

**ELSEWHERE STUDIOS
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RESIDENCY PROGRAM
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UPCOMING EVENTS!

FRIDAY JUNE 28TH

'UNCOVERED'

EXHIBITION!

6 - 8 PM

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**RESEARCH GROUP:
ART, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**

**SCHOOL OF ART, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY, WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY**

**ELSEWHERE STUDIOS
107 3RD ST. PAONIA, CO**



Research Group: Art, Environment & Sustainability

Carol Flueckiger, Associate Professor, School of Art, Texas Tech University

Keriann Conroy, Environment & Sustainability, Western Colorado University

Sahar Fattahi, Art, Texas Tech University

Madeline Hernandez, Art, Texas Tech University

Sam Liebl, Environment & Sustainability, Western Colorado University

June 11, 2019, 5-7pm

June 27, 2019, 5-7pm

Elsewhere Studios, Paonia, CO

Presenting Art, Environment and Sustainability Research Group! I had the honor to lead an interdisciplinary group that consisted of two School of Art students from Texas Tech University: Sahar Fattahi and Mattie Hernandez and two Environment & Sustainability students from Western Colorado University: Sam Liebl and Keriann Conroy. All participants met at Elsewhere Studios for two meetings where the Texas Tech University students were artists in residence.

The idea for this group started in 2018 when I met John Hausdoerffer, Dean of Environment & Sustainability, Western Colorado University at Elsewhere Studio's symposium Inspired: Art @ Work.

The program for Inspired: Art @ Work entailed bringing two artists in residence and three local artists together to work on socially engaged projects. Working closely with local partner organizations, artists created socially-engaged works that addressed selected environmental, cultural, social, and economic issues vital to preserving the natural world and the quality of life in the North Fork Valley.



The Inspired program was guided by Animating Democracy, a program out of Washington DC that measures art effectiveness by its ability to enrich communities. Both Flueckiger and Hausdoerffer thought it would be good to continue this energy with a student focus, so they made a plan to send students to Elsewhere Studios for a research group the following summer.

Would there be overlap between the Environment & Sustainability students research and the artists creations? And if no overlap was found, would it at least be useful to practice talking about research across disciplines? Turns out, dialogue about cheat grass, an invasive grass species and the power of renewable energy that the Environment & Sustainability students were working on offered rich metaphor for the veiled fabric and distorted sexual drawings the art students were developing. There is never enough time to sort through these issues and the nuanced overlap of interdisciplinary discussion, but maybe just continuing the dialogue is enough? Don't take my word for it, see for yourself!

Carol Flueckiger

Associate Professor, School of Art, Texas Tech University



"Uncovered", open house at Elsewhere Studios June 28th, 2019



Kerianne Conroy

Environment & Sustainability

Western Colorado University

My work researched the democratic mechanisms available to citizens taking part in energy decision making, specifically electricity. Electricity is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and is becoming increasingly more relied upon throughout the world. Further, the presence of electricity, in a home or a community, substantially improves the lives of those with access to it. Therefore, as climate change presents challenges to democratic decision making due to the ease of implementing authoritarian methodology, my research seeks to understand the role of power, both figuratively and literally.

To adequately address climate change in the next 5 years, the two main points of focus ought to be ceasing dependence on fossil fuel use and the empowerment of women. Both issues require the need to expand the sphere of decision making. This poem attempts to intertwine the relationship between environmental degradation and the abuse of women.

Concealment. The sea encroaches upon the land. Women stand in the salty body rising above their calves, their knees, their thighs...Revealing. Petrochemicals float.

Is wisdom less dense than gene expression?

Follow Instructions. Show me yours.

The Beginning. For those who believe, the sky was together and empty. We, the Light, tore it asunder. Eve, first gatherer. Poisoned us all with wisdom.

With each new manual, her fate is the same.

It is the hormones. She deserves it.



Hysteria. We think, we become. Equal and opposite reactions. Emissions of the brave new world, choking out the songs of Spring. Remnants of the Light extracted from the soil.

The burn brings exponential growth.

Life is the sacrifice. The Truth would be much prettier if it smiled.

A Marketplace of Blood. The Womb absorbs the leaching of excess. Laying shit down on barren ground. Shit as fertilizer. Shit as toxin. Let the Dispossessed experiment with outcome.

The Exchange designed for single use.

It's getting better. Calm down.

Power Outage. A wave of curable Disease wipes away the ground of Home. A moment of silence. A prayer. Did the Light turn back on?

Choosing to ignore the Darkness. Acceptance of mischaracterization.

Stop leaving it unattended. Reclamation.

Good and Evil both falter under opposition. Perhaps neither are so concrete. Love is this lesson, learned.

Rules do not apply.





