

SKOWHEGAN

JOURNAL
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Past, Present, Future

Katie Sonnenborn, Co-Director

Skowhegan, in its essential and human approach to building and sustaining a diverse community of artists, exists to uplift. Founder Bill Cummings was revered for his generosity, and his legacy at Skowhegan is a culture rooted in compassion and inclusion, a school born out of a time of war. Nearly 80 years later, it will unfold this summer in the context of global and national conflict, and again face complex problems without simple truths. But as Nayland Blake passionately called up at the Awards Dinner in October, art can be a counterpoint to competition and polarization, and artists can hold conflicting realities simultaneously: “[Art] is the place where our individual complexities come together to become our shared culture. In art we are unique together. Both the uniqueness and the togetherness are essential to what we call art.”

At Skowhegan, we follow artists, we support artists, we work for and with artists. We are guided by a mission and set of core values, and we reinvent annually thanks to the assembled artists and the intense community formed in Maine. Less visible but equally essential, is the community behind the scenes—our staff, our partners, our donors—whose commitment enables the school to thrive. Compiling this journal is always a reminder of the truly remarkable nature of this place and the extreme talent and innovation of the humans who congregate through and within Skowhegan, year after year. It is, to paraphrase Nayland, “a reminder of why we do this work.”

In 2023, the energy on campus was palpable, and it was exhilarating to see such an inspiring group of artists assembled in one place. Ranging in age from 22 to 60, the participants drew from 21 states and 17 countries, bringing with them an exceptional breadth of lived experiences and studio practices. The joy and sense of possibility is evident in the generous memories shared by Candida Alvarez with Ajay Kurian (F '23) as she reflects back to her summer as a student (1981) and her recent role as faculty (2023). Equally, her memories reinforce one of Skowhegan’s abiding priorities which is to help artists believe in themselves as artists. An artist recently told me she understood Skowhegan to be like time release medicine wherein the metaphorical “dose” of the nine-week experience metes out for years thereafter. Or in Candida’s words, “As a young artist you don’t even realize how important these conversations are until later on, because they don’t go away. But you don’t know that they didn’t go away until you need them, right?”

Skowhegan is always toggling between past, present and future. Since opening the New York space in 2014, we’ve expanded programs envisioned to function as connective tissue between generations of alumni. Projects like those spotlighted in the Journal are largely spearheaded by the Alumni Alliance to offer points of connection, community and new contexts to share and explore art and practice. They help us understand the school’s history and impact, and reflect our interest in growing our archives to include more stories from alumni, rooted in an interest in learning new stories and making visible lesser-known art histories. The Lecture Archive, fully online and indexed by Jagdeep Raina (A '17), is a rich resource, freely available for alumni, as well as artists, curators and researchers by request. In 2023 we resumed the Oral History project with Liza Zapol who conducted new interviews with Joyce Kozloff (F '98) and Howardena Pindell (F '80). And responsive reflections, like those by Shaun Leonardo (A '04, F '23) and Steve Locke (A '02, F '23) in memoriam for Pope.L (A '96, F '04), are opportunities to learn about bravery, friendship and influence, inextricably linked to 350-acres in central Maine.

Sarah Workneh writes about the ghosts of Skowhegan, and I am finishing this letter from campus in late February where only ghosts are in residence. Snow mounds outside of Red Farm and I was woken by the hoots of a great horned owl. It is very quiet. Surrounded by its palpable history, I can’t help thinking that one of Skowhegan’s most wonderful attributes is its ability to know who needs it, and who it needs, at any given moment. Sarah’s leadership was transformative, and her 14-year service was a gift to the school and to hundreds of artists at just the right moment. Sarah brought me to campus for the first time, in the winter. This trip, I am the seasoned one, joined by Ruth Estévez, who is our next co-director. It feels precisely right, and I look with anticipation to the next chapter of this remarkable school where artists can be unique together.



2023 Participants

Agil Abdullayev
Suzi Alvarez
Christian Amaya Garcia
Dahlia Bloomstone
Trent Bozeman
Henry Bradley
Alexander Brewington
Bri Brooks
Roberto Carter
Kaela Mei-Chee Chambers
Maia Chao
Mustafa Clayton
Josh Cloud
Shanique Emelife
Ilya Fedotov-Fedorov
Ann Flanagan
Sterling Hedges
Yun Heo

Elvira Horvei
Yasmine Huang
Michael Igwe
Julia Jalowiec
Maren Jensen
Ebony Joiner
Mario Joyce
Samone Kidane
Kristina Knipe
Ryan Leitner
Hai-Wen Lin
Iris Loughran
Abigail Lucien
SaraNoa Mark
Vijay Masharani
Assata Mason
Dylan McLaughlin
Luis Mejicanos

Kristen Mills
Ash Moniz
Giancarlo Montes Santangelo
Liam Murray
Ivan David Ng
Elijah Ober
Grace Rosario Perkins
Utē Petit
Vernando Reuben
Amir Saadiq
Jonathan Sanchez Noa
Benedict Scheuer
Sally Scopa
Manal Shoukair
Gwen Smith
Sandra Smolski
Ossian Nilsson Söderqvist
Sergio Suarez

Heryk Tomassini
Thiang Uk
Carlos Alberto Vazquez Vielma
Ajunie Virk
Misra Walker
Chantal Whuk
Mikey Yates

2023 Faculty

Resident Faculty
Candida Alvarez (A '81)
Ajay Kurian
Shaun Leonardo (A '04)
Steve Locke (A '02)
Carolyn Lazard

Park McArthur (A '12) &
Jason Hirata
Constantina Zavitsanos

Visiting Faculty
Gregg Bordowitz
Anthea Hamilton
Diane Severin Nguyen
Ahmet Öğüt
Alison Saar (F '93)

Paul Mellon Distinguished Fellow
Walter Hood



Of Blue Sky & Great Wandering Shadows

Sarah Workneh (Co-Director 2010–2023)

As I do every year when writing this letter, I have procrastinated until the very end. This year is different because I am writing it from a new job, and my new home in a new place. This new place is just a few miles from the birthplace of W.E.B. Du Bois, so while it feels unfamiliar; it feels like a grounding in a moment when much of what I know of myself, my intentions, my beliefs, my relationships feel untethered.

At our Awards Dinner last fall, my colleagues organized a toast to celebrate the end of my 14 years as Co-Director of Skowhegan. During the toast offered by Dave McKenzie and Elle Pérez, Elle—who served as dean for six summers alongside me, repeated the words I have said as we gather in the barn for our closing ceremony at the end of each summer:

"You will start leaving here, this 9 weeks will end tomorrow. How you order your world, how you envision the potential around your practice, and what you want from the larger community of people that surround you lies ahead. And here at the end of this, 24 hours from feeling the pinch that puts Skowhegan directly in conversation with the rest of our lives—we realize that today is actually the real start. For you, for me. For all of us, and all of us together."

The leaving of Skowhegan is something I have been through many times before. Even if I always stayed and everyone else was doing the leaving—there was a breach for me in the loss of any particular summer; the very abrupt shift from constant engagement to an empty campus; the rude juxtaposition of life almost on an island back to the anonymity and overstimulation of being in New York. But the pinch—the pinch that I described, and Elle invoked, was about facing the gap between a life lived together, a life of deep engagement, a life centered not on what we know or have made routine, but a life centered on what we might give to each other to destabilize what we know or have made routine in the hope of constructing something better, more full, more complex. As a constant in that space and community, I hadn't personally experienced that pinch until now.

This is where I sit in this moment, but this singular blip in time—after the end of my tenure, but before I understand some of the contours of my new life—this pinch is, like it is for everyone leaving Skowhegan each summer, the result of a process-based experiment. And while my experiment has been protracted, it has landed me in the same spot, trying to understand the same questions: How do I order my world, how do I envision the potential around my practice, and what do I want for the larger community that surrounds me.

I came to artmaking and to the woods specifically, first at Ox-Bow, then at Skowhegan, because I wanted space to experiment with futurity, with freedom, with a kind of conceptual no man's land where I might suspend the realities of everything that had existed before me and had felt like a limitation to me.

In the very beginning of *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois asks a question that, in some ways, has framed my thinking and my work: "How does it feel to be a problem?" I wanted to exist and work, and be with people where "problemness" wasn't a problem. It was a mode of searching, or rebuilding and building from a temporarily suspended history. In artmaking—this kind of imagination and improvisation, the act of making something from nothing—could be made by anyone, with anything, for any purpose. It offered a chaos and openness that not only defied the notion of problemhood, it made it purposeful and empowered. Doing this in a kind of remoteness, it became supercharged by the fact that a collective of people could do it alongside each other in a protected space.

This past fall, I met with students at a nearby university to talk about Skowhegan. While I have done a lot of these over the years, and many in the pandemic years—distance shortened by zoom—this was both my first in-person since 2020 and the last during my tenure.

When I opened the floor to questions, one of the grad students raised his hand and recounted a similar meeting seven years prior when I had visited his undergrad school. He said he'd been thinking about that presentation and the question his younger self had asked, which, 7 years later, remained his question, albeit a softer, more nuanced version. It seemed to me, a question fueled by yearning rather than bravado, which was:

"How do you negotiate freedom when you've experienced the opposite all of your life? How do you deal with the wanting of it, when it is given to others but not you? What do you do with the anger, the fear, the worry when you finally encounter a place like Skowhegan that tries to facilitate it?"

