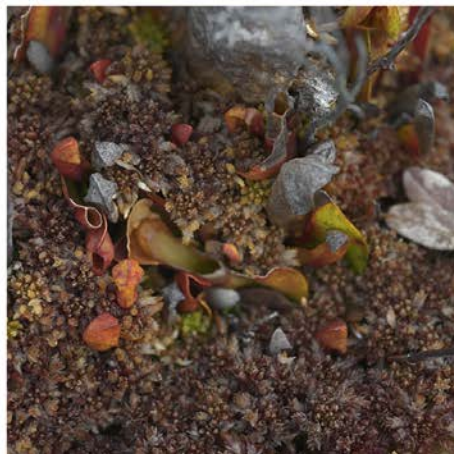


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2020 McKnight Visual Artist Fellowship Recipients Announced

Minneapolis, MN—June 2020— The Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), on behalf of the McKnight Foundation, is proud to announce the six recipients of the 2020 McKnight Fellowships for Visual Artists: Eric J. Garcia, Seitu Ken Jones, Catherine Meier, Teo Nguyen, Meg Ojala, and Maria Cristina Tavera ("Tina"). Designed to identify and support outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists, the McKnight Fellowships for Visual Artists provide recipients with \$25,000 stipends, public recognition, professional encouragement from national visiting critics, and an opportunity to participate in a speaker series. The fellowships are funded by a generous grant from the McKnight Foundation and administered by MCAD.



Eric J. Garcia, *War Nest*, 2019, Wood, acrylic paint and screws, 4' x 12' diameter

Seitu Ken Jones, *Shines to Collard Greens*, 2017, acrylic paint, oil bar paint on wall, cardboard, found chair, 10' x 10'

Catherine Meier, *Field Trials*, 2019, Animation Installation, Photo Credit: Morris Manning

Teo Nguyen, *I Put My Faith In Tomorrow*, 2017, Acrylic on vellum, mounted on aluminum, 60 x 80 inches, Photo credit: Jeff Johnson Photography

Meg Ojala, *Pitcher Plants in Mary's Bog near Otter Lake, north of Grand Rapids, Minnesota*, May 2017, Pigment print, 26 x 32 1/2 inches

Maria Cristina Tavera ("Tina"), *Americo Speed*, 2014, Mixed Media Installation, 120 x 120 x 120 inches, Photo credit: Xavier Tavera

For high resolution images contact Shelby Pasell at spasell@mcad.edu

The 2020 McKnight fellows were selected from a group of 176 applicants by a panel of arts professionals of varying backgrounds whose careers intersect with the visual arts in different ways. This year's jurors were Rita Gonzalez; Terri and Michael Smooke, Curator and Department Head of Contemporary Art at Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Matthew Schum, LA based independent curator and arts writer; and Lien Truong, Artist and Associate Professor of Studio Art at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Remarking on the fellowship recipients, Matthew Schum stated, "As a Twin Cities native, the 2020 McKnight Fellows represent the best of an increasingly distinctive and diverse state. Their artwork emerges from the edges of the Great Plains, the tributaries of the Mississippi, and from diasporic communities in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. As a cohort their talents contextualize two centuries of intense cultural and ecological change in Minnesota—ongoing histories of violence and renewed legacies of solidarity unique to time and place. These artists are North Stars in their own right. In each instance, their art has much to offer local, national, and international audiences."

Lien Truong reflected on the juring process, "It was a rich, rewarding experience to be introduced to artists immersed in practices deeply reflective of geographic violence, global trauma and personal histories. The discussion with the artists and other jurors also seemed somehow precious during the time of sheltering, in an experience across the country. The finalists exemplify resilience in meaningful, expansive creative practices founded both in community and solitude. Their visual work transcending geography and language, to expose the complex making of our belief systems, while reflecting our very humanity."

A Statement from the McKnight Foundation about the Death of Mr. George Floyd:

We grieve for George Floyd's family and friends. We recognize the deep pain felt within the Black community and by all who endure acts of violence based on prejudice, and we stand with people of all racial backgrounds who call for community healing and accountability.

Read the Foundation's full statement [here](#).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

[Eric J. Garcia](#) is a Chicano who blends history, contemporary themes, and a graphic style to create politically charged art that reaches beyond aesthetics. Using sculpture, mixed media installations, murals, printmaking, and his controversial political cartoons, he aims to challenge his viewers to question sources of power and the whitewashing of history. He received his BFA with a minor in Chicano studies from the University of New Mexico and his MFA in Painting and Drawing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Garcia is a proud member of the emerging Veteran Art Movement, a new member of the Justseeds cooperative and a dedicated teaching artist. He has exhibited nationally and his work can be found in the collections of the National Museum of Mexican Art, the National Hispanic Cultural Center, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Garcia lives and works in Minneapolis.

