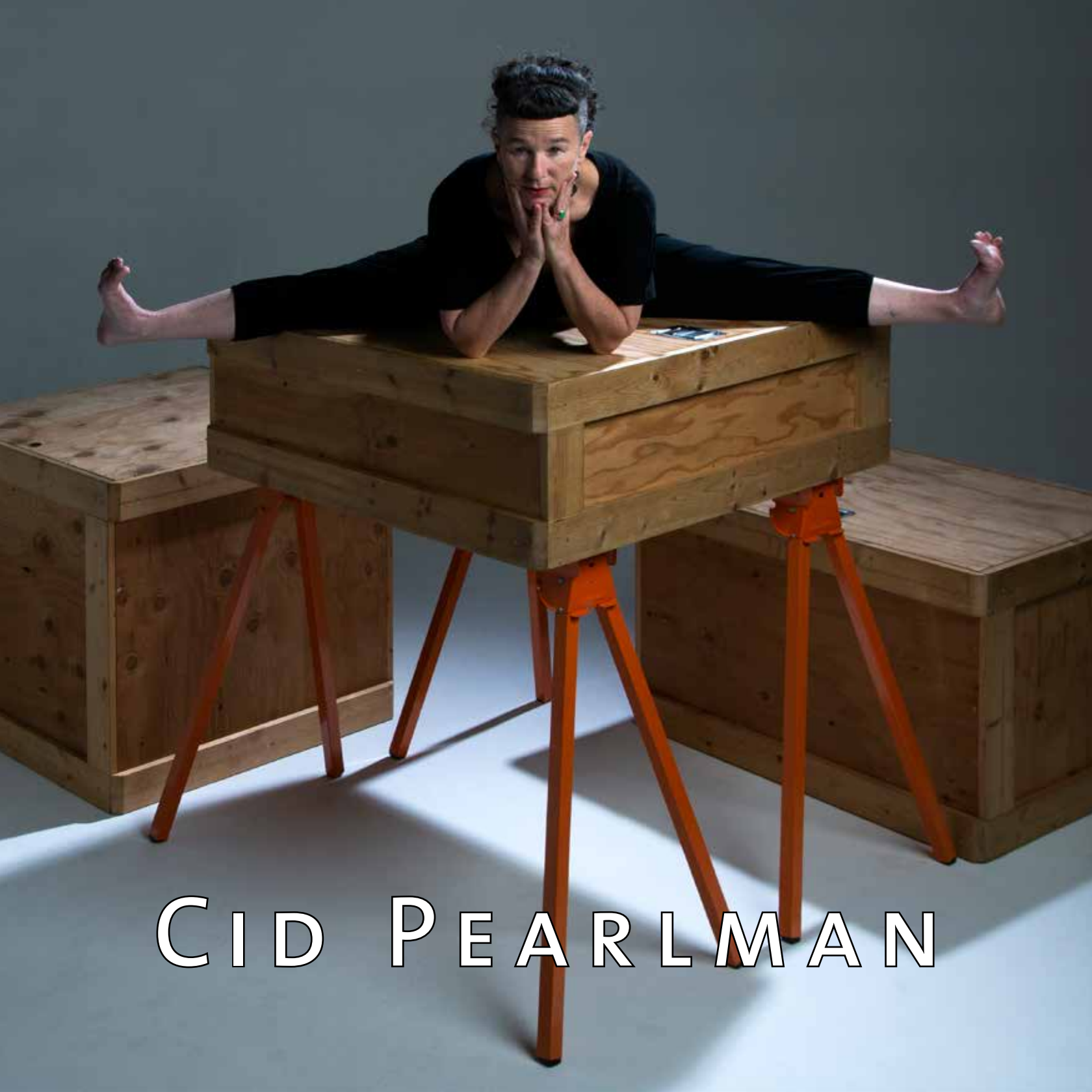


ARTIST BIO

Marc D'Estout, MFA, San Jose State University, is a multi-disciplinary artist, curator and designer. He is represented by Jack Fischer Gallery, San Francisco, and has exhibited at numerous venues including: Aqua Miami, Red Gallery, Savannah College of Art and Design; Houston Center for Contemporary Craft; SFMOMA Artist's Gallery; San Jose Museum of Art; de Saisset Museum; and the San Jose ICA. D'Estout's pieces have been published in magazines, books and catalogs. His work was used for the cover image and featured in the significant Graphis book *Products by Design*. The Thompson Gallery at San Jose State University produced a monograph chronicling 2-1/2 decades of his art and design work. In addition to his 3D studio work, D'Estout has maintained an active design career. He most recently held the curator position for the Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco. Prior to that, he was director for Art and Design for UCSC Extension, art curator and exhibit designer for both the Monterey Museum of Art and the Triton Museum of Art. He has also taught numerous courses at various universities and colleges in the Bay Area, and at Anderson Ranch in Colorado.

Previous page:
Harvey/Kilroy, 2010
Fabricated steel, chemical patina
9" x 10.25" x 5.25"
Private collection

Gesture, 2013
Forged steel, paint, charcoal
25" x 7" x 4.5"
Collection of Jamie Dagdigian and
Kerry Smith



CID PEARLMAN

(H O M E) B O D Y

I was introduced to Cid Pearlman's work in the 1990s when she called her company Nesting Dolls. The name was an invitation to engage with the work as containers within containers of meaning, expression, energy and force. Punk rock aesthetics met the technical lyricism of modern dance and postmodern cool. The performances were intricately crafted and loud, a mosh pit of sweeping, athletic movement vocabulary—jumping, falling, rolling, lifting, leaning, swaying, inverting—subdued by Judson era techniques of repetition and accumulation.

(home)Body is a multimedia and multidisciplinary art installation conceived by artistic director/choreographer Pearlman in collaboration with poet/dramaturge Denise Leto, video artist Mara Milam and an intergenerational group of dancers. The work is built on a scaffold of poems provided by Leto and four commissioned poets, JJJJerome Ellis, Willie X. Lin, Naomi Ortiz and Tanaya Winder. Centered around five dance videos and five poems, and with the occasional live performance element, *(home)Body* represents the latest leg of Pearlman's artistic journey, one that grapples with the concept of home as a relationship between human beings and the choreographic objects of space, place and embodiment.