After the session, he came to apologize for what he remembered as a tough interaction between us so many years before. I remembered doing the visit, but had no memory of his question, so my guess is that in that moment, I was probably impressed. As I explained to his almost 30-year-old self in 2023, anger isn't a bad thing—a lot of us should be angry—and should want and demand more for ourselves and for our futures. I was probably proud of his question, even if to others, it seemed like he was challenging me.

In short, my answer to his question was something like this:

"This is exactly the point. This is a place where you can carry all of that, but where you can also transform it—into something else, into a receptacle for it, into a vision for the world that comes from that awareness, but offers something different as a path forward. This is for you."

And I didn't say it then—I probably needed to be here, just down the road from Du Bois, to think: it is not a problem to be a problem.

For as much as we shared in the experience of living on this campus and running this school, Bill Cummings and I are very different people, with very different realities and very different experiences. In many ways this young student and I are probably more similar, which is how I know it's a space for him and people like him—because in no small way, it was a space for me. My gratitude for that vision, begun in 1946—facilitated by generations of artists, directors, and boards—bolstered in my time by my colleagues, in NYC and in Maine, and by the almost 900 artists who came through Skowhegan in my time, has taught me more than I can summarize in an essay, and probably more than I even understand in this moment.

And that pinch—which I understood before I actually felt it, describes an urgency to continue to push beyond what I had come to know, what I was good at, what I wanted to offer to others. In leaving, I am doing exactly what I understand Skowhegan inspires in people—acting on the will to keep moving, to keep improvising, to keep imagining things that haven't dared to be imagined before.

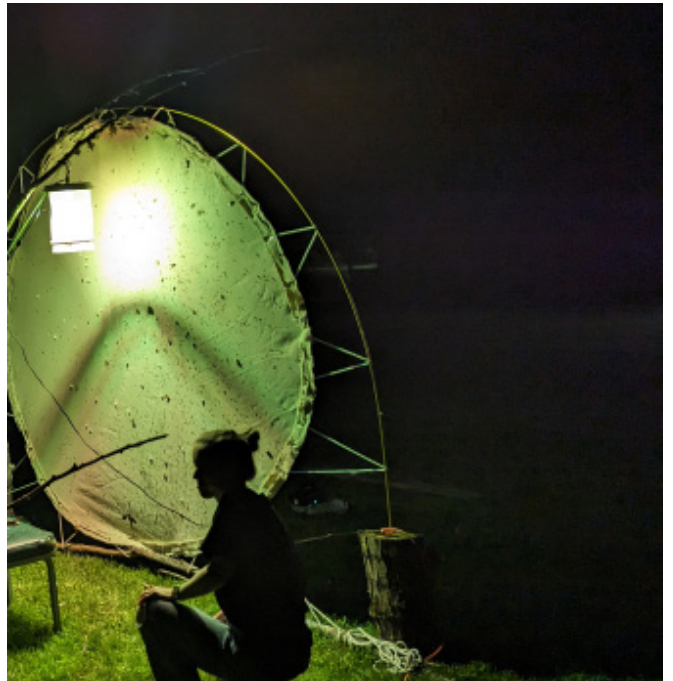
I was 26 when I started the work of running alternative art schools. The idea that one can just suspend themselves from history betrays a naïvete that comes with youth. At 47, I am far less naïve, but my conviction is stronger, more committed and more experimental. I believe more than I did two decades ago that spaces to be a problem are even more necessary than ever before.

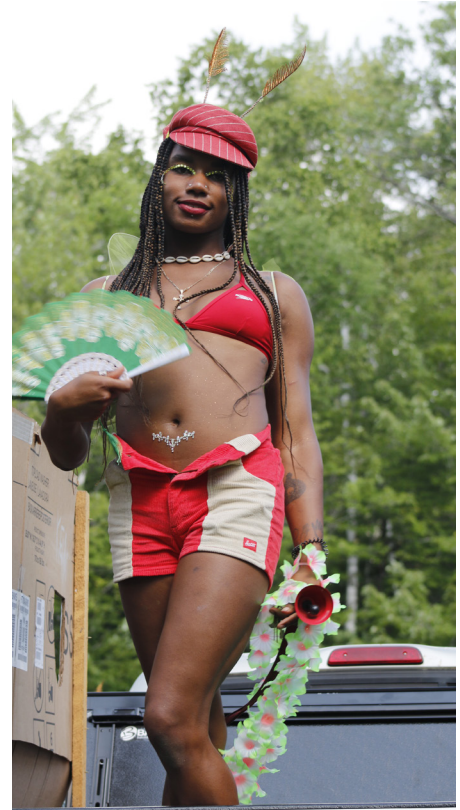
The founders couldn't have possibly envisioned 2024, but somehow, they made a path committed and flexible enough to accommodate the space that we would need and we could shape, and we could live out together. I am not sure that it was ever just about art. In my own historiography of Skowhegan, it had to be about what art could uniquely do for the world; what it could inspire in us to want and to enact. In the very nature of Skowhegan's founding and existence—it, too, was set forth to be a problem for the ways everything had been done before.

On my first night at Skowhegan in 2010, I gathered the ghosts of the founders of Ox-Bow—Frederick Frary Fursman, Walter Marshall Clute, Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, Edgar and Isobel McKinnon Rupprecht, and Elsa Ulbrecht, with the ghosts of the founders of Skowhegan—Willard Cummings, Charles Cutler, Henry Varnum Poor, Sidney Simon, Annie Poor and Ben and Bernarda Shahn, whose house I would live in for so many years on campus. I wanted the ghosts from Ox-Bow to vouch for me, that I had adhered to, protected, and made contemporary their vision of what they created.

So now I will end this in the same way, by gathering all of these very important ghosts, along with those who have shaped my life and since passed, this collection of ghosts who offered a vision of the world that hasn't relied on what already exists. But this time I will just say thank you for this space, this pinch, this gift of being a problem.









Palimpsest

A Conversation between Candida Alvarez (A '81,
F '23) & Ajay Kurian (F '23) | January 17, 2024

Ajay Kurian

[You were a participant at Skowhegan.] Do you remember any of [the faculty from 1981] as particular personalities? Any takeaways where you were like, "oh, wow, I'll never forget this?"

Candida Alvarez

Yes indeed! I remember Al Loving cooking lobsters. It was my first experience both eating and watching how lobsters were cooked. Al was a tall guy and he just grabbed those lobsters with those huge hands of his and just sent them headfirst into a huge pot of boiling water. I remember feeling very squeamish, but at the end it was quite a memorable but delicious experience! His work was amazing...so transparent, and easy going...I felt he was one of the most radical artists of his generation. He built his paintings up like woven quilts getting to irregular shapes, using dye color as paint. He loved working with paper and just hammered nails into the four corners...so they appeared like they were floating on the wall.



Sidney Simon and Candida Alvarez, 1981.

My studio in 1981 was inside a former chicken coop, with a big wide window facing a pasture where the cows were grazing. It was a tiny space, and I think there were at least two of us working inside. Al had to stoop while he came to advise, as it was difficult to stand up straight. Rafael Ferrer never stayed long, but he could relate to the scale of that studio differently. He was more petite, with that great mustache. As we spoke, I often thought about how much information he could get into a painting, regardless of the scale. They were colorful and complex. Inside my tiny studio, we spoke about making paintings that could fit in my back pocket. What a great idea!!

In 1981 I did a lot of work on paper and I had the cows as my subject. My huge studio window faced the pasture where they grazed, I didn't know much about cows, since I grew up in the city. One day, I was taking a walk through that pasture and saw something that looked like a tree stump. Well, I decided to jump on top of it, and my sneakers sunk in. It was this big piece of shit...cow dung. I was so embarrassed, but it was hilarious. Never again! Beware of beautiful landscapes!

I remember taking my little painting to Milton Resnick. He gave a terrific lecture that I just loved. He just started it by walking around in multiple circles, scratching his head waiting for the room to fill. As I watched him, I remember thinking to myself, Oh my God, he does what I do. When I'm thinking, I just go around in a circle like that. Of course, that was my moment of connection with him. I looked forward to taking my little 20 x 20 black painting to his studio for a Crit. I remember he looked at my work, and he said, "wow, you're such a good composer." I never heard anybody say that about my work. I remember those words so strongly, because maybe I was actually doing something interesting. Maybe I do know something. As a young artist, you don't always understand what you are doing until someone you respect says something, brings it out, names it, and calls it up. I learned to be an artist at Skowhegan. How to think through ideas and how to trust myself. I learned courage. Milton was very kind and direct when he said, "remember to always look at the corners." I must admit to this day, I still do. My eyes still dance around the painting like a circle, around those corners.

That's why communication is so important. When we speak to each other, we can get lost in language. But there's also this beautiful misunderstanding that could happen, right? That is also learning. As a young artist you don't even realize how important these conversations are until later on, because they don't go away. But you don't know that they didn't go away until you need them, right? This is clear now, 42 years later. It was like a thought wave that was always with me the whole time, because it was important. I just could not hold it all at once. It has taken years.

Ajay Kurian

Was it funny being on the other side of things?

