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At First Sight 2021

John Sommers Gallery Guide

Monday September 13th- Friday September 24th

Opening Reception Friday, September 17th, 5-7pm

Artist Talks and Closing Reception Friday, September 24th, 4-6pm

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Drew Trujillo, *SOS.SOS.*, watercolor and marker, 11in x 14in

My art practice explores the multicultural identities of Spanish, Mexican, and Puebloan peoples who have an ancestral connection to New Mexico, including mi familia. The timely stories discovered through research about my ancestors help inform my artwork to transcend inequities, disease, prejudice, and oppression. Recurring themes from this research include conflict, oppression, race, human rights, immigration, colonialism, land, and water rights.

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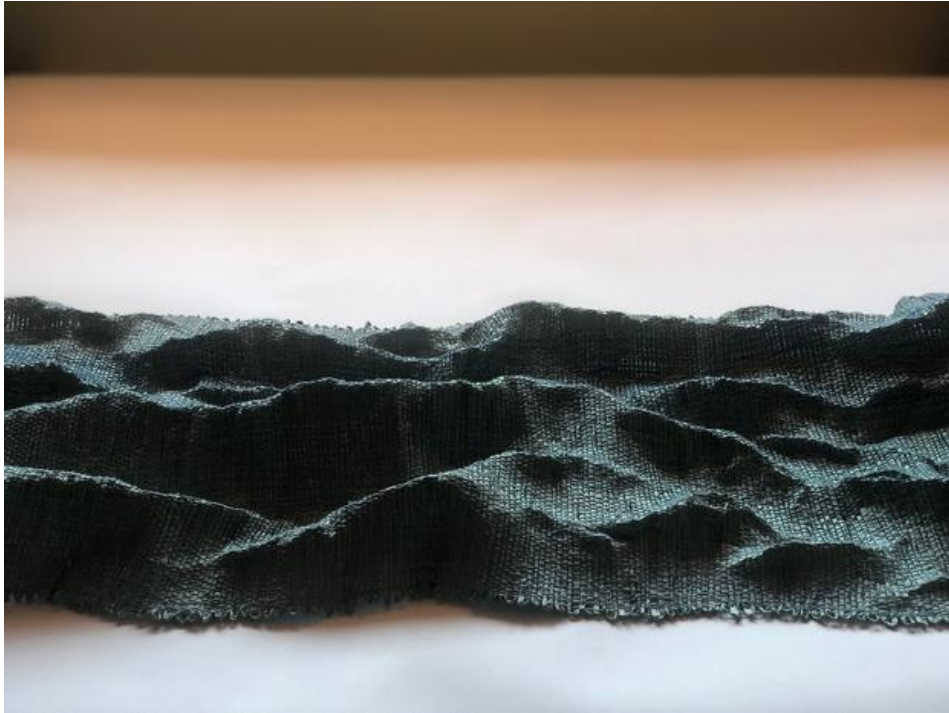
Nicholas Valdés, *Allison on her stump over lily pads*, silver gelatin print,
8in x 10in

I am drawn to people who are drawn to the river. Many, I assume, are seeking to disconnect; from the highway commutes, video conferences, endless notifications. The river - moving water - provides solace, entices life. I share a pull to these waters with the people photographed *and* those not. Thus, these moments feel like more than coincidental exchanges. Each portrait is a mutual acknowledgement of each other's presence, a connection; a quiet resistance to the increasingly homogenous world.

Starting in March of 2021 I spent 15 weeks in San Antonio, TX. I found myself drawn, like many others, to the San Antonio River as it winds south-easterly through the city towards the Gulf. My eyes were drawn to others I saw during walks and bicycle rides, some alone like myself, others part of larger groups, each drawn to this river and the space it creates.

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Rachel Bordeleau, *Snowmelt*, raffia and hemp, 62in x 19in x 6in

As a fiber-based artist I work with a medium whose forms are immediately recognized by the public yet mysterious in their origins. I intend to provoke a moment of pause, allowing participants to reflect on the systems in place and question their own role in them. The systems I work within are intrinsic to our human ecology but have evolved to a level that harms the ecology of our planet. Through working with natural dyes, discarded materials, and consciously sourced fiber, I approach concepts from soil to landfill, highlighting agricultural and industrial production practices alongside the gap in consumer education and the waste that ensues.

