The background is a textured, brownish-grey surface, possibly cardboard or aged paper, covered with numerous colorful paint splatters and smudges in shades of red, yellow, green, blue, and black. A small, dark, rectangular mechanical component is visible in the upper left corner. The title 'TRANSFORMERS' is written in large, bold, white capital letters, with the 'R' in 'TRANS' partially obscured by the 'A'.

TRANSFORMERS

Reshaping Form and Meaning



About the Curator

Originally from New Zealand, **JK Russ** relocated to Las Vegas in 2010. Known for her collage installations, Russ has created interactive projects at The Life is Beautiful Festival, The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, UNLV Barrick Museum of Art, the Clark County Rotunda Gallery, and Delano Las Vegas. In 2017 she worked with the City of Las Vegas to create a large-scale collage from contributions of cards and notes for the touring Hearts4Vegas installation. Her work has been shown at the Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV, UNLV Barrick Museum of Art in Las Vegas, NV, the Torrance Art Museum in California and Sydney Contemporary Presents 2020, International Art Fair.

Russ currently manages the Neon Museum's arts program and has curated a number of exhibitions including *The Travelling Miracle Show* that toured Las Vegas and Reno, NV in 2013, the Las Vegas Contemporary Art Center's *Off the Strip New Genres Festival* in 2012 and *I Go Where The Party Takes Me* that toured Whanganui, Palmerston North, and Auckland, New Zealand in 2010.

EXHIBITION ARTIST WEBSITES

Gig Depio	www.gigdepio.com
Justin Favela	www.justinfavela.net
Nick Larsen	www.cargocollective.com/nick-larsen
Sarah Lillegard	www.sarahlillegard.com
Pasha Rafat	www.pasharafat.com
Miguel Rodriguez	www.miguelartrodriguez.com
Dave Rowe	www.daverowesculpture.com

Cover Image Dave Rowe studio detail by JK Russ

TRANSFORMERS

Organized by the Nevada Arts Council and curated by JK Russ, *TRANSFORMERS: Reshaping Form and Meaning* is part of The Nevada Touring Initiative (NTI)–Traveling Exhibition Program. The Nevada Arts Council is a division of the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, and is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the State of Nevada.

Contents

About the Curator	2
-------------------	---

Introduction	4
--------------	---

EXHIBITION ARTISTS

Gig Depio	10
-----------	----

Justin Favela	12
---------------	----

Nick Larsen	14
-------------	----

Sarah Lillegard	16
-----------------	----

Pasha Rafat	18
-------------	----

Miguel Rodriguez	20
------------------	----

Dave Rowe	22
-----------	----

Acknowledgements	24
------------------	----

Past Fellowship Recipients	24
----------------------------	----



Introduction

The artists in *TRANSFORMERS: Reshaping Form and Meaning* demonstrate resourcefulness in their selection and manipulation of materials to illustrate their ideas. They stockpile readily-available items such as art store and hardware supplies, fabrics, repurposed objects from thrift stores, and even natural wool fleeces shorn from Nevada flocks. The multitude of ways in which these artists transform everyday objects is the focus of this exhibition.

During the process of curating the selection of artworks for this exhibition, conversations with the artists covered working practices in their current studio arrangements. Most described their studios as often being in a process of transition. Unlike some states that have a long history of industry and the associated structures, Nevada does not offer a large number of unused warehouse spaces to artists for long-term, low-cost lease. Although many of the exhibiting artists are known for creating large-scale three-dimensional sculptural pieces and installations, they have adapted their practices to utilize smaller studio spaces in conjunction with outdoor areas. Resources of equipment and space provided by institutions have also been integral in allowing Nevada artists to continue to develop their individual practices.

Building on the tradition of taking art to the people, this Nevada Touring Initiative exhibition travels to a number of venues throughout the state where viewers either discover these artists for the first time or encounter new work

and insights from already familiar artists. All of the artists included in this exhibition have been developing their careers over a number of years and have had their work recognized with a Nevada Arts Council Artist Fellowship Award.

Gig Depio is known for his masterful manipulation of oil paint. He works quickly and intensely. Without allowing the thickly-applied paint to dry, he works *alla prima* (wet on wet), with each bold brushstroke contributing to complex interactions of shape and form.

With many of his works being large in scale and incorporating multiple historical and cultural characters, Depio puts in hours of initial research. From his notes, he develops the narrative to translate into drawings, and then the final work. Describing his process Depio says, "All of a sudden you have a movie in your head, and you are just putting the pieces together."

Perhaps because the process of bringing together such a multitude of colors and textures to create the recognizable interacting forms is so complex, Depio is very organized in his approach. His paint tubes are tidily stacked and arranged by color in boxes on wheeled carts. His brushes are displayed according to size in vintage ceramic pots collected by a family member, and the tile floor is spotless. Only the large palette where he mixes his paint colors shows evidence of the inherent messiness involved with paint application.

