

AFTER, OTHER, AND BEFORE

25 September 2021 —
31 December 2021

Mardag Gallery
Franconia Sculpture Park

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It goes without saying that this exhibition is about immigrants and colonisation. Many people, especially People of color in the United States are, or are descendants of, immigrants — forced or voluntary — due to the devastation of genocide and imperial colonization. It is with great privilege that we get to live and hope to thrive in this country. As we have been removed and displaced from our ancestral homelands, we understand that this privilege is at the cost of the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from this land.

Franconia Sculpture Park is located in the Saint Croix River Valley in central eastern Minnesota. The Saint Croix River defines much of what is the present day Wisconsin-Minnesota border before it meets the Mississippi River. The river was essential to the vast trading network that spanned much of the North American continent. As European colonizers built and destroyed land stolen from the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples, German, Irish, and Scandinavian immigrants settled in the area. With multiple sister cities between the region and Sweden, there is an obvious testament to maintain political and ancestral relationships with a homeland.

Minnesota became a state in 1858 and takes its name from the Dakota, *Mni Sota Makoce*, meaning “cloudy waters.” Franconia Sculpture Park is built on the occupied and unceded land of the Anishinabe and Wahpekute, part of the Dakota Oyate, whose shared territory stretches across much of the middle of the North American continent. After the 1862 U.S.–Dakota War Dakota people were forced from the state of Minnesota, a ruling which affected Ho-Chunk, Ojibwe, and other Indigenous people as well. The ruling that makes it illegal for Dakota people to inhabit the state remains on the law books today, but the Dakota and many other Indigenous peoples continue to call Minnesota home.

The curator and artists involved in this exhibition acknowledge that it is being carried out on unceded lands amidst a backdrop of ongoing colonialism and oppression of Indigenous peoples.

AFTER, OTHER, AND BEFORE

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WITHIN AND WITHOUT

The burden of cliché as politicized people means that home is often not tied to physical space. We find home and care in the people around us and the objects we own. Theories and ideas that marginalized people and People of color largely find safety and place making in physical objects and people have been explored by artists for centuries. For contemporary people of the diaspora, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is one of the most mainstream examples of such. But where *The Wizard of Oz* fails audiences in that the ideas come from a restrictive and unrealistic perspective for an audience that places more value on the family than the self. Dorothy is expected to learn that she is meant to be happy with what she has and to not desire more for herself. Though she is uncomfortable and unfulfilled by her life on the farm, “there’s no place like home” is supposed to be what keeps her there.

Due to its neglect of marginalized audiences, a newer, queered redressing of the 1939 movie musical was offered to audiences through the 1975 Broadway production and 1978 film adaptation, *The Wiz*. As it comes to close, in the finale song, “Home,” Dorothy sings about all the things that remind her of home. How the little details such as white snow should be enough to make her happy. But as the music swells and reaches its climax, Dorothy—played by Diana Ross—wipes away her tears and realizes that the place she remembers and the person she was before her time in Oz no longer exist. She understands that she has changed, and that her desire for more and a different life are okay. She learns that her family and the things she loves about home don’t bind her to a place. It gives the audience a sense of security in self-discovery and liberation.

As People of color our lives are filled with the questioning of a before. Before our parents met, before our families were brought or came to these lands, before colonization. The before binds us to systems of continued subjugation, where we must deal and live in the after. The after asks something new of us. The after asks us to assimilate and align ourselves with whiteness as a neutral. The after asks us to change our names and lose language(s), to question whether we are included on our own merit or a diversity hire. The after asks us to shrink ourselves down, to become the person we are in public and the person we are at home. The after defines us as the Other.

As the Other, we are forced to reconcile the trauma and response to colonization and the ever-growing globalization of peoples and ideas. Immigration — forced or voluntary — has been veiled with the promise of safety, acceptance, and socio-economic success, yet the dominant rhetoric in our culture is that of otherness. In the promises of safety and a better life for yourself and children, the dream ignores and hides the societal damnation of the Other. On stolen lands that have become home to and defined by immigrants, how can it be that none of the complexities of such lives are welcomed in the dominant culture?

There is a disconnect between who gets to consider themselves mainstream and when. After generations of families being born in this country and losing connection to ancestral lands, People of color are still barred from the mainstream. We are kept out, assigned to the beforespace because we “look” like foreigners, we maintain

our names, our languages, our food. When we become adults, we rebuild our lives and search for a connection to the before while moving forward within the afterspace. Our relationship to our past and the future is a funnel that gave way for the creation of the After. The afterspace is fed, reinforced, and continually supported by systemic white supremacy that allows for a societal gap in representation. A disconnect so severe that it creates dichotomies from the onset.