Candida Alvarez

It wasn't funny; it was an honor really. I felt special. One of the first things I did when I went to Skowhegan this time was to notice how much walking was involved in our daily activities. My iPhone was tracking my steps. At first, the black night was challenging, but we learned to look up and use the trees as our guide. It did not work too well when it was cloudy (which was most of the time) but when the moon came out it was sheer bliss. It was like a meditation, a challenge to myself. So for weeks I huffed and puffed my way up and down the terrain, which was terrifying at night or when the ghost stories filled the air. After several weeks it just got smoother. It was an achievement.

I must say that teaching at Skowhegan over 9 weeks was a wonderful way to measure my own relationship to practice and how teaching has been such an amazing role for me to grow within as an artist. I could never have asked for better colleagues. It was hard, but stimulating. It was emotional at times, but it kept me strong. I remembered to remember the things I forgot to remember all those years I traced 42 years of my history as I walked the grounds, looking for heart shaped stones, just like in 1981. Growing up into the artist I have become is a result of many experiences that can never be predicted. I am overjoyed to feel like I am living my destiny with my feet firmly on the ground. Skowhegan was an important training ground for me.

Ajay Kurian

You raced up that hill.

Candida Alvarez

I sure did.

It's the Brooklyn in me, it's the New Yorker in me. Being raised in the city where you have to walk and you have to go climb up and down, to get to the subways, it's in my body because I had to do that all the time. That's what I miss about it. I think that deciding where to end up is very interesting. It's about your body type in some ways, and what you need, and your friends, your community, who's still alive, who's around, who can remember things that you remember, there's something to that as opposed to being in a world by myself.

So that's why the teaching was always so important to me, because I was meeting people I didn't really know. I got to know the conversation, and to know what there was for me to figure out, what was there for me to share? What is there for me to say at that moment that could hopefully open up a passageway or connect that young person or that participant or that student who's looking for help or assistance. So together we can walk through something that is kind of questionable.



Candida Alvarez with Steve Locke, 2023.

Ajay Kurian

When you think a work is done, you said you can't remember where you started?

Candida Alvarez

When I forget where I began, that's when I know it's finished.

Ajay Kurian

It's more than the sum of its parts. You can't say it's one plus two plus three plus four plus five. It's this new thing that's living and moving in a way that you didn't expect, and that's the magic of it all.

Candida Alvarez

Well, that's conversation, isn't it? That's the magic of really good conversation. It's when you connect with someone and know that you want to be friends with them. I believe that getting lost in your work can be beneficial as it helps you to step back and examine where you've landed.

I often find myself drawn to the word "palimpsest." The word itself is beautiful, with its ten letters and an air of mystery. It wasn't until I visited

Arles, France during a residency this past April that I truly understood its meaning. Walking through the ancient streets, with the town's centuries-old Roman history, I was struck by the walls and buildings that had stood for so long. I've always loved visiting history museums and seeing the models of the cities and the way they were built. In one of the oldest museums in Arles, they had fantastic models of the water systems, bridges, and architecture.

As soon as I walked into the building, I could see the ruins and how they had been preserved. Seeing the different stages of the city's development through its architecture was truly fascinating. I remember thinking as I was walking down one of those streets, it's a very circular city...and I am lost. Experiencing a circular city like that was curious and frustrating. It's hard to figure out where you're going to stop. Where's the clock going to stop? So I can have that sign to know that I'm going the right way. But I remember thinking, I'm living in a palimpsest here. It was something that's still very alive. That idea of recycling and retooling and layering history. Knowledge is sharing bits and pieces of what has been and what is about to become, that transitional space which we all go through because that's our lives, right? We are not fixed points, we're moving points.

Ajay Kurian

And that was physically enacted at Skowhegan. You literally got to go back and place it.

Candida Alvarez

That was my first opportunity to relive my experience. Unlike the paintings, it was about remembering the beginning points, trying to go back through the layers to get back to the questions, feelings, and what activated the experience in the first place. We are memories, and I was trying to reactivate them. It was very palimpsestic. My relationship with the terrain also taught me a lot, such as how the imagination starts to work in the dark.

Ajay Kurian

In the beginning I was using the flashlight on my phone. Then there was a certain point when I got comfortable enough that I would just walk in the dark. And it was really nice because you can't look at the path when you're walking. If you look at the path, it's just pitch black.

Candida Alvarez

You have to look up.

Ajay Kurian

If you look toward the tops of the trees, then you'll see the path without seeing it.

Candida Alvarez

That reminds me of finally understanding that I could use black pigment as a ground for fresco. I carved out the drawing with the back of a brush. I was so grateful to meet and work with Mariel and Jose. They did exceptional work, and were terrific instructors. I loved passing the Fresco barn with all the excitement going on. The music was blasting and the coffee was good. I was seduced to create a fresco. So happy I did, despite all the labor. It was hard, but the results paid back.

Steve would look at me and say "Candida, you got too many colors for fresco." I must have had like 13 colors out, I mean it was crazy. But I approached it like my paintings, and that was the problem. I loved watching Steve working on his fresco, with such skill and patience. He was always there doing his thing and I was learning a lot from him because I was watching how he did it, how he moved and he was so into it, he loved it. And then when Shaun started doing his, I was still experimenting, I was still practicing, so I was watching what he did and his relationship to it was very different and that was nice to see. And then you finally came at nighttime and I was doing it, and there was a moment where I was like something is not quite right and that thing is too heavy for me to move—it was like a wheel, right? I had to move it and I could not move that thing.



Candida Alvarez with Jason Hirata and Park McArthur on campus, 2023.

Ajay Kurian

It was really heavy.

Candida Alvarez

I was working on a 32-inch circular format, and it was really heavy to move. It was frustrating, and I had mixed all these colors that I was determined to use. I wanted to keep it simple but frustration can make you feel it wasn't good enough. I was glad that you were there working on your beautiful 3D fresco while I was trying to beat the pigment drying time. I was about to give up and throw it on the floor, but your kind words of encouragement saved it from doom, lol. I was so upset and wondered why I was doing this after so many hours of layering color. I was tired and hungry.

Ajay Kurian

I could see it in your eyes, I could see you were on your last nerve. You were literally 99% there.

Candida Alvarez

You were my gift. We were both in that fresco barn trying to create under deadline. Our brief conversation reminded me that it's okay to be where I am. The process actually gave me confidence to say that I want to try it again. The pigments are incredible.

Ajay Kurian

It was very difficult for you. And it turned out beautifully. It really did.

Candida Alvarez

I learned a lot this summer. I never expected to pick up a new skill, but I did. I accomplished a lot too. The Smithsonian recorded me for their archives, and I became an Emeritus Professor at SAIC. I also prepared for a solo exhibition that brought together work from studios in France, Maine, and Michigan. The exhibition at Monique Meloche gallery was a success, and it provided a sense of completion at the end of a long year.

This was the first time I painted in different locations for a show. Usually, I work in one studio, but this time I worked in several studios. I wanted to understand how the environment shapes us. I remember the last painting I did at Skowhegan was one of the black dinner napkin paintings. When I put it up, my first thought was "Oh my God—I just painted my view out the screen doors." It felt like a landscape painting for a split second. I didn't plan to do that, but it just came out, and it was just joyful to recognize that. I felt connected to the land, to the terrain. It was supporting me, as I was supporting it. What we create is not just in our heads, but it comes in through the body, through the eyes.



Candida Alvarez canoeing on Lake Wesserunsett, 2023

OFF CAMPUS PROGRAMS

Behind the Scenes of the Artist as Researcher Series

Chantal Lee, Librarian in The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints, and Photographs

The Artist as Researcher program at the New York Public Library is an event series launched this year in partnership with Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. The series itself is as much about discovering inspiration as it is about access to visual and scholarly research.

In the summer of 2022, Paige Laino emailed NYPL's Art & Architecture Division with an invitation to sift through boxes of books in the Skowhegan office on West 22nd Street to see what bound material consisting of 30 pages or less we could interfile with our Artist and Gallery Files—a wonderful and dizzying collection of ephemera related to an artist's career or a gallery's activities.



Skowhegan alumni at the NYPL for the Picture Collection workshop, New York Public Library, 2023.

I arrived at the offices as a Library rep, and, lo and behold, in the middle of the offices there was a small mountain of cardboard boxes each filled with a range of books collected over many years on both historical and contemporary artists and movements. Needless to say, this required more than one visit and more than a few boxes and Skowhegan tote bags to bring the materials back to our Reading Room. Paige was there each time, and being surrounded by the artworks on view in the space made by alumni, we talked about the residency, the generations of artists who participated, the artists I admire who were part of the program, and the ongoing coordinated activities from the School with participation by artists sometimes occurring decades after their residency.

As public librarians dedicated to supporting the thinking, practice and story(telling) of art, we are crazy about sharing what we have with those who may be impacted by it in small or large ways, directly and/or indirectly. The Stephen A. Schwarzman branch at Bryant Park is home to five art collections, each accessible with a library card, its resources by its very nature encyclopedic and global while also specializing in New York City creative culture. Fundamentally, a Public Library lives a symbiotic life—it would be nothing without researchers, and a Public Library with art collections would be nothing without artists. Simultaneously, any community evolves when there is a healthy and strong relationship to its library.

The possibilities are unquantifiable!