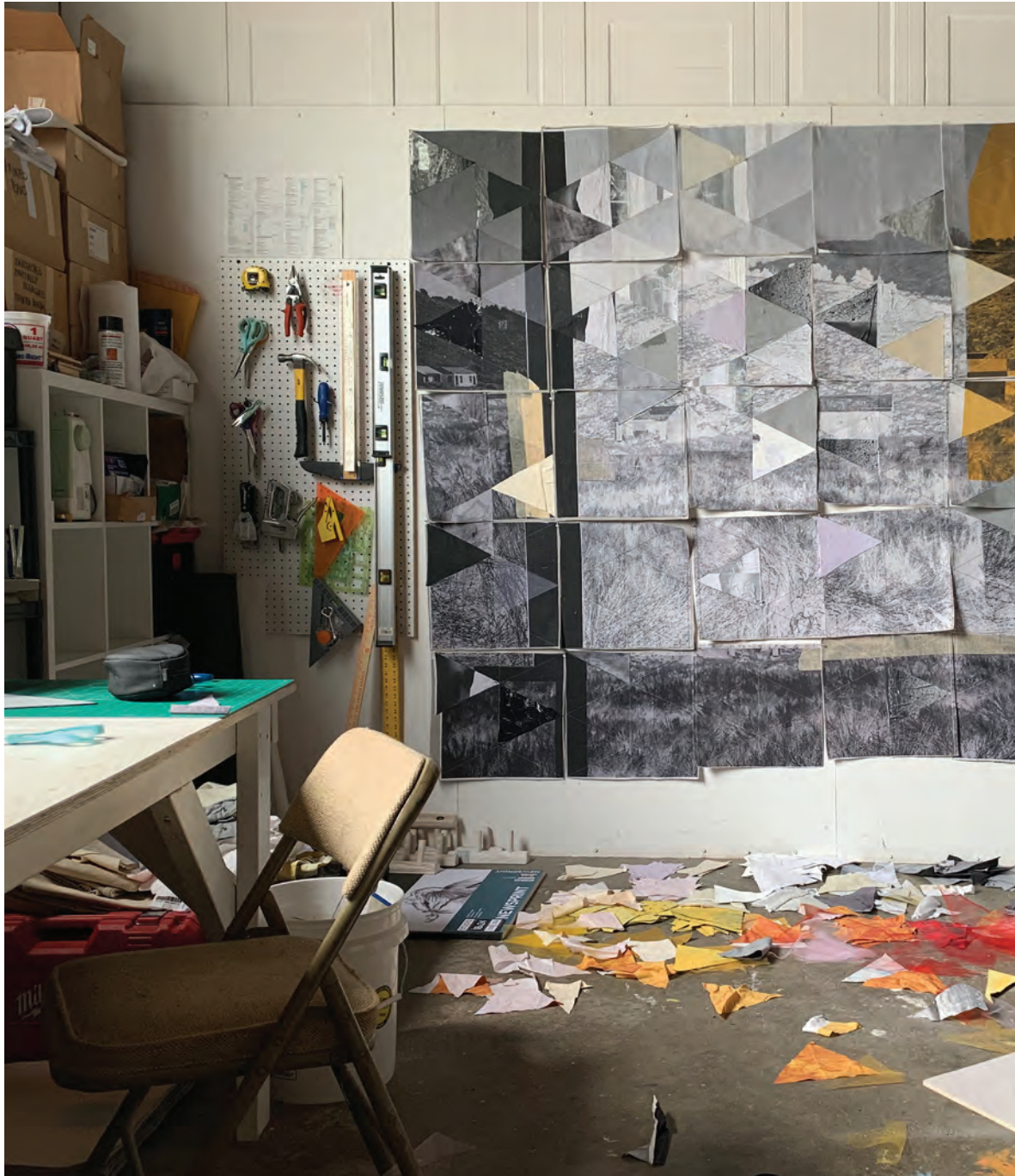
Beyond the physical process of manipulating the paint into detailed, complex works, Depio is reflecting on the role of the artist and the larger context of art that we cannot visualize. "You can't fathom the entire thing. You can only see the accidents that are emerging through our senses. Art has an emergent quality...."

Depio's works incorporate cultural elements recalled from his childhood in the Philippines, where he experienced a "filtered and cleansed" version of America, while visiting American



Justin Favela in temporary studio space

photo by Mikayla Whitmore



Nick Larsen's studio

photo courtesy the artist

bases with his WWII veteran grandfather. It was only after moving to the United States that he realized the reality was more complex and problematic. His later research into the forces of American global expansion and influence is evident in his work.

Depio's paintings often bring together diverse groups of political figures, performers, and hardworking laborers. TV reruns that he watched as a child also provide content, including Sesame Street and Kermit the Frog. These light touches balance out the more serious issues addressed in his work: A banjo-playing Kermit the Frog is transported into the midst of a nineteenth century gambling scene, and unequivocally claims his space.

Working with the simple materials of cardboard and brightly colored tissue paper, **Justin Favela** cuts, glues and layers these materials to create large-scale sculptures and vibrant installations. The first step in the process of creating the final sculpture is the production of a small-scale *maquette*, or model. When he is satisfied with the design, the full-scale sculpture is created in sections so that it can be easily transported and then reassembled at the exhibit site.

With many museums and cultural centers inviting Favela to create his large, colorful installations in their venues, he has become adept at establishing temporary studio spaces on-site, where he brings together teams of people to produce the final piece.

"I'll have to have a project manager there when I do these large installations now. It

delays the process if I have to keep teaching the task over and over again. So if there's that person, I can just do one workshop day and then that person teaches the rest of the time. When I was at the Denver Art Museum, there was I think 25 people all working at the same time—volunteers and staff members. In New York, when I did the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling, I had a team of ten paid assistants who were all really amazing artists. We worked really fast and we got that done a day ahead of schedule."

When traveling to a new area, Favela will often research the history and listen to local community members to collaborate on a work, based on something that happened in that area. His references include Latin-American art history.

"My work shifts back and forth between these collaborative projects and then me just kind of getting these ideas out that I've had in my head. I've been preaching a lot about people of color not having to make work about trauma. And I kind of fall into that sometimes still. So I'm really going to consciously focus on what brings me joy and what would bring people joy, and just trying to celebrate that consciously within the work. To me, that's radical—a person of color making a work about joy...."

With a background in archaeology, **Nick Larsen** considers the historical significance of objects and materials that he incorporates in his work. An object that has been used for a specific purpose may be incorporated into an artwork for a period of time, then deconstructed and reused again. Larsen gives

The multitude of ways in which these artists transform everyday objects is the focus of this exhibition.

an example of the first series of sculptures he made after relocating to Columbus, Ohio, from Reno, Nevada. He worked with the ropes and tarps and everything that was strapped to the car for his move.

"In the desert where resources are limited, there's this pattern of reuse of material. The residue of an object's past life is present as it takes a new form. So a thing that you would often see in the Great Basin archaeological context would be... Euro-American glass being refashioned into Native American projectile points or old railroad ties being used to build temporary structures in places in the desert where there isn't necessarily a ton of resources or raw materials to work with."

