

Fellowship 22

Eva Alcántara

Dylan Everett

Steph Foster

Jenna Garrett

Carla Liesching

Jake Reinhart

About the Artists

Eva Alcántara (they/them/theirs) born in 1997, is a Dominican transgender artist working with images and text. Their work attempts to illuminate the gaps between objects and the words we use to describe them in order to find limitations in language. They love to create worlds through images and tell poignant stories about themselves and their friends.

Dylan Everett is an artist/photographer working with still life and photo collage. He received an MFA in Photography from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2019, and a BA in Visual Art from Brown University in 2016.

Steph Foster is an interdisciplinary artist specializing in photography, with interests in video, installations, music, digital fabrication, sculpture and performance. His work combines sound and music with visual media to tell stories of mass incarceration and reconciliation within urban communities.

Jenna Garrett is an artist living in San Francisco, California. Her current practice focuses on the Ozarks in southwest Missouri where she was born. Garrett is interested in spirituality, mythmaking, and its consequences in American culture.

Carla Liesching is a South African interdisciplinary artist working across photography, writing, collage, sculpture, bookmaking and design. Grounded in experiences growing up in apartheid South Africa, her work considers the intersections of representation, knowledge and power—with a focus on colonial histories.

Jake Reinhart is a photographer from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Born and raised in Southwestern Pennsylvania; his work is informed by the region's history and explores the importance of place in relation to the formation of identity and community.

I. Introduction: Fellowship 22

This exhibition highlights the award winners and honorable mentions from Fellowship 22, our annual call for entries. This year's awards were juried by a panel consisting of Dan Boardman, Executive Director of Light Work, Brian Paul Clamp, Director of ClampArt, and Helen Trompeteler, Deputy Director of Programs at Silver Eye.

The Fellowship Award recognizes a rising talent or established photographer from anywhere in the world. This year's Fellowship award winner is Carla Liesching, and the Fellowship Honorable mentions are Dylan Everett and Jenna Garrett. The Keystone Award is given to an exceptional photographer living or making work in the state of Pennsylvania. The Keystone Award Winner is Eva Alcántara, and the Keystone Award Honorable Mentions are Steph Foster and Jake Reinhart.



II. Defining Place

Depictions of a region and its communities contribute to constructing personal and cultural identities. How artists represent landscapes can also reveal political, social, and environmental histories concerning how human intervention has shaped nature. For example, Jenna Garrett explores the town of Branson, Missouri, which she regularly visited as a child. Her work reveals how intertwined histories of religion, capitalism, and tourism have shaped this region. Jake Reinhart's *Laurel Mountain Laurel* is similarly informed by complex social-political histories while reflecting on his personal connection to South-Western Pennsylvania. Both artists expand beyond a purely documentary approach to evoke sensory memories and places of home.

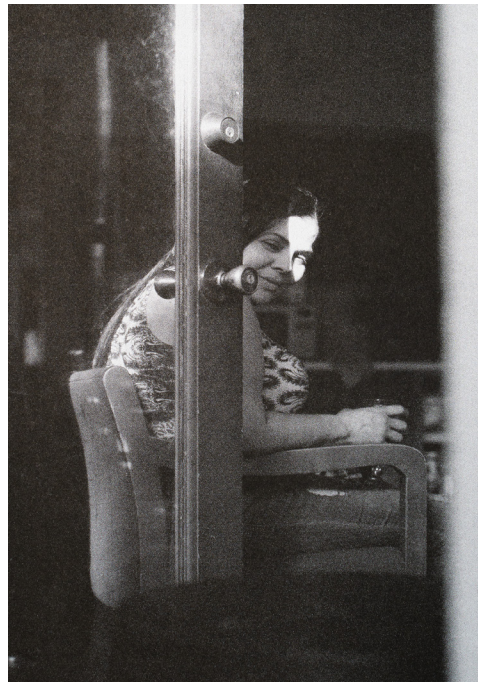
Their work also invites reflection on the **ethics** of storytelling. Artists and viewers are individually complicit in aiding or harming understandings of a region, bringing their own biases and personal interpretations. Consequently, how a place is defined depends on who tells and views its stories. Both Jenna Garrett and Jake Reinhart bring authenticity and foster trust with their work due to their deep-rooted personal connections to the land and communities they portray.

