



On Location

Artists Explore a
Sense of Place

Eric Parra, *Side Arrangement*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 42 x 32 inches. Courtesy of Eleanor Harwood Gallery, Photo by Almac Camera, San Francisco, CA

AUGUST 21 – OCTOBER 2, 2021

PENINSULA SCHOOL OF ART

PARRA 21

What is it about a place that captures our imagination, clings to our memories, and infuses our daily lives? Can its presence be conveyed by careful documentation of dimensions, stories told, the light of a window on a wall, or the ephemera inhabiting it? Though the artists included in *On Location* take many different approaches, place is central to their art.

The Road

The open road is a powerful symbol in American culture. This is no surprise in a country whose residents collectively spend 70 billion hours behind the wheel each year. Sky Hopinka, Maria Gonella, and Caitie Sellers—all artists who site having moved from place to place when talking about themselves and their work—use the road as a metaphor for change, displacement, and connection.

Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) was born and raised in Ferndale, Washington and spent a number of years in Palm Springs and Riverside, California; Portland,

Oregon; and Milwaukee. His short film *Kunjkaga Remember Red Banks, Kunjkaga Remembers the Welcoming Song* traverses the history and the memory of a place shared by both the Ho-Chunk and the settler. Red Banks, a pre-contact Ho-Chunk village site near present day Green Bay, was also the landing site of Jean Nicolet, who in 1634 was the first European in what is today Wisconsin. Sky begins and ends the film with the sound of his grandmother's recollections played over footage of the expressway on a rainy night, shot from a car driving I-43 between Milwaukee and Green Bay.



The Built Environment

Roads are just one part of the built environment—the human-made systems, structures, and spaces in which people live, work, and recreate. These are the places we both shape and are shaped by. Accordingly, these spaces are the focus of many artists' work.

“Roads are lines that bisect indigenous lands, and they’re also spaces in themselves, these little bubbles.”

—Sky Hopinka



“...with all the damage the Lebanese architecture sustained, these buildings still function as vessels for human life.”

—Michael Nashef

Kat Cole, Michael Nashef, and Raymundo T. Reynoso look to the city. For his Functional Resilience series, Michael Nashef draws on his time living in war-torn Lebanon. Despite all the damage to Lebanese architecture, the buildings are still able to shelter people due to the stability and strength of the cement used to make them. Michael’s vessels are distilled representations of these buildings. Not only did he draw on the language of Lebanese architecture, he also developed innovative processes and methods for working with cement while creating them.

Interiors

While Michael focuses on exteriors, the interiors portrayed by Brianna Harlan, Richard McGuire, and Eric Parra each have stories to tell. In November of 2020, Brianna spent nine days in the hospital. While there, she filled over 33 pages with labeled rubbings of her surroundings. All of these fragments combine to suggest a narrative of Brianna’s stay. From the lids of a Dole peaches cup and water pitcher we imagine a meal of hospital on a tray, from the ‘thinking of you’ card, a longed-for visitation.



Abandoned Places

Elysia Michaelsen, Tomiko Jones, and Krista Svalbonas are all interested in abandoned places, whether just off season or left behind in a changing economy. As family farming is being replaced industrial agriculture in rural areas of Krista’s home state of Pennsylvania, the barns that once dotted the landscape are disappearing. In their varied architecture, she sees the traditions immigrants brought from their home countries in other times of change. Krista has been traveling around taking photographs of these structures to document the vanishing rural industrial landscape. For her *In the Presence of Memory* series, Krista silk-screened architectural details from these images on industrial felt (manufactured in Pennsylvania) using industrial pigments such as steel, iron, and copper. She then

painted each piece individually using oil and cold wax and cut into the felt, echoing the empty and thatched spaces of the often-dilapidated structures she photographed.

In contrast to these abandoned places, John Smither’s *Boulder Loop Trail* is bursting with life. While no one appears in the verdant panels scattering out from around a screen on which painted branches fade in and out over video of the forest, the bright songs of birds and sound of passing hikers fill our ears.

Above: Krista Svalbonas, *In the Presence of Memory 7 and 5*, 2014. Oil, steel photo-serigraph and mixed media on industrial felt, 15 x 9 inches each. Courtesy of Klompching Gallery.

Upper Left: Michael Nashef, *Grandma’s Gate*, 2018. Concrete, brass, copper, and bronze, 13x6x6 inches.

Lower Left: Sky Hopinka, still from *Kunjikaga Remember Red Banks, Kunjikaga Remembers the Welcoming Song*, 2014. HD video, stereo, color, 09:20.