With this as an underlying truth, during the book sifting sessions with Paige we began talking about ongoing interactions between our resources and the Skowhegan community. In other words, The Artist as Researcher program came about as an invitation to practicing artists, in whatever stage of their practice, to come and use the library as a thought-extension of their studio space. In recognizing a similarly close-knit and passionate community with the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, the oldest and longest-running community printshop in the US, and just a stone's throw away on 39th Street, we welcomed both communities in February to the first of four of our monthly programs.

Word & Image from the Renaissance to the Present was led by Madeleine Viljoen, Curator of Prints and the Spencer Collection, where we explored how artists navigated the complex and ever-evolving relationship between word and image in printed works from the 15th century to the present, and how textual layout was considered by different artists and poets and how they can evoke a range of sensory experiences. Beginning with Dante, Dürer, and Yoshitoshi, we also looked at works from the 20th and 21st centuries, such as the French Symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé, the book's "translation" from Marcel Broodthaers, a book of mud paper works by Richard Long, a collaborative portfolio by Frank O'Hara and Larry Rivers, and an altered book by Anne Hamilton, among others.

The following month saw *Fluxus at the New York Public Library*. Active primarily in the early 1960s to the late 1970s, Fluxus was a loose international group of artists, poets, and musicians with a shared impulse to integrate art and life. Though global in scope, the movement had a particularly strong presence in New York City. Fluxus works, both physical and performative, are often best characterized as having a critical attitude towards art itself rather than being overtly finished in their final state—thus most of what can be seen are ephemera. Fliers, posters, event scores, performance schedules, and artists postcards is largely what our (and true of any) Fluxus Collection consists of, and is stewarded by Librarian Vinny Rutigliano in the Art & Architecture Collection. The ephemera was accompanied with photographs by Peter Moore that show the events, happenings, and concerts; the photographic prints housed in the Library's Photography Collection. Fluxus artists were also prolific in book production in innovative ways, in the world of artists' books and traditional publishing, which we also displayed.

In April was *The Picture Collection*, where we dived head first into this world of images. Picture Collection librarian Jay Vissers and I facilitated a group activity inspired by the verbal/pictorial dialogue in the 2009 book, *Interview* by Hans-Peter Feldmann and Hans Ulrich Obrist. In the book, Obrist poses questions in writing and Feldmann responds with a picture. The results are frequently surprising, and an exercise in visual thinking and communication. The Picture Collection's unique arrangement of printed images into subject headings (as nouns, verbs, people, places, concepts, and times) makes it an important instrument for visual thinking for many creative fields, in particular the fine arts—costume, set, and prop design; fashion design; and illustration. It was wonderful to see that while some attendees were encountering the Picture Collection for the first time, others were returning, having used it as a resource for their work before. Created in 1915 specifically for artists to use, it is the only collection in the building that is a circulating one—with a library card a researcher can borrow up to 60 pictures to reference in their home or studio for up to three weeks, the same length of time one can borrow a book.

The concluding program was *Japanese Photographs, Photobooks & Artists' Books*, led by Assistant Curator of Photography Maggie Mustard. The history of Japanese photography is as long and rich as the medium itself and offers the opportunity to study technical innovation and avant-garde theory alongside issues of memory, gender, and national and personal identity. The format of the photobook in Japan is especially important as a vehicle for experimental design, for collaborative expression, and for new ideas about the relationship between viewer and image.

Because the original run that took place in the Spring occurred on weekday mornings, we decided to reprise the programs, bi-monthly this time, to take place on Saturdays, so those who could not come for the first round have the opportunity to join.

At the end of every event, we emphasize access. As New Yorkers with a library card, they can (are entitled to!) request to look at, flip through, or read—the print, the photograph, the historical ephemera, the book—and in the case of the Picture Collection, even borrow. Though so much inspiration and creative work is actually unquantifiable (making the "value" of a library difficult to "prove," as evidenced by the recent city budget cuts), something that has been personally thrilling was seeing the number of program attendees returning on their own, in their own time, for their work.



Roofs and Roots

Heather Cox (A '97)

Roofs and Roots is a collage created by Heather Cox that utilizes the archives of the Picture Collection from the New York Public Library. Heather took pictures of the images she wanted, printed them out, used paper punches to cut out circles, and then stapled them together. The piece is part of a larger body of work titled *Roundels*, that uses found photographs and staples to create 2D and 3D constellations that explore memory and connection.

Heather Cox is an artist who lives and works in New York City. She received her early training in book arts and photography at Mills College. She went on to study at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and received her MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She currently works at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the Conservation Department.

Heather's artwork is quirky and seductive. It is often characterized by precisely crafted objects that involve repetition and shifting scale. She employs a variety of materials in her projects to address issues of visibility, discovery and metamorphosis.

SkowheganPerforms 2023

Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, NY | Sunday, October 1, 2023 | A day of new, site-specific performance art by Skowhegan Alumni. Sharing a thematic prompt with The Socrates Annual, the performances related to “transformation” in many forms, with a special emphasis on changes in the environment and history.



Amanda Lechner, *CambrianSchist/Wetland/Ravenswood/Landfill* (2023), live drawing using handmade ink from walnut and oak galls collected from the eastern US and from discarded copper and iron on canvas.

Running in Circles, Erik DeLuca (A '17)

Running in circles and whispering into a portable sound recorder, the artist Eugene Macki weaves in and out of people and trees. Behind him are the riverbanks of the Hudson in Queens. We're at Socrates Sculpture Park, once an illegal dumpsite, for a fall day of site-specific performances by Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture alumni. The grounds, still wet and muddy from a torrential weekend rainstorm, are abuzz with both mosquitoes, radio sounds, and art. Perched up on a little rock stage, I sit behind low-wattage broadcasting equipment. With me—guest DJ-ing on the mics—are a group of Ghanaians I met at the picnic tables. It's their day off from work. We play a number of their favorite highlife songs, from musicians like Cardinal Rex, over our one-day-only—clandestine 107.1FM. Park visitors are tuning in using the little red radios we scattered throughout the park; Macki circles by. Under the trees ahead, artist Amanda Lechner is drawing remnants of “a billion-year-old supercontinent.” Things seem both meaningless and outside state censorship and control. Two teens come up to request Sade's “*No Ordinary Love*.” I play it. Listening along, I recall a moment from just a few months earlier: I was on the top floor of the Abu Jihad Center and Museum for Captives' Movement at Al-Quds—a Palestinian public university on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Inside a small vitrine was a handheld Phillips radio next to some brief contextual writing on a piece of folded paper. Starting with a 13-day, 800-person hunger strike within the Juneid prison in Nablus, the demand for radios to be allowed in Israeli prisons was reluctantly met. Palestinian prisoners were now connected to the prolific Al-Quds Radio, which helped direct the first Palestinian uprising—coining itself as the “*voice of those who have no voice*”.

My memory-dream broke when artist duo Noelle Choy and Jordan Wong began a 30-minute performance sit-in next to our fleeting radio station with their banner, “*THIS SPACE BETWEEN RADIO AND THE TRASH*.” Macki runs by as Dylan McLaughlin interjects with wild noise from his voice processed through guitar pedals—some people run away, others run towards. It's really too difficult to know when broadcast radio waves come to an end. They travel at speeds of 186,000 miles per second. From Earth, it takes just over a second for broadcast radio waves to reach the moon—with the right power. We go home. Powerlessness. Privilege. A few days after SkowheganPerforms—amidst siege, occupation, and displacement—people back here start questioning condemnation, contrition, and censorship for the first time. Genocide. The magic is lost. Do radio waves come to an end? Or do they go on into the infinite? To other worlds? To the loons on the lake? I took for granted that conversation with the mother and daughter about non-fiction writing and the two other people on a first date who requested “Purple Rain”—while Macki ran in circles.

Featuring performances

Rebecca Baldwin (A '04)
Elena Bajo (A '06)
Máiréad Delaney (A '22)
Erik DeLuca (A '17)
Rachel Frank (A '05)
Li-Ming Hu (A '19)
Becky Kinder (A '04, '21)
Amanda Lechner (A '18)
Jaeun Lee (A '11)
Eugene Macki (A '18)
Dylan McLaughlin (A '23)
Ash Moniz (A '23)
Noelle Choy (A '22)
Jordan Wong (A '22)

SkowheganPerforms 2023 took place days before October 7, and the Hamas terror attack on Israel. This essay is written by Erik DeLuca (A '17), who shares: “As an American-German Jewish artist and musician, I facilitate a college-level studio of 40 student-artist-teachers that is uniquely housed within an art education department. We mark out the activity of learning as the guiding “material” in our artmaking. This interdisciplinary multi-media approach embraces the role of creativity in asking difficult questions, supporting different value systems, taking risks, and improvising. With them, I follow this mode through studying technologies of dispossession, reparations, and fraught geopolitical memory culture (specifically within the context of my family's suffering under and survival of Nazi genocide). With vivid dialogue, rich sensory detail and nuanced stories, we underscore the value of “show, don't tell,” in our work about writing from life. I write in this spirit.”



