ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER presents

Applied Forces

on view JANUARY 18 - MARCH 28, 2020
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featuring
EAMES ARMSTRONG
REX DELAFKARAN
BILLY FRIEBELE
MICHAEL DAX IACOVONE
LAURA HYUN JHEE KIM
ROSE NESTLER
KIRK AMARAL SNOW
ANTOINETTE SUITER

WYATT RESIDENT ARTISTS GALLERY / JUNG MIN PARK: Blink Blank
JENKINS COMMUNITY GALLERY / FOON SHAM: Arlington Projects, 1988-2019
About the Exhibition

In the exhibition *Applied Forces*, bodies, objects, and spaces collide. Artists choreograph, instigate, and document confrontations between objects and bodies, between bodies and environments, and between various physical objects. They act upon the landscape, utilize their own bodies as artistic material, and create tools and costumes to be used in performances and videos. Although the exhibition includes video, photography, painting, and sculpture, performance acts as its organizing theme. The human body is omnipresent throughout the work on display – whether as the central focus or as an unseen force putting actions into motion. The issue of audience is also raised by many of the artists in pieces that question the lines we draw between public and private space.

In a series of projects executed over the course of several summers, Michael Dax Iacovone planned and carried out large-scale interventions into desert environments in Nevada and Utah, spaces that are notable for both their scale and their remoteness. From one perspective, Iacovone’s desert projects, which take place on public land, are public in the largest, grandest sense. But they are also intensely solitary, even private, as the artist spends hours or days alone in the desert to execute them. Conversely, Rex Delafkaran’s *Bends* performances have the resonance of a private ritual, taking place in a public space. They are brief and informal, performed with the artist’s camera as the only pre-arranged audience. Focusing inwards and ignoring the glances of onlookers, Delafkaran seems to claim public space as her own.

The body is central to work by Eames Armstrong, Rose Nestler, and Antoinette Suiter. Armstrong’s work in painting and performance emerges from the artist’s interest in the body and its potential as a site for the formation and the obliteration of the self. In their paintings, Armstrong uses a visual shorthand that includes thick black outlines and half-circle smiles to depict figures with an ambiguity that is further exaggerated by the collapse of the boundaries that separate the figures from one another. In Rose Nestler’s *Power Suits* series, items of clothing that typically serve to solidify rigid gender norms seem to mock and subvert them instead, emphasizing the way bodies interact with clothing to produce social norms and expectations. In a performance work created by Antoinette Suiter for *Applied Forces*, two male performers carry participants through the gallery in a sedan-style chair built by the artist. As in previous versions of the performance, Suiter dresses her performers to embody a specific masculine archetype that is associated with the location of the performance. Throughout *Applied Forces*, artists also examine the body in relation to devices, commodities, and other objects. In the *Living Labs* project, Laura Hjunjhee Kim asks us to consider the relationship between our physical selves, our online identities, and the devices we use to mediate between them. She uses technology to broadcast videos from her living room, mimicking the styles and genres that have emerged on YouTube and other video-sharing platforms. In these videos, which are recorded on an iPhone and circulated on Instagram, Kim addresses her audience directly, taking on the persona of a fitness instructor, life coach, or general lifestyle influencer.

Exploring our physical relationship to less technologically-driven commodities, Kirk Amaral Snow transforms industrial and mass-produced materials using subtle physical gestures. To create *When Surface Was Depth*, the artist used a power sander to sand the top of an Ikea Lack side table, continuing to sand until the interior cardboard structure of the table was revealed. While it was originally carried out as a performance, the object itself is included in *Applied Forces*, asking viewers to imagine the force that was applied to the familiar object. Billy Friebele also works with ubiquitous, inexpensive, and found materials. For his *Slosh Cyphers* series, the artist created a drawing device that translates the movement of a river into beautiful minimalist compositions. In the series, the artist transforms mundane materials into ad hoc and eccentric tools that channel natural materials and environments into striking visual and aural creations.

