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University of Iowa School of Art & Art History
THE GRANT WOOD ART COLONY
2013–14 GRANT WOOD FELLOWS EXHIBITION

Esther Baker-Tarpaga
Kristina Paabus
Eric Sall

SABOTAGE
new work in visual and performance art

April 20–27, 2014, Levitt Gallery
School of Art & Art History, The University of Iowa
The Grant Wood Art Colony, now in its fourth year, continues Wood’s advocacy of contemporary art production in the School of Art & Art History at The University of Iowa. The mission of the Colony is to nurture creative work and teaching in the disciplines relevant to the art and life of Grant Wood. The program exemplifies The University of Iowa’s historic commitment to the visual arts and the pioneering of the MFA degree, the terminal professional degree in the field. Fellows are provided with a welcoming home, private studios, and generous residencies on the Colony grounds adjacent to the Grant Wood House. They also have teaching assignments in the School, but have ample time to pursue their artistic endeavors.

Grant Wood Fellows exhibit their work toward the end of the spring semester of the fellowship year. This gives faculty and students in the School, as well as the wider academic community and general public, an opportunity to see the results of the Fellows’ efforts during the time of their residency at the Colony. This catalogue documents the exhibition held in the Levitt Gallery of Art Building West on The University of Iowa campus in April of 2014.

2013–2014 Grant Wood Fellows Kristina Paabus (printmaker), Eric Sall (painter) and Esther Baker-Tarpaga (choreographer and performance artist) exemplify the analytical power of contemporary art and enhance Grant Wood’s legacy by epitomizing the next generation of artists. Notwithstanding their distinctive processes, all three artists explore the technical possibilities of the respective medium in which they work. Thanks also to Alan MacVey and the Division of Performing Arts, and George de la Pena in the Dance Department for their participation and development of the Performing Arts Fellowship. Special thanks are owed to Saffron Henke, Associate Director of the Grant Wood Art Colony, who has shepherded the Colony program from inception to maturity and coordinated all aspects of the exhibition and catalogue production.

FROM THE DIRECTORS

Sean O’Harrow, Director
University of Iowa Museum of Art

John Beldon Scott, Director
School of Art & Art History
SABOTAGE
Grant Wood Fellowship Exhibition
Esther Baker-Tarpaga
Kristina Paabus
Eric Sall
ESTHER BAKER-TARPAGA

BIOGRAPHY

Esther Baker-Tarpaga is a choreographer and performance artist. She is a Grant Wood Visiting Artist at The University of Iowa Department of Dance. Her research is on visibility, invisibility, race, gender, and motherhood. As a recent Headlands Artist in Residence she collaborated with Moroccan choreographer, Hind Benali. She is an Associate of Guillermo Gómez-Peña La Pocha Nostra and recently collaborated on a new project at Galería de la Raza, San Francisco. She toured with David Rousseve/REALITY “Saudade” Project and DAFRA West African Dance and Drum.

She is co-artistic director of Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project, a transnational dance theatre company founded in 2004 with Olivier Tarpaga. BTDP has performed at REDCAT Now Festival and Highways Los Angeles, as well as I’Trotra Madagascar, Jacobs Pillow Inside Out, The Kelly Strayhorn Theater Pittsburgh, VSA N4th New Mexico, Dialogue De Corps Burkina Faso, The King Arts Complex Columbus, The Maitisong Festival Botswana, Abok I Ngoma Festival Cameroon, and The French Cultural Center Senegal. She co-directs a dance workshop in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and has taught at The Ohio State University Department of Dance, Rio Hondo Community College, and Cypress Community College. She received her MFA and MA in Dance at UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures and her BA at Bowdoin College.
She curates a video blog site “Shifting Traces: Contemporary Dance and Technology In and Outside of Africa,” featuring performance and interviews with African choreographers (http://shiftafrica.wordpress.com/). She has a forthcoming publication in Live Arts Almanac and Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism. She recently was invited through the US State Department to teach and lecture at KINANI Contemporary Dance Festival in Mozambique and Ateliers Aex-Corps in Senegal. From 2006-2008 she was a US State Department Cultural Envoy invited to teach contemporary dance in Burkina Faso, South Africa, Botswana, and Guinea. From 2000–2005 she collaborated with Senegal-based dancers, musicians, and rappers, notably Andrey Ouamba, Fatou Cisse, Djibril Diallo, Bertrand Saki, Keyti, Sen Kumpe, and Fatim. She co-produced United Nations of Hip Hop, which screened at AFI International and NYC Pan African Film Festival and recently created “Free to Be You and Me” with her daughter for The Dances Made to Order film series. She is the recipient of New York Live Arts Suitcase Fund, Battelle Endowment for Technology and Human Affairs, Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award, Johnstone Fund for New Music, Durfee, Javits Fellowship, Coca-Cola Critical Difference for Women, and UCIRA grant.
I am a choreographer, performance artist, dancer, and interdisciplinary artist. My current research is on race, gender, and motherhood as performance impetus for the body. Specifically I have been obsessed with inscribing, writing, costuming, and improvising my dancing body as well as the bodies of others. As I inscribe and write on my body or ask others to do so, I am interested in what is visible and what is invisible. These collaborations bring in heavy use of props, text, performance interactions with audiences, site, activism, and border politics, amongst many other things. It is a home for my questions around what is representation, what is fantasy, what is autobiography, and how do my performance glitches sit next to other personas simultaneously.