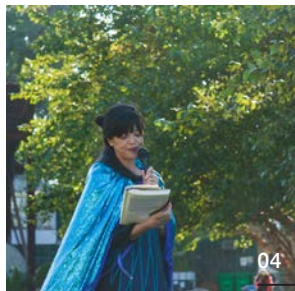
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01 Elena Bajo (A '06), *DATURA RITUALS*, 2023. 02 Noelle Choy (A '22)s & Jordan Wong (A '22), *THIS IS THE SPACE BETWEEN THE TRASHCAN AND THE RIVER*, 2023. 03 Ash Moniz (A '23), *Performance*, 2023. 04 Li-Ming Hu (A '19), *Small free park with some open space and a few sculptures*, 2023. 05 Dylan McLaughlin (A '23), *Songs of Tempestuous Rising and Falling*; 06 Eugene Macki (A '18), *Performance*, 2023. 07 Jaeun Lee (A '11), *Sculpture & Performance*, 2023. 08 Erik DeLuca (A '17), *Live Radio*, 2023. 09 Rachel Frank (A '05), *Transitory Vessels*, 2023.

New York Happenings

Skowhegan's off-campus programs are collaborative and experimental. Predominantly organized by the Alumni Alliance, they delve into topics that inform contemporary practice, and build community between alumni and faculty, as well as a broader group of artists, arts workers, and art enthusiasts.



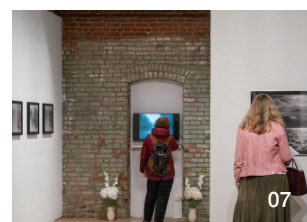
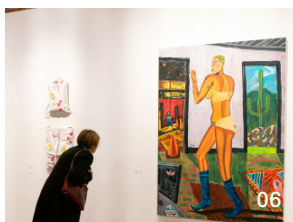
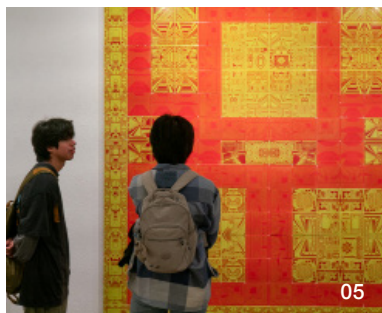
01 Freddie June aka Shala Miller (A '17) performing during *Mended Hearts Party*, 2023. 02 Katie Sonnenborn introducing the panelists of *A Conversation on Hard Return 9*, Jesus Benavente (A '12), Daniel Bozhkov (A '90, F '11, 16), Alix Pearlstein (F '04), and Emily Coates with moderators, Kate Gilmore (F '12), and Jonah Westerman. 03 Paige Laino and Cori Spencer (A '14) at Sarah's farewell party, 2023. 04 Skowhegan Bird Club members on their guided bird walk with Nadir Sourgi, 2023.

Moved/Displaced at OCCCA

Orange County Center For Contemporary Art, Santa Ana, CA | January 6-27, 2024 | The Skowhegan Alliance is proud to highlight the exhibition *Moved/Displaced*, which features works addressing the themes of migration and displacement from a wide variety of perspectives. The show includes pieces by 28 alumni artists working in a wide array of artistic mediums and methods, and predominantly based in Southern California. Co-curated by Annette Cyr (A '76, '21) and Rebecca Shippee (A '18).

Participating Artists:

Marcel Alcalá (A '22)
 Eleanor Aldrich (A '12)
 Sama Alsemeiry (A '22)
 Thai Bu (A '87, '21)
 Enrique Martínez Celaya (A '94)
 Carol Anne McChrystal (A '64)
 Cameron Coffman (A '17)
 Jenny Gagalka (A '18)
 Mookwon Han (A '08, '21)
 Kunlin He (A '18)
 Jann Nunn (A '91)
 Cynthia Philips (A '95, '21)
 Amir Saadiq (A '23)
 Yoshie Sakai (A '14)
 Jose Sarinana (A '06)
 Abed Shalabi (A '22)
 Eliseo Silva (A '02)
 Cynthia Underwood (A '99, '21)
 Katayoun Vaziri (A '10, '21)
 Carlos Vielma (A '23)
 Freddy Villalobos (A '22)
 Debra Vodhanel (A '79, '21)
 Sterling Wells (A '18)
 Abbey Williams (A '04)
 Jordan Wong (A '22)
 Sichong Xie (A '18)
 Julie Yeo (A '14)
 Crys Yin (A '22)



01 OCCCA Art Walk opening reception. 02 Sakie, Yoshie (A '14), *Bathroom Stall Tears: Part II*, single-channel digital video. 03 (l-r): Thai Bui (A '87, '21), Annette Cyr (A '76, '21), Debra Vodhanel (A '79, '21), Katayoun Vaziri (A '10, '21), and community members. 04 Enrique Celaya (A '94), *The King at Nightfall*; oil and wax on canvas. 05 Jordan Wong (A '22), *Hopefully You Remember This*, glazed ceramic tiles, plywood boards and velcro. 06 Marcel Alcalá (A '22), *Duality of Story*; oil on canvas. 07 Amir Saadiq (A '23), *Untitled*, and *Installation of Six*, gelatin silver prints. 08 Mookwon Han (A '08, '21), *Silkroad-2*, performance, UHD video and sound.

2023 Awards Dinner

Guastavino's, New York | October 24, 2023 | Skowhegan's 53rd Annual Awards Dinner | The event honored **Lonnie Holley** (F '22) with the *Medal for Visual Arts & Music*, presented by **Michael Stipe**. **Suzanne Deal Booth** received the *Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Award for Outstanding Patronage of the Arts*, presented by artist **Mel Chin** (F '95) & LACMA Senior Curator and Department Head of Modern Art, **Stephanie Barron**. **Visual AIDS** received the *Governors' Award for Outstanding Service to Artists*, presented by **Catherine Gund** and **Kendall Thomas**, and accepted by **Nayland Blake** (F '02, '17). Additionally **Elle Pérez** (A '15) and **Dave McKenzie** (A '00, F '11, '17) gave toasts to Sarah Workneh's departure as co-director. The dinner's After-Party performers included **keyiA** and a DJ set by **musclecars**.



01 keyiA 02 Michale Stipe and Lonnie Holley (F '22) 03 musclecars 04 Suzanne Deal Booth 05 Kendall Thomas hugging Nayland Blake (F '02, '17) 06 Mel Chin (F '95) on video

A Toast to Sarah

Elle Pérez (A '15)

Hi my name is Elle Pérez, I was Dean at Skowhegan from 2016 to 2021 and then was even given emeritus status in 2022 which was an extended joke Sarah played on me because the whole summer people kept asking me what emeritus meant, and I just said, "Don't worry, it's not contagious."

Hi Sarah, for seven years, every summer, I had the privilege, the pleasure, and the responsibility of working with you and to witness as Skowhegan birthed a new world. We would nurture it, we would witness its many evolutions and growing pains. I loved being a witness to your private moments, thinking, weighing, working through questions and conflicts with no easy answers. I would be there by your side as you brought each world to its fullness, to its reality principle, to its real start, and its end. You taught me, and we taught each other. And the land had us back. Again and again. And now, the season changes. We all know Skowhegan has many ghosts, and now we will join them. When we were there last week, the land helped me understand what was happening and why it had to happen. It was so obvious; for something new to be born. For new growth to take place. For new lessons to be learned.

I love being a ghost with you.

Sarah, community maker. Sarah, family maker. Sarah, thank you for teaching us: liberation. Thank you for teaching us: freedom. Thank you for teaching us to become an 'us'. Thank you for your stewardship of the land and the people, and now the season is changing.

I want to end this toast with your words. Anyone who has been through convocation at Skowhegan has heard these words, has lived these words, has held onto them like a life raft in the sea of a new life.

It feels like the only appropriate end to this cycle, this season of Sarah.

You will start leaving here, these 14 years will end in a month. How you order your world, how you envision the potential around your practice, and what you want from the larger community of people that surround you lies ahead. And here at the end of this, 30 or so days from feeling the pinch that puts Skowhegan directly in conversation with the rest of our lives—we realize that today is actually the real start.

For you, for me. For all of us, and all of us together.

Toast to Sarah. Thank you.



Elle Pérez (A '15) raising a toast during the 2023 Annual Awards Dinner.



Chris Carroll (A '08) ringing the Skowhegan Bell with Sarah Workneh.

2023 Awards Dinner



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01 Nayland Blake (F '02, '17) 02 Catherine Gund and Kendall Thomas 03 Rena Hoffman, Eleanor Acquavella, Sarah Workneh, Katie Sonnenborn, and Paula Volent 04 Alison Saar (F '93, '23), and Tom Leeser 05 Derrick Adams (A '02, F '13), and Amitha Raman 06 Donald Moffett (F '04), Marlene McCarty (F '11), and Daniel Bozhkov (A '90, F '11, '16) 07 Quinton Lovelace, Farah Al Qasimi (A '17), Terrance James Jr. (A '17), Jeffrey Meris (A '19), Malcolm Peacock (A '17), Stephanie Hunt, Maryl Georgi, and Jason Grode 08 Chelsea Flowers (A '22), Kate Bowen, Cameron Granger (A '17) and Jeffrey Asunmonu 09 Elizabeth Hilpman, J. K. Brown, Amy Cappellazzo 10 Bernard Lumpkin, Eleanor Acquavella, Jud Reis, Paula Volent, and Ann Gund.

Dave McKenzie (A '00, F '11, '17)

An impromptu barn installation,

A visiting artist,

The conflict: a scheduled lecture—

Maybe even the presence of flammables.