For the last decade, Pearlman has been designing three-dimensional micro-worlds inside museums, galleries, and other non-theatrical spaces, including the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, the Felix Kulpa Gallery and Sculpture Garden, the Peace United Church, the Santa Cruz Downtown Library and Santa Cruz City Hall. In 2019, Pearlman, in collaboration with Milam, Kate Edmunds (scenic design), Jonathan Segel (music/sound score) and a diverse group of performers, presented *Moving Through Loneliness*, which appeared as an installation and stand-alone film presented at international film festivals. Milam was a principal collaborator on the project, filming and editing the three 12-minute videos around which the installation was built.

Over the past several years, Pearlman's work has coalesced around the concept of home, both the physical structures that contain human relationships and the bodies we inhabit. Performers negotiate a range of spaces from internal, emotional choreographies to tightly walled places to the empty vastness of an unencumbered stage floor. In *Bluets* #1-40, 2018, inspired by and set to poems from Maggie Nelson's volume of the same name, three roofless, frontless boxes on wheels create nested domestic spaces where dancers cram together,

navigating the interstices between bodies and walls. Images and text proliferate on stage sets that function as both dance spaces and screens: windows, sky, clouds, bathtubs, excerpts of poems. Soundscapes collide music, noise and voiceover, a slow motion radio dial that moves through talk, classical music, rock and roll and static. In *Economies of Effort* 1, 2015, the dancers construct the set for each performance, foregrounding collaborative and collective labor, what Pearlman calls a “radical act of self-sufficiency and self-containment.”

Pearlman’s approach to working with text has shifted over the last two decades, moving from a focus on content to a dynamic engagement with poetic structures. She began collaborating with Leto, whom she met during a Djerassi Artists Residency, and who writes poetry in intimate connection with her embodied reality as a person with laryngeal dystonia. Leto wrote six poems with different structures (e.g. sestina, tanka) and performed in the collaborative performance installation *Your Body is Not a Shark*, 2013, which featured composer/cellist Joan Jeanrenaud, longtime member of the Kronos Quartet.