Light and easy to transport, hardy fabrics such as denim and calico are stacked in Larsen's studio. When sewn into garments, denim has been popular with the intrepid travelers of rugged terrain who seem to be evoked in much of Larsen's work. When reworking the fabric, adding layered surfaces and printed text, he conjures these ghostly characters by referencing discovered relics, maps and logistical lists.

Larsen describes his interest in incorporating text that is encapsulated in his 2019 limited edition publication *Belongings*: "It really feels like a new chapter in my work because writing is such a strong component of it.

Text has always been an element of what I do, but never writing in this way. It's kind of an installation in book form in that it is bringing together image, text, drawing, and has a real kind of edited and restrained quality, but also has a lot of room and space to be taken in a lot of different directions."

For Larsen, the writing is leading him into unexplored terrain, where his physical journeys meld with explorations back through history as well as forward into vistas of the imagination.

Sarah Lillegard grew up in the Great Basin of northern Nevada where her study of the subtle shifts in ecosystems and the cultural history of the land is evident in her work. She describes a common misconception of the high desert landscape,

"There is the perception that there is nothing out there because it is big, open and brown. So we have to put something out there like military bases. But there is actually a plethora of both flora and fauna. There is a reward to digging in and learning about it and realizing there is so much more here."

Her practice as an artist is also influenced by her seasonal work shearing small flocks of sheep. She is fascinated by the attributes of wool and the traditions involved in processing it after it has been removed from the sheep—the scouring, spinning, dyeing, weaving, and final transformation into a garment.

As Lillegard's studio space has been in transition while structures are being renovated, she has become adept at organizing her resources into outdoor containment. The

process of working with natural dyes also takes place outdoors. When she has indoor space, there is a multitude of wool and fiber hanging from the ceiling, creating an ever-morphing, immersive installation. Being surrounded by the fiber is an integral aspect of her process.

Taking her own immersion in the materials one step further, Lillegard has worked in collaboration with dancers and "movement people." She describes the process of initiating this interweaving of form and movement: "Here are these forms, these soft sculptures, these ropes that I'm really interested in and I make. I'm curious about what happens when these forms aren't static, they're in motion."

The resulting series of photographic images, *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf*, are captured by Lillegard. This term relates to the transitional hour at dawn and dusk where the light is shifting and forms fade into grey. It is not always clear where human form ends and amorphous fiber begins.

"I think that ambiguous space is a really powerful area. Change can happen in grey spaces because things are overlapping. Your eyes sort of deceive you and it gives a moment where perspectives can shift. And then maybe that moment will translate into reconsidering."

In the back yard of his downtown Las Vegas home, **Pasha Rafat** has designed a structure that appears to be a nondescript utilitarian workspace. However, when stepping through the entrance, a carefully curated, white-painted, minimalist interior is discovered. Within this pristine space, light constructions

have been inset into the wall and floor, with others arranged freestanding around the space. His interest in architecture, geometry, and the play of light in space are evident when viewing this carefully designed experience.

The adjacent workspace is where the actual assembly of the works takes place, and the interior is piled with raw materials awaiting assembly. Tools hang from large pegboards, multiple coils of cord are stacked on utilitarian benches interspersed with containers of colorful electrical wire, and glass tubes filled with neon gas area awaiting connection to a power source. The final component is the small black transformer box, transferring the electrical energy between circuits. Rafat finesses the flow of current as delicately as a musician tuning an instrument, adjusting the frequency of the light pulses by adding or subtracting the number of connected tubes.

When creating large-scale light installations, Rafat also considers the audio aspects of the work. He enjoys the higher audio volume created by "old-school" equipment but acknowledges this is not always appreciated by gallerists spending long periods of time with the work, so he allocates equipment accordingly. The low-level hum of the flowing energy, accompanied by the visible light pulses, suggests the constructions have their own life force. Once the power is connected, we are invited into an experience of light, color and sound. And Rafat reassures viewers that understanding the science behind the work is not required.

"So you don't know exactly what you're looking at and you try to grasp it.... It's actually important not to quite get it."



Dave Rowe's studio photo by JK Russ

Multiple casts of headless chickens inhabit **Miguel Rodriguez's** studio space along with bags of clay, molds, sculpting tools, pots of glaze and sculptures in varying states of completion. His recent series of works begins with found commercial ceramic molds that have been broken or discarded after use. His subversive humor and enthusiasm for working with these materials is evident: "[I] love these headless roosters because it hits on things that I love about art making. First, it's a self-portrait expression of who I am. Second, it's from a busted mold. I definitely didn't sculpt the original. But I guess I could if I wanted.... Forever wondering who made it. Just like so many sculptures I see on The Strip. Thirdly, it's ... Texture, Surface, Color and Emphasis."



Rodriguez shares the story of legendary Mike the Headless Chicken, who back in 1945 survived a decapitation intended to prepare him for the farmer's dinner table. In homage to Mike's miraculous hold on life, Rodriguez adapted a found clay mold designed for mass production of a popular kitsch object commonly found in country-style kitchens.

Somehow, it seems that every potentially cute object that Rodriguez creates and develops has a disconcerting presence, prompting the viewer to do a double take. Do we need to reassess our comfortable summation of the cultural items that surround us in our everyday environments? Perhaps stop to think about who created them and why?

We are given some insight into the artist's focus of interest:

"The concepts of my work often revolve around drawing metaphorical lines between the natural world of science, anatomy and animals, and society—politics and popular culture. My aesthetic is of the 'Pop Art' family, with some good ol' fashioned classical figuration thrown in for good measure."

Rows of brightly colored blocks cover the large bench surface in **Dave Rowe's** studio. Each four-inch square block is unique, with underlying structures smothered in layers of colored resin. The artist's enjoyment of the organic process of creating each piece is evident. He describes the steps involved as very intuitive:

"I try not to overthink them or plan them out ahead of time. If I do that, I find they're boring. I enjoy using a process that is unpredictable, that I don't know where it is going to end up. That keeps it exciting for me. I guess I've kind of got a short attention span."