Questions for Looking:

- Consider Jake Reinhart's photograph *Power Lines (Connellsville)*. How do choices the photographer has made such as his use of light, the time of day, composition, perspective, or vantage point contribute to your perception of this place?
- Jenna Garrett slowly builds visual layers in her photographs to explore the divine. What emotions do her photographs evoke in you and why might this be?
- Both artists have used expressive ways of installing their work that adds to their storytelling. What feelings does the shape of each photographer's installation inspire?



Fellowship 22



Education Guide

III. Exploring Identity

The work of Eva Alcántara and Dylan Everett speaks to the relationship between photography and **identity**, with each artist using photography to explore or communicate what defines them as individuals. Photography can illuminate many intersecting aspects of personal identity, including cultural backgrounds, family histories, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. Dylan Everett makes pictures of the real or personal through the intermediary of the constructed photograph. His images frequently incorporate symbols or references to pay homage to creative figures throughout art, literature, and music. Eva Alcántara series is a meditation on nature and people as organisms in flux, with forever shifting shapes and identities. Both artists' work speaks to a search for belonging and a continual process of self-discovery.

Questions for Looking

- How might you pay homage to an artist or creative figure you admire? What references or symbols would you incorporate in a photograph to reaffirm your own identity?
- What natural landscapes have you personally been drawn to that gives you space for self-examination and reflection?
- Eva Alcántara has chosen to use the risograph process to print their work. This process involves passing ink through a stencil, with the ability to layer colors and create tactile textures. What qualities does this process bring to the feeling of their photographs?



Fellowship 22



Education Guide

IV. Power and Representation

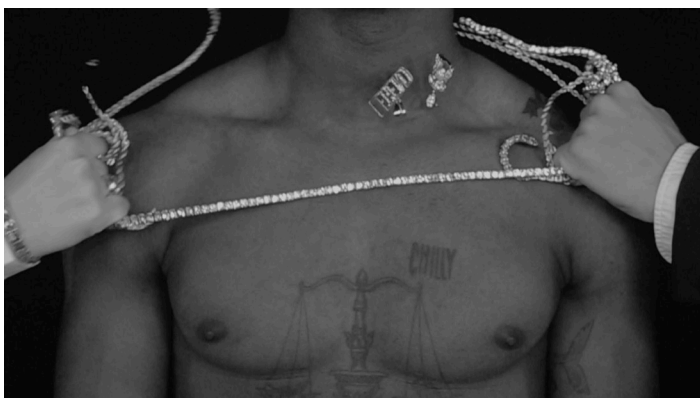
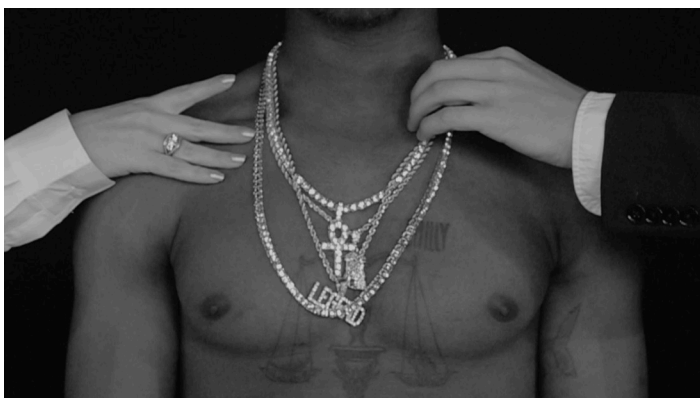
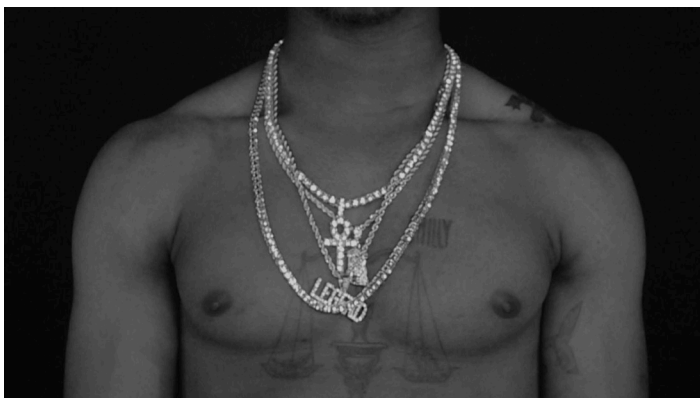
Early photography in Western culture was informed by and perpetuated systems of **colonialism** that relied on the **othering** of different races. This long legacy of racism intersecting with photography is still present today. Artists Carla Liesching and Steph Foster challenge this legacy through their artistic practices, which aim to question and dismantle structural systems of oppression. Liesching works across multiple art forms, including photography, writing, collage, sculpture, installation, and design. Her work considers the construction of visual culture and its complicity in empire-building and the formation of White settler-colonialism. Steph Foster is an interdisciplinary artist whose work exposes legacies and systems of oppression by analyzing the prison system and the impact of mass incarceration. His series *The Eyes Beneath the Oak* is inspired by his family's collective and individual negotiations of his aunt's incarceration. By framing his family's personal narratives within a larger context of racism and capitalism, Foster aims to empower others in similar positions to create and control their **representation**.

