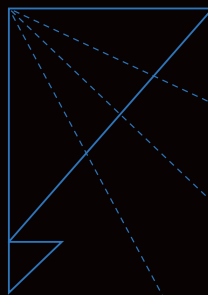
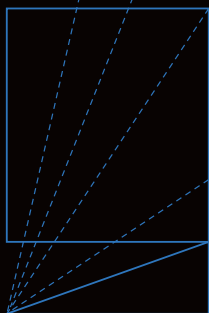
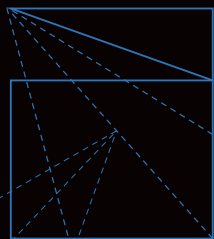
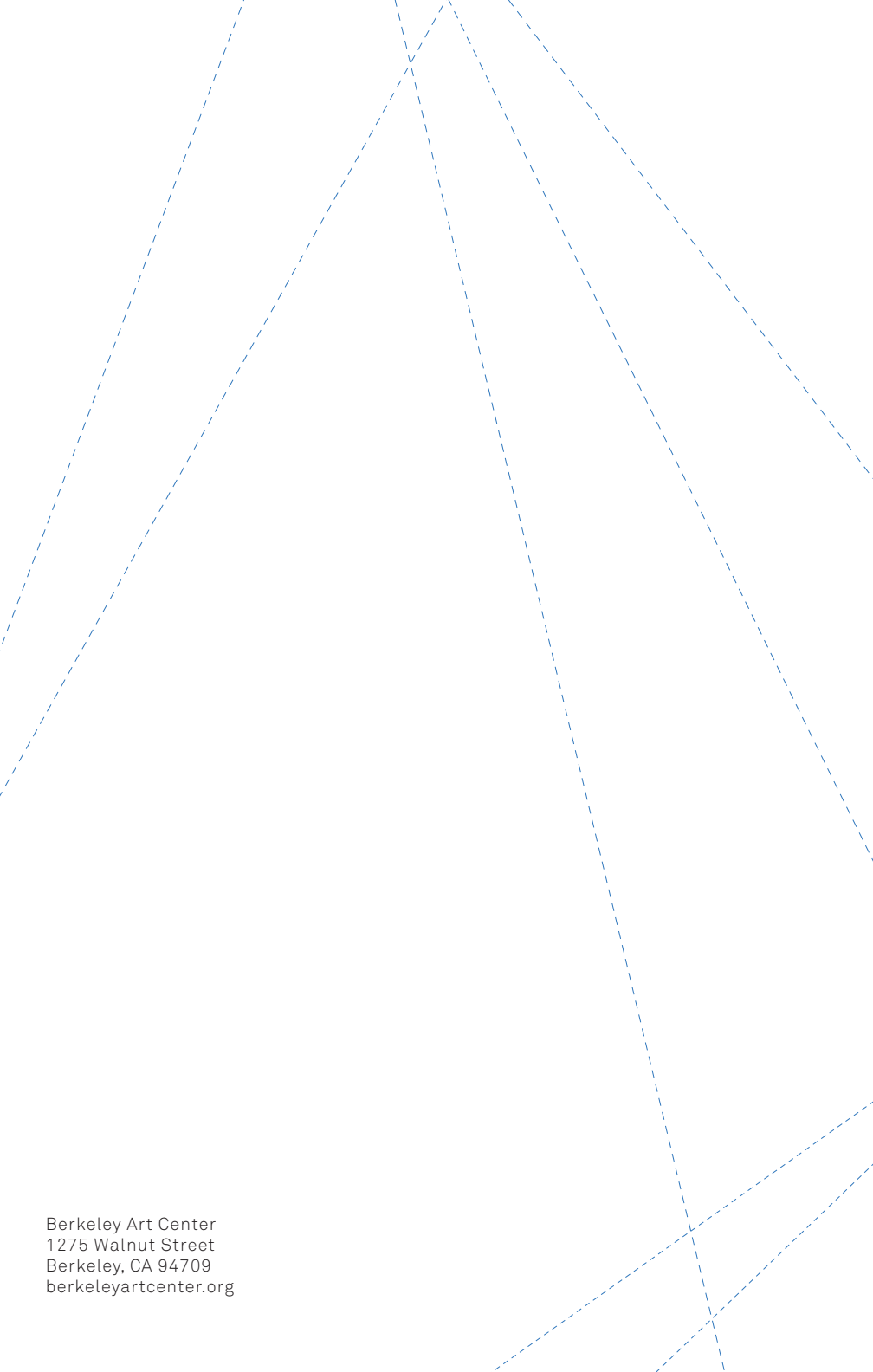


