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Artist Autumn Knight takes flight in her debut performance *Broad: Say Less*, at the VAC in conjunction with the exhibition *If we are here...*, curated by Nicole Smythe-Johnson with Melissa Fandos.

From the Director

This spring, before it was announced that I accepted the role of director of the Visual Arts Center, a close and in-the-know friend asked me a question that led me to respond with what I now realize was an enthusiastic, if somewhat long-winded reply. They asked, “What exactly is the VAC? What role does it play in Austin? At the University? In the art world?” Following my highly animated but circuitous answer, wherein I described the VAC’s numerous impressive exhibitions, collaborative projects, and recurring student-focused programs, I began to think about how I could respond to that question more clearly...and concisely. And over the last few months, as I’ve taken the reins and begun to implement ideas that will shape the VAC’s immediate future, I’ve asked my friend’s questions to nearly everyone who has a connection with the center and, in turn, have received very similar, enthusiastic meandering answers describing the amazing work that has taken place over the institution’s 14-year history.

Part of the challenge in pinning down the VAC using a conventional institutional art vocabulary is that the VAC isn’t a conventional art institution. And it certainly has defied all endeavors to define it narrowly or pin it to a singular idea or focus. Instead, the Visual Arts Center has embraced the unfixedness of its identity and the fluidity of its innovative programming. While this doesn’t make for short conversations when discussing the VAC as a whole, it makes for *interesting* ones. And isn’t that a goal for all arts institutions?

The VAC’s 2023–24 season inspired numerous interesting conversations for the over 8,000 guests we welcomed to our galleries. For example, in the fall, Assistant Curator María Emilia Fernandez raised questions about the role of artificial intelligence in art and culture through the presentation of works by artists including Zac Blas, Danielle Dean, and Trevor Paglen to name a few. Artist Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork asked visitors to think about historical and embodied presence by constructing a monumental sculpture in the shape of a Japanese lantern in a gallery flooded with an environmental soundscape. In the new year,

the Afro-Boricua sibling duo Las Nietas de Nonó enlivened the VAC by growing microorganisms to use in sculptural installations that asked visitors to think about how their environment is informed by ancestral knowledge and history. And 61 graduating BFA and MFA art and design students bid farewell to their school by sparking disparate conversations about how to translate complex ideas into discrete works in a group exhibition. Even more topics were debated through five student-curated exhibitions, during four commissioned live performances and numerous artist talks, workshops, and on the pages of the VAC’s latest publication, *Social Fabric: Art and Activism in Contemporary Brazil*, released last fall.

These conversations have been generative, not only for the public and artists with whom we work and serve but also for the new team at the Visual Arts Center, who will build upon last year’s season by introducing exciting new artists-in-residence, a thrilling range of national and international artists, thought-provoking programming, and student-centered projects for the 2024–25 season. All the while, the VAC will continue to function as both a contemporary art laboratory and an experiment, defying traditional institutional boundaries. For artists and students, the Austin public, and a far-reaching arts community, that’s the role of the Visual Arts Center.

We are deeply grateful to our colleagues at UT, the faculty, staff, artists, students, and curators who have worked alongside us, and to our supporters and patrons who have partnered with us to realize our ambitions. Thank you all for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Max Fields
VAC Director



Opening night at the Visual Arts Center: Visitors check out works by Las Nietas de Nonó, created during the artist duo’s residency.



Visitors explore the exhibition *Somos Recuerdos* on opening night

Exhibitions

Sept. 22 –
Dec. 2, 2023

Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork: Like a Breath of Fresh Water

PROGRAMS

Oct. 18
Artist Talk: Jacqueline
Kiyomi Gork

Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork combines sound and objects to test the boundaries of experiential connection through multi-part installations. Gork's installations facilitate an embodied experience that casts the viewer in the role of active participant as sculptural and sonic forms interact with each other and with us in a choreographic interplay. Using evocative materials such as human hair, felt, acoustic foam, and latex, Gork's works often move, change shape, expand and contract while emitting sounds gathered from the surrounding environment. The specific features of a site are integral to the fabric of the work—footsteps, conversations, room acoustics, and other ambient sounds are recorded, remixed, and played on speakers as an interactive sound composition. The output is often a beguiling cacophony; a multi-layered feedback loop that continues to evolve over time.

Over the past six years, Gork has created inflatable sculptures that occupy a range of spaces from basements to gallery courtyards. These soft sculptures, like many of her works, are amorphous shapes that emit sounds and attune visitors to the specific architectural features of a site. The inflatables are kept aloft by blowers, which are an essential element of the sounds one hears while experiencing these works. Never fully inflated or deflated, but in a constant state of flux, of becoming and evolving, contracting and collapsing like breathing organisms. At the Visual Arts Center (VAC), a new inflatable in the shape of a Japanese lantern from the artist's personal collection will fill the gallery, incorporating sounds collected from the fountain in the VAC's courtyard. Together, the sounds of blowers, of flowing water, of visitors, and of the VAC's interior space will transform the gallery into an interactive indoor sonic garden.

