

An abstract painting depicting ocean currents with swirling colors of blue, green, yellow, and red. The background is a deep blue, suggesting the ocean's surface. The painting is composed of various brushstrokes and textures, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Fenwick Gallery

CURRENTS

8th Annual Call and Response Exhibition
September 23 - October 30, 2016



University Libraries

CURRENTS

8th Annual Call & Response Exhibition

A partnership between the MFA program in creative writing and the School of Art. Presented in collaboration with University Libraries and Fall for the Book festival.

The theme for Call & Response 2016 is CURRENTS, in conversation with the College of Visual and Performing Art's 100th Meridian Project, an interdisciplinary multimedia arts and science project investigating drought and the American West.



The 100th Meridian Project: A Performative Collaboration of Science and Art
Thursday, September 29, 7:00 p.m.
Harris Theater, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
Part of Fall for the Book Festival

Curators:



Nikki Burgnoli Whipkey – Faculty, Assistant Graduate Programs Coordinator, and Graduate Advisor, School of Art

M. Mack – GMU Alumnus MFA Poetry; Term Assistant Professor, English; and founding co-editor of Gazing Grain Press

Marcos L. Martínez – GMU Alumnus MFA Fiction; Term Faculty, English; and founding Editor-in-Chief of Stillhouse Press

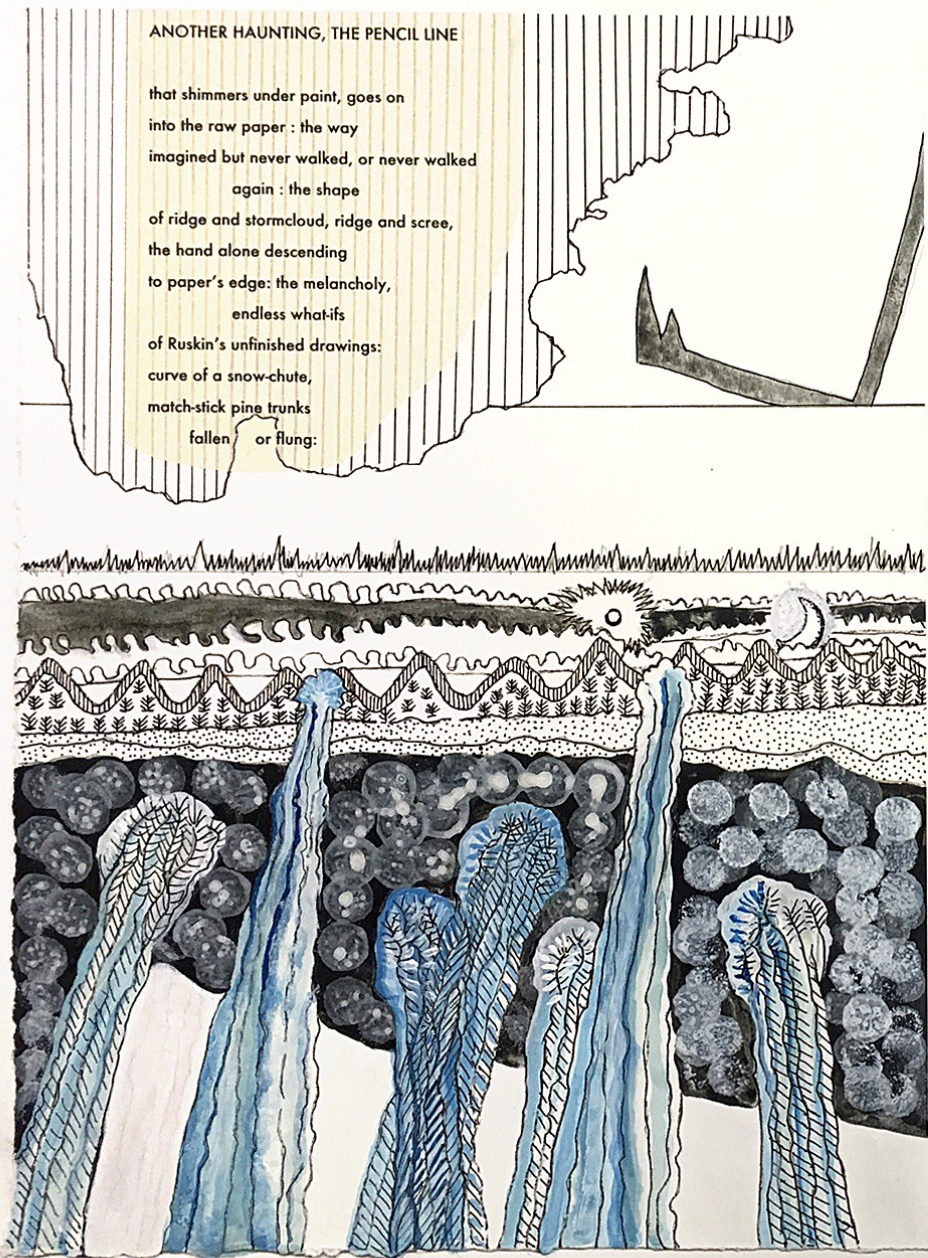
Anne C. Smith – GMU Alumnus MFA Drawing, Printmaking, and Sculpture; and Teaching Artist, National Gallery