Sahar Fattahi

Art

Texas Tech University

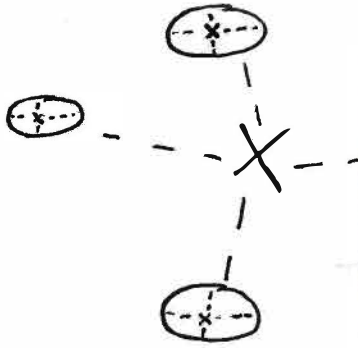
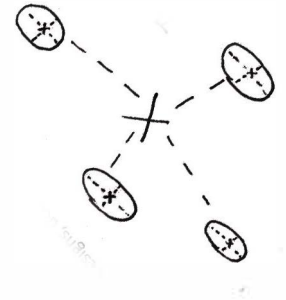
Wounded and Suspended: a Feminine Narrative

My artworks take a critical view of cultural issues, often to reference the imbalance of power among gendered bodies within the traditional and religious structures. Each work portrays an environment in which the feminine body is manipulated and dismantled by a controlling agency. The concept is an essential factor that determines the material and process of each piece. While I use a variety of materials and processes in each piece, my subject matter is consistent.

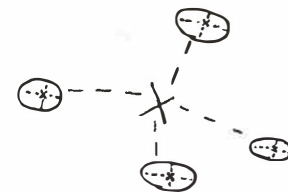
The use of fiber in my current series immediately connects me to the history of women's crafts. However, sewing the fabric and cotton helps me to translate my paintings into folds, pleats, and stitches. I intentionally incorporate crafting materials in my work to raise a dialogue about mute women whose social engagement has been limited for centuries. The softness and flexibility of the cotton and fabric offers a sculptural quality and leads to a contemporary approach to this material. Through my art, I hope to initiate new questions and conversations around conventional gender binary.



Sahar Fattahi, *Untitled*,
lace fabric, felt, packing foam, acrylic, clear cord
60".60".15", 2019



Sahar Fattahi, *The Aftermath*, cotton
sheet, lace fabric, felt and stitches
50".50", 2019





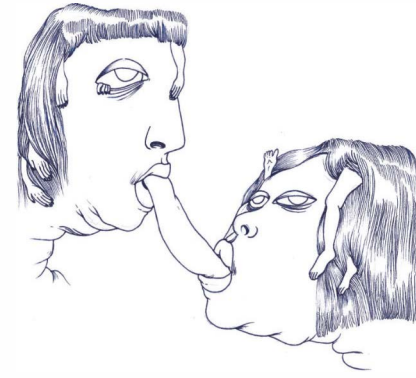
Madeline Hernandez

Art

Texas Tech University

Women and Sexuality

This work explores self-objectification and so called raunch culture. It appears that the fetishizing and sexual objectification of women seemingly occurs from young child to teenager and continues into adulthood. Our society has a strange relationship with sex and sexuality and how they relate to men and women. On one hand porn is readily available and women are sexualized from a young age. However, most schools refuse to teach safe sex in sex education classes and practically praise abstinence.



Madeline Hernandez, Unknown Pleasures,
pen drawing, 11" x 14", 2019



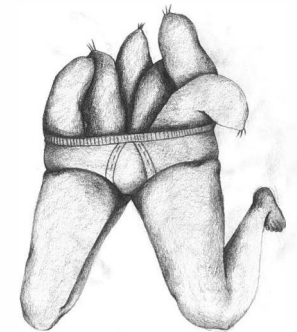
Madeline Hernandez, Graze,
watercolor on yupo paper, 9" x 12", 2019



Many women, myself included, have experienced instances of stares and suggestive behavior from adult men as early as ten years old. From those experiences I began to feel a separation between myself and my body. The body, the skin, behaves independently from you. The relationship between women and sexuality remains convoluted. How much of the choice to participate in so called raunch culture is influenced from society versus individual interest?



Madeline Hernandez, It's Burning,
watercolor, 9" x 12", 2019



Madeline Hernandez, Laundry Day,
graphite drawing, 9" x 12", 2019



Sam Liebl

Environment & Sustainability

Western Colorado University

On the Ubiquity of Sausages

The shapes that lifeforms take seem limitless: A peacock spreads its feathers in a gaudy display, a rattlesnake blends perfectly into a background of leaf litter, an elk's pale rump bounces across a field with all the subtlety of a traffic light. But if we look into the components of animals, protozoa, plants, we see the same shapes repeated. These are the designs that have stood the test of deep time. At the intersection of physics, fitness and perhaps the most foundational aesthetic preferences, shapes like the humble sausage persevere, reappear and seem inescapable. It is a cylinder with

rounded ends. It is a maggot, a grain of rice, an amoeba, a phallus.

In a sketch series by Madeline Hernandez, these shapes are penises. But they lack a foreskin, testicles, a head or any of the other characteristics that make them, to the viewer, penises without a doubt. So she leaves the viewer to wonder, are they animal? Vegetable? Mineral? Whatever they are interpreted to be, they flourish in her drawings. They squirm from ghastly places like eye sockets and mouths, sprout from cuts across a female waist, and writhe in midair. What is most disturbing, however, isn't their placement but rather their population. They are everywhere, including the places where we would like to see them least. The shapes are, in a word, invasive.