Organized by MacKenzie Stevens, former director, and Melissa Fandos, VAC curatorial fellow, 2023–24. Major support for this project is generously provided by the Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation.

Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork:
Like a Breath of Fresh Water,
installation view, Visual Arts
Center, The University of
Texas at Austin, September 22 –
December 2, 2023. Photo:
Melissa Nuñez.





Sept. 22 –
Dec. 2, 2023

Queer Sublime

ARTISTS

Irene June Chau
Gabrielle Constantine
Demian Dinéyazhi'
Charlie Hyman
Quinn In
Logan Larsen
Mathew McIntyre
Andres Payan Estrada
Joy Scanlon
Brendan Shea
Mai Snow

PROGRAMS

Oct. 23
Soft Sublime:
A collaboration with
MASS Gallery

The Gothic literary tradition provided a unique outlet for expressions of 'otherness' within the realm of narrative prose fiction. It dealt in characters and situations that existed outside of the narrow limits of societal norms. Set in castles, haunted estates, and other gloomily incongruous locations, works written in the Gothic style trafficked in the intersection of romance and horror to create a sublime aesthetic experience. Evocative fantasy and melodrama, emblematic features of the Gothic sublime, could be construed as precursors to certain modes of Queer expression today (e.g. camp, a form of highly stylized, sometimes ironic, and often overwrought expression).

The Gothic evocation of "otherness" exemplified through excess serves as a lightning rod or conduit for the expression of Queer attitudes in contemporary art. The artists in *Queer Sublime* work at the crossroads of terror and ecstasy, exploring intense emotions, feelings of bodily dissociation, and euphoria. Through abstraction and figuration, and across a range of media, their work also conjures alternative pathways as a liberatory form of escape from menacing and hostile environments governed by malicious rules. In doing so, the exhibition artists explore the ways in which contemporary Queer experience is presented, processed, and interpreted through visual art.

Organized by Quinn In and Mathew McIntyre with Center Space Project. The Center Space Project is supported, in part, by the Jedel Family Foundation.

Queer Sublime, installation view, Visual Arts Center, The University of Texas at Austin, September 22 – December 2, 2023. Photo: Alex Boeschstein.

Sept. 22, 2023 –
Mar. 2, 2024

A Well-trained Eye

ARTISTS

American Artist
Zach Blas
Jim Campbell
Ronnie Clarke
Danielle Dean
Esther Hovers
Alicia Kopf
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer
Trevor Paglen
Macarena Ruiz-Tagle
Jason Salavon
Jemima Wyman
Canek Zapata
Mai Snow

PROGRAMS

Sept. 22
Heddatron (By Elizabeth
Meriwether): A Staged
Reading

Nov. 29
The Landscape of AI:
Danielle Dean &
Samantha Shorey
in Conversation,
in Partnership with
The Contemporary
Austin

The possibilities, limitations, and responsibilities that come with instructing both humans and computers how to see stand at the core of *A Well-trained Eye*. The exhibition features works by thirteen artists who explore issues such as surveillance, classification, and categorical thinking in relation to AI technologies, looking closely at the biases that underlie data collection and analysis. Encompassing different media—drawing, watercolor, photography, video, and installation—the artworks assembled here examine how human and computer vision are inextricably linked. Although much of the current discourse concerning AI systems tends to polarize the debate, falling into either an alarmist or technophilic position, the artists in *A Well-trained Eye* advance a more nuanced view of our relationship with these technologies and how we might find a path to developing AI guided by environmental, social and ethical considerations.

What does our training of computer vision models say about the way we perceive the world and about the future we imagine? How are these developments impacting the expectations and interactions we have with our bodies and those of others? By establishing a parallel between training algorithms and the human process of learning to see, *A Well-trained Eye* reflects on how the developers of artificial intelligence have ingrained their worldviews in their creations, including certain principles, associations and aesthetic preferences. At a pressing time when machine learning applications are reconfiguring not just the economy but also how we value education, labor, privacy, and the quality of our interpersonal relationships, this exhibition thinks critically about the categories and value systems currently driving these new technologies, inviting us to unlearn some of our own ways of seeing.

Organized by Maria Emilia Fernandez, former assistant curator. Lead support for *A Well-trained Eye* provided by the Jedel Family Foundation and the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation. Additional support provided by Suzanne Deal Booth, Kathleen and Chris Loughlin, and Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Public programming for *A Well-trained Eye* supported, in part, by Good Systems, a research grand challenge at UT Austin.

A Well-trained Eye,
installation view, Visual Arts
Center, The University of Texas
at Austin, September 22,
2023 – March 2, 2024.
Photo: Alex Boeschstein.





Sept. 22, 2023 –
Mar. 2, 2024

If we are here...