BERKELEY
ART CENTER
THE AGILITY
PROJECTS

MAY 21–
JULY 17
2016

I LOOK FOR CLUES IN YOUR DREAMS





Berkeley Art Center
1275 Walnut Street
Berkeley, CA 94709
berkeleyartcenter.org

**BERKELEY
ART CENTER
THE AGILITY
PROJECTS**

**MAY 21–
JULY 17
2016**



I LOOK FOR CLUES IN YOUR DREAMS
CURATED BY HEATHER MARX







CURATOR'S STATEMENT: HEATHER MARX

Like you, I have a deep attachment to California. I am American and I am Californian. It took decades for me to understand why I identified myself in this way and have been so sensitive to this place.

The majority of my family is from the Midwest. After my parents married they began their new life in Malibu and slowly worked their way down the Southern California coast. Many other family members followed and settled in various areas up and down the Pacific Coast. The social and political energy, in addition to the welcoming climate of California were more favorable to their lifestyles and drew them westward. My family's history is not dissimilar from so many who moved west in search of new dreams personified by the vastness and diversity of the landscape, people, lifestyle and promise. This unique environment was—and continues to be—a part of my family's ecosystem and inspires me daily; we are where we live. *I Look for Clues in Your Dreams* is our collective story.

The seed was planted when I saw Chris Duncan's sun prints at a satellite art fair during Art Basel Miami Beach in 2014. Duncan places large pieces of fabric over windows in his home, or wraps fabric around wood discs that he leaves on the roofs of borrowed warehouses throughout Oakland, and 'harvests' them seasonally. He then stretches them over frames like canvas. His primary medium is the sun. I was instantly struck by how so simply and magnificently Duncan was able to capture what I felt was the mood, drama, action, and beauty of Northern California and it haunted me for months.

This encounter refocused my attention away from my personal history, into a larger collective one. I began to see a pattern emerging among artists who are working independently from one another, yet whose artworks are informed by a spirituality that is influenced by the legend of the American West and, specifically, Northern California. Their work is primarily abstract, but instantly recognizable as landscape and is either directly sourced from the natural environment, situated within it, or produced by it.

I had been working with Amber Jean Young and Victoria Wagner around the time I was in Miami, hosting online thematic exhibitions of their work. In their artwork, each recreates a sense of place, memory and vibrations of the landscape that inspires them. Whether it be primarily through the use of textile as in Young's densely stitched quilts of Bay Area skies. or the reclamation of redwood and oak as in Wagner's gem like oil painted wood rocks, each evokes the landscape's primordial vibration.

Kristin Farr's bold geometric paintings and wall murals were on my radar for years. Her "art for everyone" aesthetic and regular activation of outdoor spaces and interventions, was the perfect choice for Berkeley Art Center's magical outdoor area leading into the gallery. You are greeted by the gleeful kaleidoscope of psychedelic magic hecksagons installed high on the bridge posts.

The mixed media work of Leo Bersamina and Jenny Sharaf struck deep chords with me as well; their work is also defined by place and shaped in different ways by the mythos of California. Bersamina's work translates his love of surfing into his paintings and sculptures. He sources materials from beaches in Marin and Sonoma County to weave into his driftwood sculptures and painted rock installations which he often pairs with glittering abstractions on canvas that mimic the dappling light on the oceans crest. Sharaf maps her signature swirling bright acrylic paint onto vintage Playboy and American West magazine pages, and textiles, to explore California myth making and its relationship to femininity and an idealized California aesthetic.

I view these six artists as seekers and explorers. They uphold the Bay Area's rich visual and social history by including elements of psychedelia, community, innovation and a reverence and harnessing of the landscape to make their work. Their artworks in this show are rich in place, and in the pursuit of visual magic. Symphonies of color, light, pattern and natural materials evoke the area's elemental spirit and force that is born from the mythology of the West and its seductive spell.

By looking for clues in these artists' works I hope to tell a story about this powerful and complex "dream" of Northern California and its bewitching hold on our collective imagination.

June 2016

**LEO
BERSAMINA**

Leo Bersamina was born in San Francisco, California and grew up predominantly on the coast, just south of the city. Bersamina began studying studio art in Santa Cruz, California. Later he attended San Francisco State University to finish his BA with an emphasis in Studio Art. He then received an MFA in Painting at Yale School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut.