Certain styles or archetypes reoccur. A dominant visual component is the grid pattern that is suggestive of urban cityscapes. It is not surprising to learn that Rowe once considered architecture as a career:

"I really wanted to be an architect when I was a kid. I job-shadowed an architect in high school and what really killed it for me was spending three hours in a meeting about how to move a drainage pipe one foot."

However, many of his sculptural works reference buildings, some in dilapidated states of disrepair, being overtaken by bright acid-colored foliage.

Although there is a fluid, random quality to a lot of Rowe's work, his studio space is very organized with stacks of filing drawers housing a variety of small hardware items. He acknowledges he has inherited a collector's mentality, retaining objects for contemplation and potential inspiration for future projects. His collection of objects includes vintage lamps, slag glass bases and bottles, and brightly colored items.

He traces his obsession with color back to an artist residency he was completing in Oregon. He received a care package of a three-pound bag of M&M'S®. He left them sitting on a table and would grab a few each time he was heading into the studio. Eventually, he acknowledges, the colorful M&M'S began to influence his work.

Rowe also makes use of an outdoor area where he is able to experiment with larger sculptures that incorporate elements of the natural setting, such as tree stumps. A sea of transient wooden planks appears to be threatening to submerge all objects within reach. Wooden constructions also made an appearance in his 2014 large-scale installation *Improbable Metropolis* featuring landmark Las Vegas structures exhibited in the Clark County Rotunda Gallery. The description "improbable yet fascinating" could be applied to both the city of Las Vegas and to Rowe's compelling constructions that somehow refract the city's seductive qualities.

Gig Depio

“My major work consists of complex large-scale, figurative compositions, focusing mostly on American culture and its history.”

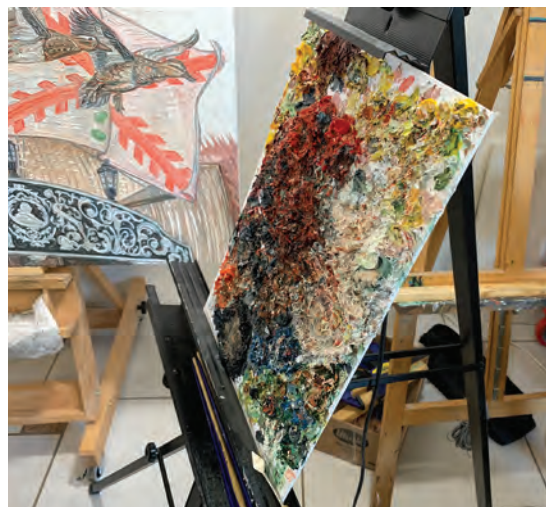
“My paintings explore the history and philosophy of humanity, discovering meaning in the things we do and the objects we create, finding the essence of what drives us to individually or collectively produce a body of work for the next generation of people to contend with. My major work consists of complex large-scale, figurative compositions, focusing mostly on American culture and its history, the exploration of the unfamiliar west and later its expansion and influence across the globe, especially on the convergence of American, Philippine, and Spanish histories at the turn of the 20th century.

“On the surface, my paintings are about historical, socio-political, and cultural knowledge, but essentially, they are more about jolting us out of our contemporary context in an attempt to visualize the complexity of the inevitable interweaving of many different cultures and the emerging qualities of their symbioses. The result is

to hopefully help us reimagine what our localities and narratives of a historical present might mean in a much wider context of coexistence—to contemplate the inter-objectivity of our personal experiences across time and space, and to realize how art brings it all together in this bigger picture of vicarious togetherness.”

Las Vegas-based Filipino painter Gig Depio presents the conjunctions of contemporary and historical forces in the form of intense, often large-scale, figurative compositions. His individual paintings depict particular political and cultural events in points of time and geographical space in history, but his body of work seen as a whole encapsulates a much bigger picture of how our ideologies and resulting collective human endeavors have directly affected every aspect of our environment in the age of the Anthropocene.

A recipient of the 2016 Nevada Arts Council Fellowship Grant, he has exhibited across Nevada, with shows at the Nevada Museum of Art, the University of Nevada–Las Vegas, the University of Nevada–Reno, and Clark County’s Winchester–Dondero Cultural Center Gallery in Las Vegas, among others. Depio has been an advocate for public, non-profit and independent art in Nevada since 2009, and has recently extended his advocacy internationally, including exhibitions with the National Commission for Culture and Arts (NCCA), Manila, Philippines in 2018, and in the 58th Venice Biennale, Giudecca Art District (GAD), Venice, Italy in 2019.



Gig Depio's studio

photo by JK Russ



Yowza

oil on canvas
36" x 48" x 1.75"
2018



Cool Water

oil on panel
42.5" x 48" x 2"
2017

Justin Favela

“As a queer person of color in the United States I believe that expressing joy, taking up space and simply existing is a political act.”

“As a multidisciplinary artist, I like to express my identity exploring the notions of authenticity and place using familiar materials to make large scale installations, sculptures and paintings. My interest in art history, Latinx culture, community, celebration, home and my obsession with pop-culture inform my practice with the intention of dismantling institutional hierarchies, making my work accessible and fun. As a queer person of color in the United States I believe that expressing joy, taking up space and simply existing is a political act.”



Based in Las Vegas, Nevada, and known for large-scale installations and sculptures that manifest his interactions with American pop culture and the Latinx experience, Justin Favela has exhibited his work both internationally and across the United States. His installations have been commissioned by the Denver Art Museum in Colorado and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas. His recent major project, *Puente Nuevo*, was exhibited in Fort Worth, Texas, at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, through June 2020. He is the recipient of the 2018 Alan Turing LGBTQ Award for International Artists. Favela hosts two culture-oriented podcasts, “Latinos Who Lunch” and “The Art People Podcast.” He holds a BFA in Fine Art from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Justin Favela's temporary studio space

photo courtesy the artist



**Valley de México desde
el Molino del Rey, after
Jose Maria Velasco**

tissue paper and
glue on board
12.5" x 35.4" x 1.75"
2020



Floor Nachos Study

tissue paper and glue
9" x 12" x 10"
2017

Nick Larsen

“The desert is a place defined by what it lacks; in the no-man's-land between fictional archaeological inventory and autobiography, I've found a place to mine both what's present and visible and, maybe more importantly, what isn't.”