Questions for Looking

- Take a closer look at Steph Foster's photograph, *Bottle Blessing*. This photograph shows family members placing hands on a bottle before drinking in memory of a deceased loved one. What is the artist trying to evoke by focusing his composition on the details of hand gestures and touch?
- To create the installation *Good Hope, Columns I-IV*, artist Carla Liesching has used centuries-old architectural forms associated with academic, civic, and legal buildings. This temporary installation uses a malleable linen fabric printed with found images that creates an empty structure behind this false facade. What do you think the artist is exploring by recontextualizing these forms of architecture? How does this work question structures of knowledge and power?

V. Community Perspectives

Community Perspectives is an ongoing series where people from diverse disciplines and backgrounds respond freely to images in our exhibitions.



etta cetera reflects on Steph Foster's *Chain*

I watched the Chain.

I see upper-class hands ripping at rhinestone legends, splattering eternal life in a frenzy to extract culture.

I hear a profound and poetic truth.

This should be shown in high school history class. In social (media) studies. You could show it on day one and then use it as the framing for the whole semester. Following chapters include White Supremacy, Gender, Class, Historical Violence, Cultural Colonization, Structural Violence, Self Determination.

I suppose that may be...

Too critical.

Too racey.

I mean, was that white femme hand lingering just a little too long before she got into those chains?

Class discuss!

"Oh that's Nipsey Huggle," said Antoine, "in voice and body." Antoine Hawkins had just moved to Pittsburgh four days ago and was knocking on the door selling clean energy. I decided to make the switch and invited him in to get the info off my bills. I showed Antoine the Chain.

Antoine explained that Nipsey was the biggest of the big in the Crips who turned his life around. Bought a whole city block and was doing right by the community. He was murdered in connection to Dr. Sebi, who was curing people outside of western medicine.

The plot thickens and the conversation turned to healing.

etta cetera has been collaborating with people in prison towards collective liberation for over 20 years. She mentions Antoine with his consent. Instagrams: @ettacetera @womeninprison Antoine @tweezyletigre

Candace Opper reflects on Jenna Garrett's *Motel*

In a recent interview, Jenna Garrett described *This Holy Hill* as an exercise in “making the ordinary feel otherworldly,” a quality I feel especially while looking at *Motel*, 2019. What drew me in first were the colors—that pink, dusky glow interrupted by an electric blue reflection—which together evoke the luminescence of a drive-in movie or the edge of a carnival that has inflated in the center of town. To imagine myself inside this scene is to time travel to the summers of my childhood, now otherworldly in their remoteness. I would see a similar light walking alongside the divided highway at the fringes of night or piled inside a car on our way to somewhere less rural. The journey was never glamorous but took on a kind of cinematic sheen that promised something more epic just over the horizon. This image taps that same sensation, luring us in with the kind of spark that conceals itself inside the ordinary.

Candace Opper is the author of Certain and Impossible Events, selected by Cheryl Strayed for the Kore Press Memoir Award and featured in NPR's 2021 "Books We Love." Her writing has appeared in Guernica, Longreads, Literary Hub, Narratively, and Bright Wall/Dark Room, among others. She lives in Pittsburgh with her husband, writer Patrick McGinty, and their son.