These points were included in one of the questions the small group of governors and trustees, who first met Sarah, asked. I don't remember Sarah's answer and I am not sure if she's had to put said answer into practice during any one of her summers. What I am sure of is this, throughout her 14 years, she has provided answers to questions we didn't always know we needed to ask: food sustainability, mental health support, community relationships, land use, ethical practices...

The list goes on. In a round about way, everyone's favorite Audre Lorde quote comes to mind, *"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."* But these 14 years of co-living reaffirm that there are other houses and questions to be asked about what tools we use to tidy up and shore up those structures—so thank you for being more interested in creation and preservation than their shadows.

If the personal is still allowed to be political, I would add this, during the early days of Covid and following the murder of George Floyd, we spoke. I was then feeling trapped...in uncertainty and in my own head. You invited me out to see the work being done at Linda Goode Bryant's *Project Eats* farm in Brownsville. It was the tonic I needed. More offered before it was spoken aloud. I wonder how many times (in the New York office or the campus in Maine) you have done similar within the collaborative practice that is you. So, your time at Skowhegan brings to mind a more apt Lorde quote:

"Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways to actively 'be' in the world, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters."

We thank you for working within and without, for your friendship, your advocacy, and the undeniable energy that you have brought to the position of Co-Director of Skowhegan.



Dave McKenzie (A '00, F '11, '17) with Elle Pérez (A '15) at the 2023 Annual Awards Dinner.



Sarah Workneh smiling during her speech at the 2023 Annual Awards Dinner.

SUPPORT

Thank You!

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Mickalene Thomas (F '13) guiding a walk-through of her exhibition, *je t'adore*, to Skowhegan Council members at Yancey Richardson.

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Tour of the Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC) with the institution's founding Executive Director, Khady Karara, 2023.

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Andrew Hamill (A '14)
Jane Hammond (F '92, '05)
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in honor of Sarah Workneh
Noreen Khalid Ahmad
Becca Albee (A '99)
Camilo Alvarez
Candida Alvarez (A '81, F '23)
Kitty Alward (A '83, '21)
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Jane Brucker (A '87)
Thai Bui (A '87, '21)
Polly Jane Carpenter (A '75)
Christopher Carroll (A '08)
Roberto Carter (A '23)
Ellen Celli
Greg Chann (A '78)
Marina Chistyakova
Jessica Briceño Cisneros
(A '19)
Sophia Cleary (A '15)

Lauren Cohen (A '10)
Sue Collier (A '79)
Jean Cooney
Sarah Corona
Emma Cousin (A '18)
Heather Cox (A '17)
Jacqueline Davidson (A '58)
Stephanie Diamond (A '00)
David Michael DiGregorio
(A '02)
Craig Drennen (A '06)

Jennifer Dudley (A '06)
Christopher Dunbar (A '91)
Ellen Levine Ebert (A '66)
June C. Edmonds (A '82)
Vincent Ehly
Jonathan Ehrenberg (A '11)
Corey Escoto (A '16)
Adriana Farietta
Anoka Faruqee (A '95, F '10)
Ann B. Feitelson (A '76)
J.A. Feng (A '16)

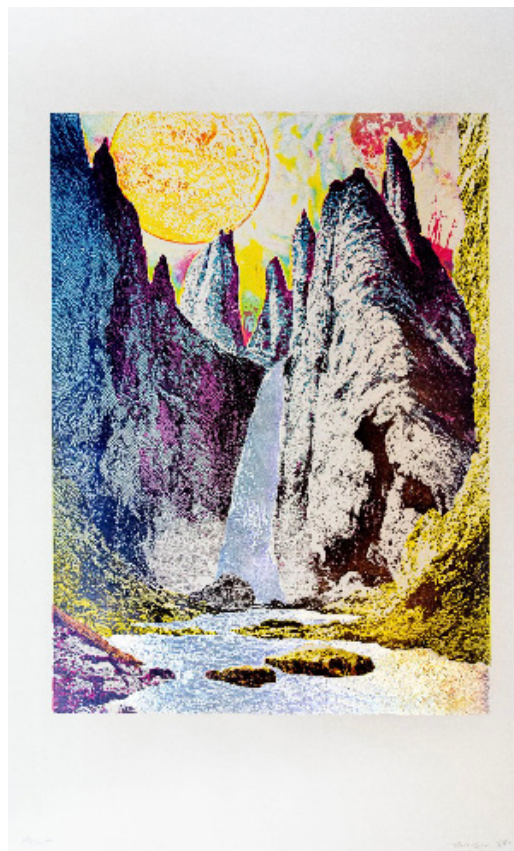
Sam Finkelstein (A '22)
 Elizabeth Flood (A '19)
 Kathleen Flynn
 Robert Flynt (A '74, '76)
 Chelsea Flowers (A '22)
 Robert Franca (A '72, '21)
 James Benjamin Franklin (A '94)
 Jane Gagne (A '80)
 Robert Gainer (A '63)
 Glorimar Garcia
*in honor of the wonderful
 New York office staff
 lari garcia* (A '22)
 Lilian Garcia-Roig (A '90)
 Elisa Gardella
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Nicolas Grabar & Jennifer Sage
 Philip M. Grausman (A '56, '57,
 F '73)
 Neil Goldberg (F '15)
 María Elena Gonzalez (F '05)
 Clare Grill (A '11) &
 William Ryan
 Estate of Gwendolyn Knight

Lawrence
 Karl Haendel (A '00)
 Josephine Halvorson (F '18)
 Harmony Hammond (F '08)
 Scott Hampton
 Bang Geul Han (A '07)
 Vanessa Haney (A '83)
 Connie Hayes (A '89)
 Ralph Helmick (A '79) &
 Nan Niland
 Shelley Herman (A '66)
*in memory of Marcia Green
 Gardere*
 Jamie Hine
 Hallie S. Hobson
 Joanne Howard (A '84)
 Tishan Hsu (F '96)
 James Hyde (F '03)
 Sareh Imani (A '18)
 Alexander Jackson (A '15)
 Jed Jackson (A '74)
 Terrance James (A '17)
 Jennie C. Jones (A '96, F '14)
 Mary Judge (A '74)

Neil Kalmanson (A '63)
 Annetta Kapon (A '92)
 Nancy Modlin Katz (A '78)
*in memory of James
 McGarrell*
 Mindi Katzman (A '84)
 Baseera Khan (A '14)
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Patrick Killoran (A '98)
 Becky Kinder (A '04, '21)
 Patricia A. Kirshner (A '78)
 Kenneth F. Koen
in memory of David Beitzel
 Ai-Wen Josephine Wu Kratz
 (A '67)
 Guillermo Kuitca (F '99, '04)
 Anna Kunz (A '09)
 Wendy Lang (A '54, '55, '56)
 Heidi Lange
 Amanda Lechner (A '18)
 Rachel Lee
 Shaun Leonardo (A '04) &
 McKendree Key (A '05)
 Maggie Libby (A '87)

Artist Editions

Thank you **Odili Donald Odita** (F '15), **Matthew Day Jackson** (A '02), and **Donna Huanca** (A '06) for creating amazing prints to benefit Skowhegan. Find these prints and other works on our website.



Matthew Day Jackson (A '02), *Tower Falls* (2023), four-color rainbow-roll relief print with foil embossing on Yamada Hanga Japanese paper, 34 x 26.25 in.



Odili Donald Odita (F '09), *Couple on the Edge of the Sea* (2022), six-color lithograph on Coventry Rag, 17 x 17 in

Judith Linhares (F '17)
 Dana Lok (A '16)
 Nan Hall Lombardi (A '88)
 Ana Maria Gomez Lopez (A '15)
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Angela Lorenz (F '07)
*in memory of Yvonne
 Jacquette* (F '77, '94)
 Marie Lorenz (A '04, F '13)
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Tristin Lowe (A '89)
in honor of Barbara Lapceek
 Yvonne Lung (A '06) & Dustin
 Sparks (A '07)
 Robert MacDonald (A '96)
 Keli Maksud (A '22)
 Lorena Mal (A '16)
 Virgil Marti (A '90, F '12) &
 Peter Barberie
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Emily Mast (A '06)
 Natasha Mayers (A '76)
 Josephine A. Merck (A '68, '73)
 Melissa Meyer (F '02)
 Nicole Miller (F '16)
 Susan B. Miller (A '68, '71)

Donald Moffett (F '04) &
 Robert Gober (F '94, '16)
 Maria Morabito
 Ann-Michele Morales (A '97)
 Regina Morales
 Simonetta Moro (A '03)
 Carrie Moyer (A '95, F '10)
 Carol P. Mugford (A '78)
 Matthew McCardwell &
 Sidharth Chawla
 Marlene McCarty (F '11)
 Lilly McElroy (A '06)
 Julie L. McGee
*in memory of David C.
 Driskell*
 Mr. and Mrs. James H.
 McGraw IV
 Dave McKenzie (A '00,
 F '11, '17)
 Mores McWreath (A '13)
 Garry Nichols (A '82)
in memory of George McNeil
 Jordyn Oetken (A '13)
 Margaux Ogden (A '11)
 Jeanine Oleson (A '00, F '18)
 John J. O'Connor (A '00)