“Queer Mountain is an uninhabited high-desert wilderness northeast of Death Valley, and it is hard to see. I tried, unsuccessfully, a few summers ago after finding it on a map while planning a road trip somewhere else. I made it to the outskirts, but an intense fire season followed by a wet winter had washed out the three roads in, and I was forced to head back the same way I came without seeing any of it. It wasn't until much later that I started to think of this failed trip—my inability to reach this place—as an analog for a kind of fantasy tethered to landscape. The maps, site overview images, material catalogs, and fictional artifacts that comprise my current work—all forms I discovered during the six years I worked in the archaeological field—draw out and articulate this fantasy. The desert is a place defined by what it lacks; in the no-man's-land between fictional archaeological inventory and autobiography, I've found a place to mine both what's present and visible and, maybe more importantly, what isn't.”

Nick Larsen lives and works in Columbus, Ohio. He studied at the University of Nevada-Reno (Bachelor of Fine Arts, 2007) and Ohio State University, where he received his Master of Fine Arts degree in Sculpture. Larsen has had over a dozen solo and collaborative exhibitions and has been a part of a number of notable group exhibitions, including *Tilting the Basin*, a survey of contemporary art in Nevada (Nevada Museum of Art, 2015), and several editions of *New American Paintings* (NAP #131, #135, #143). Larsen works in a number of different forms, including textile-based sculpture, photography, and text. In 2019, he self-published a book of images, drawings, and writing that straddled the line between autobiography and fictionalized archeological inventory of Queer Mountain, a real though poorly-documented desert wilderness in western Nevada.



Nick Larsen's studio

photo courtesy the artist



Belongings

hard cover book
8.25" x 8.25" X .5"
2019

QM 003 (New Allergies)

urethane, fabric, graphite,
image transfer, diptych
14.5" x 11.75" X .5" (2)
2020



Sarah Lillegard

“Working with the culture of a place and the language of materials, I make the subtleties of a location evident by using my labor as a lens.”

“Using local fibers and textiles to create soft sculptures, forms, and installations, I make work about the locational identity of the Great Basin region of the American West while documenting the process through photography and writing. Working with the culture of a place and the language of materials, I make the subtleties of a location evident by using my labor as a lens.

“My recent body of work, *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf*, is about moments on the cusp of transitioning. Through photographing soft sculptures and wearable forms on dancers, the images capture the slip between movement and objects. It’s a moment where the human form is indistinguishable, melting into the landscape similar to the way daylight shifts into nighttime at dusk. As Jean Genet writes, ‘[dusk] the hour in which... every being becomes his own shadow, and thus something other than himself.’”

Sarah Lillegard is an interdisciplinary artist whose site-specific installations, soft sculptures, photographs and publications are rooted in both the language of materials and the locational identity of the American West. Lillegard received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Walla Walla University and her Master of Fine Arts degree from Sierra Nevada College. Working within the Northern Nevada community, she has co-founded the Go For

Broke Zine Collective, self-published a DIY Guide to Reno, directed the Rogue Art+Craft Market, managed the Holland Project Gallery and the Sierra Nevada College Galleries.

In 2019 and 2015 she was awarded the Nevada Arts Council Artist Fellowship. Her artwork has been exhibited in Nevada, California, Washington and Michigan. Lillegard currently lives in Doyle, California where her work includes teaching craft-based workshops, weaving, sewing, and shearing sheep for small flocks in the region.



Sarah Lillegard's studio photo courtesy the artist



The Hour Between Dog and Wolf

C print photograph in collaboration
with dancer Scott McPheeters
31" x 25" x .75"
2018



Bearing the Burden

fiber, panty hose, waxed thread, rope
27" x 18.5" x 4"
2016

Pasha Rafat

“He works closely with designers, fabricators and engineers in a collaborative manner, often in response to specific architectural situations.”

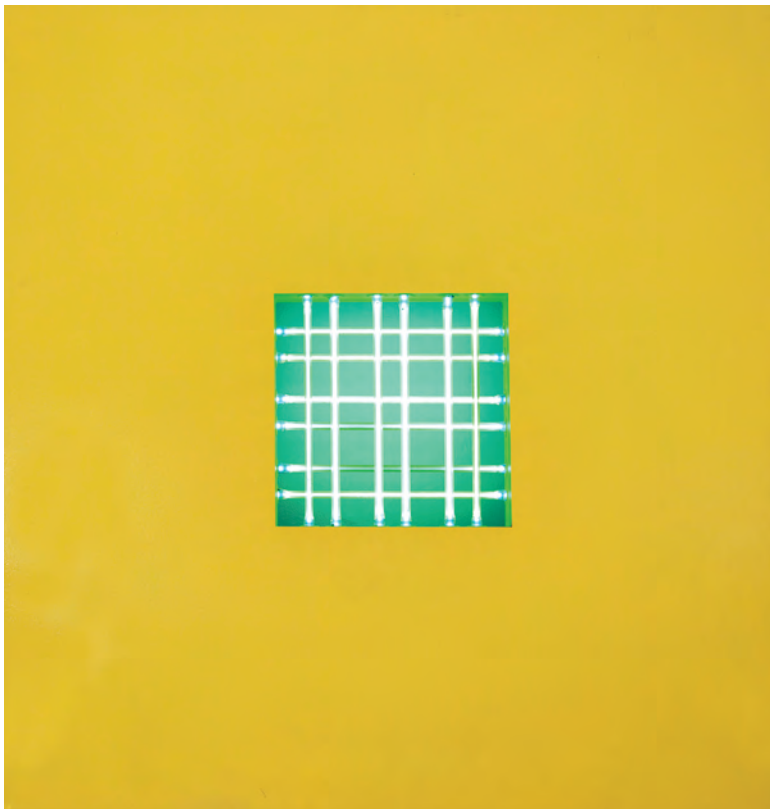
Pasha Rafat’s work in light constructions echoes the work of a group of 20th century artists whose interest lay in real and physical phenomena, rather than illusory material. Of particular interest to his work is the Russian Constructivists’ stressing of transparency of material and the California Light & Space Artists’ exploration of perceptual, spatial and atmospheric aspects of art. In addition to creating discrete objects, Rafat often works in architectural and outdoor interventions creating installations, employing a wide range of media, such as fluorescent and neon tubings, aluminum, steel, concrete and photography. He works closely with designers, fabricators and engineers in a collaborative manner, often in response to specific architectural situations.