The work in *Applied Forces* builds on materials and genres that emerged or took on greater prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, including land art, performance, and video. Updating these approaches to address contemporary concerns, several of the artists in the exhibition utilize new technology, exploring the ways the proliferation of digital technologies and devices has altered our relationship to our physical bodies. Other artists use simple, often industrial materials and choreograph straightforward actions, drawing on the symbolic significance of bodily forms and everyday objects. Throughout the exhibition, artists use these strategies as vehicles to explore power dynamics, push the limits of their material, confront their physical surroundings, and blur the boundary between the public and the private.

Blair Murphy
Curator of Exhibitions
EAMES ARMSTRONG

Eames Armstrong's paintings depict human figures gathered in humorous, suggestive, and explicit groupings. Arranged as couples, trios, and endless configurations, Armstrong's figures grab, caress, support, and melt into one another. Depicted in fluorescent hues, with smiling faces, the figures embody an energetic, enthusiastic innocence, pointing to the body as a site for both pleasurable experimentation and the dissolution of the self. Armstrong's painting practice has developed in dialogue with their work in performance. Armstrong's interest in both media comes from "a deep commitment to and fascination with the body in both representation and embodied practice." Armstrong's paintings disturb our expectation of figurative representation, mimicking the dark outlines and smiling faces of children's drawings, emoji, and informal doodles. The figures are intentionally ambiguous and difficult to pin down as anything more than human bodies. In her more recent work, Behold and Reach Out and Touch Face, the repetition of the facial features further confuses the relationship between the figures, which might represent a single figure moving through time and space or an undifferentiated mass of flesh in an ecstatic or possibly apocalyptic landscape.

Armstrong (they/she) is an interdisciplinary artist, collaborator, and arts organizer. They have performed at High Zero Festival of Experimental Improvised Music (Baltimore, MD), Dfibrillator Performance Art Gallery (Chicago, IL), and many other exhibition spaces, noise fests, and basements. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Redux Contemporary Arts Center (Charleston, SC), RhizomeDC, Sense Gallery (Washington, DC), and Flashpoint Gallery (Washington, DC). With their collective Queer Trash, Armstrong was the 2018 Suzanne Fiol Curatorial Fellow at ISSUE Project Room in Brooklyn, NY. Armstrong received an MFA from The George Washington University and a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Through performance, sculpture, and ceramics, Rex (Alexandra) Delafkaran explores the body as an object and objects as a body. She draws on her identity as a queer Iranian-American person, exploring the tensions and creative collisions embedded in that identity. Delafkaran visualizes language in embodied ways, exploring the formal relationships, vulnerability and intimacy found when ideas are expressed with or through the body. In her *Bends* series, Delafkaran records herself carrying out short, informal performances in public space. During the performances, the artist begins in a crouch, before slowly standing and, after reaching her full height, starts to slowly bend backwards. She holds a backward bend for several seconds, before returning to an upright position. Although the *Bends* are performances, they happen quietly, more private ritual than audience-driven spectacle. Documented in picturesque locations, surrounded by lush plant life or historic buildings, the artist places her body in relation to these materials, considering and pushing her physical limits, through the ongoing repetition of a particular shape. Delafkaran's *Bends* performances have a formal relationship with her ceramic work, including vessel-like forms with curved spouts and appendages reminiscent of the physical form the artist takes on during *Bends*.

