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The mission of the **Chicago Artists Coalition** is to build a sustainable marketplace for entrepreneurial artists and creatives. HATCH Projects is a yearlong, juried incubator for contemporary Chicago artists and curators that strives to support an ecology of curatorial and artistic practice. HATCH fosters shared experimentation, exchange, and creativity to produce ground-breaking exhibitions and programs.
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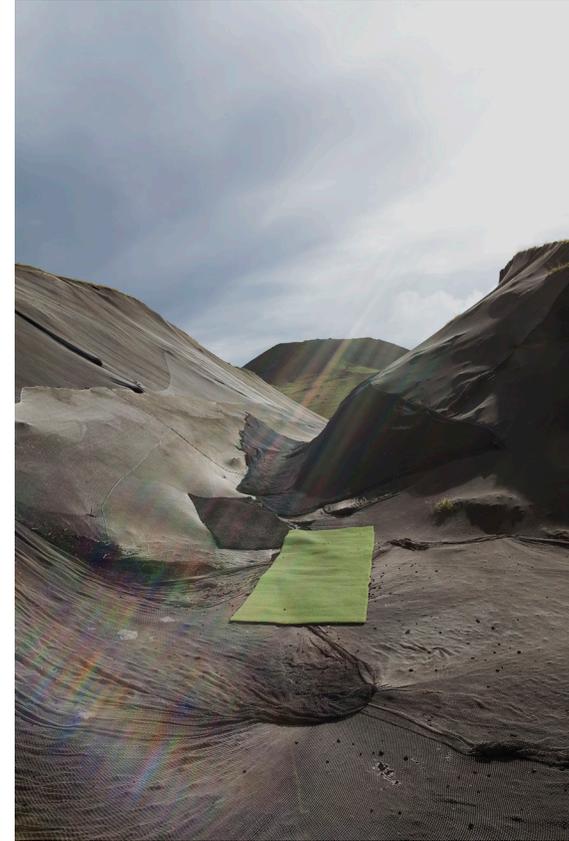
Visual Arts Organizations

Chicago Art Department, Chicago Artists Coalition, Elastic Arts Foundation, Elmhurst Art Museum, Filter Photo, Heaven Gallery, LATITUDE, Ragdale Foundation, Riverside Arts Center, Spudnik Press, Threewalls, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, Woman Made Gallery

*Cover Image: Judy Natal , Series: Future Perfect: *Astro Turf*, 24 x 34 inches , Edition of 10



**THE GAYLORD AND DOROTHY DONNELLEY
FOUNDATION CURATORIAL FELLOWSHIP**
Created in partnership with the Chicago Artists Coalition
July 7 - December 15, 2017



I Have Vivid Memories of Lightning

An exhibition featuring

**Nikki Renee Anderson, Iris Bernblum,
Helen Maurene Cooper, Assaf Evron, Gunjan Kumar,
Noritaka Minami, Judy Natal, Besty Stout, Allison Svoboda,
The Weaving Mill, Rhonda Wheatley, and Stacia Yeapanis**

Special thanks to the following for your support in bringing this exhibition to life:
Ellen Wadey, Caroline Older, Teresa Silva, CMM Framing, Terry Dowd, Inc., Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, and the artists.

Curated by **Kate Pollasch**

I have vivid memories of lightning

I was immersed in two texts while developing this exhibition, *When Women Were Birds* by Terry Tempest Williams and *Tongues of Flame* by David Wojnarowicz. While each text appears to be of two disparate worlds, one contains a conservationist's reflections on womanhood and environmentalism after her Mormon mother died, while the other is a soul-churning battle cry of autobiography and experience as an HIV positive man during the AIDS crisis in the 1990s. Both texts, both authors, use their creative voice to breach through the world around them, to puncture the status quo and demand a shift in thinking, a divorce from normativity, and a call to healing and transformation. The alchemic power of their words are echoed throughout my conceptual formation of this exhibition and harmonized within each artist exhibited in *I Have Vivid Memories of Lightning*.

Why do we so often damage and draw borders around those things that are most fragile in life? Owning land and constraining citizens into states of immobility; demolishing ecosystems while exploiting natural resources; and binding individuals into frozen states of binary labels, social expectations, and economic class structures. Each artist in this exhibition transcends these habits of trauma and constraint, to visualize a new way of being or interpreting the human condition in the context of the environment and the body.