Upon graduation from Yale, he lived in New York City. Bersamina later returned to California to teach Studio Art at UC Berkeley. He also has taught at Yale, Stanford, Pont-Aven School of Contemporary Art, Santa Rosa Junior College, and Diablo Valley College (where he currently is a full-time instructor). Bersamina continues to exhibit nationally and internationally, and currently resides just north of San Francisco.

Artist Statement:

I am an ardent observer of life's visual rhythms and fleeting moments. I am especially interested in the relationships and patterns that we create during our lives that over time come to define us, and make us definable to others.

I look for patterns we create through our living: relationships with forces of nature, and models created through encounters with other people, experiences, travel, shelter, struggle, habit, and with our own genetic makeup.

leobersamina.net









CHRIS DUNCAN

6



Chris Duncan is an Oakland-based artist who employs repetition and accumulation as a basis for experiments in visual and sound based media. Often in flux between maximal and minimal, Duncan's work is a constant balancing act of positive or negative, loud or quite, solitary or participatory and tends to lead towards questions regarding perception, experience and transcendence. Outside of his studio practice he organizes events and runs a small artist book press and record label called LAND AND SEA with his wife. Duncan earned his BFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts and his Masters Degree in Art Practice from Stanford University. He is represented by Halsey McKay Gallery in East Hampton New York.

Under the moniker OFFING, Duncan creates open ended sound paintings rooted in the accumulation of simple tones made from tuning forks and harmonicas combined with field recordings of natural phenomena. On Sunday, May 29, 2016 Duncan performed in the gallery during HEAVY MELLOW, along with musician Sean Smith (LFZ, Stimulus Progression).

christopherrobinduncan.virb.com





**KRISTIN
FARR**

Kristin Farr is based in the East Bay and is well known for creating colorful, gleeful, geometric art for the public. She's painted large-scale murals in downtown areas across the world, and her abstract paintings inspired by Pennsylvania Dutch folk art take on a new context in the urban landscape. She applies her signature joyful style to fashion, prints and a free iOS app, #FarrOut. She personifies the art for everyone aesthetic, a sense of the California rush, and represents a very generous and open practice.

@kristinfarr

Kristin's Clues:

What is on your playlist at the studio?

Reality TV.

Does your art respond specifically to literature, or any particular authors?

No just folk artists.

What place(s) do you go to refresh, or re-set?

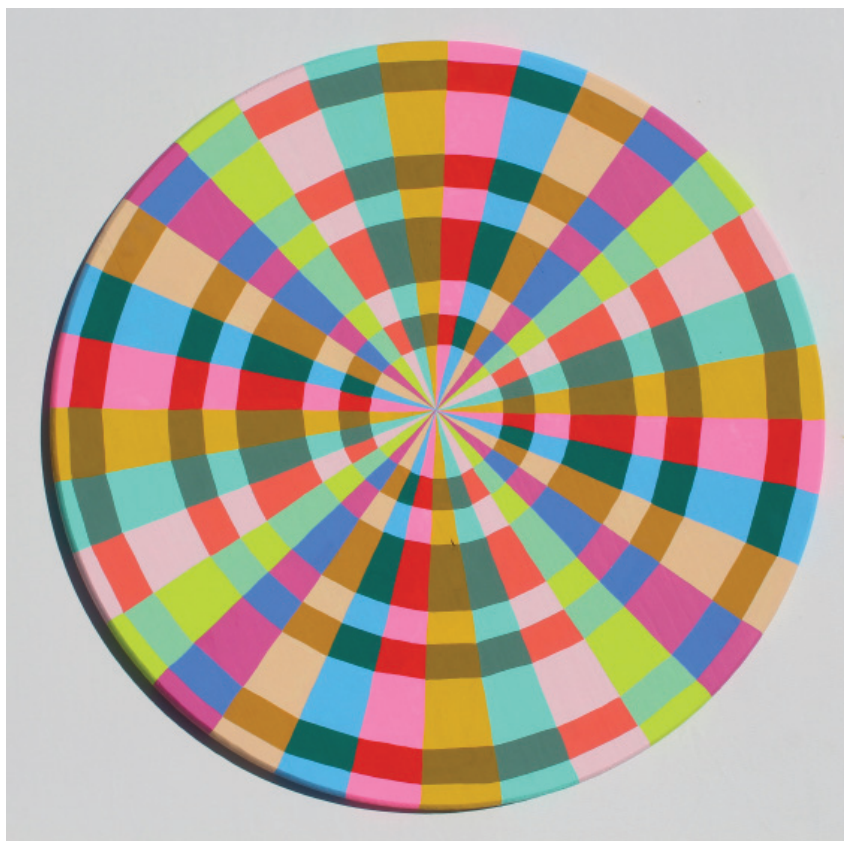
The studio!

