

For Immediate Release
March 23, 2023



Ceci Cole McInturff, *Garuda #1*, hydrocal, crow wings, songbird wings, custom steel stands, 13.5 x 22.5 x 5 inches

Bodies We Inhabit

April 14 – May 17, 2023

Curated by Jessica Duby

Opening Reception: Friday, April 14, 6-8pm

NARS Project Space

Exhibition of mixed media by Shaun Champion, Hoesy Corona, Sara Dittrich, Phylicia Ghee, Nava Gidianian-Kagan, Noel Kassewitz, Koyoltzintli, Ceci Cole McInturff, Mirella Salamé, and Sue Wrbican

NEW YORK, March 23, 2023—NARS Foundation today announced that the exhibition *Bodies We Inhabit* curated by Jessica Duby will be showcased at the NARS Foundation from April 14 through May 17.

Bodies We Inhabit features work by ten intergenerational women and nonbinary artists exploring their spiritual, cultural, and political allyships with the earth. Through various means including metaphor, music, mythology, gesture, and satire, the artworks create a space to reflect on the ways each of us engages with the bodies of land, water, flesh, and work that surround us.

Influenced by the principles of ecofeminism, a movement that draws a parallel between the state's attempts at dominion over women and humanity's attempts at the subjugation of nature, *Bodies We Inhabit* illustrates artists'

takes on the importance of striving toward reciprocity between humans and non-human life forms. The works in the exhibition explore mutual care, protection, boundaries, autonomy, nonduality, and reclamation.

While such a gathering of thoughts, ideas, and objects may not have the power to directly impact climate legislation or turn bias on its head, *Bodies We Inhabit* seeks to emulate an act of solidarity humans can always offer the earth: to plant a seed.

Artwork Descriptions

Several artists in the exhibition tell their stories using earth materials:

- In a series of performances, Koyoltzintli plays reconstructed pre-Columbian instruments that have been locked away in museums, reclaiming their sounds and sovereignty. Through this act, her body becomes a vessel for a primal creative force, reaffirming her own and others' connection to the earth.
- In an installation at the center of the exhibition, Phylicia Ghee sheds light on a history of displacement and forced dispossession targeting Black and Indigenous communities throughout history and into the present using soil sourced from the original site of Seneca Village and her Grandfather's garden.
- Mirella Salamé processes earth pigments into an iron-rich paint whose color approximates blood, which she uses in performative paintings that symbolize warmth, power, and fertility.
- Ceci Cole McInturff uses organic ephemera to turn cast sculptures into mythological bird-human hybrids that hold timeless lessons.

Other artists illustrate interdependence through visual metaphors:

- In lyrical portraits of Black community members as *Black Bouquets*, Shaun Champion captures the joy, delicateness, and strength in her subjects as they enjoy serene moments of connection with trees, plants, and flowers.
- In her painting *Curved Back Mountain*, Nava Gidianian-Kagan portrays a back bent forward in prayer as a mountain--her personal symbol of constancy and stillness.
- In Sara Dittrich's photography series *Traces of Tide and Time*, the low-tide moments that are soon to be erased a few hours later, represent the rise and fall of breath, liminality, and life's transience.

And several artists confront the body-politic of climate change directly:

- Hoesy Corona's intricately woven *Climate Poncho* highlights the complex relationship between humans and the environment by focusing on our changing climate's impact on habitation and migration patterns. Each *Climate Poncho* pictures a character or group journeying from a land made uninhabitable by the warming climate.
- Noel Kasewitz examines how a painter copes with the continuous threat of obsolescence in a rapidly changing environmental landscape. For her *Rococo Remastered* series, a body of floatable artworks inspired by the Rococo period in art history and the threat of rising sea levels, she paints pool floats injected with expanding marine foam with classic characters from famous Rococo paintings recast as contemporary American cultural figures.
- Sue Wrbican explores intersections between the environment, capitalism, labor, and surrealism in *Ship Split #1*, a foreboding photograph of a sculpture of a ship splitting created from shipment detritus and studio scraps.

About the curator:

Jessica Duby is an independent curator based in Brooklyn, NY. She studied Arts Politics at NYU Tisch and her undergraduate degree is in Art History.