Helen O'Toole (A '89)
 Maia Cruz Palileo (A '15)
 Will Palley
in honor of Amitha Raman
 Erik Patton (A '15)
 Alix Pearlstein (F '04)
 Hilary Peck
 Sheila Pepe (A '94, F '13)
 Susan M. & John Pelosi
 Gabriel Pionkowski (A '12)
 Amy Podmore (A '86) &
 Frank Jackson (A '85)
 Peter Polshek
 Marquita Pool-Eckert
 Jagdeep Raina (A '17)
in honor of Pallavi Sen (A '17)
& The Bird Club
 Carolyn Ramo
 Birgit Rathsmann (A '04)
in memory of Betty Fischer
 Matthew Rich (A '10) &
 Victoria Fu (A '06)
 Kari Kaplan Rives (A '82)
 Celeste Roberge (A '79)
 Leslie Roberts (A '86)
 John & Carolyn Rosenblum
 Allen Ruppertsberg (F '01)
 Christine & Kenneth Rush, Jr.
 (A '68)
 Naomi Safran-Hon (A '12)
 Gabriela Salazar (A '11)
 Yoshie Sakai (A '14)

Jean Sausele-Knott
 (A '83, '21)
in memory of Yvonne
Jacquette (F '77, '94)
 Pedram Sazesh (A '17)
 Ingrid Schaffner
 Jeff Scheuer
in honor of Liza Phillips (A '89)
& Francis Cape (A '89, F '08)
 Michael L. Scott (A '75)
in memory of Lester Goldman
 Roger A. Search (A '72)
 Beverly Semmes (A '82,
 F '01, '05)
 Pallavi Sen (A '17)
in memory of everyone who
has come before us
 Matthew Shalzi (A '16)
 Joy Shipman (A '72, '21)
 Arthur Simms (A '85, F '10) &
 Lucy Fradkin
 Hunt Slonem (A '72)
 Gwen Smith (A '23)
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Shinique Smith (A '03)
 Ellen M. Soffer (A '81)
 Leily Soleimani
 Gail Spaen (A '86)
 Joseph Sullivan
 Marc Swanson (A '00, F '14)
 Julianne Swartz (A '99, F '08)
 Stacy Tenenbaum Stark

in honor of Katie Sonnenborn
 Fabian Tabibian (A '10)
 Colin Thomson (A '74)
 Tomoe Tsutsumi (A '10)
 Cynthia Underwood (A '99, '21)
in honor of Ann Gund
 John Udvardy (A '57, '21)
 Elizabeth Webb (A '18)
in honor of Sarah Workneh
 Carrie Mae Weems (F '00)
 Maria K. Walker (A '11)
 Lindsay Walt (A '77)
in memory of Martha
Diamond
 Abbey Williams (A '04) &
 Dave Hardy (A '04, F '18)
 Brittney Williams (A '17)
 Bennett Wine (A '12)
 Eileen Woods (A '99)
 Carson Wosé
 Rosa Valado (A '89, '21)
 Jonathan J. Van Dyke (A '08)
 William Villalongo (A '02)
 Debra Vodhanel (A '79, '21)
 Ursula Von Bydingsvard (F '88)
 Livien Yin (A '22)
 Andy Yoder (A '81)
 Alan Yü
 Jing Xu (A '16)
 Jennifer Zackin (A '98)
 Mary-Eileen Zadlo
 Reg Zehner



Donna Huanca (A '06), *QUIPUS FUEGOS* (2023), archival pigment print with oil hand embellishments by the artist, 24 x 35.3 in.

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

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 Endowed Scholarship
 Bingham Scholarship
 Brown Endowed Scholarship
 Deborah Buck Foundation
 Camille Cosby Scholarship
 Cummings Endowed
 Scholarship
 Dreyfus Endowed Scholarship
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 Scholarship
 Gober-Moffett Scholarship
 Ann and Graham Gund
 Scholarship
 George Gund Scholarship
 Alex Katz Scholarship
 Bernard Langlais Endowment
 Scholarship
 Jacob and Gwendolyn
 Lawrence Scholarship
 Reid Peter Lewis Scholarship
 Toby Fund Scholarship
 Don F. Turano Scholarship
 Wallace-Reader's Digest
 Scholarship
 W & M Zorach Scholarship

THE ELMS

The Elms was established in honor of Skowhegan's 75th Anniversary to recognize artists, individuals, and families who choose to provide for Skowhegan's future by including the school in their estate plans. Skowhegan gratefully acknowledges the following members.

Emma Amos (F '86, '97, '06)
 Mildred C. Brinn
 Susan Paul Firestone (A '72)
 Robert Flynt (A '74, '76)
 Rae & Robert Gilson
 Gail S. Hollenbeck (A '66)

Alumni & Faculty News

Did you know that we post alumni & faculty events and exhibitions on Skowhegan's Tumblr and Instagram Stories every week? Email upcoming exhibitions and events to announce@skowheganart.org to be included on our Tumblr, and **at least 2 weeks in advance** to be featured. Be sure to include an image, the event title, venue + location, and date(s).

You can also add us to your email list: announce@skowheganart.org to keep us updated. Visit our Tumblr or follow us on IG to view announcements by scanning the QR code below.



skowhegan.tumblr.com



@skowheganart

Tribute to Pope.L

Shaun Leonardo (A '04, F '23)

The irony is, I know, that if you read this or came across the many commemorations populating social media, that you would more than likely respond with that iconic smirk (eyes looking upward and off to the left), before offering an ever so subtle, “weeeee!”—that same seemingly dismissive expression I would encounter during those recent events we shared in celebration of your work and the many formative exchanges I had the incredible fortune of having with you that summer of 2004. It was in your face—pursed lips, wandering gaze, tilted head—that I would look for meaning. Truthfully, I would be mostly lost during those moments you remarked, “I’m only telling you this because I think you can handle it.”, or “Well, at the end of the day, it has to look good, doesn’t it?”, or “Be good, Shaun...or don’t be!”

I would struggle with those recommendations for years, Pope.L. But those quiet challenges are what make an artist...aren’t they?

To be honest, that expression on your face, I would come to love not because of how it would edge me in a particular direction of inquiry or thought, but because I could always detect a kindness there. In the humor, I saw care. In your slipperiness of language, I felt you guiding me toward seeing something that maybe I was afraid to.

But Pope.L, sir, will people get it?

I still remember the smile you shot at me at your Union Square Black Factory event as you collected donated “black objects”—the most serious joke I’ve ever witnessed. But with your passing, will folks understand the courage it took to be the friendliest black man in America? I don’t know. Will the artistic community archive the significance of mayonnaise, peanut butter, bologna as materiality? Will people be able to look into the gesture of bottling contaminated water for more than its whimsy but rather its signaling toward collective accountability? The tenacity, grit, passion at the core of your performance works and investigations...though those words seem inadequate.

For certain, without your superman crawling, there would be no El C. jumping off the top rope.

That (personally) fateful summer, you told us that you couldn’t see a separation between the politics of blackness from your personal being. That your willingness to see blackness as a site of exploration that welcomes unease, unfixed-ness, doubt, comes from a deeply personal place, and therefore, a spirit of generosity (my words and interpretation).



Pope.L, *Sweet Desire a.k.a. Burial Piece*, Digital c-prints on gold fiber silk paper, 10 by 15 in. 25.4 by 38.1 cm., © Pope.L, Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, 1996.

The moment I saw the moving image of your skin covered with white powder, donning a mirror on your back as you waded down the river, I understood for myself that within our creations we can find the power of undoing...our likeness, our perceptions, our expectations. We have the ability to turn it all upside down, should we wish.

Am I imagining things or do I remember correctly you guiding us, from the Skowhegan lectern, through a collective yet quiet “*Fuuuuuck You!*”, to one another and, by default, to you.

What a generous offering even if exclaimed in a whisper. I hope we all, all those commemorating you, remember that what you gave us was that collective fuck you—to disobey, to be disagreeable, to offer the sleight of hand, all the while being really damn friendly.

While I so appreciate those simple yet grand moments of connection you provided throughout my career, let me, again, be honest...I don't really know what was going through your mind. So, I won't say thank you, maestro. I don't think that's what you would have wanted. Instead, I'll hold onto that 'fuck you.' I will miss you tremendously, Pope.L.

And I will remember your work and words forever.



Pope.L, *Sweet Desire a.k.a. Burial Piece*, Digital c-prints on gold fiber silk paper, 15 by 10 in. 38.1 by 25.4 cm., © Pope.L, Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, 1996.

In Memoriam: William Pope.L

Steve Locke (A '02, F '23)

It was 2004. A Thursday. William Pope.L was supposed to give the Faculty lecture that night. And no one had seen him.

It was my first year as Dean at Skowhegan. Linda Earle hired me and Karyn Olivier was my Co-Dean. We were in the office doing all the things that make the summer run and Karyn and I were asking Linda over and over if she had heard from Pope.L. The participants were asking us. All the other faculty (Elaine Reichel, Alix Pearlstein, Donald Moffett and Guillermo Kuitca) had been on campus for weeks and were already making bonds with the participants and each other. We were now into the session and there was no William. It is my nature to worry and I was new at my job.