There are exhibitions and Other exhibitions, but never both. The Other may be included in the former, but on the basis that the work looks no different and bares no questions of identity. The Other is rarely given the opportunity to be contextualized with mainstream contemporaries. The representational gap is rooted in expectations that eliminating the voice of the mainstream — whiteness — inherently invokes suggestions of activism and advocacy. Culture observes its contents through a singular lens, filtering perceptions and concepts through the normalizing experience, which determines what is good and worthwhile, and what is otherwise foreign and dangerous. After, Other, and Before disrupts a settler colonial identity and “other” identity marker placed on People of color. Through works by diasporic artists Timothy Manalo, Nico Sardina, Beau Tate, and Kieran Myles-Andrés Tverbakk, the exhibition confronts, challenges, reconciles, and recontextualizes what it means to be “other.”

The first five years of many of our lives are spent at home, amongst family, developing an idea of the world around us. In these years we

begin to understand the world and our position in it. By age four years old we have a concrete racialized idea of who we are. We align ourselves with the people around us, the dominant culture. In his pieces *Balut* and *Shoes To Walk In*, Manalo reflects on his Filipino-Canadian upbringing, the self-realization of race and the dominant western culture, and the ways the people and land around us impact our lives. *Balut* confronts feelings of shame trying to assimilate in school that Manalo, and many children of color, experience trying to avoid their families home-cooked lunches. The title "Balut" is a reference to the hard-boiled duck fetus egg – a popular delicacy in the Philippines. It also translates from Tagalog as "pack up," referencing the origins of Manalo's Filipino heritage and family migrating from their homeland. The piece is presented as a light box, similar to that used to identify fetus-ready balut eggs, programmed to mimic the day/night cycle in the Philippines. *Shoes To Walk In*, considers the relationship of people to the land. Using forged clay from the Dakota lands that are now Shafer, Minnesota, Manalo invites and challenges viewers to appreciate, and understand their physical and permanent impact on the clay body. Made during the Covid-19 pandemic, the piece is a symbol of the importance and intimacy of touch. Through this work, Manalo doesn't ignore the colonial or violent nature of forged material but asks viewers to examine their relationship and to build connection to the land that they occupy. These pieces remind viewers to give reverence to the places we live and the places/ cultures that raised us.

Sardina's two pieces in this show focus on concepts of home and family, looking back as a spectator in their own life, and concepts of the way that home can both consume and be consumed by their inhabitants. *Trick Run Ran*, an animation piece utilizing Sardina's own family photos, places a nondescript figure in intimate family photos. This figure can range from a stand-in for the audience, to a voyeuristic intruder, and most likely sits somewhere in between. *Ultimate Henry's Comfort Zone Pt. II*, Sardina's sculpture, speaks to both the constraint that home can inflict on an individual, and the way that an individual can take up space in their own home. The figure in this piece, *Ultimate Henry*, is one of the archetype characters used by Sardina to talk about the various themes they use in their work, referred to as "The Henries". *Ultimate Henry* is a push to the extreme of the everyman; while the everyman is a concept often used in media to claim that any person can relate to this character, it's use in media is often constrained to white, masculine, straight, and cisgender commonalities. *Ultimate Henry* strives to be a personification of relating to one another, with a specific intention of relating to those who aren't often included in the idea of everyman, largely due to Sardina's own non-white, transmasculine, queer experience. *Ultimate Henry's* functions as an archetype by Sardina as a question of what is relatable. As Henry strives to be relatable, often Sardina is asking "I've felt this, has anyone else?"

Where Sardina's work challenges the external spaces within which a person can exist, Beau Tate's work asks viewers to examine the ways in which a person can become home unto themselves. Tate tests

the body as a structure that is designed to survive. A complicated system of flesh and organs, all working in complete synchronization, but like any well built structure, it can all come down with one complication. Though the physical body is strong and built to sustain anything, the psyche is sensitive and malleable, much like the steel body of the work. *Insubmission* centers a welcoming body as a membrane for forgiveness and unrest. Tate's use of the body represented by cold, hand-bent steel offers viewers a worm alias by which they can understand their own identity construction and self-preservation. The worm travels through the body violently molding it, ensuring that the outside reflects what's inside. The worm begs to be seen, heard, and understood. Its existence and survival are at the very core of the body it barrels through. Tate challenges viewers to question an aforementioned body, "as a response to a non-linear path through grief and healing," to visualize themselves as "a twisting mass [gauging] through a wet layer of receiving with a defined but unsuspected shape."