Susan Tichy & Helen Frederick

Caller: Susan Tichy is the author of five books, most recently *Trafficked* (Ahsakta Press, 2015), a mixed-form investigation of family, race, and language, spanning from Reformation Scotland to the abolition of slavery in Maryland. She teaches in the BFA & MFA programs at GMU and when not teaching lives in Colorado and writes mountain / geology / walking / drought / wildfire poems—some of which will be collected into her next volume, *The Avalanche Path in Summer*. Her writing has been widely published in the US and Scotland and recognized by the National Poetry Series, the National Endowment for the Arts, a Chad Walsh Poetry Prize, residencies at Hawthornden Castle International Writers’ Retreat, and numerous other awards.

Responder: Helen Frederick is an internationally known artist whose work has been exhibited at The Phillips Collection in DC, and the Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan; and is in the collections of the Whitney and Brooklyn Museums in New York, and the National Gallery of Art in DC. Frederick is a Professor Emeritus at George Mason University, Virginia. An active participant in the Washington DC metropolitan area art scene, she has served on boards of various local and national organizations, and national peer review panels. She received the Southern Graphic Council International Printmaker Emeritus Award in recognition of her role as founder of Pyramid Atlantic Art Center. Her private Reading Road Studio, Silver Spring, Maryland provides collaborative opportunities for artists interested in works in and on paper, artist books, and critical conversations about visual literacy.



Susan's home ground is the Colorado Sangre de Cristo range, an 80-mile chain of rocky peaks, nine over 14,000 feet. Snow in the couloirs (high, steep, narrow gullies) avalanches in winter, then lingers through summer. This poem began as a question of experience vs. representation and a portrait of scale within landscape—including our vulnerable bodies vs. a topography in which monumental geological forces are visible...all subject to the present-tense battle between snow and drought. Parenthetical lines are from Robert Macfarlane, who calls us out on our tendency to perceive landscape as metaphor for human ideas.

Allusions to walking, paper, falling, vortices, ridges, and bodily pain resonated deeply for Helen. Knowing of the wildfires Susan experiences in Colorado, and putting that knowledge together with her own recent serious personal fall, also haunting, she constructed a visual narrative, teasing marks and symbols across four panels in a new

ANOTHER HAUNTING, THE PENCIL LINE,
(Frederick & Tichy, 2016)
Digital print with hand coloring
17" x 48"

Spencer Dormitzer & Holly Mason

Image right:
I'm Pretty Sure it was the Right Thing To Do
(Dormitzer, 2015)
archival ink on paper
20" x 16" framed

