

# Statement on Research, Teaching, and Service

## Introduction:

While my research, teaching, and service extend across media and platforms, they are all bound by shared conceptual underpinnings and mirror the interdisciplinary mission of the Department of Art. I maintain a rigorous and national-level practice as both an artist and curator and use both modalities to disseminate my research into the intersection between the visual arts and the public discourse surrounding climate change. My work as a curator greatly influences my pedagogy and has made me a unique asset to students, both through my classroom and museum-based teaching.

## Research:

My research practice primarily focuses on climate change and issues of environmental policy. Through studio-based and curatorial projects, I utilize visual art to make legible the social, economic, and political impacts of a changing climate. As a curator, I have worked with internationally known artists such as Cannupa Hanska Luger, Calida Garcia Rawles, Pope.L and Richard Misrach to produce exhibitions which have engaged the FSU and Tallahassee communities in deep discussions surrounding hurricane preparedness, the impact of climate change on civil rights, and the intersection of Indigenous sovereignty and environmental stewardship. My studio-based research practice is grounded in an inquiry of human interference into landscape. I use installation, video, sculpture, and collage to document and complicate particular sites. Utilizing historical landscape photography, environmental literature, and social media images, I often collapse many forms and sources simultaneously to reference the past as well as imagine the future.

## Studio Based:

Using public land management as a lens through which to discuss our shared histories and potential futures, I have created several large-scale projects which engage deeply with particular sites. I often collaborate with Katie Hargrave (Associate Professor of Art, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), and during my time at FSU, our projects have been shown at galleries and museums across the country and has been supported by a range of organizations and institutions. Since our work is project-based, I will discuss these as discreet endeavors, although their conceptual overlap is evident.

*Sight Lines* - In the spring of 2019, Katie Hargrave and I visited state and national park sites in Florida and California to document the tools that tourists use to experience landscape. Looking at equipment like cameras, tents, RVs, and hiking boots, we considered how the things we purchase mediate our experience in the outdoors. Turning a van into a camera obscura, we photographed Joshua Tree National Park. These images were shown with a range of sculptural and multimedia elements - including video of Florida RV parks projected onto rear view mirrors. The project took the form of a large-scale installation which was displayed at the Wiregrass Museum of Art in Dothan, AL in the summer of 2019. Elements from this project have been included in several other exhibitions

and were part of a retrospective exhibition of our photographs at the University of Texas Permian Basin in 2021.

*Over Look / Under Foot* - In 2020, the Utah Division of Art and Museums invited Katie Hargrave and I to do a project documenting each of the five national parks in the state. To consider the complex relationship between tourism and environmentalism, we visited each park and used different strategies to document the infrastructure that supports visitors - built spaces such as roadways, campsites, bathrooms, and visitors centers. We constructed several sculptural elements, including two hand sewn tents, and used photography, collage, and video to further emphasize these elements of park sites which are designed to be unobtrusive. While we were able to complete the research for this project, the global pandemic impacted its dissemination. An exhibition scheduled for the Utah Division of Art and Museum's galleries was canceled in the summer of 2020, but we were able to show the work at the New Gallery at Austin Peay State University that fall. The university printed a catalog in support of the exhibition, with an essay about the work by Veronica Kavass. The exhibition then traveled to Granary Arts in Ephraim, UT. Christopher Lynn (Assistant Professor of Art History, Brigham Young University) wrote an essay about the work which was published in a catalog printed by Epicenter, an arts organization in Green River, UT. Elements from this exhibition have been included in group shows as well.

*Mirror Muir* - In 1866 the botanist John Muir walked from Kentucky to Florida, documenting the trip in a book published after his death, 1000 Mile Walk to the Gulf. Muir is celebrated as one of the forefathers of American conservation, and in the past twenty years, Muir enthusiasts have begun to piece together his path across the south to create the John Muir Trail. 1000 Mile Walk to the Gulf belies Muir's racism, classism, and sexism, and forces us to confront how his bigotry continues to be reflected in mainstream environmental movements in the United States. For *Mirror Muir*, Katie Hargrave and I hiked the John Muir Trail in central Tennessee and created a series of sculptures and video which question who feels welcome on this public land. I received an Arts and Humanities Programming Enhancement Grant from the CRC to support this project. In the spring of 2022, we showed this work at the Gadsden Museum of Art in Gadsden, AL. That summer the show traveled to the Blue Heron Nature Preserve in Atlanta. Although the Blue Heron is not a conventional art exhibition site, it was relevant to show the work in that particular context. As we are questioning conservation sites, it is important to directly engage with those spaces and audiences.

*Developed, Developing* - Katie Hargrave and I were invited to create a new work for the Tennessee Triennial, an exhibition of contemporary art hosted across several museums in the state. María Magdalena Campos-Pons, an internationally recognized artist and the Cornelius Vanderbilt Endowed Chair of Fine Arts at Vanderbilt University, served as consulting curator for the state-wide exhibition, and we used this platform as an opportunity to synthesize many of our ideas into one sculptural installation. The work, which was installed at the Knoxville Museum of Art in the winter of 2023, collages historical photographs, outdoor recreation advertisements, and contemporary social media images to show the ways photography has enabled settler colonialism and impacted public land policy. These images are printed large-scale in a variety of media and coupled with a clear plastic tent we designed.

