

school
of art
gallery
newsletter

issue eight—winter 2023

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about the gallery

The School of Art Gallery is part of the University of Manitoba, School of Art. The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

The School of Art Gallery serves the School of Art, University of Manitoba, and broader communities by exhibiting and collecting contemporary and historical art addressing a range of practices and perspectives. Exhibitions and collections are complemented by engaging outreach programs and publications.

We strive to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all. If there is anything we can do to make your visit – onsite, offsite, or online – more accessible, please let us know.

All exhibitions and programs are **free**.

OPEN

STRUCTURE

Ron Bechet, Jared Brown, Whit Forrester,
Jennie C. Jones, Harold Mendez, Janelle Ayana Miller,
and Derrick Woods-Morrow

Curated by Grace Deveney, Visiting Curator

November 3, 2022 to January 28, 2023

Reception: Thursday, November 3, 5:00–8:00 pm

“When breath becomes an object of attention, no longer unremarked on, no longer taken for granted, no longer an uninspected given, anxiety is also in the air.”

—Nathaniel Mackey

Open Structure explores the subtle rhythms and systems that structure life. The exhibition considers how sound, music, and touch can offer new perspectives on systems such as identity and the rules that govern our lives, and also provide space to pause, gather, and dream. Many of the artists in the exhibition look to histories of avant-garde and experimental Black music as part of their research, including musicians such as Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, and Gil Scott-Heron. Other artists approach the themes of the exhibition by drawing our attention to a range of structures, including breath.

This exhibition is informed by Nathaniel Mackey’s 2016 lecture “Breath and Precarity,” and his exploration of breath as a structuring element of avant-garde music and poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. Mackey, a poet, editor, and critic, suggests that this attention to breathing created an aesthetic attuned to the rhythms and nuances of the poet or musician’s breath, and can be understood as a symptom of political emergency. A new audio commission, made specifically for the exhibition, focuses on the importance of breath to Black experimental art, and ways of understanding structure in the present.

Open Structure developed during the recent and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a health crisis that made us acutely aware of the air around us and made urgent the need for new political structures. Though representations of the body are largely absent from the exhibition, many of the artists reference sensory experience through works that use ordinary materials and respond to the presence of the viewer. Others depict the natural world and reference life cycles that unfold at a scale different from our own.

In music composition, an open structure is a harmony composed of notes from a wide range, and in this context, the form suggests the peaks and valleys of experience. Overall, the artworks model ways of questioning current political and social structures and posit alternative ways of organizing and being together.

Open Structure is the first of three exhibitions presented as part of the School of Art Gallery’s Visiting Curator Program. Launched in Summer 2021, this initiative supports curatorial research, exhibitions, events, and publications by emerging and established guest curators alike.

The Visiting Curator Program is a catalyst for international-calibre exhibitions and aims to play a vital role in defining contemporary art and its attendant discourses in the Prairies. It gives students, faculty, and other community members meaningful opportunities to engage with curators charting bold new trajectories in their field. Through a significant mentorship component, it aims to foster strong new voices in this discipline.

We are pleased to welcome Grace Deveney, Lillian O’Brien Davis, and Shalaka Jadhav as the program’s inaugural visiting curators. This program is generously supported by Michael F.B. Nesbitt.

Whit Forrester, *The Electric Universe Theory*,
ongoing, gold leaf and electronics.
Photo: courtesy of the artist.



adjunct programing

Grace Deveney, Ron Bechet, and Whit Forrester in Conversation

Thursday, November 3, 12:00–1:30 pm, ARTlab 364

Live-streaming on the University of Manitoba School of Art YouTube Channel

ASL interpretation and closed captioning available

Join *Open Structure* curator Grace Deveney and exhibiting artists Ron Bechet and Whit Forrester as they discuss their respective practices. This conversation will centralize and build on some of the themes of the exhibition, discussing the ways that formal and structural experimentation can create space to imagine new paradigms or ways of being.

Grace Deveney is a curator and art historian who holds a PhD in Art History from Northwestern University. She is the David C. and Sarajeun Ruttenberg Associate Curator of Photography and Media at the Art Institute of Chicago. Previously, she was Associate Curator of the fifth iteration of Prospect, a New Orleans-based contemporary art triennial, titled *Prospect.5: Yesterday we said tomorrow* (2021) and Assistant Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Exhibitions at the MCA include a mid-career survey of the work of painter Christina Quarles (2021), *Direct Message: Art, Language, and Power* (2019) and *Groundings* (2018; with Tara Aisha Willis), and presentations of the work of Paul Pfeiffer and Amanda Williams (both 2017).