Hernandez says these shapes are penises, but if we dig in the dirt anywhere we see cylinders with tapered ends. Scoop soil into a cup, add water and warmth and we see penis-like epicotyls pushing out and through papery coatings. These are seeds and, to be more precise, grass seeds. Relatively young in terms of their evolution, members of the family Poaceae have overtaken the Earth. They fill voids in ecosystems, they thrive on disturbance (or at least tolerate it better than forbs), and their abilities to withstand extremes in temperatures and moisture levels, all while growing prodigious amounts of biomass, are unmatched. The staple foods of our species are grass seeds with few exceptions. The animals we eat, milk and from which we collect eggs are grass eaters, too.

As ubiquitous and crucial to human survival as grasses may be, we consider them to be 'invasive', too. Perhaps no grass in North America bares this title more frequently than cheatgrass, *Bromus tectorum*. A cool season grass with an ecology and a Eurasian origin similar to wheat, cheatgrass germinates in the fall, survives freezing temperatures and races to maturity early in the spring, dropping seeds while native grasses are just beginning to wake up from their winter dormancy. As cheatgrass goes to seed it changes color, turning from a bright green to a distinctive purple. Across swathes of the American West, the land turns purple as far as one can see for a couple weeks each May or June. Like the shapes in Hernandez's drawings, cheatgrass teems unwanted and out of place.

The purple fades to a light brown when the seeds start to drop, and the dried cheatgrass thatch becomes highly flammable. Each plant, and there may be thousands in a square meter, can produce hundreds of seeds. The magnitude of this fecundity becomes clear in every bit of topsoil across millions of cheatgrass-infested acres. Among the silt, sand and scant organic matter that characterizes



soils of the Intermountain West we find large deposits of cheatgrass seeds--papery sausage shapes. They are simple and slight but each holds a clock, what scientists call acquired dormancy. Each seed carries a different clock that tells it when to wake up and germinate. This ensures that not all seeds sprout at once. Kill this year's crop of cheatgrass and, even if no new seeds are added to the soil, a new crop will sprout next year, too. Cheatgrass, therefore, is an annual plant that creates a perennial problem.

But for whom is cheatgrass a problem? Cattle and other ungulates find it a nutritious forage in the spring. Some birds eat it. Strains of fungus specialize in rotting its seeds. And cheatgrass itself has no malicious intent. It simply wants to carry on through another generation. And it certainly will carry on; it has established itself so thoroughly that most Western states do not have it on their noxious weed lists, the regulatory equivalent of giving up. Governments omit it from their rolls of enemy plants even though cheatgrass causes more damage (by way of thatch-fueled wildfires) than perhaps any other plant in North America.

Hernandez tells us her sketches are meant to invoke absurdity. In response to the objectification and sexualization of women's bodies, even of very young girls, Hernandez puts dicks in every crevice of the female form. A machismo, homophobic masculinity cannot hold in this protrature; Hernandez takes male ideas of possessing women's bodies to an extreme where we cannot avoid seeing the ugliness of masculine desires to put a penis in every body, in every place.

Efforts to eradicate cheatgrass bring to mind a similar sense of the absurd. If land managers wish to dominate landscapes, to control every ecological crevice in every place, then cheatgrass is always out of place. It's something to be killed. The only option to kill it on any significant scale is to use herbicides. As with other grasses, there are no species-specific poisons for cheatgrass. The chemicals are, to use the Orwellian jargon of agrochemistry, 'non-specific;' they kill everything. Yet cheatgrass can't be killed. Over the last century we've dropped poisons on it from airplanes, attempted to bio-engineer lethal fungi and introduced even more non-native plants in hopes of finding something that can outcompete it. Still the extent and intensity of cheatgrass' presence in the Western U.S. grows every year.

Masculine ideas of land management and of women's bodies share a common seed. Male domination has brought on the anthropocene, has produced rigid views of sex and of gender. But we see in the ubiquity of the sausage shape that we cannot kill, own or fuck everything because life itself is the most virile of all.



Elsewhere Studios is an artist residency program in Paonia CO, hosting artists from around the world to have time and space to focus on their work in a unique and supportive environment. Elsewhere is a choose-your-own-adventure style residency, providing residents with the opportunity to connect with the community... or just time to focus on work. Time spans are individually based- 1 to 6 months, accommodating 4 to 6 artists at a time.

Since its inception in 2011, the Elsewhere Studios Residency Program has hosted over 189 artists from 28 states and 14 countries (Argentina, Iran, Columbia, Mexico, Canada, England, Japan, Switzerland, Bangladesh, India, Ireland, Netherlands, and Finland). The program is open to visual artists, writers, composers, and performing artists at any stage or their career as well as scientists, activists, teachers, students, or any kind of creative thinker interested in exploring and expanding their work. Artists are supported in the creation of new work and new ideas through dedicated time, a space conducive to focused work, and an environment that is both stimulating and nurturing. The artists are selected through a competitive application process. The residency program includes housing, studio space, and utilities. The staff is dedicated to making this a positive experience and to finding resources and networking with the local community and resources as needed. The multidisciplinary resident artists interact, share, and often collaborate with each other.