About the artists:

Schaun Champion is an artist-photographer, director of photography and instructor specializing in natural light, portraiture, fine art and cultural documentary/archival work. Using both digital and analog cameras, she creates intentionally cinematic and honest imagery. Inspired by classic films, music and all things vintage; her intention is to use themes of nature, diversity and nostalgia to illustrate the drama within the familiar. She has worked with Oscar-nominated cinematographer, Bradford Young and visual installation artists like Sir Issac Julien of the Royal Academy. Her subjects have included fashion designer, Bishme Cromartie, actors like André Holland, writers and directors such as Radha Blank, independent/grammy winning musicians like Pink Siifu, as well as friends, family, and people she meets from around the world. Schaun's work is in both public and private collections in several countries. She has exhibited her work internationally through museums and galleries such as the Barnes Foundation, James E. Lewis Museum of Art, Baltimore Museum of Arts, Antipode Gallery of Marseille, Deutsches Architekturmuseum (Germany Architecture Museum), Eubie Blake Cultural Center, Washington Project for the Arts and Latela Curatorial. Her work has been featured internationally through Adobe and publications/networks such as Cultured Magazine, NBC, People Magazine, The New York Times, HBO, NPR, Allure Magazine, Essence Magazine, American Cinematographer Magazine, Rouleur Magazine, and many others.

Hoesy Corona (based in the U.S.) is a Latinx queer artist creating uncategorized and multidisciplinary art spanning installation, performance, and sculpture. He is a Winston Tabb Special Collections Research Center Public Humanities Fellow 2022-2023 at the Johns Hopkins University's Sheridan Libraries'. In the studio, Hoesy's work highlights the complex relationship between humans and the environment by focusing on our changing climate and its impact on habitation and migration patterns. Corona has exhibited widely in galleries, museums, and public spaces in the United States and internationally, including recent solo exhibitions *Sunset Moonlight* (2021) at The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, MD and *Alien Nation* (2017), at The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden presented by Transformer in DC. He is the recipient of many honors and awards including the Andy Warhol Foundation's Grit Fund Grant, a Halcyon Arts Lab Fellowship, and an Ox-Bow artist residency. His work has been reviewed by The Washington Post, Bmore Art Magazine, Washington City Paper, and The American Scholar among others. www.hoesycorona.com

Sara Dittrich is an interdisciplinary sculpture artist who builds introspective experiences that shift perspective from passive seeing to active looking, from passive hearing to active listening. Using musical thinking, Dittrich illuminates the dynamic and unconscious rhythms of the body and environments. Her art is heard and felt in real time, a feature that Nat Trotman, Curator of Performance and Media at the Guggenheim, called "the liveness" of Dittrich's work. Dittrich uses a diverse set of mediums that often include sculptural objects, musical performance, video, and interactive electronic technologies. In whatever her chosen medium, Dittrich challenges our expectations and assumptions by exploring natural and constructed dualities—in/out, up/down, rise/fall, large/small, right/left. She has been awarded artist residencies including Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (2015); the Vermont Studio Center

Fellowship (2015); and Sculpture Space (2015). In 2018-2019, she was a Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. She is the recipient of a 2017 Mary Sawyers Baker Artist Award, and was a 2017 Janet & Walter Sondheim Prize Finalist. Dittrich's work has been exhibited and performed in numerous venues including the Baltimore Museum of Art, MD; Washington Project for the Arts, DC; and Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI.

Phylcia Ghee is an interdisciplinary visual artist, photographer and performance artist whose work documents transition, explores healing, memory, ritual and the intersection between the physical and the spiritual. She earned her BFA in Photography with a Concentration in Curatorial Studies from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2010. Ghee has exhibited her work at The Baltimore Museum of Art, Galerie Myrtis, The Egyptian Embassy, The Margulies Warehouse (Miami), Studio Art Centers International (Florence) and The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture. Most recently, Ghee completed a 3-month artist residency and immersive, multi-sensory solo exhibition at The Nicholson Project in Southeast, D.C. Ghee has exhibited and performed at NYU, Art on the Vine (Martha's Vineyard), Young Collectors Contemporary (Memphis, TN), The Banneker Douglass Museum, The Walters Art Museum as 2019 Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize Finalist, Fridman Gallery (NY) and The African American Museum (Philadelphia, PA). Ghee was named 2020 Baker Artist Award Finalist, 2020 Pratt>FORWARD Fellow (Mickalene Thomas & Jane South) and 2020 Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize Finalist. Ghee has taught workshops and held day-long retreats internationally. She received recognition from Maryland's First Lady Yumi Hogan & the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration for her art and activism in raising awareness on issues surrounding mental health. She is the first Black Woman and only one of 21 photographers in American history to work as Official Photographer for the U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives.