Like Tate, Kieran Myles-Andrés Tverbakk's work is directly concerned with physicality of one's body, the space it holds, and ways that the bodies are documented and held within the minds of others. Institutionalized systems of documentation have and continue to be one of the most pervasive tools used to "other" individuals in western communities. Documentation of People of color through photography has been historically used as a tool to support the continued subjugation and evoke sympathy from white audiences. Through their piece, *One and the same but we remember differently* Tverbakk's use of broken imagery in a photo collage suggests an alienated, displaced, and aching personhood. Clean edges of cut

paper, layering, and stacking evoke a sense of building and rebuilding – specifically the development of identity as his images exclusively feature depictions of people and bodies. The objects locate a ubiquitous "they," or an "ideaperson," giving reverence to the physical and non-physical places that a person takes and /has taken up beyond the physicality of their body. Their identities are lost to the viewer, entering a mind-space through which the person is no longer identifiable by virtue of the anonymity of the photo manipulation, and identity construction is built on the assumptions of others. This piece calls into question the importance of memorialization through photographs and our perception of peoples without that documentation.

Through these four artists and their works, we discover a single, undeniable, truth about the after. One can never go back, only forward. We reconcile the past and push forward, finding solace in the lives we build. We learn to take pride in our "otherness" and insert ourselves into dominant culture. We challenge what our parents expect of us as we push against whiteness and live out their dreams of a better life. Because we understand when everything we've believed in has disappeared, something still drives us to fix a past to find a future.

— Kehayr Brown-Ransaw

TIMOTHY MANALO



Timothy Manalo is a sculpture and installation artist born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He is influenced by personal stories and aesthetics of migration and diaspora. Manalo holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD University), Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts (SMFA), and Certificate in Museum Studies from Tufts University. He is the recipient of a 2019-2020 Post-Graduate Teaching Fellowship at SMFA at Tufts and a 2021 Emerging Artist-in-Residence at Franconia Sculpture Park.

Manalo's work centers the exploration of everyday objects and their evocative potential. Manalo does this primarily through mold-making, weaving and new media installation, playing with materials to manipulate and re-present objects unveiling narratives rooted in history and collective memory. Manalo draws from experiences of family gatherings, food, and labor in order to create work that addresses ways of understanding home and the dissonance of hyphenated identities.

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TIMOTHY MANALO



I've Seen The Elephant
2021

glazed ceramic, marine vinyl, insulation foam, wood

Medriñaque
2018

polypropylene twine,
gold metallic foil fringe



Ancestral Diet
2019

plaster-sugar mix

FAM JAM
2019

wood, paint,
castor wheels



Sweat Sweat
2019

cast papaya soap

Natural Resources
2019

resin, foam,
iridescent powder pigment,
sound exciter



Driveway
2018

silicone rubber, grey pigment, white acrylic paint, projector,
5-minute video loop, rubber blocks



Imperial Floods
2015

manila rope, bamboo twine,
bleach, fibreglass resin

NICO SARDINA

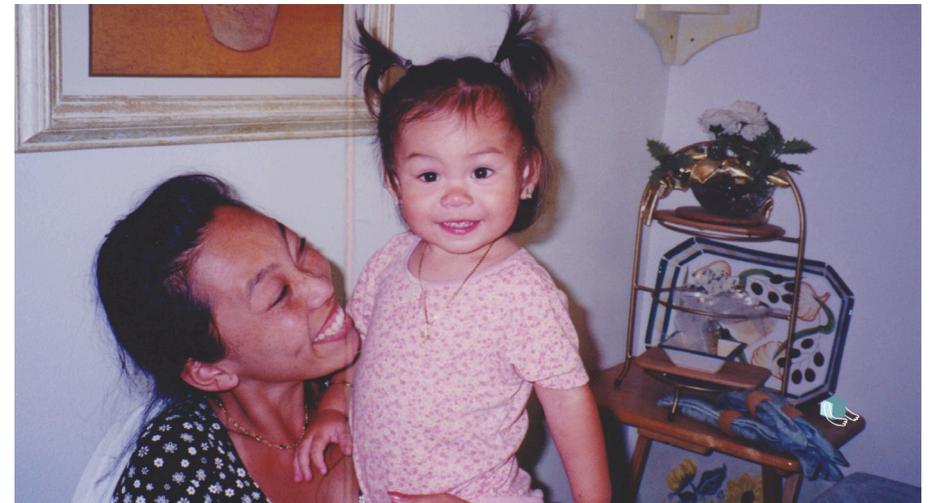


Nico Sardina is an experimental animator and screenprinter from San Diego, California, currently living and working in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis - St. Paul), Minnesota. Sardina holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Animation from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and is an operating member of the People's Library. Their work focuses on non-hegemonic sections of identity, drawing from their lived experience as a transmasculine Filipino, and how those sections are expressed. Their work is influenced by their formal animation education, subverted to work in a fine arts space. On behalf of the People's Library printmaking collective, Sardina is the co-recipient of a 2020-21 Visual Arts Fund Community Relief Grant from Midway Contemporary Art; overseeing the training and facilitation of 6 screenprinting interns during the grant period.