The poems of *(home)Body* were submitted in advance of the choreography; they are enmeshed with and generative of the dance videos and live dancing that accompany them. They reflect voices of those whose life experi-

ences ignite awareness of the body in relation to our physical world and social order. They shed light on the choreographic possibilities of the stutter, the stammer and the spasm. Skin “spikes and gathers” in Leto’s poem. Ortiz’s poem alone features chin, shoulders, hips, wrists, lungs, arms, chest, fingers, jaw, hands, gut, ribcage and breasts. Lin throws “a weight against the wall,” shrugs in the cold. Winder’s poem engages repetition like rainfall. Ellis draws speech impediment and chant, blackness and watery passage, into alignment

Three of the five poets involved in *(home)Body* identify as disabled, and the poems were selected for the ways they perform and trouble embodied presence and what it means to have a body. Leto explains that while reading the over 800 poems submitted by 250 poets, she thought of the ekphrastic tradition in poetry, how poetry responds to visual art, how the choreography in *(home)Body* may respond to poetry.

Cid Pearlman let go of the name Nesting Dolls in 2002 but her work increasingly opens to spaces within spaces in a constant choreography of reconfiguration. *(home)Body* invites collaborating artists and audiences to destabilize their relationship to each other, to space and to the artwork itself.

Sima Belmar, PhD



Your Body is Not a Shark, 2013
Performance photo (documentation)
Photo: Beau Saunders



Your Body is Not a Shark, 2013
 Performance photos (documentation)
 Photos: Beau Saunders



Moving Through Loneliness, 2019
 Film stills
 Photos: Mara Milam





This page and next:
small variations, 2018
Performance photos (documentation)
Photos : Beau Saunders



This page and next:
Bluets #1-40, 2018
Performance photos (documentation)
Photos: Stephen Louis Marino



This page and next:
Economies of Effort: 1, 2015
Performance (documentation)
Photos: Beau Saunders





Previous page and above:
Economies of Effort: 3, 2016
Performance photos (documentation)
Photos: Beau Saunders



ARTIST BIO

Cid Pearlman creates work that subtly disrupts traditional notions of desire, gender and friendship. Inspired by the resilience, fragility and resourcefulness of the human body, Pearlman's dance installations consider how we negotiate being together in a complex world. Her work has been shown at numerous venues including ODC Theater, Joyce SoHo, Kanuti Gildi SAAL (Estonia), Getty Center, Santa Cruz MAH, Stockholm City Hall and the Museum of Contemporary Art/San Diego. Among other honors she has received a Fulbright Award from the US Department of State, and she has been twice awarded a Djerassi Resident Artist Fellowship. Her evening-length performance installation *High Fall* received a Lester Horton Award for Visual Design. *small variations*, with an original score by Joan Jeanrenaud, was nominated for two Horton Awards in 2006 and an Isadora Duncan Award in 2019. Pearlman completed her MFA in Dance at UCLA, holds a second degree black belt in Aikido, and teaches in the Department of Performance, Play & Design at UC Santa Cruz, and the Dance Department at Cabrillo College.

Previous page and above:
Economies of Effort: 3, 2016
Performance photos (documentation)
Photos: Beau Saunders



EDWARD RAMIREZ

THE CONCRETE ROSE

Beginning March of 2020, the pandemic decimated the nation's workforce. Quarantines created a fear that cleared all retail stores of necessities, requiring individuals to stay at home and limit their engagement to a safe social distance. This became an ongoing struggle for many Americans in California. Yet, for the im/migrant community, this has been another example of working-class survival. Im/migrants have no job security and no access to sustaining social services, requiring them to continue business as usual, with added health and economic challenges to their daily routine.

Photographer Edward M. Ramirez identified a need for social documentation around this issue. His recognition of the invisibilization of im/migrant labor sparked a desire to answer the question: *How are small business owners and street vendors finding ways to sustain their families when everyone is at home?* His query took him across California where he captured formerly bustling streets, now empty, and had conversations with workers still hoping to return home with an income. Throughout his travels to find evidence of vendors sustaining themselves, he met flower street vendors, or *vendedores*, marketing at entrances to freeways, main streets and popular intersections.