Nava Gidanian-Kagan is an Iranian-Israeli artist based in Tuxedo, NY. Contemplation on our collective humanity, our connection to the divine/nature and to each other is the heart of her work. She received numerous awards including: The Terra Foundation for American Art (2014), The Elisabeth Greenshields Foundation Award (2014), The Eileen S. Kaminsky Foundation Residency award, MANA Contemporary (2017), LABA Fellowship (2022), and featured in: New American Paintings Magazine (2019) and Studio Visit Magazines (2020). Nava has exhibited both nationally and internationally including: The 14Y, NYC (2022), The Jewish Museum of NJ (2019), The Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, NY (2017), Dedee Shattuck Gallery, MA (2017), Mana Contemporary, NJ (2017), The Experimental Gallery, NY (2016), Flux Factory, NY (2016), A.I.R Gallery, NY (2016), Panepinto Galleries, NJ (2015), Collier West Gallery, NY (2015), Wilkinson Hall Gallery, NY (2015), Indigo Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2012), Burchfield Penney Art Museum, Buffalo, NY, (2012), Marion Art Gallery, Fredonia, NY (2012), Olean Public Library Gallery, Olean, NY (2011), BAS, Buffalo, NY (2011), Echo Art Fair, Buffalo, NY (2011), Gallery 33, Tel-Aviv, Israel (2006), ISA Gallery, Umbria, Italy (2004/5) and Stern Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel. Nava participated in the Residency programs at: The International School of Painting, Drawing Sculpture in Umbria, Italy (2005, 2004) and The Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain (2007). She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the New York Academy of Art (2015), the Jerusalem Studio School (2006).

Noel Kassewitz is a contemporary artist and third-generation Floridian currently based in Washington, D.C. After receiving her BFA in Studio Painting from the University of Florida and working with the prestigious Rubell Museum, she later completed an artist residency in Carrara, Italy with marble master sculptor Boutros Romhein. In addition to her studio practice, she currently works in Sculpture Conservation at the National Gallery of Art. Kassewitz has given an artist talk at the Smithsonian Hirshhorn Museum, guest written for the Union of Concerned Scientists, and her work has been featured in the Washington Post, Huffington Post, Financial Times, BMore Art, and PBS WETA. Her work has exhibited both nationally and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at Arlington Arts Center (Arlington, VA) and IA&A at Hillyer (Washington, DC), along with exhibitions in Miami, FL;

Chicago, IL; and State College, PA; as well as in Milan and Bologna, Italy. Kassewitz was recently awarded the 2020-2021 DC-CAH Visual Artist Fellowship Grant and her work has been acquired for the permanent public art collections of both the District of Columbia's City Art Bank and the University of Maryland's CAPP collection.

Koyoltzintli is an interdisciplinary artist, healer, and educator living in the USA. She grew up on the pacific coast and the Andean mountains in Ecuador, these are geographies that permeate her work. She focuses on sound, ancestral technologies, ritual, and storytelling through collaborative processes and personal narratives. Intersectional theories and earth-based healing inform her practice. Nominated for Prix Pictet in 2019, her work has been exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, the United Nations, Aperture Foundation in NYC, and Paris Photo, among others. She has been an artist in residence in the US, France, and Italy and has taught at CalArts, SVA, ICP, and CUNY. She has received multiple awards and fellowships including the Photographic Fellowship at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, the NYFA Fellowship, and the IA grant by the Queens Council of the Arts. Her first monograph *Other Stories* was published in 2017 by Autograph ABP, and her work was featured in the Native issue of *Aperture Magazine* (no. 240). In 2021, her work was included in the book *Latinx Photography in the United States* by Elizabeth Ferrer chief curator at BRIC. In 2022 she is one of the artists in residence at Socrates Sculpture Park and she has been awarded the Latinx Artist Fellowship by US Latinx Art Forum (USLAF).