Sardina has live screenprinted at events for Angela Conley, Whittier Alliance, Minneapolis Institute of Arts Third Thursday, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and Seward Free Store

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NICO SARDINA



Trick Run Ran 2017

still from animation

note: a wrinkle is visible where in the photo, where was folded for years, the left side hidden in family photo albums



Exterior view of *Ultimate Henry's Comfort Zone I*
2019

sculpture, photo by Tom Bierlein



Interior view of *Ultimate Henry's Comfort Zone I*
2019

sculpture, photo by Tom Bierlein



Original drawing of *Ultimate Henry's Comfort Zone*
2018

digital sketch



Trick Run Ran
2017

still from animation

BEAU TATE



Beau Tate is a non-binary trans-masculine installation and video artist and musician from Milwaukee, Wisconsin working in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Tate holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fine Art Studio with an emphasis in Printmaking from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Tate works with text, performance, and familiar found objects to replicate and preserve the intimacies of human relationships through the guise of memory within a queer lens. Tate's work concerns itself within the emotions and intimacies of human interaction and relationships, the moments shared by friends, family, and strangers alike. He uses the performative residue of organized placement, text (poetry), and visual narrative to maximize the sensory experience within his work.

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BEAU TATE



Est. Again
2020

Steel, cement, lithograph on glassine



As Well As It Can Fit, the Worm Sits
2018

clay



As Well As It Can Fit, the Worm Sits
2018

clay



Typograph - O
2019

Lithograph on glassine



Cow
2020

Intaglio print

KIERAN MYLES-ANDRÉS TVERBAKK



Kieran Myles-Andrés Tverbakk is an artist from Houston, Texas, currently living and working on Dakhóta land (Minneapolis-St. Paul). They create mixed media artwork exploring dichotomies within their experience as a first-generation Mexican-Norwegian-American who is also non-binary transgender. Their interests lie in how we as humans divide ourselves socially, politically, and physically.

Tverbakk has exhibited nationally in galleries including Clamp Light (San Antonio TX), Sure Space (Minneapolis MN), New Women Space (Brooklyn NY), NDSU's Memorial Union Gallery (Fargo ND), Waiting Room (St. Paul MN), Hair + Nails (Minneapolis), and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Museum (Philadelphia PA). Tverbakk is a 2020 Artist Initiative Grant recipient, awarded by the Minnesota State Arts Board. They are the founder of Transparency.News and a co-founder of ACAB, A Community Arts Bandwagon.

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KIERAN MYLES-ANDRÉS TVERBAKK



bound
2020

reclaimed wood,
red velour dress from the artist's childhood,
spray paint, steel grating, resin
photo by Emma Beatrez