ARTISTS

Deborah Anzinger
Autumn Knight
Tsedaye Makonnen
Las Nietas de Nonó

PROGRAMS

Nov. 16
Screening: Las Nietas
de Nonó's *FOODTOPIA:*
después de todo territorio

Feb. 10
Performance by Las
Nietas de Nonó

Feb. 16
Nothing #5! UTA: Artist
Talk with Autumn Knight

Feb. 17
Broad: Say Les:
Performance by Autumn
Knight and Li Harris

Feb. 26
Discussion with
Tsedaye Makonnen and
Andrea Achi

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unfulfilled promise of the “racial reckoning” of 2020, the dissolution of *Roe v. Wade*, and the unfolding climate crisis, our current moment feels increasingly dystopian. *If we are here...* is a response to that sense of impending apocalypse in its philosophical, political, and personal dimensions. The exhibition brings together five artists whose practices explore different approaches to where and when we find ourselves from black feminist perspectives that know the world has already ended many times. Jamaican artist Deborah Anzinger's *The Distraction of Symbolism* (2019) overlays the natural bounty of Jamaica, named “the land of wood and water” by its first inhabitants, and the risk and precarity of Jamaican life and ecology. In *WV #1 Disappointment* (2020), Autumn Knight supports us in sitting with our disappointment and discontent, not only as a motor of political engagement but as essentially human and valid in and of itself. Tsedaye Makonnen's *Astral Sea IV* (2021) makes the beauty in our aspirations, and our grief tangible. And as spring artists in residence, Las Nietas de Nonó insist that there is always creative potential, even in conditions of confinement and limitation with nothing but scraps to work with.

Black feminist approaches shape the exhibition's content and form. The project evolves over its six-month run, extending beyond the exhibition with artist residencies, research trips, and lectures. In spring 2024, all five artists will be invited to partake of UT Austin's substantial research facilities in support of their practices. This gesture toward reciprocity and acknowledgment of process is reflective of a curatorial commitment to avoid the extractivist dynamics that so often structure relationships between artists and institutions.

Organized by Nicole Smythe-Johnson, 2022-23 VAC curatorial fellow, with assistance from Melissa Fandos, 2023-24 VAC curatorial fellow.

Lead support for this exhibition is provided by the College of Fine Arts. Additional support provided by the Art Galleries at Black Studies, the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, and the College of Liberal Arts GRIDS Initiative.

If we are here..., installation view, Visual Arts Center, The University of Texas at Austin, September 22, 2023 – March 9, 2024. Photo: Alex Boeschstein.

Jan. 26, 2023 –
Mar. 2, 2024

Las Nietas de Nonó: In Residence

PROGRAMS

Feb. 10
Performance by Las
Nietas de Nonó
Austin

Over the past ten years, Afro borikua sibling duo Las Nietas de Nonó has evolved a creative process that evokes ancestral and communal memory through personal archives of the everyday. Their practice incorporates performance, found objects, organic materials, ecology, fiction, video, and installation. The specific character of places and the people that occupy them are critical to their process. The collective spends considerable time immersing themselves in a geographic, ecological, and social space before presenting work that responds to the context in which they find themselves. Each intervention becomes a playful, richly associative archive of a specific place at a specific time holding specific communities.

For their residency at the VAC, Las Nietas de Nonó have turned their attention to the multiple levels at which community operates. SCOBY (an acronym for symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast), itself a community of microorganisms, is a material they have been working with since 2016. Here, the SCOBY is made three-dimensional. Their shape references a Taino cemí that the siblings encountered as children, symbolizing community persistence through ancient and modern times. The gathering of SCOBY from kombucha brewers across Austin, construction materials from UT's building sites, and found objects from Campus Departmental Reuse and elsewhere has instigated engagement between the VAC and its community. Further, references to basketball, a carefully choreographed form of community activation for players and fans alike, link UT's sports-crazed campus, the VAC's vaulted gallery, and the neighborhood courts of Las Nietas de Nonó's childhood.

Organized by Nicole Smythe-Johnson, 2022-23 VAC curatorial fellow, with assistance from Melissa Fandos, 2023-24 VAC curatorial fellow.

Las Nietas de Nonó would like to thank their collaborators at Buddha's Brew Kombucha, KTonic Kombucha, Casper Fermentables, UT Surplus, the Department of Integrative Biology, and Texas Acoustics for their assistance in developing and realizing this project.

Las Nietas de Nonó:
In Residence, installation
view, Visual Arts Center,
The University of Texas at
Austin, January 26 –
March 2, 2024. Photo:
Melissa Nuñez.





Jan. 26, 2023 –
Mar. 2, 2024

Somos Recuerdos

ARTISTS

Alan Aguilera
Biankah “Bee” Cortez
Enrique Figueredo
Ariana Gomez
Gabriela “Gabo” Martinez
Julio Martinez
Fabiana Muñoz-Olmo
Eric “Drigo” Rodriguez
Rachel Salcido
Jesus Treviño
Marcus Venegas
Jennifer Teresa Villanueva

PROGRAMS

Feb. 29
Somos Recuerdos Lecture
with Sylvia Orozco

SOMOS is a collaborative of artists and researchers who examine Latinx heritage and ignite conversations about Latinidad. Latinidad, a dynamic and ever-evolving expression, is a term that voices Latin America’s interconnected and multifaceted culture. Translated roughly to “Latinoness”—the label seeks to encapsulate the shared attributes of Latin American people while being both broad and individual, often provoking paradoxical questions and complex issues about identity. Latinidad, as an idea, is presented in this exhibition as something open to criticism and challenge.