Ceci Cole McInturff works in sculpture, hand-formed paper, narrative installation, and book objects. She is founder of the 87FLORIDA Artist Collective; formerly owned the non-profit exhibit and performance space 87FLORIDA in Washington, D.C.; and is a studio member of the Otis Street Arts Project. She holds an MFA in Art and Visual Technology from George Mason University, studied two years in the MA/Art and the Book program of the Corcoran College of Art+Design, is a former executive with the CBS Television Network, and the mother of two sons. Memberships: International Sculpture Center, Washington Sculptors Group, Washington Project for the Arts, ArtDC Forum, National Museum for Women in the Arts, Greater Reston Arts Center.

Mirella Salamé aka ella is a multi-disciplinary artist. Her practice includes (but is not limited to) performance art, installation art, writing, public interferences, and painting; working with left-overs and natural findings, she uses reclaimed, natural & off-the-grid material such as earth pigments, found wood or recycled paper, seeds, plants, and her own body, together with reclaimed immaterial such as movement, sound, time/memory, herstory and dreams. After being selected for a full grant, ella received her Masters degree in "Art in Public Spheres" from Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais (ECAV, Switzerland) in 2014, with great distinction, and had won several prizes along the years, namely the Installation Prize at the Modern And Contemporary Art Museum in Lebanon (MACAM), and the Excellency Prize from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HES.SO), Western Switzerland. Mirella Salamé also works in reciprocal & spiritual relationship with the earth and medicinal plants to offer healing & guidance for others. She founded "the hope sanctuary" where she dedicates space for medicinal seeds & plants, channels the wise teachings and messages of the earth spirit, offering gatherings and 1:1 sessions, as well as workshops.

Sue Wrbican lives and works in the Washington, DC metro area. During the Summer and into the Fall of 2021 she presented work featuring her brother Matt Wrbican in two exhibitions entitled *The Iridescent Yonder* at Riverviews Art Space in Lynchburg, Virginia and *This Iridescent Era* at VisArts Center in Rockville, Maryland. In 2020 her work *Buoyant Force* was installed at Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art in Reston, Virginia. In the Fall of 2017 she presented her extensive artistic exploration into the work of Kay Sage at the Greater Reston Art Center in Virginia (now Tephra

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Institute of Contemporary Art) In 2015 her site specific sculpture “The Eventual Outcome of an Instant” was constructed at the Seligmann Center in Sugar Loaf, NY. Her video "Back Roof" is part of Miranda July's Joanie 4 Jackie Archive at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA. In 2014 she presented her installation and lecture “Continue the Temporary and It Becomes Forever” at the Zizek Studies conference at the University of Cincinnati’s College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning. Wrbican has held residencies at the Robert Rauschenberg Residency in Captiva, Florida, Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, California, The Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida and STUD Residency in Catlett, Virginia. She is a founding member of the Floating Lab Collective whose projects have been exhibited widely in venues such as ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany and the Nathan Cummings Foundation, NYC, NY. In 2008 she worked with Mary Carothers on a project addressing gas consumption and the environment entitled The Frozen Car.

The NARS Galleries are open Monday - Friday from 12 to 5 pm. For more information please call the office: 718-768-2765 or email info@narsfoundation.org.

The New York Art Residency and Studios (NARS) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization committed to supporting artists and curators on an international level as well as engaging the local community in Brooklyn and the Greater New York area. Our mission is to present diverse platforms on which to nurture creative inspiration and innovative cross-pollination of ideas.

For further information, please contact us at www.narsfoundation.org / info@narsfoundation.org / 718-768-2765.

Support for this exhibition was generously provided by **The Hope Sanctuary Lebanon**.

NARS exhibition programs are made possible in part through the generous support from **the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts** with the support of the **Office of the Governor** and the **New York State Legislature**, and, in part, supported by public funds from the **New York City Department of Cultural Affairs** in partnership with the **City Council**.



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