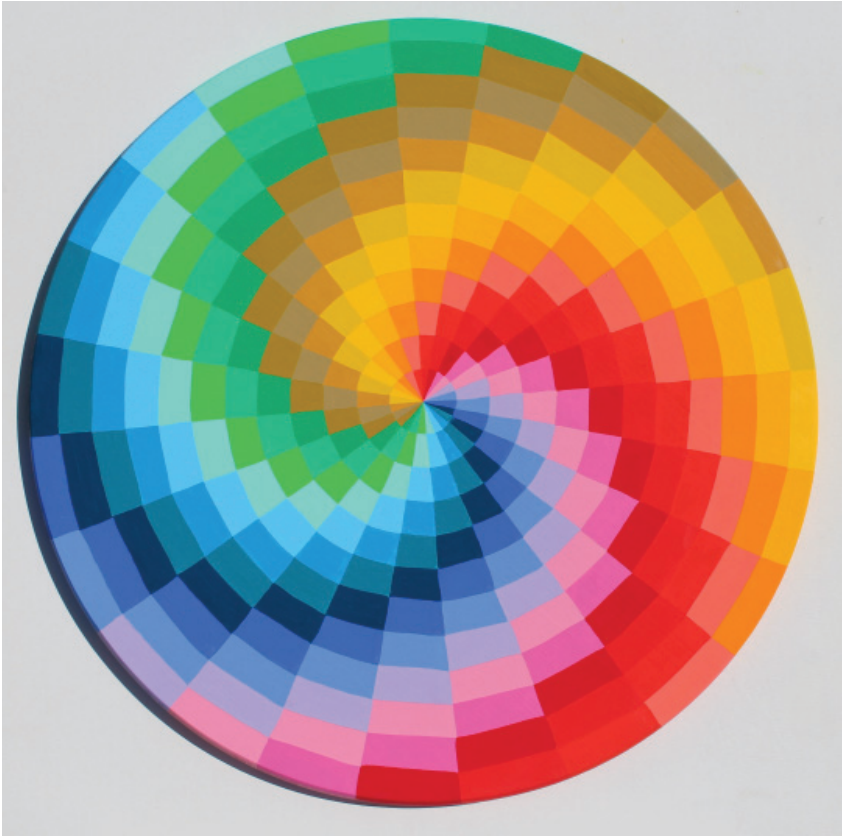
What films inspire/encapsulate your California dream?

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure

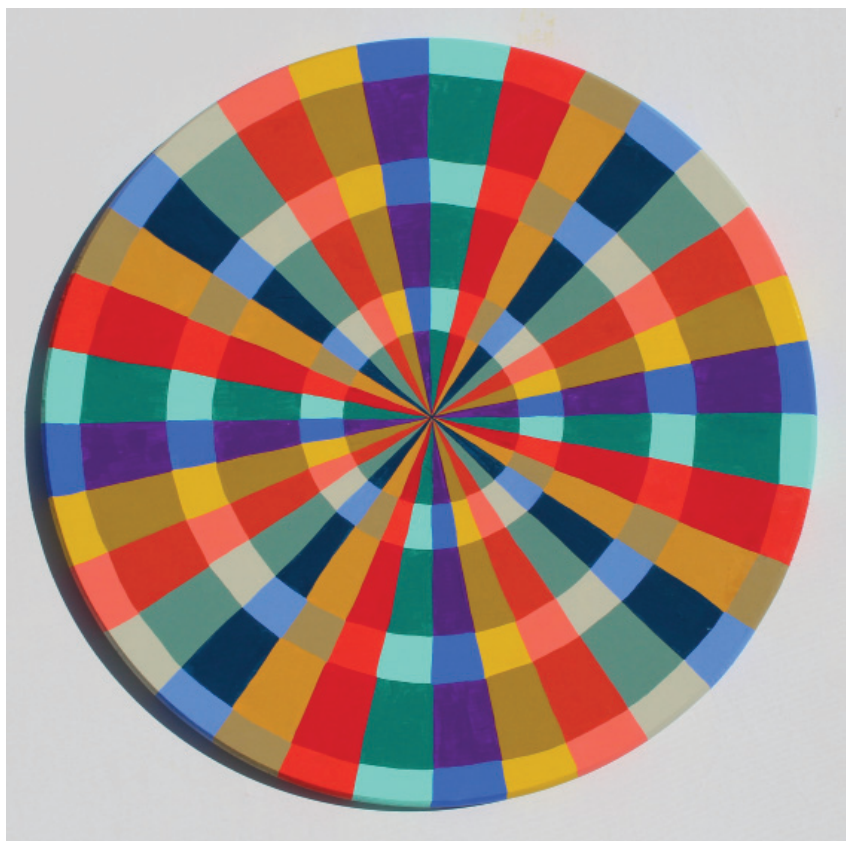
How does the California landscape effect you and your art?