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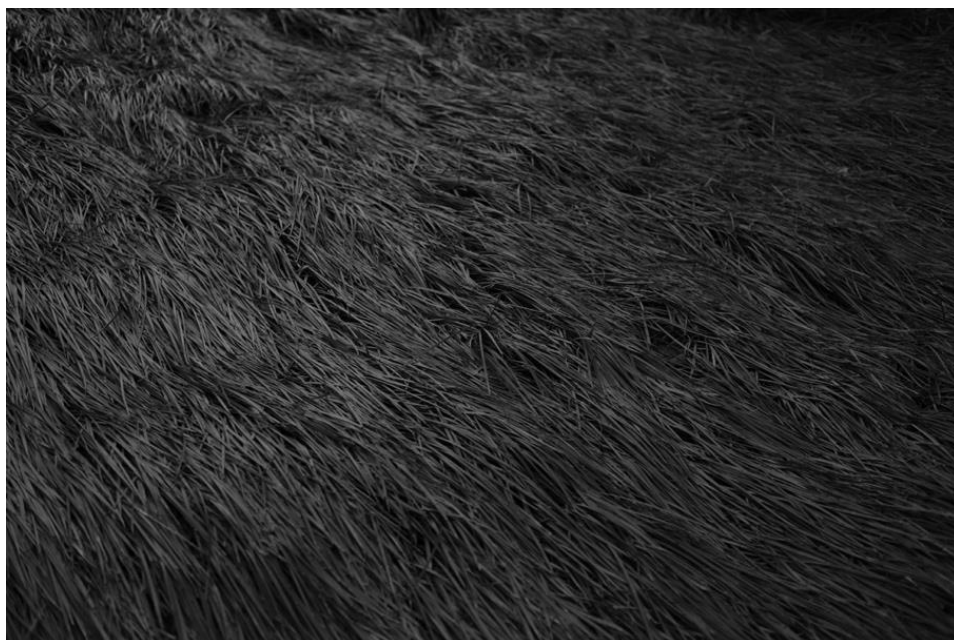


Chloe Hanken, *Untitled*, aquatint three-color viscosity print, 14in x 11in

Chloe's work considers the plasticity of memory and how it influences the ways in which we represent the past. In her practice she uses the process of printmaking as a means to recreate the sensation of remembering. The matrix becomes the moment, the person or place, each successive state is recontextualizing while reflecting back pieces of the original image. The resulting prints exist in the liminal space between fact and feeling—highlighting the tension between nostalgia and the world as it is. Her most recent work, *Born Into the Summer Land*, generates visual narratives about landscape, generational anamnesis, and rural alienation.

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Francis Reynolds, *Untitled*, archival ink jet print, 12in x 18in

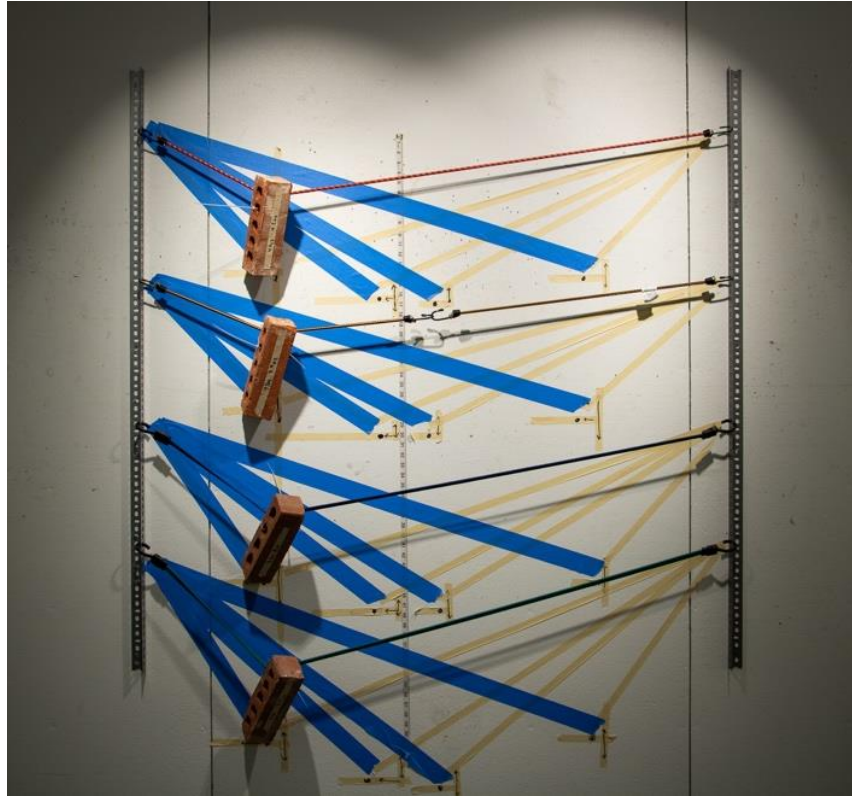
The Truth must dazzle gradually Or every man be blind —

EMILY DICKINSON

I passed out once in church. Stood up and kneeled down one too many times until the blood couldn't keep up—I was struck to the ground right there in the pew. By that time I had already stopped believing, but imagine what a younger me would have made of this annihilation. I spent my childhood in churches: I was raised Catholic because that's how my dad was raised. My mom's family, who made the Depression-era journey to California, weren't beholden to the old church, they were Christian Scientists and Disciples of Christ, reworked strains adapted to the new American context. As I've grown older, I've come to miss the pause that Mass created in the week, the time separate from school and work, certainly separate from pleasure. Those of us who have moved away from religion have left behind frameworks for understanding life and death that provided solace and structure, that gave us a way of looking at the world that was defiantly not of this world. That doesn't mean we've given up trying to find meaning in all this. The images from this series record my journey back into the landscape of faith. It is a documentation of light and darkness, but the camera's experience of light is different from our own. The world it captures is like the one we live in, but slant. It can see things we can't.