Pasha Rafat’s light constructions and photography have been shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, the Ace Gallery at Los Angeles, the Nevada Museum of Art, and internationally in Germany, France, Spain, Sweden, Cypress and Turkey. His work is in the permanent collections of the IPG Building, La Jolla, CA; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; the Sprint Collection; the Rio and Aladdin Hotel & Casino; the Center for Photography, Woodstock; and Robert M. MacNamara Foundation. He is a professor of art and coordinator of the photography program at the University of Nevada–Las Vegas Department of Art. He teaches cross-disciplinary courses in Alternative Photo Processes, Intermedia and “Art in Public Places.”

Pasha Rafat’s studio

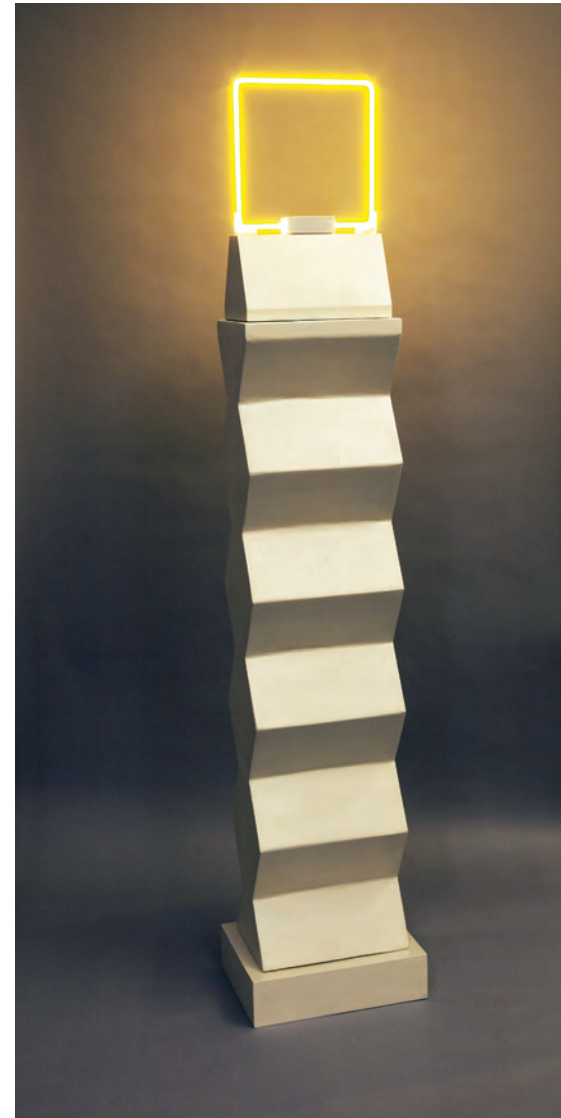
photo by JK Russ





Untitled U (238.079)

painted wood, 12mm uranium
tubing, argon/mercury gas
39" x 36" x 2.5"
2020



Aeternus Columnae

painted wood, 10mm yellow soft glass tubing
Total: 66" 13" x 7"
Top: 7.25" x 10.3" x 6.3"
Middle: 46" x 11.2" x 8"
Base: 10" x 13.2" x 3.3"
Neon Tube: 10" x 10" x 2"
2020

Miguel Rodriguez

“ I paint
all my own
sculptures, so
in many ways
I consider
myself a
painter. ”

“Sculpture has been my preferred method of art making for my entire adult life. My background is ceramic sculpture. I use many different materials and methods to produce my work. This ceramic foundation eases the learning curve as I move from medium to medium. Mold making has become an integral aspect of my practice. It serves the purpose of lowering the cost and time it takes to create multiple sculptures. More importantly, it gives the opportunity to add color and surface in a way that is much more exploratory. I paint all my own sculptures, so in many ways I consider myself a painter.

“Contrasting color, thick, glossy clear coats and sparkling metallic paint are intended as signifiers of a sublime undercurrent. I prefer to showcase my artworks as part of a larger installation. Installations make it possible for viewers to have a more immersive experience. Theatricality plays a vital role in my presentation.”



Miguel Rodriguez was born in Wichita, KS in 1977. He grew up in Leavenworth, KS, alongside the Missouri River, surrounded by green vistas, big skies, old homes, and farms. His mother, a 5th generation Kansan and his father, an Afro-Puerto Rican with roots on the island that go back to the late 1700's, were brought together by the American military.

Miguel first found love for ceramics in high school. But as with most artists the passion was an inherent part of his childhood. He graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2000, then moved to Las Vegas in 2001 to pursue his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. He's lived there ever since.

Over the past 19 years Miguel has shown his artworks throughout the Las Vegas valley. Aside from his ceramic work he's created multiple large scale publicly- and privately-funded sculptures and murals. Currently, he teaches ceramics and 3D design at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. His art is always colorful and dynamic, drawing inspiration from science, popular culture and current events.

