

Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Amber Aguirre

Clay, glazes, stains, paint, luster Naked Fauxku technique, 2009

\$600. 24"h x 7w x 12"d

Les Bunnies

Amber Aguirre

Porcelain, stains, glazes, wood, paint.

\$350. 6.5"h x 7"w x 8"d

Throughout history artists have functioned as social commentators. As the child of a Holocaust survivor I was aware from a young age of the fear, apathy and victimization inherent in human cultures. I use human and anthropomorphic figures as the vehicle to explore the results of these prevalent emotions on society. The results form an uncomfortable contrast between the external face of content and the inner destruction that they pose. I reference art, contemporary culture, religion, mythology and other forms of social determinism in non-traditional ways to engage my subjects in activities that confront the viewer with the results of the human condition.

To accentuate the narrative I use various surface treatments to emphasize different aspects of the work. Along with a minimal use of colorful glazes, I use a surface technique that I developed known as "Naked Fauxku". This approach reproduces a likeness to Naked Raku but is created in a high fire, oxygenated atmosphere with no reduction. The advantage of this technique is that it creates a cracked and painful looking surface that adds subliminal meaning to the work, while technically imparting it with a durability that is unattainable from un-vitrified raku work.

At the late age of 40, Amber's mother discovered she was finally pregnant. Amber was the "miracle child" of a couple who were planning to adopt a child. It was thought that as a result of Amber's mother being a Holocaust survivor who endured Auschwitz and the Death March that her ability to conceive was damaged.

As the "late in life" child of both a Holocaust survivor and a forced labor camp survivor (her father) from Hungary, Amber's childhood was unusual for growing up in the suburbs of San Francisco. Hearing screaming at night from her mother's nightmares was the norm. Fear was a regular part of her life. As a consequence of this childhood, Amber grew up with the overwhelming need to speak out against social injustice.

In kindergarten, Amber made her first ceramic piece. It was a blue ashtray with her palm-print in it. From the moment she saw that a malleable piece of dirt could be turned into a rock hard waterproof item, she was hooked on clay. Much later in her career (second grade) when she won the local poster contest, she knew she was destined to be an artist.

Many years later Amber received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Southern California, and then continued her education with a Masters Degree in Art Education at San Francisco State University. At that time she also received her California teaching credential and went on to teach ceramics in the public school system.

When Amber moved to Hawaii with her husband 16 years ago, she left teaching so she could focus on her own art in earnest with the goal of being the professional artist that she had envisioned since second grade.

Her art speaks of her feelings about war, racism, sexism and other forms of social injustice. Using her natural artistic gift, Amber hopes to be able to change the world "at least a little bit" through her sculptures.

45 years after making that fateful ashtray Amber is represented by top galleries in the field of ceramics and her work is exhibited and collected internationally.

Fear Street

Tobias Brill

Paint markers on wall. 96"x 184"

I often explore ideas of sexuality and the body in my art. This sensuality sometimes comes across as jarring and bizarre, becoming a kind of psycho-sexual meditation. The subject matter may be deviant, subversive, homoerotic, juvenile, dark and X rated, but also intimate, humorous, honest and real. To stay true to my vision I must draw both the beautiful and the grotesque.

I spent my early years around the 1970's and early 1980's northern California counter-culture. I had my own collection of adult, underground comix like Zap, Young Lust, and the Freak Brothers and access to magazines like Soldier Of Fortune and Beaver. My dad would take me to R rated movies he wanted to see such as The Deer Hunter and The Warriors. This material deeply influenced me and I absorbed, reflected and internalized, subsequently learning and continuing to express my voice through the mediums of drawing and painting.

Tobias Brill is based in Puna and Hilo on the Big Island where he has lived on and off for 33 years. He earned his BA in Art from the University of Hawaii at Hilo. He has also lived in northern California, southern CA, Buffalo New York, and Brooklyn, NY where he received an MFA in painting from Pratt institute in 1997. He currently teaches drawing and painting at Hawaii Community College in Hilo.

4 photographs from the series *Masculinities*

Chad States

Inkjet prints. 16"x 20" on paper 20"x 24"

What does it mean to be masculine? I have a hard time answering this question. Looking in the dictionary doesn't help. I find concise but vague definitions. "Of or relating to men" or "Suggestive or typical of a man." For me, these listings don't take into account cultural differences, social expectations, or any of the complex ways in which ideas of gender are indoctrinated. I figured that the best way to answer my question was to first find people who identify as being masculine.

Through listings on internet sites and flyers posted around the city, I began by simply asking the question "Are you masculine?" If those who respond do not meet my personal definitions of masculinity doesn't matter. My interest lies in their personal definition and in their relationship to their own masculinity. I then ask to photograph these individuals. The models are anonymous until the time of meeting and are not paid to pose. Upon meeting, I work in collusion with the model to create an image that best represents them and their masculinity. The setting is either the model's home or a location of their choice that they feel best portrays this masculinity. Using a large format camera, the portraits are formal in style with every pose intentional and deliberate on the part of the subject.