Originally from California, Delafkaran is currently based in Washington, DC, where she has a studio at STABLE. She has exhibited work and staged performances at IA&A at Hillyer (Washington, DC), Transformer Gallery (Washington, DC), Panoply Performance Lab (Brooklyn, NY), Southern Exposure Gallery (San Francisco, CA), and the Textile Museum at The George Washington University (Washington, DC) among other venues. Delafkaran curates independent projects, most recently *HYPHEN AMERICAN* at The George Washington University in collaboration with Tsedaye Makonnen. Delafkaran holds a degree in Ceramics and Performance Art from the San Francisco Art Institute and is currently co-director of Hamiltonian Artists in Washington, DC.
Using forms found in his environment, Billy Friebele explores the latent potential in common materials and composes artworks that reveal disregarded aspects of our everyday lives. For the *Slosh Cyphers* series, Friebele has constructed drawing devices that function with the flowing tide of a river. Constructed from disparate and found materials, the devices translate the flow of the river into a composition of dots, squiggles, lines, and pools of ink. The devices evoke mad scientists and DIY experiments but rather than providing hard facts and data, they result in a kind of poetic translation of the water's journey. In the kinetic work, *Slosh Loop_01: Micro/Macro Plastic* an arm slowly rotates, causing a rush of water and bits of plastic to pour from one plastic bottle to another. The sound is caught by a contact microphone, run through an effects pedal, and amplified into the gallery, creating a meditative hum. Built in part from discarded and recycled materials, the work is crafted with an eye towards functionality. Its individual components are straightforward and utilitarian—they carry out their purpose with little visual spectacle. But once the work becomes active, the result is a mesmerizing soundtrack emerging from a seemingly nondescript assemblage of basic electronics and reclaimed materials.

*A multimedia artist working in the DC metro region, Friebele has exhibited work at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Orlando Museum of Art, and the Art Museum of the Americas, among other venues. He was artist in residence at Culture & Energy in Ruse, Bulgaria in 2018, Maker-in-Residence at the MLK Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, DC from 2015 to 2016, and a Hamiltonian Artist Fellow from 2012 to 2014. Friebele is an Assistant Professor of Art at Loyola University Maryland. He holds an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art and a BA from St. Mary's College of Maryland.*

*Slosh Cypher_02: Danube River – Ruse, Bulgaria, 2018*  
Ink on paper  
50 x 18 in
Over the last four years, Michael Dax Iacovone has spent time in the deserts of Utah and Nevada, inspired by the overwhelming sense of scale that permeates the landscape there. Through advanced research and planning, he prepares for a performance of labor that will produce a particular mark, however fleeting, on the land. On previous trips he has used a hand-held garden tiller to trace the arc of the sun on the solstice and to carve large-scale drawings based on Euclidean geometry onto the surface of the Bonneville Salt Flats. He documents these performances in photography and video, creating artifacts that attempt to communicate the scale of the space and his labor within it. For Applied Forces, Iacovone presents a selection of these photographs and videos, as well as a new installation, Euclid's Perfect Numbers: 1, 2, 4, 7, 14, that takes inspiration from his projects in the desert. Created for the exhibition, Euclid's Perfect Numbers: 1, 2, 4, 7, 14, begins in one of Arlington Arts Center's interior galleries and then spills out onto AAC's lawn.

Iacovone is an artist based in Washington, DC. His work has been exhibited internationally in Sarajevo, Belgrade, Warsaw, Budapest, Paris, Warsaw and London and domestically in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Orlando, Baltimore, and Washington, DC, among other locations. Iacovone has participated in numerous international residency programs including The Arctic Circle Artist Residency, a Cultural Exchange Residency in Nagaland, India, and an artist residency sponsored by the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Budapest, Hungary. He has an MFA in studio art from Maryland Institute College of Art, an MFA in photography from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a BS in photography from the State University of New York.
Laura Hyunjhee Kim is a multimedia artist who contemplates and reimagines digitally constructed on/offline experiences. Her current practice-based research projects explore emerging consumer technologies and their influence on human and (non)human interactions and experiences of the body. Her ongoing project, The Living Lab, is a platform for experiencing our shared reality as physical beings tethered to earth by gravitational forces. Recorded primarily on a smartphone and disseminated through social media, The Living Lab experiments encourage viewers to consider the ways we speak, perform, interact with one another, and navigate this world alone together. The videos from The Living Lab have an informal aesthetic that is familiar from YouTube and other online platforms. Kim addresses the camera directly, seemingly instructing or performing for the viewer. In Get Fitergized with Laura, Kim takes on the role of fitness instructor, demonstrating an “energy-blasting” workout. In her Tele-Dance series, Kim dances in front of the camera to a selection of contemporary pop music. Footage of the artist is interspersed with footage of a collaborator, dancing to the same music in a different domestic space. Kim and her partner dance for and with each other, their interaction mediated and made possible by technology. With humor and exuberance, Kim encourages viewers to consider their relation to their physical bodies in our increasingly digital world.