*Bad Outdoorsmen* - In the fall of 2023, Katie Hargrave and I were awarded a residency at the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum to conduct research into the legacies of early conservationists who visited

north Florida. Focusing on John Muir, John Audubon, and Billy Bartram, we worked with local historians and environmentalists to retrace their paths. This work led us to consider popular expectations of what a person who has mastery over the outdoors looks like and how they behave. Including video, performance, sculpture, photography and installation, we have developed an extensive project which has already garnered significant attention from curators and critics. The work is scheduled to be exhibited at the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum (St. Augustine, FL), Grizzly Grizzly (Philadelphia, PA), Vinegar (Birmingham, AL), and the University of Wyoming Museum of Art (Laramie, WY).

*Welcome to Florida* - Working independently, I created a body of work which envisions the welcome center at the Florida-Georgia border in 100 years. At that time, much of the Florida peninsula will be underwater, including all of the Everglades, most of south Florida, and significant portions of Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Jacksonville. In this project, I question how we will remember Florida when it is gone and what objects and materials will become precious to us when they are depleted. The exhibition included photography, books, sculpture, and found objects. It was shown at the Alexander Brest Gallery at Jacksonville University in the spring of 2021.

## **Curatorial**

My research into climate change and the social and cultural implications of environmental movements is also manifested in my curatorial practice. As the curator of the FSU Museum of Fine Arts, I curate two to three exhibitions each year. Each project generally represents a year's worth of research into artists and the various contexts and influences for their work.

My first major curatorial project at FSU was *Rising Water: Artists Working in Response to Hurricanes*. Co-curated with Jessica Ingram (Associate Professor of Art) and presented at MoFA in the spring of 2020, the exhibition featured Willie Birch, Keith Calhoun, Frances Gallardo, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Aspen Mays, Chandra McCormick, Richard Misrach, and Sarah Welch. These artists had all been personally impacted by hurricanes, and through the show, we asked how we can center empathy and equity in planning for an increasingly stormy future. The project was awarded a highly competitive Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and I served as Principal Investigator.

The following year I co-curated *A Shared Body* with MoFA curatorial assistant Annie Booth. This exhibition focused on artists who consider water access a civil right and directly engage in conversations over government intervention into clean water access. With projects from artists Pope.L and Cannupa Hanska Luger, the show confronted recent incidents like the Flint water crisis and the Standing Rock protest. The exhibition also engaged historical trauma, with work from Sarah Sense and Courtney M. Leonard focusing on Indigenous sovereignty and water rights. This exhibition was supported through several initiatives, including a grant from the Florida Department of State and the FSU President's Diversity and Inclusion Grant. Annie Booth and I have since written about this project, including a chapter in *Dimension of Curation*, published by the American Alliance of Museums in 2023.

In 2022, Annie Booth and I co-curated *Boundless Terrain*, an exhibition speaking to the power of the outdoors to connect us to each other, our histories, and future versions of ourselves. Considering

how the outdoors became the only safe social space during the global pandemic, we worked with artists such as Allison Janae Hamilton, Sky Hopinka, and Doug Baulos to illustrate the unique capabilities of nature to collapse time and bring generations of people together. This project was part of a grant application which led to the largest award MoFA has ever received from the State of Florida in its over thirty year history.

As curator of MoFA, I am also responsible for researching, interpreting, presenting, and growing the permanent collection of the university. To this end, I curate one permanent collection exhibition each year. While these shows are not directly related to my specific research interests and instead respond to the collection, they do stem from deep research. Recent permanent collection shows include *50 Years of Collecting, Love and Longing: Bruce Davidson*, and *Shape Shifting: 35 Years of Late Modernist Prints*. These shows were utilized extensively by faculty across the university in support of curriculum, and Shape Shifting traveled to the Wiregrass Museum (Dothan, AL), a first for an exhibition originating from MoFA's permanent collections.

## Teaching

Much like my research practice, my teaching responsibilities and opportunities cross several applications, from the formal responsibilities of the classroom to the pedagogical vision of the museum. The cohesive tie that unites all of the teaching that I do is serving as a connection point between students and a broader, often professional, world. As such, a primary focus of my teaching is utilizing my experience as an artist and curator to incorporate experiential projects into both classroom and museum-based education. By including curation, interpretation, and other publicly focused methods with more traditional scholarship like reading and writing, I prepare students for professional opportunities while using the format of the exhibition as a platform for discussing contemporary topics in art.

As an Assistant Professor, I have taught multiple courses in both the Departments of Art and Art History and have served on graduate committees in Art, Art Education, and Dance. Although previously split between units, since spring of 2022 my teaching has been dedicated to the Department of Art, primarily serving the graduate program. FSU is unusual in having a practicing curator located in the studio art department, and so I strive to use my professional experience to bring a unique element to the graduate program. For example, in a seminar course for the first year MFA students, the final assignment was to curate an exhibition for the gallery of the William Johnston Building on campus. In leading up to this project, we studied the history of museums as para-governmental organizations and the role of the curator and institution in shaping contemporary discourse. The students then curated, designed, installed and interpreted the exhibition collaboratively, reflecting professional best practices. In developing courses and assignments, I always consider how I can bring my museum experience to the classroom and offer students a slightly different perspective on the place visual art holds in cultural production.

