I don't know how to love you

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

*artworks can be purchased by contacting the artists directly

THANK YOUS

We are beyond excited to feature the course *Curating the Record*, in the Pearlman Gallery with artworks selected by Art Academy of Cincinnati students and led by Associate Professor of Studio Art, Head of Photography, Emily Hanako Momohara. Many thanks and accolades to each of you participating in making this exhibition happen.

This exhibition's goal started as a way to serve student growth both individually and collaboratively to form a professional exhibition of lens-based artwork. It has culminated as a fully realized curatorial concept to methodically build this comprehensive exhibition that is rooted in curiosity and research. Since 2010, FotoFocus has been instrumental in creating opportunities for our students to explore new pathways of expression. The continued effort for FotoFocus to continually champion photography and lens-based work through educational programs and special projects has created a ripple effect of inspiration felt throughout the city of Cincinnati and region.

Please join me in celebrating the collaboration between AAC and FotoFocus and enjoy this exhibition as part of the 2022 World Record Biennial.

Joe Girandola
President of the Art Academy of Cincinnati

EXIBITION STATEMENT

What is the relationship between the Natural World and Civilization? Is it a battle between human creation and the natural world, an intense struggle to dominate the land? Or a soft sad lullaby, pushing and pulling slowly like the tide between the two forces? This relationship is varied and nuanced from societal to personal disruptions. Nature responds, reclaiming it's space after the impact of human life.

The artists in *I Don't Know How to Love You: The Relationship Between Humans and Nature* challenge the way we construct narratives around this relationship. Sayler/Morris, a Syracuse-based collective, uses mixed media to document changing notions with nature and ecology. Yellow Springs artist, Migiwa Orimo uses both photography and sculpture to organize information on the conflict of society and nature's coexistence. NYC-based photographer, Dana Stirling explores struggles with mental health using nature as a mirror of personal emotions.

The FotoFocus Biennial is an opportunity for the Art Academy of Cincinnati to allow students hands on learning of the curation process. Through the generosity of a FotoFocus grant, a course *Curating the Record* was developed to encourage students to explore exhibition creative ideation, logistics and professional development.

Student curators are Eliyah Bowles, Katelyn Boysel, Kierstin Coldiron, Annie Crowl, Erica Fitzgerald, Ian Hayes, Echo Joy, Kaitlyn Lunsford, Danielle Martini, Isabelle Rather, Jin Sponseller, Ellie Wallace.

SAYLER + MORRIS

Susannah Sayler and Edward Morris work in installation, photography, and video to document the outcome of climate change in various landscapes. Each piece documents scenery that has been affected by human involvement resulting in negative change that directly impacts the environment.

Susannah Sayler and Edward Morris work across a variety of mediums (installation, photography and social practice) to study the impacts of climate change across international landscapes. Their work has been exhibited both domestically and internationally. Since 2006, the pair has founded two organizations concerning education and action surrounding climate change. They currently teach at Syracuse University in New York.

SAYLER + MORRIS

Drought and Fires XIV: Umatilla National Forest, Washington State, 2006. Archival pigment print, 40 x 50 inches

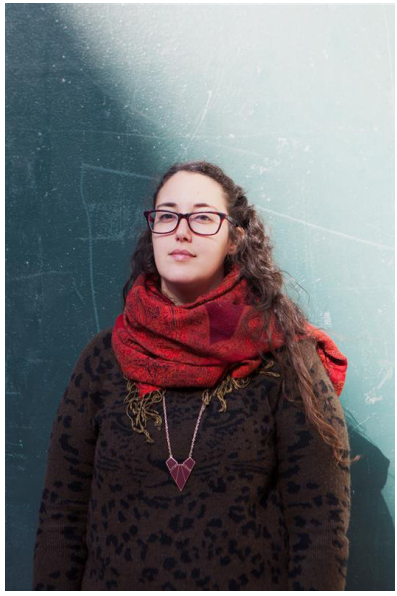
SAYLER + MORRIS

Glacial, Icecap and Permafrost Melting LIX: Lake Parón, Peru, 2008. Archival pigment print, 40 x 50 inches