By offering a platform that emphasizes rediscovery, recollection, and reconciliation, SOMOS helps navigate the intricate web of Latinx identity, which is often fragmented due to its exploitative inception. Employing the varied mediums of sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, and projections, SOMOS artists materialize and communicate the unique experiences that weave the fabrics of their Latinidad: Aguilera, Drigo and Gabo continue the conversation regarding Indigeneity, Gomez creates poetic images of home and her relationship with family, Varela queers imagery of borders, Figueredo carves colonial history, Venegas draws the intersection of queer and Latinx identities, Salcido paints ambiguous landscapes of mestizaje, among others. Their work delves into the profound influence of how our memory, our narratives, and our histories shape identity within the realm of contemporary art. In doing so, they invite the audience to engage with the following questions:

What is our relationship to our landscape? What borders inhabit this landscape? What do I embody? Who do I embody?

In this exhibition, SOMOS artists embark on an evocative exploration, prompting viewers to navigate the rich tapestry of Latinidad, challenge preconceptions, and redefine their own understanding of identity and connection.

Organized by Alan Aguilera, Julio Martinez, and Fabiana Muñoz-Olmo, with Center Space Project. Center Space Project is supported, in part, by the Jedel Family Foundation.

Somos Recuerdos, installation view, Visual Arts Center, The University of Texas at Austin, January 26 –March 2, 2024. Photo: Melissa Nuñez.

UT Studio Art major and artist Mathew McIntyre debuted his latest ceramic work in the exhibition *Queer Sublime*.



Community Impact

EXHIBITIONS

Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork: Like a Breath of Fresh Water

Sept. 22 – Dec. 2, 2023

Queer Sublime

Sept. 22 – Dec. 2, 2023

A Well-trained Eye

Sept. 22, 2023 – Mar. 2, 2024

If we are here...

Sept. 22, 2023 – Mar. 2, 2024

Las Nietas de Nonó: In Residence

Jan. 26 – Mar. 2, 2024

Somos Recuerdos

Jan. 26 – Mar. 2, 2024

FIELDWORK & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Chatter in the Campo, Learning Tuscany 2023

Sept. 22 – Oct. 7, 2023

The Almost of What Was

Nov. 28 – Dec. 2, 2023

The RRK Collection: Wood Type 1828–2024

Jan. 26 – Feb. 10, 2024

Ensemble

Feb. 16 – Mar. 2, 2024

Soon Moon: An Eclipse Show

Apr. 5–9, 2024

STUDENT THESIS SHOWS

Sincerely, Everything: 2024 Senior Art Exhibition

Apr. 19 – May 11, 2024

All Else: 2024 Studio Art MFA Thesis Exhibition

Apr. 19 – May 11, 2024

Against the Current: 2024 Design MFA Thesis Exhibition

Apr. 19 – May 11, 2024

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception for Fall 2023 Exhibitions

Sept. 22, 2023

Heddatron (By Elizabeth Meriwether):

A Staged Reading

Sept. 22, 2023

Soft Sublime: A collaboration with MASS Gallery

Oct. 13, 2023

Artist Talk: Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork

Oct. 18, 2023

Center Space Project: Trick and Treat

Info Session

Oct. 24, 2023

Book Launch for *Social Fabric: Art and Activism in Contemporary Brazil*

Nov. 6, 2023

Screening: Las Nietas de Nonó's *FOODTOPIA: después de todo territorio*

Nov. 16, 2023

The Landscape of AI: Danielle Dean & Samantha Shorey in Conversation, in Partnership with The Contemporary Austin

Nov. 29, 2023

Holiday Party and Opening of *i'm not a kid*

Dec. 1, 2023

Opening Reception for Spring 2024 Exhibitions

Jan. 26, 2024

Performance by Las Nietas de Nonó

Feb. 10, 2024

Nothing #51: UTA

Feb. 16, 2024

Broad: Say Less

Feb. 17, 2024

Discussion with Tsedaye Makonnen and Andrea Achi

Feb. 26, 2024

Somos Recuerdos Lecture with Sylvia Orozco

Feb. 29, 2024

Opening reception for *Soon Moon: An Eclipse Show*

Apr. 5, 2024

Opening Reception for 2024 Student Exhibitions

Apr. 19, 2024

BY THE NUMBERS

182 artists and students showed their work in **13 exhibitions** and participated in **10 public programs** organized by **17 curators** at the VAC during the 2023–24 season. We collaborated with **28 partner institutions** at UT and in Austin to bring our ideas to life. More than **8,000 people from around the globe** saw an exhibition or participated in a program at the VAC. **10%** of our visitors are in **primary school**. **30%** are **Gen Z**. Another **30%** are **millennials**. **20%** of our audience is **Gen X**. And **10%** are old enough to have seen the **Beatles on Ed Sullivan**. **50%** of **VAC visitors live in Austin**, leading us to believe that the VAC is a vacation destination for out-of-towners. **23,000 people follow the VAC** on Instagram and Facebook, and **69,000 folks double-tapped** our content. That means they like us. We dropped Twitter this year. You can say we're X's now.