Sue Abramson reflects on Jake Reinhart's *Thomas*

This photograph is so evocative for me. Thomas is immersed in a body of water, deep in the natural world. It feels like it is the perfect place to be. He is alone in the frame. Is he enjoying the sudden coolness of the water? Or thinking about the current? In reality, I know he is with his good friend Jake who made this arresting portrait. Outside the frame I can also imagine others hanging out, laughing, soaking in the ambiance of this idyllic setting.

The majority of this image is in soft focus; the only real sharpness is centered on Thomas' head and shoulders. He is totally still and appears to be in the zone. His mind and body are in sync with the environment. On closer inspection I notice water dripping from Thomas' beard, a clue that he has recently emerged from just below the surface. Picturing his movement, only moments before this photograph was taken, transports me back in time to so many summer days jumping into lakes, swimming and moving my limbs to stay afloat, wanting to keep my head above water.

Sue Abramson is a fine art photographer working in Pittsburgh. For four decades, she has produced work using a variety of methods in connection with the environmental landscape. Her recent exhibition at the Phipps Conservatory, From the Same Bulb, included garden work made in response to personal grief and a life in transition. Abramson's book, A Woodlands Journal, is a decades-long photographic meditation on her evolving relationship with light, loss, chaos, and place.



Glossary

Ethics: A set of moral principles. In the context of photography, ethics are the principles that guide how we take and share photographs. Ethics are subjective and based on an individual's life experiences and values.

Identity: A person's self-image as a unique and distinctive individual. This is informed by many aspects and evolves throughout life.

Colonialism: The practice of enforcing and maintaining exploitative political and economic control of a people or area by a foreign state.

Othering: An expression of prejudice where individuals and groups are treated as different and inferior from a dominant social group.

Settler-colonialism: A distinct type of colonialism that functions through the replacement of indigenous populations with an invasive settler society.

Representation: The depiction of someone or something in a written, spoken, or visual language, often conveying the essence of people, experiences and ideas in an abstract way.

Reading List

Defining Place

Catte, Elizabeth. 2018. *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia*. Belt Publishing

Ketchell, Aaron K. 2007. *Holy Hills of the Ozarks: Religion and Tourism in Branson, Missouri*. John Hopkins University Press

Schama, Simon. 'America's Verdant Cross' in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 1995

Sekula, Allan. 'Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)' in *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 19 No. 4, Winter 1978

Stoll, Steven. 2018. *The Ordeal of Appalachia*. Hill & Wang

Tharaud, Jerome. 'The Oxbow, Religious Print, and the Moral Landscape in America' in *American Art* Volume 28, Number 3, Fall 2014

Exploring Identity

Bachelard, Gaston. Reprinted 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. Beacon Press

Bey, Dawoud. 2019. *On Photographing People and Communities*. Aperture

Bright, Susan. 2010. *Auto-Focus: The Self Portrait in Contemporary Photography*. Thames

Elaine Scarry. Reprinted 2001. *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton University Press

Wells, Liz ed. 2019. *The Photography Cultures Reader: Representation, Agency and Identity*. Routledge

Power and Representation

Ahmed, Sara. 'A Phenomenology of Whiteness' in Feminist Theory, Vol. 8 Issue 2, August 2007

Campt, Tina. 2021. A Black Gaze: Artists Changing How We See. MIT Press

Fleetwood, Nicole R. 2020. Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration. Harvard University Press

Mbembe, Achille. 2015. Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive. Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research (WISER)

Sealy, Mark. 2022. Photography: Race Rights and Representation. Lawrence & Wishart Ltd

Solnit, Rebecca. 2016. Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities. Haymarket Editions

Silver Eye Center for Photography
4808 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

This guide serves as an education supplement to our exhibitions and contains information about the works on view, questions for looking and discussion as well as room for student responses. To schedule a tour of this exhibition for students, go to: silvereye.org

Silver Eye Center for Photography is generously supported by our members and individual donors and by the Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Concept Art Gallery, The Heinz Endowments, The Hillman Foundation, the Henry John Simonds Foundation, the Irving and Aaronel deRoy Gruber Charitable Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the PNC Charitable Trust, and the William Talbott Hillman Foundation.