Vendedores across California adorn the urban landscapes of cities with bouquets accessible at curbside corners. A prominent industry, the routes from large wholesale vendors like the Los Angeles Flower Market, to the *vendedores* across Santa Cruz County, have always been a part of Ramirez's life. Having grown up near the downtown Los Angeles area, he recognizes the trade's strict hours, which begin from the early four in the morning start time necessary to purchase inventory, to the hours of fading sunlight that mark the end of the day, regardless of the outcome.

Ramirez's interest is in the stories of these *vendedores*. Through his conversations, he develops the narrative of long-term industry workers, focusing on the patterns of customers that frequent their *puestos* and the success individuals continue to find in the trade. The *vendedores* identify flowers as a sustaining opportunity and a representation of cultural exchange, continuing to find the beauty and profit in the legacy of bouquets as a symbolic gesture for life's special occasions. Customers stop at these corners to select flowers for the recently deceased, a love that has begun or has ended and even an opportunity to support *vendedores* so that they may return home to

their loved ones at an earlier time.

Ramirez captures the essence of place in the *vendedores'* ongoing struggle as a marginalized community within the city. Over the years, lack of resources and forward mobility have rigidly defined what spaces the im/migrant community can safely inhabit. On his journey, Ramirez has met many individuals from different parts of Mexico, now living in geographic microcosms across the United States, transcending national borders and intersecting the American dream with Latino survival. From an outside perspective, someone may not know that *vendedores* exist in a world where Spanish is the primary language, access to education and healthcare is limited or nonexistent, and folks still require legal status to have the right to work. These obstacles have been increasing here in the United States and have mirrored the very hardships and challenges *vendedores* have fled in their countries of origin. Ramirez's work asks the viewer to humanize the flower industry and hold *vendedores'* lives as important as the flowers they sell.

Ramirez employs portraiture as a method to engage in discussion surrounding the culture of flower selling. With this framing, he focuses on two different subjects: the first is the product sold by the *vendedor* and the second is the environment surrounding that product, inclusive of the layout of the *puesto*, the selection of the

street and the composition of the flowers. One of the details that Ramirez has incorporated into his portraits is the physical manifestation of the labor, revealing the stained hands of working with different papers and dyes, and the callousness of dealing with thorns and plant matter. In the composition of images, Ramirez offers a moment in time, in the life of the *vendedor*.

Photographer Edward Ramirez hopes that through this new direction in his work, he can contribute to uplifting the lives of im/migrants who labor in trades that offer no path out of poverty nor privilege of safety. This body of work is a continuation of his personal commitment to his community and his family who are also members of the communities that *vendedores* call home.

Ivan Medina

Rosario, January 2021, Digital print, 28" x 36"



Rosario, Con Flores, January 2021
Digital print
28" x 36"



Rosario Working,
January 2021
Digital print
32" x 24"

Next page:
Rosario, January 2021
Digital print
28" x 36"





Previous page:
Felipe's Puesto, November 2020
Digital print
32" x 24"

Above:
Workers Hands, November 2020
Digital print
24" x 32"



Previous page:
Juan y Rosas, December 2020
Digital print
32" x 24"

Above:
Juan, December 2020
Digital print
24" x 32"



Jesus, February 2021
Digital print
24" x 32"



Angelica, February 2021
Digital print
24" x 32"



Above:
Antonio, February 2021
Digital print
36" x 28"



Next page:
Eli, March 2021
Digital print
28" x 36"

ARTIST BIO

As an artist, Edward Ramirez's main goal is to raise awareness about social occurrences that he views as important within our society. He utilizes the medium of photography, printmaking and his sociological imagination in order to produce work that addresses certain issues he views as critical within our world. Edward Ramirez was born and raised in South Los Angeles, Californ. He comes from working-class Salvadoran parents that instilled a strong work ethic within him. His upbringing has shaped his perspective and influences what is reflected in his artistry. He earned two bachelor's degrees, one in Sociology and the other in Art from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Edward aspires to continue his education by achieving an MFA in Photography and eventually becoming an Art professor. For now, he works at a local screen printing shop in town and labors at his passion during his time off work.

Flores del Puesto, November 2020
Digital print
24" x 32"



Rydell 2020 - 2021 Visual Arts Fellows

Exhibition: January 21, 2022 – March 20, 2022

Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History

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