VAC Spotlight

PEOPLE

The VAC is made up of an incredible team of creatives and administrators. This year was a transition year for us, and we want to thank all the incredible folks who made the 2023–24 season possible.

MacKenzie Stevens, VAC's former director, bid farewell to Austin last summer, but not without getting the incredible *Social Fabric* book and Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork exhibition across the finish line.

Lauz Bechelli took the reigns as interim director following MacKenzie's departure and led the VAC's efforts to produce all the exhibitions and public programs featured in this report. We're thankful to Lauz for ensuring the VAC reached its full potential during this time.

Here are some of the other folks who worked behind the scenes to produce VAC projects:

Adrian Aguilera, Assistant Preparator
Vincent Boarini, Install crew member
Melissa Fandos, 2023–24 Curatorial Fellow
María Emilia Fernandez, 2021–22 Curatorial Fellow
Rowan Howe, Exhibitions Manager
Michael Hernandez, Install crew member
Jennifer Irving, Communications Specialist
Nicole Smythe–Johnson, 2022–23 Curatorial Fellow
Kate Joly, Administrative Associate
Melissa Nuñez, Photographer
Sebastian Turner Scott, Install crew member
Marc Silva, Chief Preparator
Kaya Halil Sumer, Assistant Preparator
Hunter Thomas, Designer
Ariel Woods, Gallery and Education Liaison

The VAC brought **Max Fields** to lead the team as director in April. Here's a little about him:

Max Fields is director of the Visual Arts Center at The University of Texas at Austin. He has curated, co-curated, and organized over thirty exhibitions of contemporary art, including the 2022 FotoFest Biennial *If I Had a Hammer* with Steven Evans and Amy Sadao, the 2021 Texas Biennial exhibition *In Place of an Index* with Ryan Dennis and Evan Garza, and *Gareth Long: Kidnappers Foil* at the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston. Fields has held curatorial and administrative positions at FotoFest, Cynthia Woods

Mitchell Center for the Arts, Institute for Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and Suplex Projects. Fields's exhibitions and projects have received attention and reviews from publications including *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Art in America*, *Mousse Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *Aperture*, and *Texas Monthly*. His writing on art and photography has appeared in numerous exhibition catalogs, magazines, and journals. Fields is a graduate of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

The VAC brought on **Melissa Fandos** to serve as the VAC's assistant curator following her successful curatorial fellowship in 2023. Here's a bit about her:

Melissa Fandos is an arts administrator from St. Louis, Missouri. She is the assistant curator at the Visual Arts Center at The University of Texas at Austin. Her research considers how history, time, power, and people intervene and overlap in the natural landscape. In 2023, she co-curated *Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork: Like a Breath of Fresh Water* with MacKenzie Stevens (Visual Arts Center); provided curatorial assistance to Nicole Smythe–Johnson on *If we are here...* and *Las Nietas de Nonó: In Residence* (2023–24, Visual Arts Center), and served on the project team for the 2019 public art triennial *Counterpublic* (St. Louis). Fandos has held administrative and curatorial support roles at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, the Luminary, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. She received a BA in English from Grinnell College and received an MA in Art History from The University of Texas at Austin.

And we're thrilled to have PhD in Art History candidate **Maysa Martins** as the 2024–25 curatorial fellow. Check out what she's done:

Maysa Martins is a PhD student in the Art History department at The University of Texas at Austin and the 2024–25 Visual Arts Center curatorial fellow. Her research focuses on the modern and contemporary art of the Black Atlantic, centering on the production of self-taught artists, vernacular aesthetic strategies, and the role of Afro-Atlantic religions and spiritualities within artistic and political modernities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Martins has held curatorial fellowships at the Blanton Museum, the Art Galleries at Black Studies (AGBS), and a position in the education department of Museu Afro Brasil—Emanoel de Araújo.

INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The Visual Arts Center relies on partnerships and collaborations to expand our reach and strengthen our impact on the communities we serve.