As part of the residency I have been reflecting on past performance projects as well as taking time to research writings and videos on the subject of White Privilege in relation to oppression and structural racism. As I read texts and pull together ideas, I process these reflections through writing poetry and painting. This interdisciplinary practice in a visual and poetic medium allows time and space to figure out ideas through material traces. As a choreographer who works very quickly with performers, I translate my improvisations to the paper and pen. This space and time to process and perform through material traces allows a necessary breath of reflection before returning to the choreographed body.

I also have been collaborating with a local photographer to create a performance art and photography project based on several of Grant Wood’s paintings, in particular his portrait work. Using the iconic portrait tradition, I am interested in framing a queer, racially diverse utopia.

I collaborated with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Saul Garcia Lopez, and Jen Cohen on a video performance project titled “Dancing With Fear,” which we are continuing to develop. I developed an evening-length installation and performance on my company Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project entitled, “Beautiful Struggle.” I also created three new choreographies on dancers at The University of Iowa focusing on technology, gender, race, and the body: 1) “How does thi$ app work? lol feels like I’m mi$behaving,” 2) “Still Running...” (with Olivier Tarpaga), and 3) “Girl Piece.”
(Top) *Girl Piece*, 2014, performers: Lauren Linder, Jingqiu Guan, Lindsay Fisher
Still Running…, choreographed by Esther Baker-Tarpaga and Olivier Tarpaga
Performers: Melanie Swihart and Amy Simonson

Grant Wood Portrait Tableaux Vivants
Performers: Mykayla Tanner and Jingqiu Guan

(Right) Still Running…, choreographed by Esther Baker-Tarpaga and Olivier Tarpaga
Performers: Melanie Swihart and Amy Simonson
Sean, after Grant Wood Arnold Comes of Age, photo, 30”x40”
Go 3, 2014, screen print on paper. (1/4), 19"x14"
Kristina Paabus is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus in printmaking. Paabus studied Fine Arts and Religious Studies at The University of Massachusetts Amherst, Printmaking at The Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA), and received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. In 2009 she earned her MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and then returned to Estonia as a Fulbright Fellow and Visiting Artist at the EAA. Kristina has exhibited her work throughout the United States and Europe, including Chicago, Boston, Minneapolis, Rosendale, Providence, Reykjavik, Miami, Berlin, and Tallinn. Recent residencies include: ACRE (WI), Ox-Bow (MI), Women’s Studio Workshop (NY), Lill Street (IL), Culture Factory Polymer (Estonia), Samband Íslenskra Myndlistarmanna (Iceland), and Inside Zone (Romania). Prior to arriving at the University of Iowa as a Visiting Assistant Professor and Grant Wood Fellow in Printmaking, Paabus was an Instructor and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Printmedia at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. This fall she is looking forward to joining Oberlin College in her new post as the Assistant Professor of Reproducible Media.
In my work I examine the systems of logic and order that we use to enforce our perceptions of structure. Through a multidisciplinary approach, I create hybrid spatial conversations that elaborate on the constructions that allow us to interact with, and gain control over, our surroundings. These specific systems, such as language, architecture, beliefs, and organizational tools, serve as guides to our relationship to the world around us. Our interactions and conversations with these systems often inhabit polarities of fact and fiction. These spaces of actuality, memory, imagination, and paradox describe the nuances of our experiences.

This current body of work continues to explore shared and individual codes, but now through the lens of game theory. Games inherently inhabit a sense of structure, strategy, duality, competition, causality, success, and failure. It is through this discussion that I am able to research behavioral relations within both liminal and obvious spaces. Avoiding the implications of a specific game, I instead employ the language of games to study rules, planning, cause, and effect. The prints consider systems, strategy, patterns, and the processes of decision-making, while the sculptures act as characters, consequences, and situations. I employ printmaking in all of the work for its unique ability for repetition, reinterpretation, and the layering of information.

