



**The Ackland Art Museum Presents “Sacred Wasteland:  
Selected Works by the MFA Class of 2019”**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Chapel Hill, N.C. - April 11, 2019) - The Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill presents "**Sacred Wasteland: Selected Works by the MFA Class of 2019,**" **Friday, April 19 through Sunday, May 26, 2019.** A public celebration of the exhibition will be held on **Thursday, April 25.** The Ackland presents a special Family and Friends Sunday inspired by "Sacred Wasteland" on **Sunday, April 28.** There will be two participatory events related to the exhibition during the 2nd Friday ArtWalk on the evening of **Friday, May 10.**

"Sacred Wasteland" presents work by the nine studio artists of the 2019 Master of Fine Arts graduating class. It celebrates the blending of traditional and non-traditional approaches, as well as the thoughtful repurposing of materials to reveal layers of each artist's idiosyncratic curiosities. Each candidate mines the rich and complicated realities of our world using objects, techniques, and subjects that might typically be discarded or overlooked in their original contexts. In many cases, the artists' personal narratives are directly intertwined with their material choices. Their constructions and aesthetic interventions illuminate

the public value of private artifacts. Their work inspires important questions about humanity's proficiency at isolating, elevating, destroying, and memorializing people and resources over the course of a single lifespan. As these artists investigate the perception of cultural and material wastelands, they imbue what they find there with all the care and attention we reserve for the sacred.

Curated by **William Paul Thomas**, a 2013 alumnus of the MFA program in Studio Art at UNC-Chapel Hill and recent Artist-in-Residence at Duke University's Rubenstein Arts Center, "Sacred Wasteland" includes work by **Jonh Blanco, Sarah Elizabeth Cornejo, John DeKemper II, Peter Hoffman, Michael Keaveney, Jasper Lee, Laura Little, Reuben Mabry** and **Chieko Murasugi**.

The Ackland is presenting four free public events as part of the exhibition.

The first is a **public celebration** on **Thursday, April 25 from 5-8 p.m.** Visitors will have an opportunity to meet the curator and artists.

The second event is a special **Family and Friends Sunday** inspired by "Sacred Wasteland," **Sunday, April 28 from 2-5 p.m.**

The final free public events both happen on **Friday, May 10** to coincide with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro 2nd Friday ArtWalk. **"when they become us."** is a **collaborative, socially-engaged performance event** presented by "Sacred Wasteland" artist **Jonh Blanco, ShaLeigh Dance Works** and the **Ackland Art Museum**. The performance invites audience, community and dancers to become participants in creating authentic group movement examining concepts of undocumented, transitional, irregular, displaced, migrating, refugee, illegal and unlawful vessels and bodies, resonating with the themes of North Carolina artist Stacey L. Kirby's new installation in the Ackland's ART& gallery, "The Department of Reflection." The performance of "when they become us." begins at **6:30 p.m.**

Following the performance, the Ackland presents the final public event, a Q&A about the exhibition with the artists, led by "Sacred Wasteland" guest curator **William Paul Thomas** at **7:30 p.m.**

**Recipients of this announcement are invited to a special exhibition preview on Thursday, April 18 at 11 a.m. at the Ackland. No reservations are required.**

[High-resolution images of selected works from "Sacred Wasteland" can be found here.](#)

This exhibition is made possible by the generous support of Seymour and Carol Cole Levin.

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**About the Ackland Art Museum:** Featuring a year-round calendar of special exhibitions and dynamic public programs, the Ackland Art Museum on UNC-Chapel Hill's historic campus is a local museum with a global outlook that bridges campus and community. Admission to the Ackland is free and accessible to all. The Ackland's holdings include more than 18,000 works of art. The collection spans all cultures and time periods, showcasing the breadth of human creativity. A vital teaching resource, the museum's mission is the art of understanding. Visitors can connect with the complexity and beauty of the wider world by getting close to art—the familiar, the unexpected, the challenging. The Ackland Art Museum is located at 101 South Columbia St. on the UNC Chapel Hill campus. The Ackland is open Wednesday through Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM, and Sundays 1 PM - 5 PM. The Museum is open until 9 PM for Chapel Hill-Carrboro's monthly 2nd Friday ArtWalk. More information is available at [ackland.org](http://ackland.org).

*Image: Sarah Elizabeth Cornejo, American, born 1993: "Halfies, Pt. 1" (detail), 2019. Earth, saw dust, steel, wood glue, coral, alligator garfish scales, oyster shells, rocks, cement, volcanic rock, sharks' teeth, pig intestines, epoxy, lichen, barnacles, acrylic paint, and windshield glass. Courtesy of the artist.*