The Visual Arts Center partnered with and received support from the **College of Fine Arts**, **Art Galleries at Black Studies**, the **John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies**, **Planet Texas 2050**, and the **College of Liberal Arts Grids Initiative** to promote and produce the exhibition *If we are here...* The VAC partnered with **Center Space Project** to produce the exhibitions *Queer Sublime* and *Somos Recuerdos*, both of which were supported by the **Jedel Family Foundation**. The *Queer Sublime* team partnered with **Mass Gallery** to produce an auxiliary exhibition and public program. Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork's exhibition benefitted from a partnership with **Meyer Sound** and support from the **Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation**. The exhibition *A Well-trained Eye* inspired partnerships with **Good Systems**, the **Department of Theatre and Dance**, **The Contemporary Austin**, and the **Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation**, with support from **Humanities Texas**, and the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. The 2023–24 Fieldwork Project exhibitions were born from collaborations with the **Rob Roy Kelly American Wood Type Collection**, **School of Design and Creative Technologies**, and the **Print and Photography & Media** areas in the **Department of Art and Art History**, as well as multiple **University of Texas** staff and faculty members. The 2024 MFA and BFA thesis exhibitions were presented in collaboration with the **Department of Art and Art History** and **School of Design and Creative Technologies** at **The University of Texas at Austin**.

Assistant Preparator Kaya Halil Sumer working with a SCOPY grown by Casper Fermentables for the exhibition *Las Nietas de Nonó: In Residence*



IN THE NEWS

The VAC made headlines this year in multiple arts and cultural outlets. Below are a few highlights.

Art preparators play critical, collaborative role in bringing an artist's vision to life in Visual Art Center's galleries, Jennifer Irving, *Arts Next*

“The relationship of trust among artists, curators and preparators is what makes shows in a space like the VAC so very special. Next time you're in the gallery, pay close attention to all the things you don't usually see: filled-in holes where previous work hung, wires woven in through the ceiling for different lights, even that flawless fresh coat of paint.

Well-trained Eyes Stayed Focused on the Big Picture, Johnny Holden, *UT News*

“The exhibition is a fascinating and eclectic mix of pieces that span almost two decades. (That's right. We have been living with AI in various forms for longer than we think.)

'Somos Recuerdos' student-led exhibit explores Latinx identities, history, Joey Clark, *The Daily Texan*

“In spite of recent state legislation banning diversity, equity and inclusion offices at public universities, [Studio Art senior Julio] Martinez said media and art portraying Indigenous and Latinx people can reverse stereotypes and add complexity to people's understanding.

Top Five: February 29, 2024, #1 Las Nietas de Nonó, and Somos Recuerdos, Editors, *Glasstire.com*

Visual Arts Center features students' wood type projects, Sabrina Ye, *The Daily Texan*

“[Student Avery] Fox said she hopes the exhibition inspires people to appreciate works made without technology.

University of Texas Names Max Fields as Director of the Visual Arts Center, Jessica Fuentes, *Glasstire.com*

PUBLISHED BY THE VISUAL ARTS CENTER

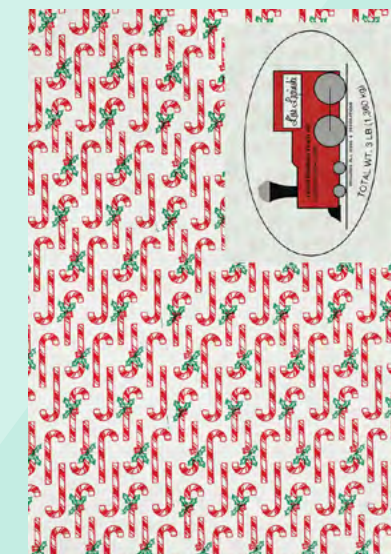
The team at the Visual Arts Center released four publications during the 2023–24 season.



Social Fabric: Art and Activism in Contemporary Brazil

Visual Arts Center, UT Press and Tower Books, 2024, Ed. María Emilia Fernandez, Adele Nelson, and MacKenzie Stevens

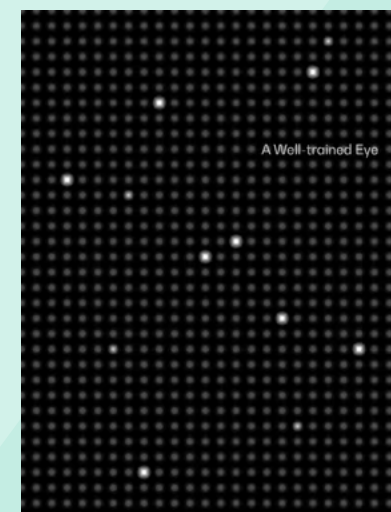
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Lisa Lapinski: Miss Swiss

Visual Arts Center and Inventory Press, 2024, Ed. MacKenzie Stevens

[ORDER ►](#)



A Well-trained Eye

Visual Arts Center, 2023, Ed. María Emilia Fernandez

[DOWNLOAD ►](#)