I also teach extensively through the museum itself. As curator, I develop educational programs for the general public as well as students across the university. From inviting guest artists and scholars to give lectures to designing in-gallery educational activities, a large part of my job as curator is an extension of my role as teacher. Over 3000 FSU students attend educational programs at the museum each semester, making my reach in this capacity extensive. I also host classes at the

museum and routinely give guest lectures in courses across the university. For example, I have worked with faculty in the College of Medicine to use the museum to instruct nursing students in inquiry-based observation techniques, I have given guest lectures to Art History graduate students on the changing technologies of online exhibition platforms, and I have discussed the arts and community resiliency with Urban and Regional Planning students.

## Service

Over the past several years, I have made significant contributions to the field, university, college, Museum of Fine Arts, and Department of Art through service. As curator and interim director of the Museum of Fine Arts, my administrative responsibilities have been extensive and unusual for a junior faculty member, and I have further used these opportunities to gain institutional knowledge and leadership skills which will continue to benefit my community both in and outside of the university.

### *The Profession*

I have done significant service to the profession through my involvement in national organizations, such as the College Art Association (CAA), and as a grant reviewer and juror for numerous exhibitions. I recently completed a three year term on the Professional Practices Committee of CAA. In that time, I co-authored Guidelines for the Promotion and Tenure of Faculty Curators with Carolyn Butler-Palmer (Associate Professor of Art History, University of Victoria) and Marcella Hackbardt (Professor of Art, Kenyon College). This guideline was adopted by CAA in the spring of 2022 and is now used by universities around the world. In the summer of 2022, I was asked to join the CAA Services to Artists Committee, and in this capacity I play a key role in developing conference sessions for visual artists. I will chair two panels at the 2023 national conference. I am also a grant reviewer for the State of Florida and evaluate 30-50 grant applications each year. In addition, I routinely serve as a juror for other museums and universities. In the past two years, I have juried the Wiregrass Biennial at the Wiregrass Museum of Art and exhibitions for the University of Wyoming and Stetson University.

### *The University*

In 2021 I was elected to serve on the Faculty Grievance Committee. Nominated by the faculty of the College of Fine Arts and elected through a university-wide process, I am the sole representative from the college on this committee. In the fall of 2021 I served on a panel which investigated a grievance stemming from the College of Medicine. The semester-long process involved interviewing various stakeholders and submitting a report to President McCullough. I am also an alternate senator for the faculty union and serve on both the Membership and Executive Committees.

### *The College*

Among my various administrative responsibilities is overseeing the William Johnston Building Gallery. This exhibition space, which serves all of the departments of the College of Fine Arts and is nested under the Dean's Office, has a staff member Gallery Manager, who I work closely with. In this capacity, I manage a small budget for the gallery, mentor the staff member, help problem-solve

installation issues, and edit promotional materials and social media. I also serve as the chair of the WJB Gallery committee, a faculty committee which evaluates applications for the projects in the space and sets the gallery schedule each year. I am also currently serving on the search committee for a new Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, an effort which has spanned two academic years.

### *The Department of Art*

Since my position stretches across the Department of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, two distinct units in the CFA, my department level service is also split. For the Department of Art, I have chaired the Visiting Artist Committee, served on our NASAD reaccreditation committee, evaluated applications to our graduate program, and led annual graduate student trips to Atlanta and New Orleans. I also co-chaired the search for an Assistant Professor of Sculpture in the Expanded Field, which led to a successful hiring, and I am currently on a search committee for a Visiting Assistant Professor of Painting. In addition, I routinely do service in support of students, such as serving as the faculty advisor for the League of Graduate Artists (2018 - 2021), and overseeing the installation and promotion of the MFA student show, which is hosted in the museum every spring.

### *The Museum of Fine Arts*

My most extensive service responsibilities are to the Museum of Fine Arts. I have intermittently been the only faculty member in this unit, serving various administrative and leadership positions, including Interim Director (2022-2023). I have been the direct supervisor for four full time staff, two part time staff, numerous graduate assistants, work study students, and paid interns. This entailed extensive HR responsibilities and mentorship. I oversaw an annual discretionary budget of over \$200,000, including the management and reporting of numerous external grants.

Fundraising and donor relationship building is a vital part of my role at MoFA. In addition to being the primary grant writer for the museum, I have contributed to the planning and hosting of annual fundraising events. I routinely meet and correspond with donors, and I have recently overseen the donation of several hundred works to the museum's permanent collection. I also host events for campus stakeholders and organizations. In the past two years, I have hosted events for the President's Office, Women for FSU, The College of Fine Arts Dean's Society, and the Alumni Pride Association.

While much of the service that I do through my roles at MoFA can be quantified, tasks come up daily which are difficult to track. For example, I routinely update the website, meet with the college and university marketing teams, and consult on projects for other departments and units.