Kim received the inaugural ArtSlant Award in New Media (2013) and was one of the first artists-in-residence at the Internet Archive (2017). In 2019, Kim received the New Media Caucus Distinguished Scholar Award. She received a B.S. in Art from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and M.F.A. from the New Genres Department at the San Francisco Art Institute. She is a Ph.D. Candidate in Intermedia Art, Writing and Performance (LAWP) at the University of Colorado Boulder’s College of Media, Communication and Information.
Through an adaptation of historic subject matter using contemporary materials, Rose Nestler’s soft sculptures, wall hangings, and videos reimagine iconic patriarchal institutions as feminine spaces, chipping away at the entanglement of gender and history. In her *Power Suits* series, Nestler appropriates stylistic details from iconic items of clothing, exaggerating their most absurd characteristics to subvert or mock the gendered expectations that accompany them. The series began as an exploration of the power suit, the boxy, masculine style of suit associated with 1980’s corporate America, which acted as a facade of power for women in unwelcoming environments. In the video, *Tying the Knot*, elaborately costumed performers go through the motions of knotting a variety of styles of tie, as a narrator explains the steps and significance of each. With absurdity and humor, Nestler exaggerates the visual characteristics of masculine fashion, pointing to the performative and theatrical nature of even those styles that intend to communicate the seriousness and authority of the wearer.

Born in Spokane, Washington, Nestler is currently based in Brooklyn, New York. Her work has been exhibited at a variety of galleries and institutions including Thierry Goldberg (New York, NY), BRIC (Brooklyn, NY), Ortega Y Gasset (Brooklyn, NY), SPACE (Portland, ME), and PUBLIC Gallery (London, UK). She has been an artist in residence at Lighthouse Works, Edward F. Albee Foundation, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Wassaic Project, and Byrdcliffe Artists Colony, and will be an artist in residence at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans, LA in the spring of 2020.

*Hung Out to Dry, 2019*
Leather, thread, polyfil, buttons, wire, wood, magnets
25 x 13 x 27 in
Kirk Amaral Snow is an intermedia artist whose practice investigates the relationship between the built world and performative aspects of culture. Drawing on an immediacy inherited from the DIY punk scene, he makes simple, poetic objects that reference encounters with “vernacular” building as a contrast to highly-crafted design. Snow’s objects are often created through or used in performance actions. For the work *When Surface Was Depth*, the artist took a power sander to the top of an Ikea Lack side table, one of the store’s cheapest and most ubiquitous pieces of furniture. The artist sanded until he reached the table’s interior, revealing the cardboard honeycomb beneath its faux wood veneer. The sanded down table reveals its own construction, drawing attention to its precarious and disposable structure. In the performance piece *Where We Meet*, created for *Applied Forces*, the artist installed a trash chute from the third floor walkway over AAC’s entrance vestibule and, during the opening reception, dropped four 50 pound bags of sand onto a metal structure installed below it. The metal structure appears durable, but this strength is revealed to be an illusion as it crumples beneath the sandbags.