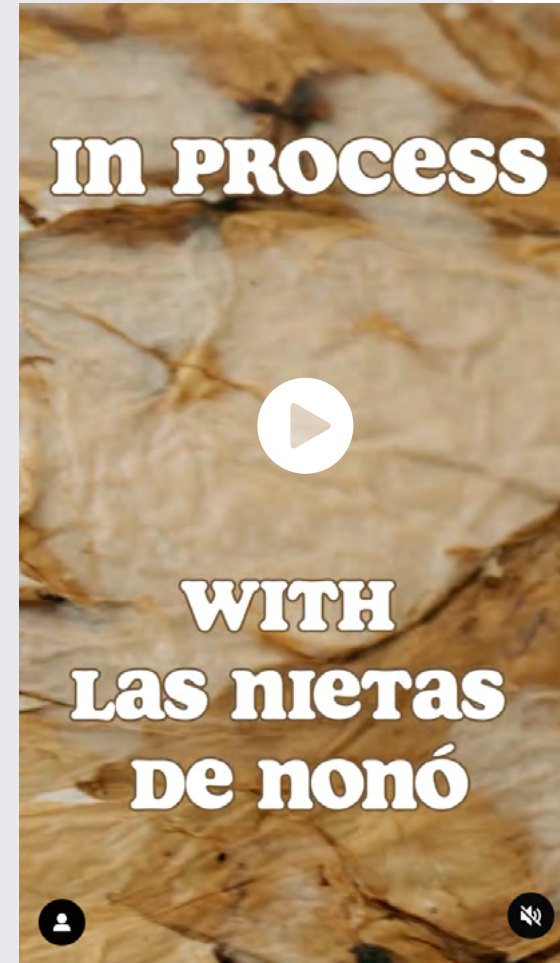
Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork: Like a Breath of Fresh Water

Visual Arts Center, 2023, Ed. Melissa Fandos

[DOWNLOAD ►](#)

THE VAC GOES VIRAL

To connect with people beyond Austin and Texas, the VAC used the Internet to promote the work in our galleries. Check out a few of our favorite online moments.



The VAC has a dedicated online fan base:

 6,257 followers on Instagram

 11,940 followers on Facebook

 69,000 interactions on VAC social media

 74,000 visitors to the VAC website



On the opening night of the exhibition *If We Are Here...*, a visitor watches artist Tsedaye Makonnen's video work *When Drowning is the Best Option feat. Astral Sea I* (2019).



A guest views Esther Hovers' work on AI surveillance systems, *False Positives* series, comprised of inkjet prints, wallpaper, and pen drawings, as featured in Assistant Curator Maria Emilia Fernandez's exhibition, *A Well-trained Eye*.

2023-24 Support

\$50,000 and above

Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation

\$25,000 – \$49,999

Jedel Family Foundation

\$10,000 – \$24,999

The Marilyn and Carl Thoma Foundation

Judi L. Regal

Planet Texas 2050

Mendez Wood DM

Guimarães Rosa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil through the Consulate General of Brazil in Houston

Galeria Nara Roesler LLC

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Kathleen Irvin Loughlin

Suzanne Deal Booth

Allison Ayers

Humanities Texas

Art Galleries at Black Studies

John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies

Good Systems–Bridging Barriers

The University of Texas at Austin, Texas Research

\$1,000 – \$4,999

Center for Latin American Visual Studies

Laura Hunter

The Tapeats Fund

C.C. Marsh

John Newman

Jeanne and Michael Klein

Anna R. Wulfe

Amanda Kadinov

Steven Yanagisawa

Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation

Up to \$999

Dr. Ramón H. Rivera–Servera

UT Austin Departments

Department of Art and Art History

College of Fine Arts

School of Design and Creative Technologies

Gender, Race, Indigeneity, Disability, and Sexuality Studies Initiative

Center for Women's and Gender Studies

Humanities Institute

Jackson School of Geosciences

Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, Brazil Center

Looking Ahead

Sept. 20 – Dec. 7, 2024

Una Luz: Photography Under Confinement in Venezuela

Curated by Violette Bule, Maysa Martins and Michel Otaeyk

For this highly collaborative exhibition, VAC Artist-in-Residence Violette Bule presents photos, video, and archival materials to explore how images spark conversations on creative agency and autonomy.

Fred Schmidt–Arenales: IT IS A GOOD PROJECT AND SHOULD BE BUILT

Organized by Max Fields

Traveling from the Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, NY

The Texas debut of Fred Schmidt–Arenales' video installation focuses on bureaucratic processes underpinning the development of storm surge infrastructure on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Retracing the Rubicon

Zahra Martinez, Fionayuko Forbes, and Farah Narejo; organized by Center Space Project

In this multidisciplinary group exhibition, UT students and alumni ask, "How can communities move on with grief and trauma together rather than moving away from it in isolation?"

COMMONS

A free and open-to-the-public community space

The VAC invites the UT community and members of the public to meet, study, perform, and skill share in this free-to-use community space.

Jan. 24 – Mar. 7, 2025

St. Elmo Artist Residency Exhibition: Pablo Tut

Organized by Melissa Fandos

Held in conjunction with the 2024–25 St. Elmo Artist-in-Residence program, this solo exhibition features new work by artist Pablo Tut centered on Indigenous histories of the Yucatan.

Transcendence: A Century of Black Queer Ecstasy

Curated by Phillip Townsend

Organized by AGBS Curator Phillip Townsend, this multi-site exhibition highlights visual representations of Black queer ecstasy that transcend its historical and ideological opacity.