This exhibition begins with the earth and the human will to build, form, and manifest community and moves in an ontological manner, from the earth to the spirit, and concluding with the body and its many layers of consumption, healing, sexuality, and strength. Upon entering the exhibition, **Assaf Evron's** *Athens and Oraibi* collapses history and time into a referential state of familiarity and simultaneity of human culture and landscape. **Noritaka Minami's** two photographs study the legacy of the Nakagin Capsule Tower in Tokyo. Developed under the Metabolist movement, this utopian architecture was intended to usher in a new way of living that never came to fruition. Minami's works capture the duality of ingenuity and failure imbued in the building before it is potentially demolished and erased from the urban landscape. Moving into the space, **Allison Svoboda's** and **Rhonda Wheatley's** individual practices summon the will of nature, energy, and elements to regenerate, activate, and heal despite the damaged state of our souls and environment. Svoboda's intuitive practice creates a composition rich with movement and friction that calls forth the power and energy of water and natural elements. Wheatley is located in two areas of the exhibition, and her practice draws power from materials' history and mythic conduits of support to place the power of healing and manifestation in the eye of the viewer. **The Weaving Mill**, comprised of **Emily Winter** and **Matti Sloman**, is a collaborative practice about the relationship of two artists coming together in one physical space and interrupting and discussing the legacy of textile history. In the Fall of 2015, Winter and Sloman took a three-week-long research trip across the south and mid-Atlantic corridors of the United States to investigate the domestic textile landscape. The graph/banner exhibited is a physical analytic of each site they visited in a cross-sectional diagram that shares technical details along with bodily and emotional notes of intimate connection. **Gunjan Kumar** exhumes power from materials' history, prehistoric and tribal culture, and ontological states of being. With a meditative quality, turmeric, turban

fabric, and composition come together to form two unified, yet opposite, works that call to Kumar's conceptual interests in *Hara*, an inquiry in non-duality. Judy Natal's *Future/Present* series also resides in a state of non-duality, as she renders a future world affected by our current environmental choices and policies. Yet in this future, humanity and its relationship to nature is not completely lost to dystopia - there is still laughter, still youth, and still healing.

Sometimes, world-making and new forms of kinship generate from a place of exclusion, from an unwanted sense of community out-casting. **Betsy Stout's** community of trans and queer friends felt unwelcomed and judged in the rural gyms of their town in Indiana. *Club Fit* visualizes the new world that they created for themselves in their own home gym as their bodies were transitioning into a changed physicality, a new identity. Her formal style, containing washes of pastel colors, thin whimsical lines, and flowery embellishments in the context of gym activity further inverts the many social binaries her kinship community disrupts. The theme of healing in both Wheatley and Stout's works carries through in **Stacia Yeapanis'** impermanent installation practice. From a distance, the meticulously created consumer-based collage evokes a sense of topography or nature, and, once close up, highlights our complex relationship with consumption and capitalism. For Yeapanis, these installations call forth our human devotional impulse in response to mortality, fleeting nature of time, and control.

Helen Maurene Cooper's photo is from the *Other Waters: The Aquatic Valley* series about the Weeki Wachee Mermaid show and the female community of performers located in the gulf coast of Florida. Since the show's inception in 1947, generations of women train and shape their bodies with strength, athleticism, and grace to enter a seemingly weightless state of phantasmic mermaid beauty. However, Cooper captures both their illusion and reality in one portrait, collapsing the skill of the performer to transport their audience to a mythic world while also elucidating the reality of practice, breathing mechanics, skill, labor, and economy in each woman's life.

"Women, when alone with nature, are subject to a particularly contradictory experience, liberating on one hand, threatening on the other. For us, there is another predator out there: exhilarating sensual identification with landforms and processes is countered by social fear and oppression." **Iris Bernblum** has climbed the mountain; she has scraped and torn her skin; she has bled, and she has laughed. Her ethereal watercolors contradict the hard masculine construct of "conquering the great unknown," alternatively washing over wilderness with blush and pink, embracing the heaving ripeness of nature, and unlocking its seeping sensual liquidity. With a similar formal upheaval, **Nikki Rene Anderson's** leaking, bulging, bleeding forms populate the wall with corporal connotations of pregnancy and multiplicity. Her installation is ripe with dualities, as they evoke connotations to bleeding, the body and breast, motherhood, fruit, and wounds or leakage.

I Have Vivid Memories of Lightning is an exhibition of earth and marrow, of healing and unraveling from the binders of land formation and human development, of pollution and the environment, and of the body and constraint.