*Amaral Snow holds BAs in Art History (2002) and Studio Art (2003) from the University of Rhode Island, and an MFA from Tufts University/School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2011). He has exhibited and performed both nationally and internationally at The Franklin (Chicago, IL), Gallery Kayafas (Boston, MA), Proof (Boston, MA), Little Berlin (Philadelphia, PA), Mubius (Boston, MA), MEME (Cambridge, MA), Perfolink (Concepción, Chile), Infr’action Site (Sète, France), Fonderie Darling (Montreal, Canada), and Grace Exhibition Space (NYC). His recent solo exhibition, MORE DOING, was staged at the ICA Baltimore in the fall of 2018.*
In her sculptures, installations, and mixed-media works, Antoinette Suiter uses ubiquitous domestic objects including carpet, PVC pipe, and wooden framing to emphasize the uncanny within the familiar. Suiter bases her work on a foundation of research, digging into and deconstructing obscure histories, creating uncanny and surreal narratives from the bits and pieces left behind. For *Applied Forces*, the artist presents a participatory performance experience which centers on participants being carried through the gallery on a litter by two performers. The litter, which was built by the artist, evokes sedan chairs and similar conveyances designed to transport high status individuals. As the participants are carried along, they follow a narrative created by the artist through sound, heard through a pair of headphones, and text, placed by the artist throughout the galleries. The performance creates a complex power dynamic, as participants are simultaneously placed in a position of power, but are also expected to give up control over their own movement through the gallery space. The audio and text narrative experienced through the piece reference Arlington and its surroundings, Arlington Arts Center, and the history of the building AAC occupies, encouraging participants to explore their surroundings and their own experience of space and time.

*Antoinette Suiter holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. Her work has been exhibited across the United States and internationally, including exhibitions at Baltimore Institute of Contemporary Art, School 33 (Baltimore, MD), Supa Salon (Istanbul, Turkey), Triumph (Chicago, IL), Samuel Gallery (Chicago, IL), and Art Helix (Brooklyn, NY), among other venues. Her work has been covered by Bad at Sports, The Visualist, Chicago Reader, Mousse Magazine, and ArtFCity. She currently teaches at Maryland Institute College of Art in the departments of Interdisciplinary Sculpture and First Year Experience.*
Jung Min Park's light boxes capture an individual moment in time, building up layers of imagery drawn from Park's own memories of specific times and places. Elegantly painting these traces of memory on clear acrylic, the artist breaks down and rebuilds landscapes and cityscapes. These three-dimensional scenes feature familiar objects and spaces, layered into complex and abstract compositions. The layering of the imagery within the light boxes evokes the fragmentation of memory. The artist thinks about the light boxes in relation to photography, a medium that relies on flashing light to preserve a single moment, balancing the seeming simplicity of a second in time with the complexity that a single moment can actually contain. The harmonization of opposites is a recurring theme throughout Park's work. It brings together simplicity and complexity, abstraction and figuration, light and shadow. The reconciliation of visual opposites also refers to the thematic tensions the artist explores, between the past and the present, the manmade and the natural, memory and truth.

Jung Min Park is a mixed-media artist based in Washington, DC. Her work has been selected for numerous solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including CulturalDC (Washington, DC), Transformer (Washington, DC), Washington Project for the Arts (Washington, DC), Annapolis Maritime Museum (Annapolis, MD), DC Arts Center (Washington, DC), Greater Reston Arts Center (Reston, VA), IA&W at Hillyer (Washington, DC), The Painting Center (NY), Chashama (NY), Gallery 175 (Seoul, Korea), ARC Gallery (IL), MG Gallery (IL), and POSCO Art Museum (Seoul, Korea). She was awarded first prize in the Water Works exhibition at the Maryland Federation of Art, and two awards from Korea Modern Cultural Art Association. She received a fellowship from The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and a grant from the Korean Ministry of Cultures, Sports, and Tourism. She earned her MFA from Pratt Institute and two BFA's from the School of The Art Institute of Chicago and Korea National University of Arts.
In partnership with Arlington Public Art, Arlington Arts Center presents an exhibition of models, drawings, and photographs created by artist Foon Sham as preparation for and documentation of his large-scale public artworks. The exhibition takes place in conjunction with the recent unveiling of Ridge, a new public art piece created by Sham for Oakland Park, two blocks from Arlington Arts Center. The form for Ridge was inspired by mountainous ridges, transforming landscapes one might see in nearby Shenandoah or the Blue Ridge Mountains into a human scale, interactive sculpture. Since his time as a resident artist at Arlington Arts Center from 1988 to 1994, Sham has completed multiple public artworks across Arlington. The exhibition focuses on these projects, featuring models, drawings, and photographs of projects in Bluemont Park, Bennett Park Apartments, Oakland Park, and on AAC’s front lawn. By exhibiting models and documentation, the exhibition gives visitors a glimpse into the development of the artist’s large-scale pieces, as well as an appreciation for his meticulous and committed approach to wood, his chosen material.