Chad States holds an MFA from Tyler School of Art and a BA from Evergreen State College. He is a member of Vox Populi and has been included in exhibitions at ClampArt, New York NY; Blue Sky Gallery, Portland OR; Napoleon, Philadelphia PA; Hous Projects, New York NY; Randall Scott Gallery, Brooklyn NY; Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle, WA; Photographic Center Northwest, Seattle WA; Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, Philadelphia PA; and Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Wilmington, DE. His book *Cruising* was published in the fall of 2011 by Powerhouse Books which was shortlisted as one of the best new photobooks in 2012 by Aperture Foundation and Paris Photo. He was an Artist in Residence at the Philadelphia Photographic Arts Center in 2013 as well as with Light Work in 2009.

Kisieland

Karol Radziszewski

Video, 30 min

Kisieland (a long-term project started in 2009) brings to light several hundred transparencies from the 1980s documenting an artistic event with a distinctly gay theme at the home of a friend of Ryszard Kisiel, the founder and publisher of the first communist-era gay zine called "Filo". These pictures, taken at the time of state police crackdown on homosexuals, known as campaign "Hiacynth", seem strangely incommensurate with the martyrological narrative of the persecution of sexual minority. Radziszewski's project is an attempt to enable the partial appearance of an archive which – due to the lack of interest in the reconstruction of the history of the LGBT in Poland – has failed to find a place in public discourse and because it is literally being carried away from Poland. The snapshots from Kisiel's archive are also testimony of the early AIDS years, the memory of which is limited and still remains in the "intimate public sphere"; the realm in need of reconfiguring and posing questions regarding the pleasures and the risks involved in holding the event which these images document, and also in documenting it. The Kisiel archive brings us close to the quotidian 1980s and makes apparent the transnational undercurrent of the decade, which defies the surface appearance determined by cold-war era oppositions between the East and the West, pointing instead to the underlying and surprisingly cosmopolitan commonality of the sexual, political and artistic avant-garde of the day – in Gdansk, Warsaw, London, New York City. (text by Tomasz Basiuk)

Karol Radziszewski (b. 1980) lives and works in Warsaw (Poland) where he received his MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in 2004. He works with film, photography, installations and creates interdisciplinary projects. His archive-based methodology, crosses multiple cultural, historical, religious, social and gender references. Since 2005 he is publisher and editor-in-chief of DIK Fagazine. Founder of the Queer Archives Institute.

His work has been presented in institutions such as the National Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; New Museum, New York; VideoBrasil, Sao Paulo; Cobra Museum, Amsterdam; Wroclaw Contemporary Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow and Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz. He has participated in several international biennales including PERFORMA 13, New York; 7th Göteborg Biennial; 4th Prague Biennial and 15th WRO Media Art Biennale.

Touching Strangers

Richard Renaldi

Slideshow, 6'36"

Since 2007, Richard Renaldi has been working on a series of photographs that involve approaching and asking complete strangers to physically interact while posing together for a portrait. Working on the street with a large format 8-by-10-inch view camera, Renaldi encounters the subjects for his photographs in towns and cities all over the United States. He pairs them up and invites them to pose together, intimately, in ways that people are usually taught to reserve for their close friends and loved ones. Renaldi creates spontaneous and fleeting relationships between strangers for the camera, often pushing his subjects beyond their comfort levels. These relationships may only last for the moment the shutter is released, but the resulting photographs are moving and provocative, and raise profound questions about the possibilities for positive human connection in a diverse society.

Richard Renaldi was born in Chicago in 1968. He received his BFA in photography from New York University in 1990. Exhibitions of his photographs have been mounted in galleries and museums throughout the United States, Asia, and Europe. Renaldi is represented by Benrubi Gallery in New York and Robert Morat Galerie in Berlin. In 2006 Renaldi's first monograph, *Figure and Ground*, was published by the Aperture Foundation. His second monograph, *Fall River Boys*, was released in 2009 by Charles Lane Press. In 2014, *Touching Strangers* was released by the Aperture Foundation. The following year Richard was named a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow in Photography. Renaldi's most recent monograph, *Manhattan Sunday* was published by the Aperture foundation in the fall of 2016.