The colors, the sunshine, the fog, the proximity to the ocean and the edge of the continent.















**JENNY
SHARAF**

Jenny Sharaf is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in San Francisco, CA. Her paintings, installations, videos, and happenings celebrate process, while reflecting on art history, feminism and abstraction. Sharaf is strongly influenced by the Hollywood vernacular, in part because of her family's legacy in the film and television business and growing up in Los Angeles. The mythology of the California girl leads the way to tell a complex and fragmented narrative of art making in the 21st century.

Sharaf also has a strong curatorial practice, focusing around community engagement and promoting the arts in San Francisco. Last year, Jenny founded The Lab's 24-Hour Telethon, raising funds to save the avant-garde art program in the Mission. Most recently, she developed an exhibition for Creativity Explored that explores abstraction and collaboration. She is the founder and director of Parking Lot Art Fair, San Francisco's rogue art happening and continues to produce art events in the Bay Area and beyond.

jennysharaf.com

Jenny's Clues:

What is on your playlist at the studio?

I usually have a music free studio environment. I really enjoy silence when making my work.

What place(s) do you go to refresh, or re-set?

Palm Springs, NYC & Russian River


What films inspire/encapsulate your California dream?

The Graduate





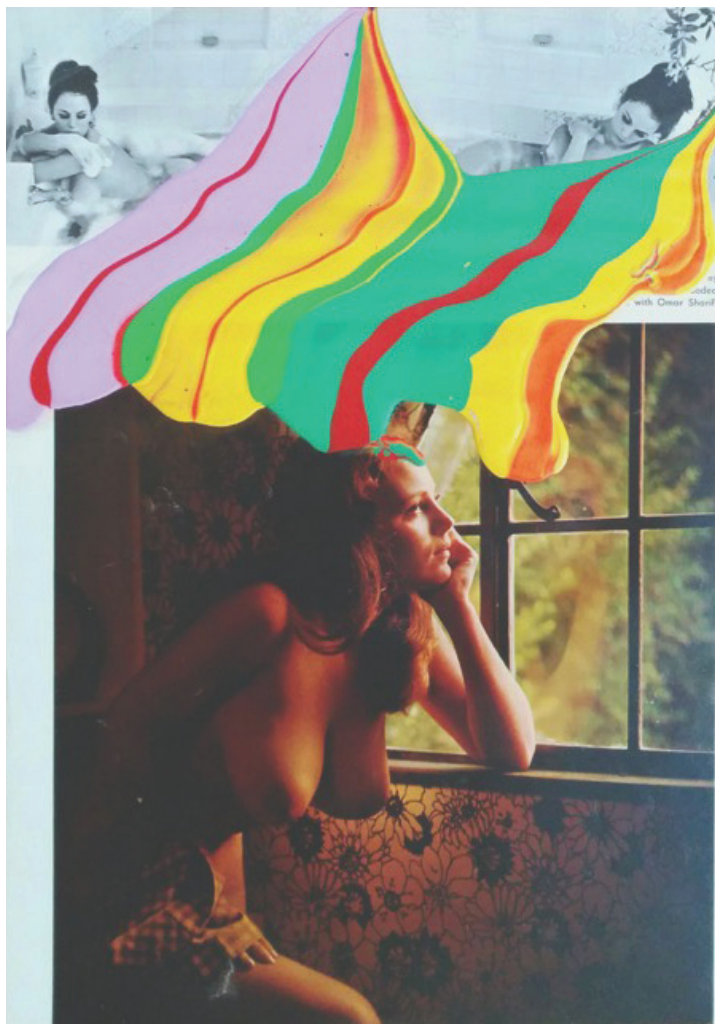


A woman is shown from the waist up, wearing a large, black, stylized mask that covers her face and head. The mask has a wide, open mouth and is decorated with vertical stripes of bright colors: pink, yellow, cyan, and magenta. Her body is covered in intricate, colorful body paint designs, including swirling patterns in green, orange, red, and black. She is holding a black object, possibly a brush or a small mask, near her waist. The background is a plain, light color.