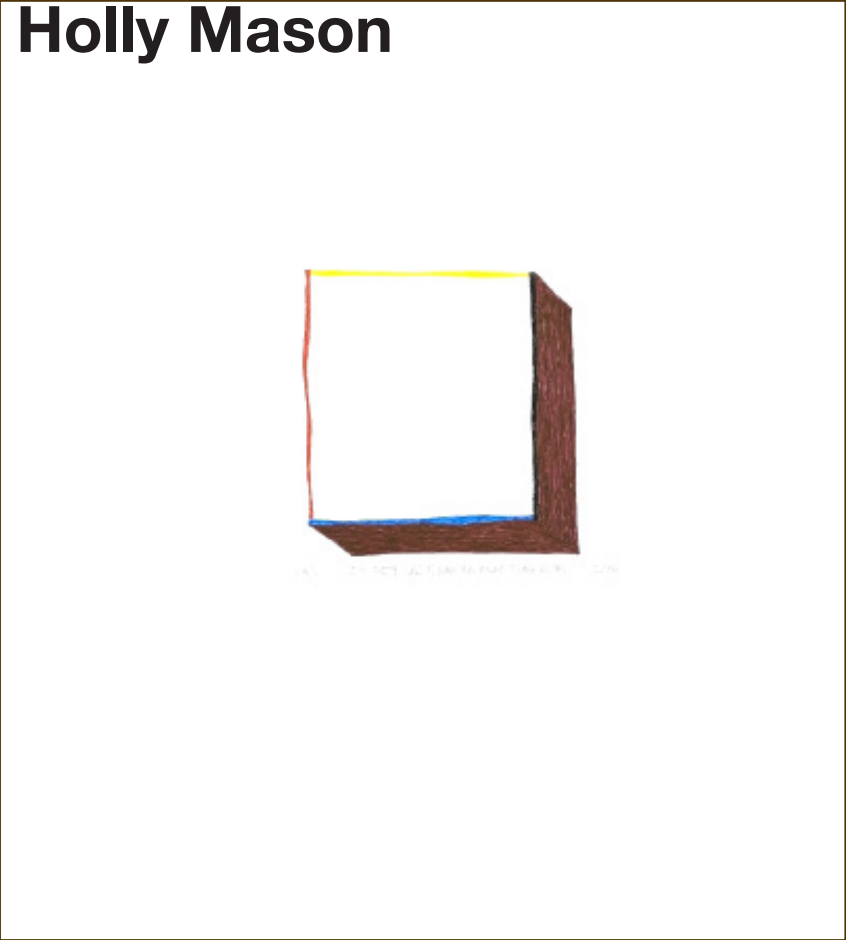


Image Left:
I am the Asteroid
(Dormitzer, 2014)
archival ink drawing on paper
24" x 18" framed