In Miguel Rodriguez's studio

photo by JK Russ



Steely Mike

ceramic
10" x 17" x 6.5"
2020



Anti Claus

ceramic
10" x 8" x 2.5" (2)
2020

Dave Rowe

“I examine masculine spaces in the form of monuments, factories, structures built for a particular purpose.”



Dave Rowe's studio photo by JK Russ

“The act of making is a core part of my work: the physical object, the physical handling of material. Specificity is important. My sculptures examine spaces and objects: landscape, architecture, miniature, symbolic types of spaces.

“Everything is the product of history. We navigate our reality often without considering how our environment was created and shaped. As children we are hyper-aware of our surroundings, we learn how to interact with others and to experience new events. As an adult it's hard to maintain that level of curiosity, even when our explorations are every bit as novel.

“My own identity is closely influenced by the performative aspects of traditional masculinity. Traditionally masculine roles are prevalent where I grew up, the American Midwest. I examine masculine spaces in the form of monuments, factories, structures built for a particular purpose. I'm interested in the political histories that exist in and define these spaces, how locations are haunted by the labor of makers. It's often very messy, not just physically, but within history. My work is messy, my labor is messy. As much as I may strive for perfection, I cannot achieve it. But that pursuit of perfection is part of what drives me in the studio.

“I think that's what we all aspire to in our daily lives. I accept these imperfect

perfections in my work because it is hand-made, sculpted from metal, wood, resin, clay. It allows the physical history of the work to exist within the object, serving as a metaphor for political and social change. Our collective landscape is shaped, then, not by bulldozers, but by policy and economics. So I get to work.”

Dave Rowe is a sculptor and educator. His work exists at the intersections of landscape, history, and the transitory spaces within the American psyche. It is informed by an aesthetic developed growing up in Illinois and time spent in Indiana, mining the visual language of abandoned factories and neglected barns. His work involves the use of multiple materials, found objects, and an obsessive need to build.

He is a recipient of the Efroymson Contemporary Arts Fellowship and the Nevada Arts Council Artist Fellowship. He has participated in numerous solo and group shows nationally, and has attended residency programs including PLAYA, Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, Plyspace, and the Pajama Factory. His work was included in the national traveling show *Crafting a Continuum*, originating at Arizona State University. His most recent show was *Someday, Everything* at The Dairy Arts Center in Boulder, Colorado. He is currently an Associate Professor in Sculptural Practices at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Master of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University Bloomington.



Unsuspecting

cast aluminum sculpture with additions
17" x 45" x 10.5"
2018



"Another Day"

various materials
16 elements, 4"x4" each / backboard 39" x 39" x 2"
2016-2020

NEVADA ARTS COUNCIL

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Carson City, Nevada 89701

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The Artist Fellowship Program was created in 1989 by the Nevada Arts Council to encourage the pursuit of artistic excellence by providing financial support to outstanding artists. Fellowship grants go to contemporary artists living in Nevada in the literary, performing, and visual arts (including media arts), and may be awarded at any stage of the artists' career development. By recognizing and rewarding artistic accomplishment, the Fellowship Program promotes public awareness and appreciation of the role of the artist in our society.

An open peer-review panel process is used for Fellowship selection. Out-of-state panelists for each category are selected for their expertise, training, and ability to assess works of widely differing styles and media. The evaluation process is "blind"; panelists assess critically and respond to artists' work samples without knowing the identities or work histories of the candidates. This provides an impartial review environment.

2020 FELLOWS

Matthew Couper — Painting
Jen Graham — Mixed Media
Sarah Lillegard — Sculpture
Austin Pratt — Painting
Marshall Scheuttle — Photography
Ann Keniston — Poetry (APG)

2019 FELLOWS

Ann Keniston — Poetry
Mark Maynard — Fiction
Sherry Rosenthal — Fiction
Lindsay Wilson — Poetry
Jennifer Grimm — Music
Performer/Flute
Troy Heard — Theater Director
Ann Marie Pereth — Theater Director
Mykola Suk — Music Performer/Piano

2018 FELLOWS

Matthew Cooper — Painting
Andrea Donahue — Mixed Media
Bobbie Ann Howell — Drawing
Paul Baker Prindle — Photography
Gailmarie Pahmeier — Poetry FPG

2017 FELLOWS

Brittany Bronson —
Creative Nonfiction
Cynthia Dufault — Choreography
Todd Green — Music Performer,
Multi-Instruments
Hans Halt — Music Performer, Bassist
Ann Keniston — Poetry
Eric Neuenfeldt — Creative Fiction
Mykola Suk — Music
Performer, Pianist
Laura Wetherington — Poetry

2016 FELLOWS

Erik Burke — Painting
Gig Depio — Painting
Justin Favela — Sculpture
David Rowe — Sculpture

2015 FELLOWS

Jared Stanley — Poetry
Laura Wetherington — Poetry
Chariell Smith — Music Performance/
Singer, Songwriter
Shana Tucker — Music
Performance/Cellist, Vocalist

Sarah Lillegard — Mixed Media
Pasha Rafat — Sculpture

2014 FELLOWS

Natalia Cortes-Chaffin —
Creative Fiction
Robert Leonard Reid —
Creative Fiction
Peter Epstein — Performance/
Alto Saxophone
Nate Kimball — Music Composition
Linda Alterwitz — Digital
Photography
Robin Stark — Sculpture/Ceramics

2013 FELLOWS

Tracy McQuay — Prose/Fiction
Steve Gehrke — Poetry
Jennifer Grim — Music
Performance/Flute
Grace Hutchinson — Music
Performance/Voice
Chris Bauder — Sculpture
Orlando Montenegro-Cruz — Painting

2012 FELLOWS

Joshua Galarza — Prose/Non-fiction
Carrie Ann Lahain — Prose/Fiction
Paul Roth — Performance/Saxophone
Maythinee Alisa Washington
— Theater Performance
Ahren Hertel — Painting
Brent Sommerhauser — Sculpture