*playboy
presents a
fresh twist
on the pro-
vocative art of
body painting:
how to tell a
bird by her plumage*

SOMETIME in the mid-1960s, an imaginative West Coast hippie reproduced her trip in colorful, mystic designs on face, feet and torso. Faster than you can say commercialization, scenes as dissimilar as middle-aged Long Island parties and the East Village's Electric Circus were filled with psychedelic epidermis, and today you can buy a cute little bucket of Coty Originals Body Paint in almost any Iowa drugstore. On these six pages, West Coast PLAYBOY photographer Mario Casilli spoofs the fad by showing the images nine different girl types might fashion on themselves to illustrate their vocations or avocations. "As with all great art," Mario deadpans, "the crucial thing in body painting is to envision the beauty beneath the surface."

Brush On Fashion



**AMBER JEAN
YOUNG**

Amber Jean Young lives and creates in Berkeley, California.

She is a Northern California native and was raised in a rural mountain community south of San Francisco. In 2008 she earned a Post Baccalaureate Certificate, and subsequently a Master of Fine Arts in 2010 from San Francisco Art Institute. She has exhibited locally and nationally, including at Subliminal Projects, Michael Rosenthal Gallery, Ever Gold Gallery, Robert Berman Gallery, Berkeley Art Center, ArtPadSF, Root Division, StoreFrontLab. She is a 2012 Djerassi Resident Artist Program Fellow, and 2012 SECA Art Award nominee.

Artist Statement

Amber Jean Young's artwork is a meditation on Northern Californian earth and sky. A third generation Bay Area native, Young's work is influenced by her upbringing in the unincorporated Santa Cruz Mountains, and her life surrounded by the Northern California landscape. Young photographs nature scenes and sky, prints the images onto fabric, and uses the fabric to build quilts, sculptures, and mixed media installations. Quilting has a long history as a domestic necessity and as a vehicle for fostering community. The work references this history, exposing the intimate relationship between the artist and the imagery she utilizes.

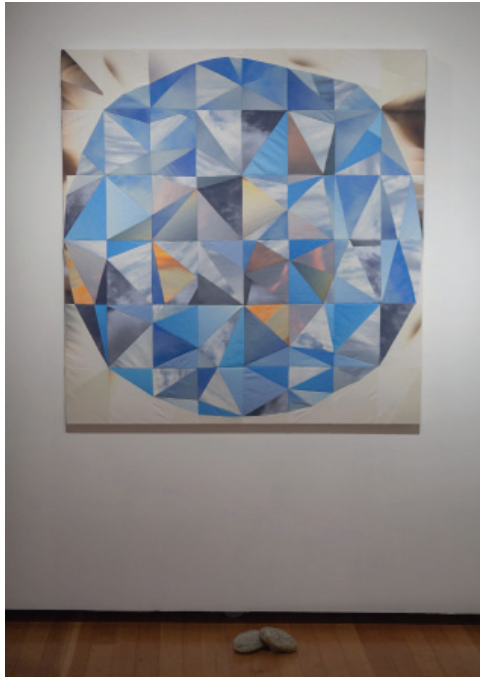
Using various techniques among bodies of work, Young builds abstract environments. The work, both alien and recognizable, is simultaneously specific and abstract. It suggests an otherworldly, unreal environment while being composed of captured imagery of definitive moments and places. The collision of distinguishable imagery with a fragmented presentation creates ambiguity and a slippage into abstraction. The resulting composition is recognizable but fantastical, familiar but garbled. Each piece, it's own world, is built to highlight these dueling experiences.

amberjeanyoung.com









**VICTORIA
WAGNER**

Victoria Wagner, who migrated at eighteen from the Nevada desert to Northern California, contrasts nature and industry in her gem-like sculptures, which are hand-planed from fallen coastal trees and painted with oils.

Wagner also addresses this dichotomy in her installations and paintings, which explore transitions of abstracted sound and light from her surroundings. Wagner's work is physically in tune with her local landscape — she harvests the wood rocks in and around her home of Occidental, CA. Her paintings are inspired by the sun, sound, and vibrational pull of the forest while also commenting on the loss of personal reflection and direct experience in the mechanical age as natural resources are diminished by collective inaction. Wagner creates a psychedelic experience that reflects the landscape of Northern California, but also announces its darker and less romantic side.

victoriawagner.com

Victoria's Clues:

What is on your playlist at the studio?

Depends on the week, but recently: Clifton Chenier, Toro y Moi, Chris Stapleton, Anderson.Paak, Julien Baker, Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros, Chance the Rapper, Drake, Beach House, Bjork and a bunch of podcasts.