Zalika Azim: Blood Memories

Organized by Max Fields

2023–24 St. Elmo Fellow Zalika Azim unpacks histories of Black migration and belonging in the American South in her Austin solo debut comprised of film, sound sculptures, works on paper, and site-specific performance.

Blackland Prairies: Austin's Black Geographies

Curated by Melissa Fandos and Maysa Martins

Co-curators Melissa Fandos and Maysa Martins bring together artworks by Texas-based artists with archival materials to spark an expansive conversation about placemaking and displacement in Austin and throughout the Gulf Coast Region.

The Modern Cowboy

Curated by Mia Johnson and Anjali Krishna; organized by Center Space Project.

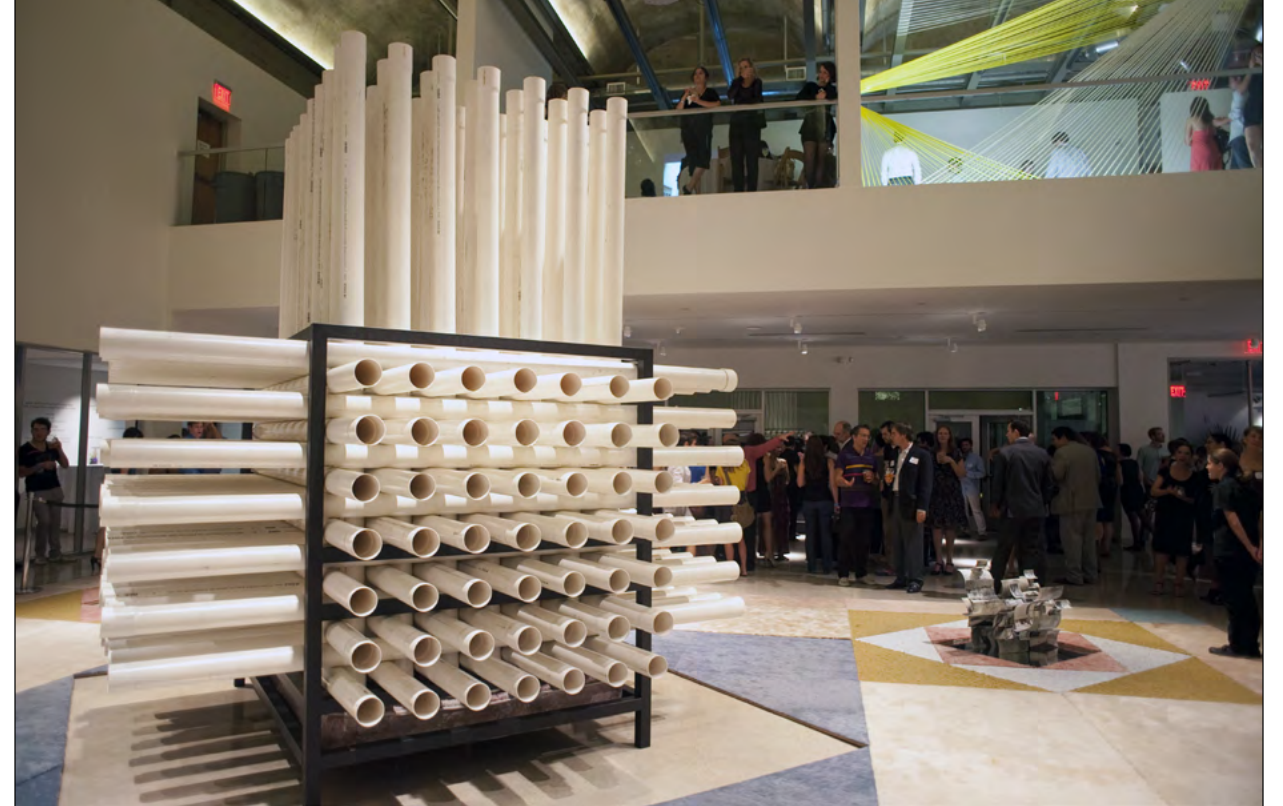
Using the mythology of the American cowboy as a starting point, this student-curated exhibition speculates on the future of Austin as a rapidly developing city and southern cultural center.

Apr. 18 – May 10, 2025

Studio Thesis Exhibitions

Organized by Maysa Martins

Graduating Studio Art students present their thesis projects, showcasing years of process and development in a refined gallery presentation.



Visual Arts Center grand opening celebration, 2010

The VAC is celebrating 15 years of dynamic exhibitions, engaging public programs, and student-focused collaboration in 2025.

Support our 15th Anniversary Annual Fund, and stay tuned for the upcoming retrospective exhibition *VAC@15* in the fall of 2025.

Scan the QR to support the 15th Anniversary Annual Fund!

Your tax-deductible gift ensures artists, curators, students, and educators can experiment, test ideas, and take risks through public presentations at the Visual Arts Center.



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