Ron Bechet was born in New Orleans and lives in the Gentilly neighborhood. Holds a BA from the University of New Orleans and MFA degree in Painting from Yale University School of Art. He is known for intimate large-scale drawings and paintings, inspired by his experiences and observations of the consequences of forces of nature and time, on place and the human experience. Bechet's improvisational mark making is grounded on those experiences and in the cultural practices of the African diaspora and New Orleans African-American culture and ritual. In the work, the revelation of the effects of terrain, light, and water symbolize human contention and harmony, and ultimately the hope of reconciliation and spiritual transformation. Bechet has worked on several community-based projects using the arts in collaboration with other artists and community members. He is also the Victor H. Labat Professor of Art at Xavier University of Louisiana where he has been teaching for more than twenty years. Bechet serves as Chair of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Board of Directors and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Ogden Museum of Art and Antenna Works in New Orleans.

Whit Forrester is based in San Francisco, CA. They have a BA in Environmental Studies from Oberlin College and an MFA in Photography from Columbia College. Exhibited widely, in both national and international contexts, they have a range of aesthetic interests that include: practices of accumulation, manifestations of power, diaspora, noetic science, new materialisms, discourses around the transcendent and the material relationship between self and world. These encounter fusion around ideas of regenerative relationships to both and land and people, collective liberation, quantum feminisms, queer theory, spiritual and occult praxis and ontology and addressing historical trauma as spiritual practice.

Ron Bechet, *Harriet's Advice* (detail),
2021, charcoal on paper, 10' x 24'.
Newcomb Art Museum, 2021.

Photo: Courtesy of Prospect New Orleans.

Open Structure Curatorial Tour with Grace Deveney

Friday, November 4, 12:00–1:00 pm, School of Art Gallery

ASL interpretation available upon request

(please contact soageducator@umanitoba.ca by October 31 if required)

Meet Visiting Curator Grace Deveney for a conversational lunchtime tour of *Open Structure*. Deveney will provide insight into her curatorial research and processes in context, through a discussion of the works comprising this exhibition.

Jared Brown and Janelle Ayana Miller on The MonkeySparrow

Tuesday, December 13, 10:30–11:00 pm, on CKUW 95.9fm

Also available via mixcloud.com/hannah_g

Open Structure exhibiting artists Jared Brown and Janelle Ayana Miller will be featured on The MonkeySparrow, a weekly radio show hosted by hannah_g on CKUW 95.9 fm. This experimental radio segment will highlight inspiring components of both Jared Brown and Janelle Ayana Miller's collaborative processes. It will feature select audio from their installation, paired with anecdotal offerings by both artists.

Every Tuesday, The MonkeySparrow presents original stories based on this city and elsewhere, essays and letters that attempt to comprehend the insignificant and too large, and music from a juxtapostastic collection of the known, new, answered and fated.

Jared Brown is an interdisciplinary artist born in Chicago. In past work, Jared broadcasted audio and text based work through the radio (CENTRAL AIR RADIO, 88.5 FM), in live DJ sets, and on social media. They consider themselves a data thief, understanding this role from John Akomfrah's description of the data thief as a figure that does not belong to the past or present. As a data thief, Jared Brown makes archeological digs for fragments of Black American subculture, history and technology. Jared repurposes these fragments in audio, text, and video to investigate the relationship between history and digital, immaterial space. Jared Brown holds a BFA in video from the Maryland Institute College of Art and moved back to Chicago in 2016 in order to make and share work that directly relates to their personal history.

Janelle Ayana Miller is a grandchild of the Great Migration, a Midwesterner with Southern inflection. Her practice is rooted within familial and communal aesthetics, looking deeply into bridging self and time as an act of place making while using modes of collage, found objects, film, food and photography.



Jared Brown.
Courtesy of the artist.



Janelle Ayana Miller.
Courtesy of the artist.