Does your art respond specifically to literature, or any particular authors?

Podcasts and audiobooks are big part of my practice, but I also love silence. In the quiet studio moments, I can ruminate on something that I've recently read, and some books are more visual by nature. Some of the impetus behind my creative process is fueled by authors like Rebecca Solnit, Margaret Livingstone and Victoria Finlay. Non-fiction pieces about the construct of the brain and our visual capacities as well as our capacity to overcome trials, seem to get me excited in the studio.

What place(s) do you go to refresh, or re-set?

Nothing like getting tossed by a wave, love it.

What films inspire/encapsulate your California dream?

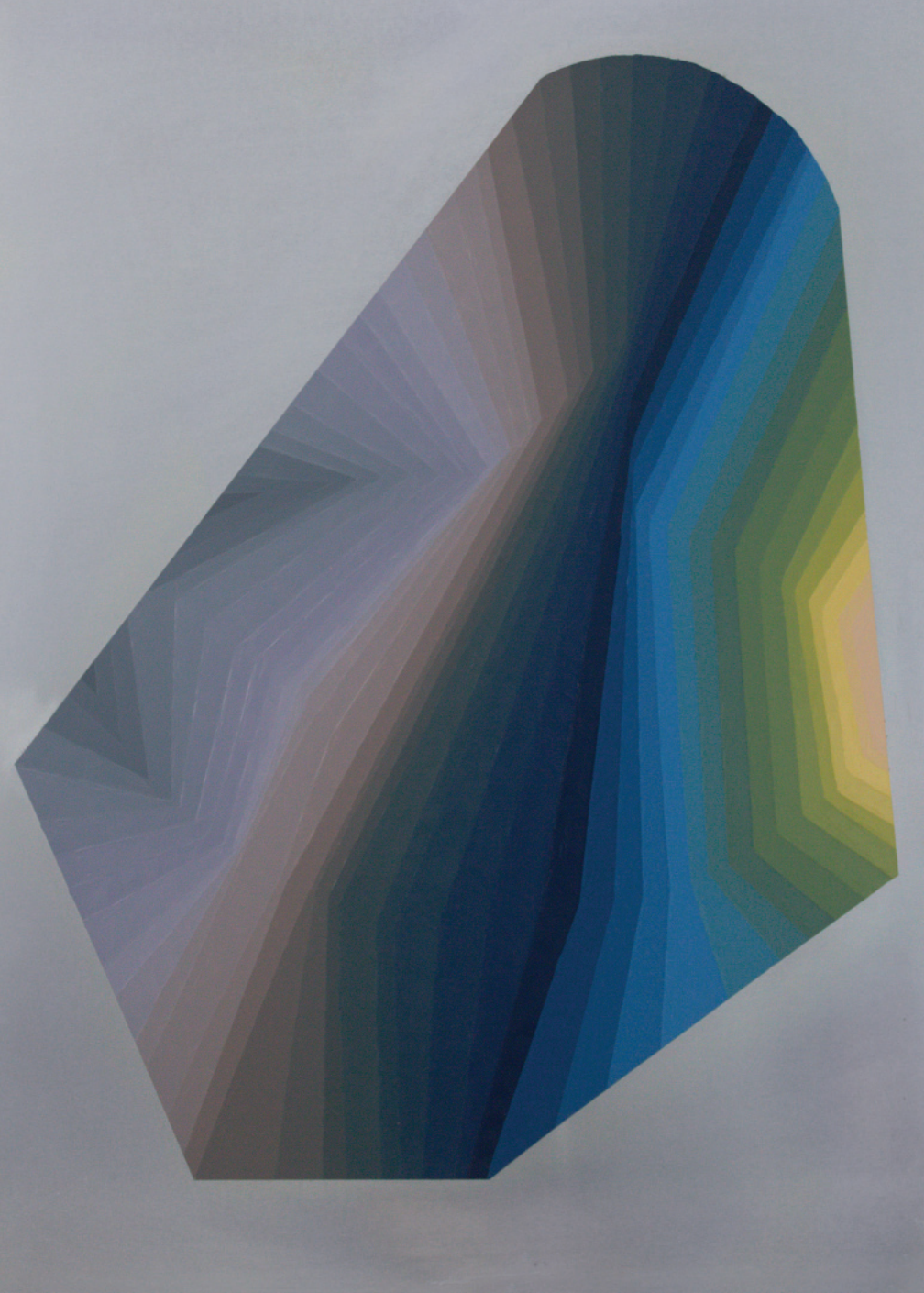
California classics with wit, style and somewhat existential humor: *Harold and Maude*, *Petulia*, *Herbie the Love Bug* and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*.