Knowing the Rules
2014
Unique screen print on paper
30”x22”
Go 2, 2014, screenprint on paper (1/5), 19”x14”
Where the Chips May Fall, 2014, unique screen print on paper, 30”x22”
Born to Lose, 2014, unique screen print on paper, 30”x22”
Zero-Sum, 2014, unique screen print on paper, 30”x22”
Meet in the Middle, 2014, unique screen print on paper, 30”x22”
ERIC SALL

Broken Blues, 2014, oil on canvas, 60"x48"
BIOGRAPHY

Eric Sall received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has attended the Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Program in Brooklyn, NY, the LMCC Workspace residency in New York, NY, the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program, Roswell, NM, and the Yale Summer Program of Music and Art, Norfolk, CT. Sall is the recipient of an Art in Architecture commission from the General Services Administration, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, a Virginia Museum of Fine Art Fellowship, and a Charlotte Street Fund Award. Recent shows include BravinLee Gallery, New York, NY; Regina Rex Gallery, Queens, NY; ADA Gallery, Richmond, VA; Brain Factory, Seoul, South Korea; Nerman Museum of Fine Arts, Overland Park, KS; and Bemis Art Center, Omaha, NE. Eric is currently residing in Iowa City where he is the Painting Fellow at the Grant Wood Art Colony at The University of Iowa. In the Fall of 2014 Sall will return to Roswell, NM for a second residency at the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program.

Too Much
(Screen Time)
2014, oil on canvas, 24”x36”
ARTIST STATEMENT

My paintings often allude to the representation of something—an object, a figure, a pattern or illusion, within a physical space or specific place. Sometimes familiar and reminiscent, other times evocative and confounding, the paintings hover between representation and abstraction.

I am intrigued by the process in which a painting is made. I begin not with a specific idea about a subject but rather with the physical act of applying paint to a surface. Through a process of call and respond, a painting seemingly appears out of thin air, becoming something from nothing. An action is implied, a form takes shape, a surface allures, a color evokes, a mood prevails. As a painting begins to develop, spontaneity, randomness and intuition are balanced with precision and calculation in an attempt to hone in on something specific. With that said, nothing is too sacred within any given painting to be sacrificed in order to bring the painting where it needs to be. A single painting may drastically change in appearance numerous times over the course of its making, which can easily take a year or longer. Consequently, my paintings regularly have a physicality that betrays any hint of the resulting image.

Deciding when a painting is finished is never easy to do, hence the extended time spent making them. It’s as if any given painting has infinite possible versions of itself that can be brought out. I attempt to capture a painting in a stage that feels just right, and explaining what that feeling is is nearly impossible. It is something that relies equally on intuition and experience.
Screensaver, 2014, oil on canvas, 20”x30”
Pseudo Shelter, 2014, oil on canvas, 24”x20”
MISSION
The Grant Wood Art Colony seeks to provide a creative home for the next generation of artists and continue Grant Wood’s creative advocacy in the School of Art & Art History at The University of Iowa through artist residencies, teaching fellowships, symposia, and community programs.

VISION
The mission of the Colony is to nurture creative work and teaching in disciplines relevant to the art and life of Grant Wood - studio art and art history, and eventually expanding to a variety of disciplines. The program exemplifies The University of Iowa’s historic commitment to creative work and pioneering of the MFA degree. The Grant Wood Art Colony will further embody the “Iowa Idea” of bringing artists and scholars together in an academic context, as first formulated in the 1920s. Our long-term goal is to create a vibrant colony and cultural center, woven together by gardens and studio space.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT
The administrative home of the Grant Wood Art Colony resides at 1131 E. Burlington St. Under the direction of the School of Art & Art History, this house is used for staff offices, a studio, upstairs residences for Grant Wood Fellows, and a reception area. A second house was recently added at 1205 E. Burlington. This house includes a two bedroom family unit below, and a one bedroom apartment upstairs. The Grant Wood Colony produces a biennial Grant Wood Symposium and the Grant Wood Fellowship Program.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
The Grant Wood Fellowship program currently provides three one-year fellowships. Fellows are selected through a national competition and provided with furnished living quarters at the Grant Wood Art Colony. During the academic year each fellow teaches a total of two courses at the School of Art & Art History and Division of Performing Arts, leaving the rest of the time for the artist’s own work and research. A teaching salary, benefits and studio are provided.

GRANT WOOD ART COLONY
1131 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, IA 52240
http://art.uiowa.edu/grant-wood-art-colony
Grant Wood and His Pupils
Courtesy of the Figge Art Museum Grant Wood Archive, Scrapbook #8.