SAYLER + MORRIS

Video Still from *Water, Gold, Soil*, 2015,
2-Channel Video Projection, 17 min

DANA STIRLING

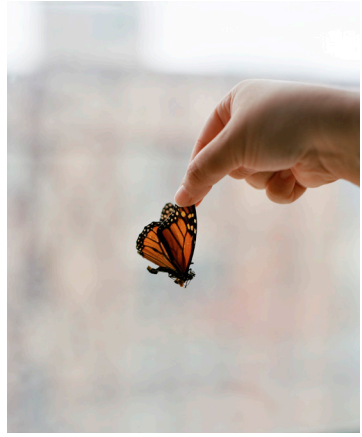


Portrait by: Jiatong Zoe Lu

Stirling's work consists of still lives and images void of physical human beings, however their presence still lingers in the negative space; the images are faceless yet tell a story about how we, as humans, see the world around us and how those influences affect our mentality, as well as our memory.

Dana Stirling is a fine art photographer and the Co-Founder & Editor In-Chief of Float Photo Magazine since 2014. Originally from Jerusalem Israel, Dana is now based in Queens New York. She received her MFA from The School Of Visual Arts in Photography, Video, and Related Media in 2016 and her BA from Hadassah College Jerusalem in Photographic Communications in 2013.

DANA STIRLING



Hold On, 2020
16 x 20 inches

DANA STIRLING

Backyard Water Slide, MA, 2015 20 x 16 inches

On the Side of the Road, Lake Pleasant, NY, 2020,
20 x 16 inches

DANA STIRLING

Deer, Queens, NY
2017, 20 x 16 inches

Long Reach Cemetery, OH. 2021
16 x 20 inches

Upside Down Smile, Ringtown, PA. 2022
16 x 20 inches

Bees, Queens, NY. 2015
20 x 16 inches

MIGIWA ORIMO

Orimo's aesthetic explores public v. private, reality v. memory, and the gaps between the two. Her work explores the in-betweeness of spaces, the moldability. In the exhibited pieces examines the push and pull of nature, the memories the spaces hold, and the liminality of it all.

A five-time recipient ('96/'04/'08/'13/'21) of the Ohio Arts Council Individual Artists Fellowship/Individual Creativity Excellence Award for her interdisciplinary art projects, she was awarded residencies at the Headlands Art Center in 2012 and SPACES Gallery's SPACES World Artist Project in 2014. As a social justice activist, Orimo facilitates People's Banner Workshop and provides free banners to activist groups. Orimo was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan. After receiving her degree in literature and studying graphic design, she immigrated to the US in the 1980's. Orimo lives and works in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

MIGIWA ORIMO

Strangers' Bundles (Voice Over), 2022, 40 x 34 inches

MIGIWA ORIMO

Strangers' Bundles (Moss), 2022, 40 x 34 inches

MIGIWA ORIMO

Strangers' Bundles (National Parks), 2022, 40 x 34 inches

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

What role do artists play in society?

Migiwa Orimo: *I think there is a slight difference between the role of artists, and the role of art in society.*

For me, an interdisciplinary artist, my practice is rooted in a belief that artists have a capacity to invigorate social, aesthetic, and educational exchanges in our communities.

During recent years, we have witnessed a significant cultural shift in our country—and in the world. To me, an ongoing question has been: are there moments when history requires us to respond with a sense of urgency? If so, are we at one of those moments? I believe we are.

Art is not only about making products. It brings a context to our society in which we learn about ourselves—who we are to each other. We can become change agents in society; to do that, I believe I need to bring my citizenry to my practice.

Edward Morris: *I think that if you're an artist engaged in a particular critical discourse or social issue, often the function that arts can play is to deepen understanding and therefore spur action through a kind of emotional urgency. And that's how Susannah and I see what we're doing with respect to climate change and other ecological issues.*

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

How much does the idea of mental health influence your work?

Dana Stirling: *I've never intentionally made work that I thought would revolve around mental health. As I mentioned, photography has always been a way to process my depression and emotion in a visual way that made sense for me. People have said many times to me that my work is too sad and that no one will want to buy it because of it. My work has always revolved around the notion of family and my own struggles with family in the end of the day, mental health has always been a part of it because of my mother.*

I knew from a young age that my family was not the same as others. My mother's illness has affected us all – each one of us have been changed by it for better or for worse – usually worse.