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Adelaide Theriault, *How to Measure a Brick* (2021),
mixed media installation, 72in x 84in

My work is a push and pull between structured methodology and playful intuition, and it is how I interpret and form relationships with the worlds I exist within. Recurring inspirations for my work include systems of linguistics, physics, waste, and plant and animal behavior- and how all of these systems function together as moving parts of a larger whole.

My work in this exhibition is about diversity in interpretation of visual data and language. I am interested in challenging the sanctity of standardized systems of problem solving, timekeeping and communication. The cycling of time, the force of gravity and the impact of our environment, as examples, exist on a different scale for each living being.

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Christopher Schuldt, *Secret Garden*, graphite, highlighter marker, acrylic, ink and oil, with zinc frame, 22in x 30in x 1.5in

Led by desire, I engage my thoughts, feelings, and actions on an intuitive level within my creative practice as I play with forms, colors, marks and materials. I perceive the content of my work as the reflection of this process. The finished work is a result of having reached a point of resonance upon going past the threshold of mere accumulation of individual decisions to a place in which the work acquires a sense of indivisibility through the relationships created between marks, forms, textures, colors and shapes.

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Karina Faulstich, *Trinity Test Site Map*, reclaimed fabrics and hand embroidery, 16.5in x 23in x 1.75in

Karina Faulstich is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice hinges on themes of queer ecofeminism. Attending to issues of wreckage and reparation, her work reveals connections between social and environmental issues while contemplating borders and boundaries as they exist within cultural landscapes, memories, and bodies. Karina's recent practice centers on textiles and alternative printmaking techniques including cyanotypes, rust transfers, and stitching. These explorations embrace and simultaneously subvert traditionally feminine "crafts" to highlight contemporary dilemmas rooted in patriarchy and settler-colonialism. Karina studies Butoh dance and is the choreographer for the ongoing project *Wilderness Mute*, a collaborative, multimedia anti-nuclear performance. *Trinity Site Map* marks the first of a series documenting contentious nuclear sites across the United States of America.

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Anna Rotty, *Terra 92*, archival pigment print photograph, 24in x 36in

I construct images that mimic another, whether by accessing a memory, building an alternative landscape or rendering projections. I draw from the environment I'm in and the imagery and emotions experienced in everyday life. In this series titled Terra, I construct landscapes to escape into, using light and an emergency blanket within my apartment. In this volatile moment I hope to express the drastic shift in emotions each day holds, through the lens of our human relationship with the landscape. As the fires blaze in California year after year, and the sun turns fuchsia above the sea that I grew up on in Massachusetts, we've seen the results of climate change manifesting outside our front door. Within the walls of my home, by making this work, I explore *Solastalgia*, a term coined by environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht to describe a form of emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change. I hope to push and pull the viewer in and out of potential future worlds as I look for the sublime, something between reality and wonder.

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claudia hermano, *groupchat*, cyanotype book cover with inkjet prints,
6in x 4in x 1in

Home is not a house, city, or place. Home is wherever we are. Home is us. The story of our family is told in moments that layer upon each other and contradict and complicate; our story is messy. I look for sense and patterns in the mess. These books are part of a larger project called, *scalp, eyes, lungs, wrist*. It is a series of handbound photography books composed of photographs of my family, prose poetry, and cyanotype illustrations. These books allow me to hold on to my family while I feel I am losing them, they create physical objects for intangible memories. I give my family bodies out of books so the books will exist when we do not.

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Nat Olmo, *shorts reel*, video/phone installation, varied

I'm a compulsive collector that creates worlds from fragments to investigate structures of meaning and navigate a sense of self. My work tends to revolve around incongruity, novelty, pain, memory, observation, exploration, and multiplicity. I like for my work to straddle all the spaces of 'fakeness' and 'realness', reality and fantasy, inner and outer, macro and micro, complexity and simplicity. It is important for me to make art with whatever is immediately available in terms of what I use and how I am able to use it. Stretching things out or messing them up is often how the fun starts! 😊

This piece is a tiny portal into my own experience of 2016 - 2019 through art images of mine, along with a few secrets and screenshots from the future. It's also: A case file on insta life, a glass of politely dissolved salt in lukewarm water.