THE ARTISTS

KAT COLE looks to the built environment, the city in which she lives, for the formal qualities of her work: materials, forms, color and surface quality. Her work is internationally recognized; has been published in multiple books and magazines; and is in the collections of the Museum of Arts and Design, Racine Art Museum, MFA Boston, the Enamel Foundation, and MFA Houston, among others. Kat-Cole.com

MARINA GONELLA was born in Chicago, raised in Buenos Aires, and currently lives in South Florida. She makes work about the psychological influence of the surroundings and the relationship between place and identity. Marina has participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions, and has work in national and international collections. MarinaGonella.com

BRIANNA HARLAN is a multiform artist and organizer. She works in community intervention and re-contextualized objects to inquire on how sociopolitical identity affects health, intimacy, selfhood, and community. Brianna has been featured in *ArtNews*; had residencies at Oxbow, Materia Abierta, and DreamYard; and spoken at events under For Freedoms, the Wide Awakes, and the Kentucky ACLU. BriannaHarlan.com

SKY HOPINKA's work centers around personal positions of Indigenous homeland and landscape, designs of language as containers of culture expressed through personal, documentary, and non fiction forms of media. Sky has been a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, a guest curator for the Whitney Biennial, a Sundance Art of Nonfiction Fellow, a Guggenheim Fellow, and a teacher at Bard College in Film and Electronic Arts. SkyHopinka.com

TOMIKO JONES's photography and multidisciplinary installations explore social, cultural and geopolitical transitions, considering the twin crises of too much and too little in the age of climate change. She has been awarded grants, residencies, or fellowships from En Foco (NY), 4Culture, CityArtists (Seattle), Musée Niépce, and The Camargo Foundation (France). TomikoJonesPhoto.com

RICHARD MCGUIRE is a regular contributor to *The New Yorker*. His comics have appeared in *The New York Times*, *McSweeney's*, *Le Monde*, and *Libération*. He has written and directed two omnibus feature films: *Loulou et Autre Loups (Loulou and Other Wolves, 2003)*, and *Peur(s) du Noir (Fear[s] of the Dark, 2007)*. He has also designed and manufactured his own line of toys, and he is the founder and bass player of the post-punk band Liquid Liquid. Richard-McGuire.com

ELYSIA HOLLAND MICHAELSEN explores the quiet moments of recreational areas often packed with people and buzzing with activity. Her painting and installation work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in innovative commercial galleries, artist-run spaces, and museums across the country. Her numerous awards include fully-funded residencies at Anderson Ranch and Ox-Bow. ElysiaHolland.com

MICHAEL NASHEF saw a lot of destruction and damaged imposed on beautiful architecture while living in war-torn Lebanon. He has developed innovative processes and methods of working with cement to make vessels that are distilled representations of war-torn buildings, whose functional resilience comes from that stable and strong material. Michael is an adjunct instructor at Western University. NashefDesigns.com

ERIK PARRA makes paintings and drawings that engage the visual tropes of contemporary spaces to reveal and revise the stories embedded in the environments we build. He has had solo exhibitions in Austin, San Francisco, Portland, and Reno; group exhibitions in Berlin, Brazil, Los Angeles, London, and New York; and work published in *New American Paintings*, the *SF Bay Guardian*, and the *LA Times*. ErikParra.com

RAYMUNDO T. REYNOSO—also known as Eyeone—is an artist whose art practice is rooted in printmaking, graffiti, and photography. His work reflects on the experience of navigating urban environments and captures glimpses of resistance and existence in contemporary society. Raymundo's work is included in the permanent collections of The Getty Research Institute and LACMA. Eyelost.com

CAITIE SELLERS is a metalsmith whose work is meant to give the wearer a connection to their specific place in the world by dressing in a representation of its landscape. Caitie's recent exhibitions include *Placeholder*, a solo show at the Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, and *Shared Concerns*, a traveling exhibition shown across the US and Australia. CaitieSellers.com

JOHN SMITHER, originally from the Midwest, now creates integrated installations of paintings, woodcuts, and video based on the local environment of his adopted home in the Pacific Northwest. His work is included in numerous private and has been shown at various venues including a live theatrical version at *On The Boards* in Seattle. John frequently exhibits his work in Seattle's CORE Gallery, which he co-founded in 2010. JohnSmither.net

KRISTA SVALBONAS's *In the Presence of Memory* series explores the disappearing vernacular architecture of barns in rural Pennsylvania. Her work has been exhibited internationally, and her recent awards include a Baumanis Creative Projects Grant, Rhonda Wilson Award, Puffin Foundation Grant, and Bemis Fellowship. She is an assistant professor of photography at St. Joseph's University. KristaSvalbonas.com