

Examples of Artist Statements

Pacifico Silano

Pacifico Silano is a lens-based artist whose work is an exploration of print culture, the circulation of imagery and LGBTQ identity. Born in Brooklyn, NY, he received his MFA in Photography from the School of Visual Arts. His work has been exhibited in group shows, including at the Bronx Museum; Tacoma Art Museum; Oude Kerk, Amsterdam; and ClampArt, New York City. He has had solo shows at ClampArt, New York City and Baxter ST@CCNY.

Reviews of his work have appeared in The New Yorker, Artforum, Washington Post and The New York Times. He is a winner of the Individual Photographer's Fellowship from the Aaron Siskind Foundation and a Finalist for the Aperture Foundation Portfolio Prize. He was chosen as an Artist in Residence at Light Work in Syracuse, NY, granted a Workspace Residency at Baxter Street CCNY and was a Key Holder Resident at the Lower East Side Printshop. He is a 2016 fellow in Photography with the New York Foundation for the Arts.

A selection of his work will be included in the upcoming exhibition “Fantasy America” at The Warhol Museum in 2020.

Yvette Mayorga

Informed by the politics of the border, the events that happen on it and the transnational narratives that arise after crossing it, I tackle issues of race, identity, and gender using the visual tropes of celebration. My work employs confection, industrial materials, and the American board game Candy Land as a conceptual framework to juxtapose the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico. The spaces in the “Candy Lands” of my work relate to immigrant’s Utopian visions of the American Dream. Candy Land signifies an America filled with the possibility of happiness. The monuments and installations, built from accumulated candy, frosting, and found objects exemplify the excess associated with the American Dream. The monuments stand as living shrines to real life individuals, such as individuals who died at the border, family members who have crossed the border, in conjunction with Mexican American icons like Selena Quintanilla to further complicate the transnational narratives of Mexican Americans. My video, “Really Safe in my Room in America,” 2016, layers personal photographs with found images of the border. It complicates my position of living in America in relation to the documented violence on the border. The smell, candy, decoration, and personal photographs in my work serve as an ironic strategy that critique the glut of violence at the border and beyond.

Faith Holland

Artist's Statement http://www.faithholland.com/portfolio_page/artists-statement/

Paul Ramirez Jonas

<http://www.paulramirezjonas.com/selected/refImages/CV/statement.pdf>

Shinique Smith

My work implies multiple reads and is informed by an enduring interest in how the vast expanse of “things” come to shape our experiences. Consistently questioning the reason for “things,” I reinterpret the connections we build our personal myths on through the objects that we hold on to and discard to expose how excess and waste are intimately related to personal meaning and market value, which resonate on a social, and spiritual scale.

Hip hop at its best, to me, is like “praise poetry.” The declaration of “I am . . . ” has had a strong influence on me and my work. “I am that I am” and “I am the bomb *&%\$@!” is crucial to selfmanifestation. I’ve been a longtime fan of Giovanni’s poetry. Her poem “Woman” got me through some difficult times. I think that she and I are both warriors, as many women have had and continue to be. For my site-specific installation, I’ve used lyrics from rap songs, married with text from Nikki Giovanni’s poem, to “riff” calligraphically and to create 3-D mantras of found objects, script and clothing.

For me, my individual works could be read as a poem or line from a song. They are excerpts from larger stories that the past wearer of the clothing or owner of the objects participated in. This piece in particular honors the warrior women who have fueled me with their distinctive cries.

Mariam Ghani

My practice is based on research into places, spaces and moments where social, political and cultural structures take on visible and tangible forms. I am interested in understanding both how we reconstruct the past in the present, and how we construct the present for the future, through shifting private and public narratives. Sometimes this research leads me to construct a fiction or reconstruct a speculative history around documents or fragments, physical traces, or a sense of place. Sometimes it leads me to witness, document, intervene in or engineer a present-day event or temporary space. Recurring preoccupations include: border zones, no-mans-lands, translations, transitions, and the slippages where cultures intersect; security cultures, archives, architectures of democracy, and national imaginaries; places where nature and artifice imitate and influence each other; and the intersections of war, trauma, memory, identity, migration, language, and loss.