2011 FELLOWS

Matthew O'Brien — Prose/
Non-fiction
Jay Udall — Poetry/Short Stories
Queala Clancy — Dance Performance
Eugene Shapiro — Music Composition
Darren Johnson — Painting
Nickolaus Larsen — Mixed Media

2010 FELLOWS

William Cowee — Poetry
Robert Leonard Reid —
Prose/Nonfiction
Christopher Wrede —
Dance Performance
Elaine Parks — Sculpture
Miguel Rodriguez — Sculpture

2009 FELLOWS

Constance Ford — Prose/Fiction
Jacqueline Lyons — Prose/
Non-fiction
George Perreault — Poetry
Rosine Bena — Dance Performance
Joshua Jessup — Theater
Performance
Aaron Pellegrini — Music Composition
Candace Nicol — Mixed Media
Heather Protz — Photography
Mary Warner — Painting

2008 FELLOWS

Cindie Geddes — Prose/Fiction
Matthew O'Brien — Prose/
Non-fiction
Benjamin S. Rogers — Prose/Fiction
Karen Haid — Performance/Flute
Barnard J. Jackson — Dance
Performance
Cristina Natsuko Paulos —
Theater Performance
Rebekah Bogard — Sculpture
Shan Michael Evans — Media Arts
Erik Lauritzen — Photography

2007 FELLOWS

Krista Benjamin — Prose/Fiction
Tara Bray — Poetry
Teresa Breeden — Poetry

Jorge Grossmann — Music
Composition
Seth Horan — Performance/
Bass Guitar
Richard Soule — Performance/Flute
Stephen Hendee — Sculpture
Zoltan Janvary — Printmaking
Nolan Preece — Photography

2006 FELLOWS

Adam Henry Carrière — Poetry
Shawn Overton — Playwriting
Gretchen Skivington — Prose/Fiction
Margot Mink Colbert — Dance
Chad Twedt — Music Composition
Catherine Cotter — Music
Performance: Voice
Catherine Borg — Interdisciplinary/
Performance
Dean Burton — Photography
Tamara Scronce — Sculpture

2005 FELLOWS

Gregory Crosby — Poetry
Annie Reed — Prose/Fiction
Eugene Shapiro — Music
Performance, Choreography
Kelly Roth — Dance Choreography
Rebekah Bogard — Sculpture
Philippe Mazaud — Photography

2004 FELLOWS

Lilace Mellin Guignard — Poetry
Brad Summerhill — Prose/Fiction
Cameron Crain — Theater Direction
Daniel Rosen — Music Composition
Cara Cole — Photography
Elaine Parks — Sculpture

2003 FELLOWS

Janet Koenen — Poetry
Donald Revell — Poetry
Stephen Caplan — Music
Performance
Nils Stefan Karlsson —
Music Performance
Ben Parks — Sculpture
Michael Sarich — Mixed Media

2002 FELLOWS

Roy A. Chavez Alvarado — Poetry
Dayvid Figler — Poetry
Joanna Frueh — Prose/Non-fiction
Cathy Allen — Dance Choreography
Virko Baley — Music Composition
Robert Beckmann — Painting
Diane Bush — Photography/
New Genre

2001 FELLOWS

Bill Stobb — Poetry
Karenmary Penn — Prose/Fiction
Gary Short — Poetry
Bill Bernatis — Music Performance
Maggie Winn-Jones —
Theater Performance
James Winn — Music Composition
Catherine Angel — Photography
Russell Dudley — Sculpture
Wayne Littlejohn — Sculpture

2000 FELLOWS

Marybeth Goddard — Prose/Fiction
Larry Olivier — Poetry
Barbara Wies — Prose/Non-fiction
Walter Blanton — Music Composition
Stephen Caplan — Music
Performance
Joseph DeLappe — Digital Media
Fred Reid — Sculpture
Chad Simmons — Film/Video

1999 FELLOWS

Charlie Buck — Prose/Fiction
Lenadams Dorris — Poetry
Nick Rissman — Music Performance
Kim Russell — Theater Performance
Suzanne Kanatsiz — Sculpture
Christine Karkow — Painting

1998 FELLOWS

William Cowee — Poetry
Kelli Nicolato — Prose/Fiction
Victoria Dale — Choreography
Dayvid Figler — Performance Art
Dennis Angel — Painting
Christine Siemens — Sculpture

1997 FELLOWS

Erica Vital — Prose/Fiction
Gary Short — Poetry
Virko Baley — Music Composition
Ralph Perkins — Dance Choreography
Paul Ford — Crafts
JoAnne Peden — Film/Video

1996 FELLOWS

Charlie Buck — Prose/Fiction
Cathy Allen — Dance Choreography
Walter Blanton — Music Composition
Philip Argent — Painting
Joseph DeLappe — Digital Media

1995 FELLOWS

Teresa Jordan — Prose/Non-fiction
Catherine Angel — Photography
David Anderson — Painting
Robert Morrison — Sculpture

1994 FELLOWS

Virko Baley — Music Composition
Stephen Caplan — Music
Performance
Carl Fontana — Music Performance
Vassili Sulich — Dance Performance
L. Martina Young — Dance
Performance

1993 FELLOWS

Gailmarie Pahmeier — Poetry
Gary Short — Poetry
Tom Holder — Painting
Erik Lauritzen — Photography
Mary Warner — Painting

1992 FELLOWS

Jerry Crawford — Theater Playwriting
Carol Kimball — Music Performance
Richard Soule — Music

1991 FELLOWS

Patricia McConnell — Prose/Fiction
Sam Michel — Prose/Fiction
Robert Beckmann — Painting
Jose Bellver — Painting

1990 FELLOWS

Virko Baley — Music Composition
Beth Mehocic — Music Performance
Paul "Red" Shuttleworth
— Playwriting
Brian Strom — Theater Direction
L. Martina Young — Dance
Performance

1989 FELLOWS

Gailmarie Pahmeier — Poetry
Mary Ann Bonjorni — Painting
Peter Goin — Photography
Walter McNamara — Sculpture
Robert Morrison — Sculpture