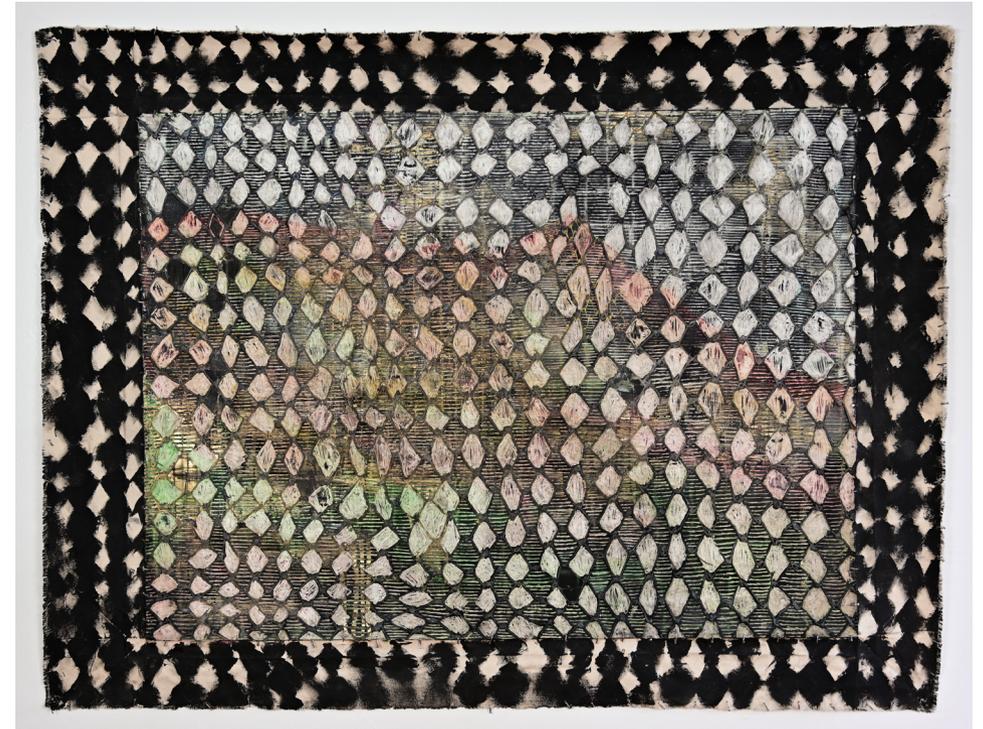
madre
2021

chickenwire, plaster wrap, acrylic, fake flowers, clay eggs, resin



la bandera
2021

wood, leather scraps burnt
and shaped with fire,
worn/used chest binder,
bent nails, resin
photo by Emma Beatrez



landscape
2021

oil, acrylic, spray paint, bent nails, canvas
photo by Emma Beatrez



untitled
2020

used/worn chest binding tape, toilet paper,
the artist's hair, bent nails, resin, wooden panel
photo by Emma Beatrez

AFTER, OTHER,

AND BEFORE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a child, I knew of few people that looked like me in positions I could only dream of having; mostly doctors and teachers. As I got older, and my dreams changed, I knew of even fewer; linguists, museum directors, curators. My mother never let me give up on my dreams, whether I would be the first, or join a legacy of people who paved the way for me.

When I was around 12 years old, my mother had *the* conversation with me on a car ride after not being invited to a friend's birthday party. It's a conversation that at some time or another, Black parents must have with their children. My world changed at that moment. I began to notice differences in my friendships, encouragement I did or didn't receive. I noticed the way people responded to my name, my complexion as it compared to my family members, my success in school and extracurriculars. I always knew there were no limits for me, but I also knew that I would have to find people to help me achieve my dreams.

This exhibition was born out of a dream and stands as a hope. A desire to understand and reconcile a relationship with ancestry and the future. To understand what it means to be the dreams of displaced persons in foreign lands. To know what it feels like to build new families, and new dreams within oneself and through others. It is thanks to my artists—Timothy Manalo, Nico Sardina, Beau Tate, and Kieran Myles-Andrés Tverbakk—who have trusted me with their works and interpretation that I have been able to learn these things.

Over a year ago, the idea of landing a position and an institution or being an independent curator felt like a fever dream. Today that

dream feels attainable; it's real, and with every passing day, curators around the world make it more and more possible. Over the last year with support from the Emerging Curators Institute, I've had the opportunity to learn, develop, and discover what draws me to make art, and to want to curate it. It has been with the support and indulgence of mentors Casey Riley, Daniel Atkinson, Sally Frater, and Esther Callahan. Being in cohort with Starasea Nidiala Camara, Juleana Enright, and Michael Khuth has been something of a dream. Though our time has been spent virtually, I would gladly call them friends, colleagues and gleam to work with them again. Because of you all, I have learned so much about myself as a person, curator, artist; to all of you, thank you.

— Kehayr Myles-O'Shaé Brown-Ransaw



Kehayr Brown-Ransaw is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and curator with a BFA in Furniture Design from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design ('19). Brown-Ransaw's practice engages in conversations of individualism v. collectivism, familial histories, concepts of gendered work, tradition, and Blackness/Black identity through quilting, weaving and printmaking. His curatorial and teaching practices are concerned with access, representation, and the presentation of marginalized communities.

He has exhibited work at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, FilmNorth, Vine Arts Center, BI Worldwide, with public works at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design Sculpture Garden. He is a current 2020/21 ECI Emerging Curator Fellow, 2020/21 Jerome Early Career Fellow, and 2021 Artist in Residence at the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery. Additionally, Brown-Ransaw is an active and operating member of the People's Library having exhibited works at and collaboratively in arts programming at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Soap Factory, Walker Art Center, and Minneapolis Institute of Art. He is the recipient of a FY2021 State Arts Board Creative Support for Individuals grant, 2020 Visual Arts Fund Community Relief Grant from Midway Contemporary Art on behalf of The People's Library, and FY2020 Next Step Fund Award from the Metro Regional Arts Council.

Photo by Awa Mally

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Fellows of the 2020-21 cohort are Kehayr Brown-Ransaw, Starasea Nidiala Camara, Juleana Enright, and Michael Khuth.

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