[Seitu Ken Jones](#) is an artist and advocate and has been tending the soil of community through art for more than forty years. Throughout his career, he has harnessed the tools of visual art, infrastructure, and civic engagement to create work that links history to the present and honors the community's assets—from its historic figures to natural resources to cultural traditions. In his public art and events, Jones pushes beyond traditional art spaces to reach people in the context of their lives and communities. In 2014, for CREATE: The Community Meal, Jones and Public Art St. Paul, convened two thousand people over dinner at a table half a mile long, which led to other meals across the country. His HeARTside Community Meal for the 2017 ArtPrize, in Grand Rapids, MI, was awarded the Juried Grand Prize. Jones's large-scale sculptural installation, Turnip Greens was dedicated in 2019 for the Nashville Farmers Market, inspired by the city's bounty of food and black culture. Commissioned by the Metropolitan Council, he integrated artwork into three stations along the METRO Green Line that connects Minneapolis and St. Paul. Jones is a recently retired faculty member of Goddard College in Washington State. He holds a BS degree in Landscape Design and a MLS in Environmental History from the University of Minnesota. He resides in St. Paul with his partner the poet Soyini Guyton.

[Catherine Meier](#) creates drawings, animations, and large-scale installations of earth, sky, and horizon—of vast, open landscapes. Large in scope, her projects develop through time spent drawing and deep listening in specific locations. In recent years, Meier has focused on the Sage Creek area of Badlands National Park. In addition to time in other Northern Plains sites, she has traveled to the Mongolian steppe and worked for many years as a truck driver hauling cattle from Montana to Texas throughout the Great Plains. A settler descendent, Meier grew up on the eastern edge of the Nebraska Sandhills. She holds a BFA in Studio Art from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and an MFA from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her work has shown in museums, galleries, and film festivals as well as in the very land that gives rise to her work. Meier's project Standing Witness, site: Sage Creek was recognized through Creative Capitals' "On our Radar," and she has held place-oriented residencies at Badlands National Park and Cedar Point Biological Station. A McKnight Visual Artist Fellow in 2013, her other awards include a Minnesota State Arts Board Visual Arts Grant, several Arrowhead Regional Arts Council grants, and a national Jacob K. Javits Fellowship for Graduate Study. Meier lives with her family on the North Shore of Lake Superior with the vast, blue horizon in view.

[Teo Nguyen](#)'s work invites contemplation and reflection on the politics of worthiness and the Vietnamese people's struggles toward peace. Nguyen tells stories of heartbreak, optimism, resistance, and reconciliation that are interwoven into the Vietnamese cultural nuances and spiritualism. Nguyen's reverence of the past, a deeply rooted cultural value, is seen through photorealist paintings, drawings, photographs, and films. Nguyen's repositioning of personal agency centers the narrative of Vietnam within a culturally rooted context. His works are counter-stories to majoritarian narratives. He studied art and design at De Anza College, San Francisco, Fresno State University, California, and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. Nguyen emigrated from Vietnam at age sixteen, he now lives and works in Golden Valley, Minnesota.

[Meg Ojala](#) combines large-scale landscape photographs, drawings, and text to imbue her subjects, such as a river or a bog, with a sense of agency. She employs ambiguous spatial illusions, disorienting points of view, and a bewildering sense of scale to shift the perception of the viewer and to elicit empathy for the natural world. Ojala, professor emerita of Art and Art History, St. Olaf College, received her BA from the University of Minnesota and her MFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago. She is a recipient of McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowships for Photographers, Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grants, and a grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council. Ojala has exhibited nationally and internationally and is represented by Groveland Gallery in Minneapolis. She lives and works in Dundas, Minnesota.

[Maria Cristina Tavera \("Tina"\)](#) is an artist, curator, and cultural organizer. As an artist residing in Minnesota with dual citizenship (Mexico-US), her focus is often on the Latinidad within the United States. Tavera's artwork investigates the constructions of racial, ethnic, gender, national, and cultural identity via numerous mediums. Through an ethnographic lens, she identifies and examines cultural signifiers determined by our society on how people define themselves and their cultures in everyday life. Tavera has an MA in Public Affairs-Leadership in the Arts from the University of Minnesota Humphrey School. She has received fellowships and grants from the Bush Foundation, Smithsonian Latino Museum Studies program, Museum of Modern Art-New York, Forecast Public Art, Minnesota State Arts Board, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC), Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME) and City of Minneapolis Art in Public Places Commission. Tavera has exhibited and curated shows nationally and internationally. Her artwork can be found in the collections of the Weisman Art Museum, Fargo Plains Museum, and the Tweed Museum of Art. Tavera lives and works in Minneapolis.

ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS

The McKnight Artist Fellowship Program is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the country. Established in 1981, the fellowship program provides annual, unrestricted cash awards to outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists in ten areas, totaling nearly \$1 million each year. Non-profit arts organizations oversee the administration of the fellowships and structure their own programs to respond to the unique opportunities and challenges of different creative disciplines.

ABOUT THE McKNIGHT FOUNDATION

The McKnight Foundation seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations through grant-making, coalition-building and the encouragement of strategic policy reform. Founded in 1953 and independently endowed by William and Maude McKnight, the Minnesota-based foundation had assets of approximately \$2.2 billion and granted about \$88 million in 2015.

ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Recognized nationally and internationally for its innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to visual arts education, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design is home to more than 700 students and offers professional certificates, bachelor of fine arts and bachelor of science degrees, and graduate degrees.

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