How does the California landscape effect you and your art?

I work with downed trees, so I cannot help but be in direct conversation—from the moss and wood grain to the contrast inherent to sky/tree line horizon, the layers of sediment and leaves—I feel very fortunate that a lot of my work is done outdoors. The forest is a very meditative place for me and gives me the stamina for the buzzing of tools and intense focus of pattern-painting in later stages of the work.









LIST OF IMAGES

1

Gallery Installation

Left to right: Leo Bersamina,
Amber Jean Young, Victoria
Wagner

2

Chris Duncan

Circle Oakland, 2014
Fabric and direct sunlight
149" x 108"
courtesy Halsey McKay Gallery

3

Leo Bersamina Installation

(left)
Teetering, 2016
mixed media on panel
48 x 60"
courtesy Anglim Gilbert Gallery

(right)
Grow (Stella-Thiebaud), 2016
acrylic, wood and glue
108 x 108"
courtesy Anglim Gilbert Gallery

4

Leo Bersamina

Stacked, 2016
mixed media
(acrylic, panel, rocks)
dimensions vary
courtesy Anglim Gilbert Gallery

5

Leo Bersamina

Grow (Stella-Thiebaud) (detail)

6

Chris Duncan (OFFING)

Performing at
HEAVY MELLOW
Sunday, May 29, 2016
Berkeley Art Center

7

Gallery Installation

Left to right:

Chris Duncan

Sun Makes Moon (Blue) 6-month
exposure, summer–winter 2015

Victoria Wagner

Woodrocks and Rounded Geode

Amber Jean Young

Sky Orb

8

Kristin Farr

Magic Hecksagon (Spring Plaid),
2016
gouache on wood
23.5" diameter

9

Kristin Farr

*Magic Hecksagon
(Rainbow Wheel)*, 2016
gouache on wood
23.5" diameter

10

Kristin Farr

Magic Hecksagon (Waves), 2016
gouache on wood
23.5" diameter

11

Kristin Farr

Magic Hecksagon (Fall Plaid),
2016
gouache on wood
17.5" diameter

12

Kristin Farr

Kristin Farr
Magic Hecksagon (3D Vision)
gouache on wood
17.5" diameter

13

Kristin Farr

Magic Hecksagons installation

14
Jenny Sharaf installation

15
Jenny Sharaf
Untitled, 2015
acrylic on found paper
11 x 9"

16
Jenny Sharaf
Untitled, 2015
acrylic on found paper
11 x 9"

17
Jenny Sharaf
Untitled, 2015
acrylic on found paper
11 x 9"

18
Gallery Installation
Amber Jean Young and
Victoria Wagner

19
Amber Jean Young
Sky Orb, 2015
linen canvas, thread, batting,
muslin
35 x 36"

20
Amber Jean Young
Sky Orb and Stones, 2015
linen canvas, thread,
stretches, stones
54 x 52"

21
Victoria Wagner
(left)
Woodrock: Winter's Light, 2016
redwood burl, oil paint and steel
25.5 x 16 x 11" (12" stand)
from the collection of C. Markey

(right)
*Woodrock: River Sand in the Late
Afternoon*, 2016
redwood burl, oil paint and steel
42 x 12 x 11" (24" stand)

22
Victoria Wagner
Woodrock: Winter's Light (detail)

23
Victoria Wagner
*Rounded Geode: Hues of
Moody Awe*, 2016
oil paint on etched aluminum
48 x 36"

24
Victoria Wagner
*Melancholy, Void and Wonder
in the Age of Mechanical
Reproduction*
2016 installation

Panels: *Endless Summer* series,
2011, spray paint and oil on
masonite
15 x 15"

Sculpture: *Moonrocks*, 2016,
ceramic, dimensions vary

Bench: fir and ebony stain, 2016

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Berkeley Art Center (BAC) serves the diverse and creative citizens of Berkeley, through the presentation of visual art exhibitions, musical performances and literary programs relevant to its unique community.

The Agility Projects is a series of exhibitions and public programs that seeks to engage diverse audiences with new and commissioned art by outstanding emerging artists from the Bay Area. The program provides artists with time, a stipend and support to create new bodies of work that will push their own artistic practices in new directions. For more information, please visit berkeleyartcenter.org.

I Look For Clues In Your Dreams was supported by the City of Berkeley and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

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