Ivan Monforte was one of the sign makers that summer. Around 2:00 PM he came into the office with a sign for William's lecture. It was a milk carton with a cut out picture of the artist—reminiscent of the 80s missing child initiatives. It stated bluntly: "HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ARTIST? WILLIAM POPE.L 8:30 FRESCO BARN." He nodded at Karyn and I and soundlessly left the office. We were doubled over with laughter.

Around 7:30PM there was a massive commotion on campus. A massive black limousine pulled past the office. I looked at Linda and all she did was smile.

Knowing that dirt road you can imagine the challenge to execute a three point turn in front of the office, but the chauffeur did. He got out of the car, a middle aged white man in a pressed uniform and gloves, and went to open the passenger door. William got out of the car in an untucked ruffled shirt and a full head of unkempt hair. He walked onto the porch. Linda shook his hand and welcomed him. I was simply gobsmacked.

His lecture was transformative. Daniel Bozhkov introduced him, using words like "trickster" and "shaman." I lost track of how long he spoke. It was an art history lecture where he connected conceptual art to landscape photography, talked about his own work, and made outlandish gestures in the midst of his talk. He "read" prepared remarks and when he got to the end of the page he would throw the paper in the air. He turned the light at the podium so it reflected off his glasses and it made him look like some kind of alien prophet. In the midst of it all he stopped and yelled, "I need a hug. Can someone give me a hug?" One of the participants obliged. I wished I had been sitting in the front. I had not seen anything like the force of presence he commanded.

That was my introduction to one of the greatest artists I have ever had the privilege of knowing. Over the years he was always generous and helpful to me. When we showed at the same gallery in Boston, he made it a point to tell me, "You can trust this guy. He made sure I got paid."

I do not need to tell any of you how gigantic and important his work was and how he challenged notions of how an artist or educator should look or behave. All that stuff is the purview of art historians and people smarter than me. In time there will be time to talk of legacies and influences and all that.

What I can say is that for me, and for a lot of my generation of artists—particularly Black men—he was our lodestar. He combined a deep knowledge of art with the embodied experience of living as a Black man in America. And far from making people comfortable, he instead demonstrated comfort in the absurdity of living in this moment—a world where people still treat Black men with a mixture of sexualized terror and contempt; and an art world that loves Black spectacle but flinches when the Black artist uses spectacle to talk about truth. He chewed up and spit out the demand that Black men perform but not criticize—where we are expected to be grateful for what we are given. He gave us a new image of excellence and a new form of Black intellectual life. He made a lot of us possible. And visible.

William demanded attention on his terms. His works are searing in their humor, pathos and absurdity. He was the artist that saw us as we were and said that it was okay if we weren't good enough because no one was good enough. Why would art have to make sense? Nothing makes sense. He freed so many of us from solving problems that we didn't create. He claimed every radiant thing in art for himself as his right (he claimed Robert Ryman as his father.). And he told us to claim it too.

Most people called him Pope.L and I did not know that. When I met him at Skowhegan, I called him William. He said to me one day, "You know, Steve, you are the only person who calls me that." I said I was sorry and that I would stop. He said, "No, it's nice. You can call me William."

He died at 68. Like a lot of Black men, he died barely able to collect Social Security. I know it sounds crazy, but I really didn't think it was possible for him to die. I tried to make sense of it and then I remembered—*there is no need to lie to yourself or others about the absurd cruelty of the world*. His loss is a tragedy and he gave us everything we need to be able to go on without him.



Top: Linda Earle (Director), William Pope.L (Faculty), Alix Pearlstein (Faculty), Elaine Reichek (Faculty), Daniel Bozhkov (Fresco Instructor), Donald Moffett (Faculty), Guillermo Kuitca (Faculty), 2004; *Bottom Photo, Back Row:* Demetrius Oliver, Karyn Olivier (Dean), Kawther Elmi, Ronald Clark, Steve Locke (Dean); *Middle Row:* Emna Zghal, Saya Woolfalk, Tomiko Pilson, Carla Edwards, Shaun Leonardo, Linda Earle (Director), Abbey Williams; *Front Row:* Ivan Monforte, Sedrick Huckaby, William Pope.L (Faculty), Clifford Owens, 2004.

In Memoriam

We honor those who have graced us within the Skowhegan Community. Thank you for your friendship and creative presence. Your memory lives long in our history and future ahead.

Bill Brady
b. 1968; d. April 30, 2023

Pope.L
b.1955; d. December 23, 2023

David Black
b.1928; d. September 5, 2023

Brice Marden
b. 1938; d. August 9, 2023

Martha Diamond
b. 1944; d. December 30, 2023

Raymond E. Mullen
b. 1929; d. April 20, 2023

Ralph Drouin
b. 1959; d. December 20, 2023

Robert Parker
b. 1927; d. December 27, 2023

Mark LeRoy Erickson
b.1951; d. June 23, 2023

Trena Howard
b.1944; d. June 7, 2023

Yvonne Jacquette
b. 1934; d. April 23, 2023

Martha Diamond (1944-2023)



Martha Diamond on campus in 1983

Faculty: 1977, 1983
Board of Governors: 1982-2018

Governor Martha Diamond was a superb supporter of Skowhegan. Reflecting on her practice, Martha said in her 1983 faculty lecture on campus: "I wanted the work not just to be something that I knew about, or that you could get about meditating on. I really, intentionally, wanted to connect with the outside world, with people."

Brice Marden (1938-2023)



(L-R) Jacob Lawrence, Al Blaustein and Brice Marden during a 1971 seminar

Resident Faculty: 1970, 1971
Visiting Faculty: 1976, 1991
Board of Governors: 1972-1976

"I distinctly remember [Al Blaustein] at one point saying, 'You have to make a drawing, a drawing has to be done in one sitting,' and I distinctly remember thinking, 'Fuck you. I'm going to take much longer.' It was a big help. It was a part of the basis of my whole approach toward making drawings was fighting him."

- Skowhegan Oral History with Liza Zapol, 2012

Yvonne Jacquette (1934-2023)



Yvonne Jacquette with Tom Burckhardt at the Skowhegan Awards Dinner in 1991

Resident Faculty: 1994
Visiting Faculty: 1977
Board of Governors: 1978-2011

As a Governor, Yvonne played an integral role in Skowhegan's program for over three decades. As one of Skowhegan's longest serving Governors, Yvonne was not only a member of our Skowhegan family, but with her former husband Rudy Burckhardt (F '72, '88), their son Tom Burckhardt (A '86, F '07), and niece Julia Jacquette (A '85), Yvonne shared her family with us.

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Governor Emerita

Lois Dodd (F '79)

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Luis Candelaria, *Kitchen*
Mariel Capanna (A'17), *Fresco Instructor*
Christopher Carroll (A '08),
Media Lab Manager
Rebecca Clough, *Assistant Chef*
Sarah Corson, *Head Of Housekeeping*
Jeff Cozzolino, *Van Driver*
Marc Dore, *Facilities*
Tamara Dore, *Red Farm*
Ralph Drouin, *Facilities*
Rachel Lovera-Duffy, *Kitchen*
Ash Ferlito (A '12), *Librarian*
Meredith Gaglio, *Librarian Emeritus*
Tyler Goldman, *Poet In Residence*
Emily Goodale, *Housekeeping*
William Holmes, *Facilities Director*
Brandy Jewell, *Housekeeping*
Jeremiah Johnson, *Facilities*
Rose Kaszuba, *Kitchen*
Zoe Lambke, *Kitchen*

Penny Lane, *Housekeeping*
Desmond Lewis (A '18),
Facilities & Ceramics Shop Manager

Avery Mack, *Kitchen*
Jade Maginnis, *Kitchen*
Carly Mccabe, *Kitchen*
Lilly Mcelroy (A '06), *Media Lab Assistant*
Gina Mitchell, *Counseling Dean*
Daniel Ortega Hernandez,
Kitchen
Lisa Patterson, *Kitchen*
Eve Payne, *Program Assistant*
Elle Pérez (A '15), *Dean Emeritus*
Ron Pinkham, *Facilities*
José De Jesús Rodriguez
(A '17), *Fresco Instructor*
Rosa Rosario, *Director of Residence Life & Head Chef*
Pallavi Sen (A'17), *Dean*
Elizabeth Smedberg, *Kitchen*
Ashley Teamer (A '14), *Dean*
Buddy Thomas, *Gardener*
Shawn Thornton (A '02), *Baker*
Erica Wessman (A '15),
Sculpture Manager
Nicole Williams, *Kitchen*
Sarah Workneh, *Director*



SKOWHEGAN

ESTABLISHED 1946

SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
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WWW.SKOWHEGANART.ORG



Established in 1946 *by artists, for artists*, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture is one of the country's foremost educational experiences for emerging visual artists. Skowhegan's nine-week intensive summer program seeks to bring together a diverse group of individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to artmaking and inquiry, creating the most stimulating and rigorous environment possible for a concentrated period of artistic creation, interaction, and growth. Located on a historic farm in rural Maine, the campus serves as a critical component of the program. Fundamental to Skowhegan's pedagogy is an understanding that a multitude of voices, disciplines, experiences, ethnicities, identities, physicalities, and economies is critical to advancing the conversation about art. We do not consider financial ability or circumstances during our admissions process. Still governed by artists today, the program provides an atmosphere in which participants are encouraged to work in contrast to market or academic expectations.