I think my longing for family connection, and the realization that I will never have it, has led me to use photography as a way to both communicate my loss but also unpack the emotional baggage that came from having this complex family dynamics. It is so embedded in my DNA that my photography is just an extension of all that sadness, loss, sorrow and mourning of my life. The battle of feeling guilt, shame and even hate has created the person I am today and with that the artist I've become. Every image I've made had a connection to mental health in its own way – either my own or my mothers. Mental health is just a part of my story and therefor always present in my work. I say that probably the only bond I truly have with my mother is the bond of sadness.

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

How do you make sure you have time to create? Do you have a set time or build it into your calendar?

Dana Stirling: *Honestly, this is probably the hardest part, and I don't think I have a good answer for this. This is a part of my project as well "Why Am I Sad?" and my complex relationship with photography and depression. I've always used photography as a way to both escape my surrounding, but also to articulate my inner dialog with visuals. So, photography has become a way for me to process my emotions and in a way use it as therapy. But this also caused photography to be my crutch which means that when I don't photography, especially for long periods of time, it makes me anxious and the depression of not photographing affects my mood and everyday life. So in a way photography is also a burden I carry around with me and the only solution is – to photograph.*

Edward Morris: *It does become more of like a calendar operation. But I think when you're just leaving a school or a program, and when we were first starting, you just have to be living it.*

In the case for us, it's really much more of actually allocating these weeks. And it is thinking in terms of weeks, not hours. Setting aside time where we have enough time to stay in it. To stay in the project for a week or two or three, or even a month at a time.

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

How does isolation inform your work?

Migiwa Orimo: *Being an only child, being/playing/working alone is a very familiar condition to me. Wherever I need to reset myself, I tap into this condition. This is my factory setting. But the isolation I experienced during the Covid shutdown of 2020 was different. The isolation was collective. It didn't feel private or personal.*

Collectively, we experienced George Floyd, the Election, Zoom, and divisions. In my notebook, I wrote: "false equivalency," "superficial delineation," and "artificial symmetry."

We were allowed to take a walk during the shutdown in Ohio. Going into nature provided me another kind of isolation. There, I started thinking about the boundaries we draw between nature and ourselves (culture). I quoted Yi-Fu Tuan in my notebook: "Place as time made visible; Place as memorial to the past; and Place is an organized world of meaning."

In isolation in your studio, you don't demonstrate; you pay attention to things that only matter to you at that moment, and you gather them with no ranking.

In my notebook, I find these words: "[Home]-less-[Woods]; apparatus; material accident; border crossing; retract; animal self; wrap; nature-exclusion-inclusion; respite; citizenship; a gap between words and images."

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

Is there a specific environment or material that's integral to your work? Why?

Susannah Sayler : *Photographs and films, at least when they're connected to a somewhat documentary practice, have a sort of special relationship to the real. That is certainly something that we make use of in our in our work.*

Edward Morris: *Because we're interested in the questions of how you represent something like climate change, which is a hyperobject. You can't actually see it at any given place in a given moment. I think photography and film become an interesting medium for that because it exposes the kind of inherent contradictions and trying to represent conplexity or the unseeable.*

Migiwa Orimo: *I use any material for my conceptual work. Choice of material is an integral part of the concept of any given work and varies from work to work. I deploy various material strategies in the hope that the material itself reveals and articulates the hidden layers of ideas.*

For example, "Stranger's Bundles," the work in this exhibit, I chose fabric. I was thinking about the Furoshiki (Japanese wrapping cloth traditionally used to wrap and/or to transport goods). A wrapping cloth for thoughts.

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

How does the collaboration and being a collective influence your work?

Susannah Sayler: *We're inside of it, so it's hard for us to define this exactly. We've been working together for as long as we've been making. Our minds work differently, but this collaboration happens through doing the work and how we end up synthesizing in the work itself.*

Edward Morris: *We have to reach consensus between the two of us about the direction or what goes into the work and that's a different process clearly than if you were just creating on your own. I think there's pros and cons to that. It is both slower and faster in a way. We can divide up the work and yet it's slower because we have to deliberately create consensus. We have to convince each other about an adverse position.*

Susannah Sayler: *And sometimes you really have to interrogate all the decisions. If you're disagreeing, you have to understand why you were inclined to do something, more than you might be if you were working just intuitively.*

Edward Morris: *But this working together has also opened us up to working with other people. There is consensus making, but also a loosening of grips on authorship, so that we feel comfortable in allowing other voices in and working by consensus in a larger way.*