I work across multiple disciplines - video, installation, photography, text, sound and performance - but all my projects share the same research-based approach, and all operate through a variable mix of documentary, narrative and database forms. In practice, this means I generally start with a central inquiry, then accumulate a collection of materials around that center, and then develop one or more interfaces to the collection, which

become the final form(s) of the project. My research traces both individual narratives and the larger systems or structures that condition or enclose them, which are reflected in my work by rigorous formal structures. Likewise, my work in Afghanistan is made from and reflects my own position there as a simultaneously intimate and estranged outsider/insider, Afghan in some ways and foreign in others.

I maintain three long-term collaborations. Since 2012, I have worked with Pad.ma and the Afghan national film institute on digitizing and disseminating the Afghan Films archive. Since 2006, I have worked with choreographer Erin Ellen Kelly and composer Qasim Naqvi on the site-responsive video and performance series Performed Places, which draws on ideas from landscape archeology. And since 2004, I have collaborated with Chitra Ganesh as Index of the Disappeared, an experimental archive of renditions, redactions, detentions and deportations, as well as a platform for dialogue around related issues.

Dave Greber

Video on artist statements <https://vimeo.com/32927247>

Lauren Halsey

Being 27 years old and having always been carless in Los Angeles, I have had the opportunity to fanatically watch the city, shaping my practice of recording and archiving city blocks. I archive South L.A. and Watts' vernacular culture: businesses, signage, tags, mix CDs, menus, incense, flyers. Recordings become fragments of travel journaling that lose their formal meanings and connotations and are transformed by my aspirations and dreams of and for their respective communities. Although my subjects depict reality, depictions are driven by my desires for the environment—thus, they are not accurate portrayals of a city block. Once in my possession, the archive becomes content for utopic fantasies of Los Angeles. I become pharaoh, the master architect and kingdom planner of new fantasyscapes forming mystical pseudo histories and remixing the neighborhoods with nature, technicolors and outer space as a means to empower neighborhoods and energize for a new tomorrow. In my work, the neighborhoods transcend pessimism and baggage held by outsiders and insiders. This illustrates my interests in appropriating fabricated histories, materials, local businesses, space and reflecting my subjects back to the community in the form of Kingdom Splurge.

Kingdom Splurge is an infinite project of endless becoming that entails liberation through Funk, fantasy architecture and the experimental development of space: gardens, lawns, vacant lots, churches, liquor stores, parking lots. The Kingdom is interested in the collective well-being of the neighborhood in which it lives. The Kingdom constitutes a fantasyscape for people and creatures (ie. fish, butterflies, birds, etc.) to inhabit in complete freedom—spatially and creatively, alongside representations of moments in nature, crystals, l.e.d.s, lasers, holograms and nomadic sculptures. In the Kingdom's early stages I, pharaoh, high-voltage Funkateer and master architect, Lauren Danielle Halsey, will engage as kingdom planner of the habitat, constructing micro-neighborhoods (Kingdoms) within pre-existing neighborhoods for potential participants to ponder and actualize new images and possibilities in for a freer, Funkier and more optimistic tomorrow. Kingdom Splurge is a space

of hypothesis for proposing new beginnings that are articulated through sculptures and environments built with what already exists in neighborhoods. The goal is community building—to revalue ephemera and existing forms (architecture, local businesses, gang tags, signage, etc.) as a method of restyling space. The Kingdom is interested in collaboration with those who have a passion for the future and are interested in stretching their imagination to create grand visions of and for working class neighborhoods.

Toyin Odutola

Where some may see flat, static narratives, I see a spectrum of tonal gradations and realities. What I am creating is literally black portraiture with ballpoint pen ink. I'm looking for that in-between state in an individual where the overarching definition is lost. Skin as geography is the terrain I expand by emphasizing the specificity of blackness, where an individual's subjectivity, various realities and experiences can be drawn onto the diverse topography of the epidermis. From there, the possibilities of portraying a fully-fledged person are endless.

Suggestions from workshop participants:

<http://amyfeldmanstudio.com/>

<http://www.amaryllisdejesusmoleski.com/statement/4568752912>

<http://wafaabilal.com/>