Foon Sham is a prolific sculptor whose work has been featured in more than 45 solo exhibitions and 160 group exhibitions across the United States and around the world, including in Canada, Norway, Mexico, Australia, Bolivia, Suriname, Hong Kong, and France. He has completed commissions across the Mid-Atlantic, including for Arlington Public Art, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Art in Public Architecture Program, Montgomery County, MD, and the City of Richmond. In 2016, he completed a commission for the US Embassy in Suriname through the US State Department’s Art in Embassies Program. Mushroom, a newly commissioned work, is installed outside the National Museum of American History by the Smithsonian Garden through December of 2020 as part of the Smithsonian’s Habitat exhibition and his upcoming solo exhibition Maze of Knowledge, will open at the National Building Museum in November of 2020. Sham holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California, 1978; and a Master of Fine Arts Degree from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, 1981. Born in Macau, raised in Hong Kong, and currently based in the DC metro area, Sham is a professor at University of Maryland, College Park, where he has taught since 1988.
About

Arlington Arts Center (AAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit contemporary visual arts center dedicated to enriching community life by connecting the public with contemporary art and artists through exhibitions, educational programs, and artist residencies.

AAC was established in 1974 and has been housed since 1976 in the historic Maury School. Our facility includes nine exhibition galleries, a large lawn suitable for public art, working studios for twelve artists, and three classrooms. At 17,000 square feet, AAC is one of the largest non-federal venues for contemporary art in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Exhibitions

Through quarterly changing exhibitions, AAC serves as a launching pad for emerging artists, provides established artists with the opportunity to experiment, and offers the public a snapshot of the region’s most compelling contemporary art.

AAC’s exhibitions and attendant lectures, workshops, and panel discussions offer opportunities for dialogue, and ultimately serve to illustrate the value of contemporary art – specifically, what it is and why it matters in our daily lives.

Education

AAC offers a stimulating schedule of art classes year-round for novice and seasoned artists of all ages, from toddlers to adults. Taught by experienced professional artists, AAC’s classes are small, scheduled around the school and work day, and tuition is affordable. AAC’s art students have access to the excellent contemporary art in our galleries to help stimulate and inspire their own efforts.

Resident Artists Program

AAC’s resident artist program provides subsidized studio space in a supportive environment that encourages interaction, dialogue, and exploration. Residents become part of a creative community that enables them to exchange ideas, engage in meaningful conversation, and expand their practice.

Hours & Location

Arlington Arts Center is open free to the public Wed - Sun, 12 - 5 pm
Metro: Silver & Orange Lines: Virginia Square
3550 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201
703.248.6800
For more info about AAC visit: www.arlingtonartscenter.org

Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Holly Koons / director@arlingtonartscenter.org
CURATOR OF EXHIBITIONS
Blair Murphy / exhibitions@arlingtonartscenter.org
EDUCATION COORDINATOR
Lia Ferro / education@arlingtonartscenter.org
MARKETING COORDINATOR
Laura Devereux / information@arlingtonartscenter.org

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Image Credits

Michael Dax Iacovone, Relating Circles; Salt Drawing #1; Rose Nestler, Tying the Knott (still)