Derrick Woods-Morrow: *Pleasure Synthesis: Nomenclatures of Ecstasy*

Thursday, January 12, 6:00–8:00 pm

Collections Gallery

Derrick Woods-Morrow's performance, *Pleasure Synthesis: Nomenclatures of Ecstasy* invites audiences to consider a radically liberatory proposition: what does pleasure without labour look like? When was the last time you experienced this sensation? What did it feel like? A deeply intimate and moving exchange then takes place between objects in the space, the audience, and the artist, centred on ideas of death, loss, love, sex, labour, and pleasure. Recounting his own sexual experiences, Woods-Morrow ruminates on both the potential for the body to give and receive love and pleasure, and on the shame, violence, and labour forced on Queer Black fol(x). In both this performance and his sculpture, How do we memorialize an event that is still happening?, exhibited in *Open Structure*, Woods-Morrow uses worn mattresses as stand-ins for the body, requiems for dreams unfulfilled, quiet containers that carry our energy through some of the most intimate and transformative human acts: metaphorical resting places, the vessels that hold us when we are born, when we sleep, when we dream, when we have sex, as we sweat, and often, ultimately, when we die.

Derrick Woods-Morrow centers process-oriented collaborative projects with Queer Black Fol(x) across a wide variety of media. His work has been presented across the United States including at the 2019 Whitney Biennial (in collaboration with Paul Mpagi Sepuya), The Contemporary Art Center (New Orleans) the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Smart Museum (Chicago) and internationally, in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany. Woods-Morrow is a member of the Chicago-based collective concerned Black imagemakers and serves on the Board of Directors of the Fire Island Artist Residency. He holds an MFA from the School of Art Institute of Chicago and completed a Post- Baccalaureate at the Massachusetts College of Art Design. He was a resident of the Skowhegan School of Painting in 2022, a 2021 Bemis Centre Artist-in-residence, a 2018 Chicago Artist Coalition Resident, and is Assistant Professor of Sculpture, Painting & Textiles at the Rhode Island School of Design where he holds a Schiller Family Assistant Professorship in Race and Design. Originally from Greensboro, NC, he splits his time between Chicago and Rhode Island.



Derrick Woods Morrow.
Courtesy of the artist.

For further details, please visit:

umanitoba.ca/art/open-structure or visitingcurator.ca

Permanent Collection

Recent Acquisitions

The School of Art Gallery collects historical and contemporary art, maintaining and evolving a growing collection of over 5000 artworks—the largest art collection within the University of Manitoba.

The Collections are maintained and developed via gifts and purchases through the advisement of the School of Art Gallery Acquisitions Committee. Heartfelt thanks to the many donors and artists who have entrusted the School of Art Gallery with the care of their work.

The School of Art Gallery is pleased to announce the acquisition of the following:

Purchased through the Eldon Hagglund Memorial Acquisition Fund:

- Dayna Danger, *Aapiji go gizhawenimin Adrienne*, 2021, digital print on aluminum
- Dayna Danger, *Aapiji go gizhawenimin* (from the series *Kinship Masks*) 2021, leather mask with red, yellow, and black lustre and matte beads

Gift of Miriam Lampe:

- Caroline Dukes, *Untitled*, 1971, drawing
- Luther Pokrant, *Bifocal*, 1975, print

Dayna Danger, *Aapiji go gizhawenimin Adrienne*,
2021, digital print on aluminum



Funding and Support:

The School of Art Gallery is generously supported by the University of Manitoba, the School of Art's faculty and staff, national and provincial funding agencies, donors, and volunteers.

The School of Art Gallery and its presenters acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Open Structure is presented as part of the School of Art Gallery's Visiting Curator Program, generously supported by Michael F.B. Nesbitt.

Special thanks to Mother Earth Recycling for their assistance with the presentation of *Open Structure*.

Canada



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Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2

Telephone: 204-474-9322

Email: gallery@umanitoba.ca

Gallery Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday:
8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Thursday: 8:30 am to 8:00 pm
Saturday: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Closed statutory holidays and between December 24
and January 3.

Parking:

Free weekdays after 4:30 pm
Free Saturdays

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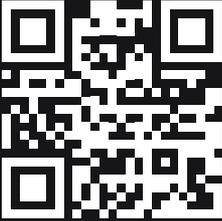
Join our Mailing List:

Email fineart@umanitoba.ca to join the School of Art's e-newsletter mailing list or to receive hard copies of the School of Art Gallery newsletter.



University
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Cover Image:

Harold Mendez, *At night we walk in circles*, 2016,
cotton, graphite, spray enamel, watercolor, toner, litho crayon on
ball grained aluminum lithographic plate mounted on Dibond.
Installation view, 2017 Whitney Biennial.

Photo: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York