Blood Beneath The Skin of Blossoms

Gerald Lucena

Oil and spray paint on canvas. Diptych measuring 72" x 48". 2016

\$1200

On the Banks of Kokytos

Gerald Lucena

Oil and spray paint on tar paper. Diptych measuring 86" x 72". 2017

\$1600

My search for meaning in life informs and inspires my work often focusing on the darker and vulnerable elements of the human experience. The strong narrative aspect of my work stems from a reinterpretation of childhood stories of mythological and religious figures. I seek to explore and reflect on the conundrum of dualities between the divine/ perverse, the spiritual/physical, the heroic/vulnerable, and life/death. I employ various drawing and painting languages from traditional methods to experimental mixed-media art processes allowing material to contribute to the overall meaning within the narrative. These works are a glimpse of my inner world...seeking beauty in an uncertain and violent world.

Gerald Lucena (b. 1967) was born and raised in Captain Cook, Hawaii. He earned his BFA in drawing and painting from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He also attended the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. Since then, he has exhibited in Hawaii, California, and Massachusetts and has created public murals for the West Hawaii Community Health Center in Kealahou and Innovations Public Charter School in Kailua-Kona. He also designs sets and costumes for the Aloha Performing Arts Company at the historical Aloha Theatre in Kainaliu, Hawaii. Gerald Lucena has taught drawing, painting, papermaking, and mixed media to all ages for over a decade and currently teaches at the Donkey Mill Art Center in Holualoa, Hawaii.

**5 poems by Danez Smith:
Ooooooh, You Look Like
Today
Dear Mrs. Thompson
On Grace
Self Portrait as a 90s R&B Video**

(LISTEN MP3 on headphones)

Danez Smith is a Black, queer, poet, writer & performer from St. Paul, MN. Danez is the author of [insert] boy (YesYes Books, 2014), winner of the Kate Tufts Discovery Award and the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Poetry, and Don't Call Us Dead (Graywolf Press, 2017). Danez is also the author of two chapbooks, hands on your knees (2013, Penmanship Books) and black movie (2015, Button Poetry), winner of the Button Poetry Prize. They are the recipient of fellowships from the Poetry Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, and is a 2017 National Endowment for the Arts Fellow. Danez's work has been featured widely including on BuzzFeed, Blavity, PBS NewsHour, and on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert. They are a 2-time Individual World Poetry Slam finalist, 3-time Rustbelt Poetry Slam Champion, and a founding member of the Dark Noise Collective.

Danez was featured in American Academy of Poets' Emerging Writers Series by National Book Award Finalist Patricia Smith. Like her, Danez bridges the poetics of the stage to that of the page. His work transcends arbitrary boundaries to present work that is gripping, dismantling of oppression constructs, and striking on the human heart. Often centered around intersections of race, class, sexuality, faith, and social justice, Danez uses rhythm, fierce raw power, and image to re-imagine the world as it takes it apart in their work.

Self Portrait as Three

Mary Babcock

Waxed paper, invisible thread. 58" x 50" x 0"

Self-portrait as Three is simultaneously a reflection on motherhood and a challenge to the cultural assumption that parental unions are sealed in difference (man/woman), not similarity (woman/woman). I used wax paper because it embodies an intriguing dichotomy. Like our concepts and rigid classifications, wax paper's intended use is preservation, yet it's ultimately its nature is fragile and ephemeral, subject to change with time.

So often the ideal of parenting comes from some idea that the ultimate creation results from opposites coming together - the "divine" masculine uniting with the "divine feminine". This image implies that somehow the opposite is necessary for completion. The center image (overlapping diamonds) challenges this. The two similar forms hold a like third: 2 mothers holding a daughter. Beauty and completion through similarity.

Mary Babcock is a visual and performance artist whose work explores mending and its relationship to personal and cultural change. She is deeply interested in the intersection of art, contemplation and social activism, engaging "making" as a tool for illuminating implicit knowledge of our humanity and compassion. Her work is resonant with eastern philosophy; it embodies a form of social activism that treats the inner landscape as inherently connected to its outer manifestation and as a central site for peacebuilding.

Babcock's installation, fiber and mixed media work has been exhibited regionally, nationally and internationally, including Korea, Japan, Canada, France, Hungary and the Ukraine. She has performed across the United States and throughout Japan in individual and collaborative contexts, as well as in Italy, Poland and the Philippines. She is the recipient of the Bronze Award in Fiber at the Cheongju International Craft Competition: The Breath of Nature. Her work is driven by a need to understand, critique and speak about her culture, and is rooted in the desire to bridge two prevailing paradigms for art-making: art as beauty and art social criticism. She has lectured at numerous conferences on her work linking fiber, performance and peace and justice studies.

AMERICA DESERVES DONALD

Essay by Steve Yee

"In past lives I went to a war, drove a city bus, worked in the sugar fields, was a custodian, a maintenance mechanic, a hotel executive and an engineering project manager. Moved to the big island in 1988, retired in 2012. I've learned that the longer I live, and the more I figure out, the less people want to hear about it".

Steve Yee was born, raised and educated in HNL.