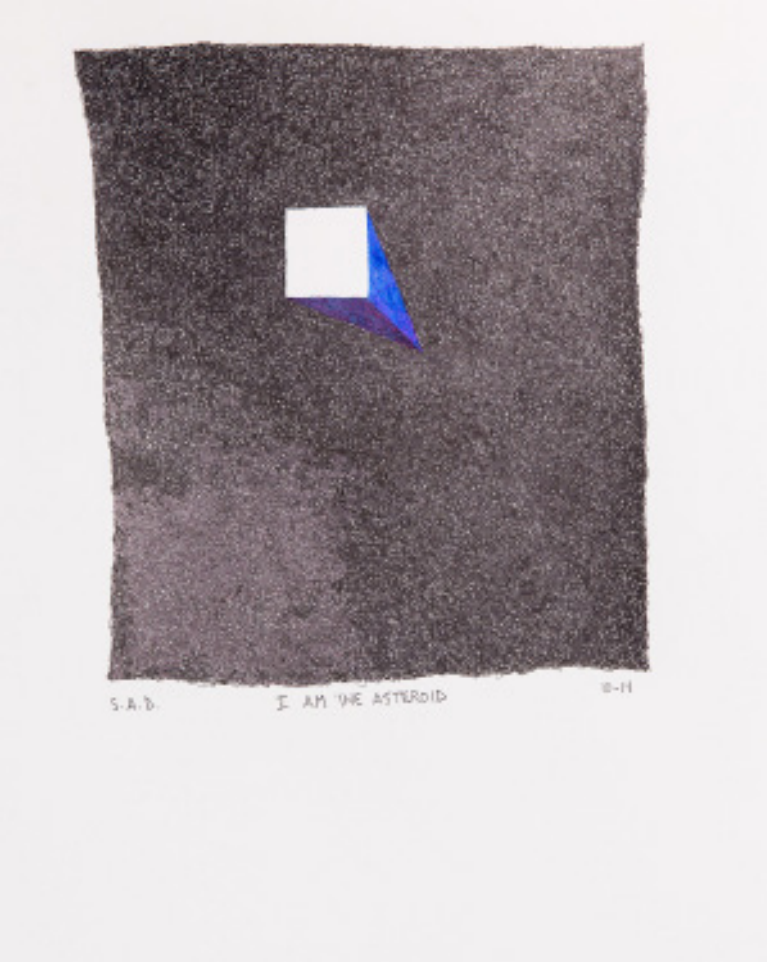
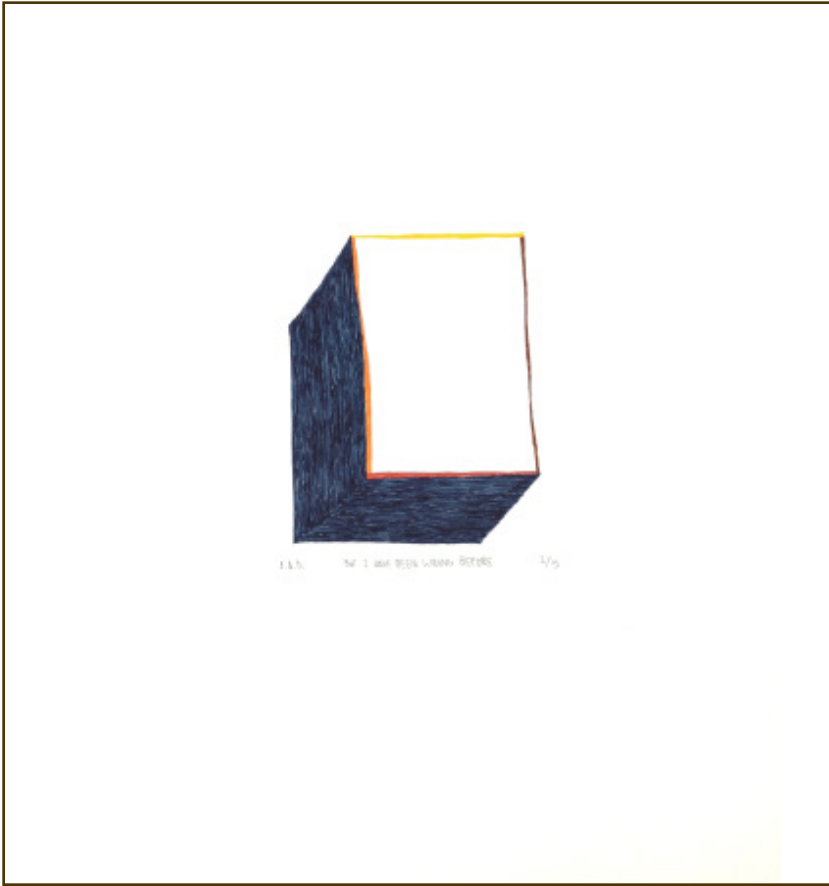


Image Right:
But I Have Been Wrong Before
(Dormitzer, 2015)
archival ink drawing on paper
20" x 16" framed



I'm pretty sure it was the right thing to do, but I have been wrong before

Prism refracts your light (the little you still hold)

Gathering darkness is balm/ and fine/ in this season

Even Vulpecula changed shape

Or even god, the universe, she

Changed Vulpecula's shape

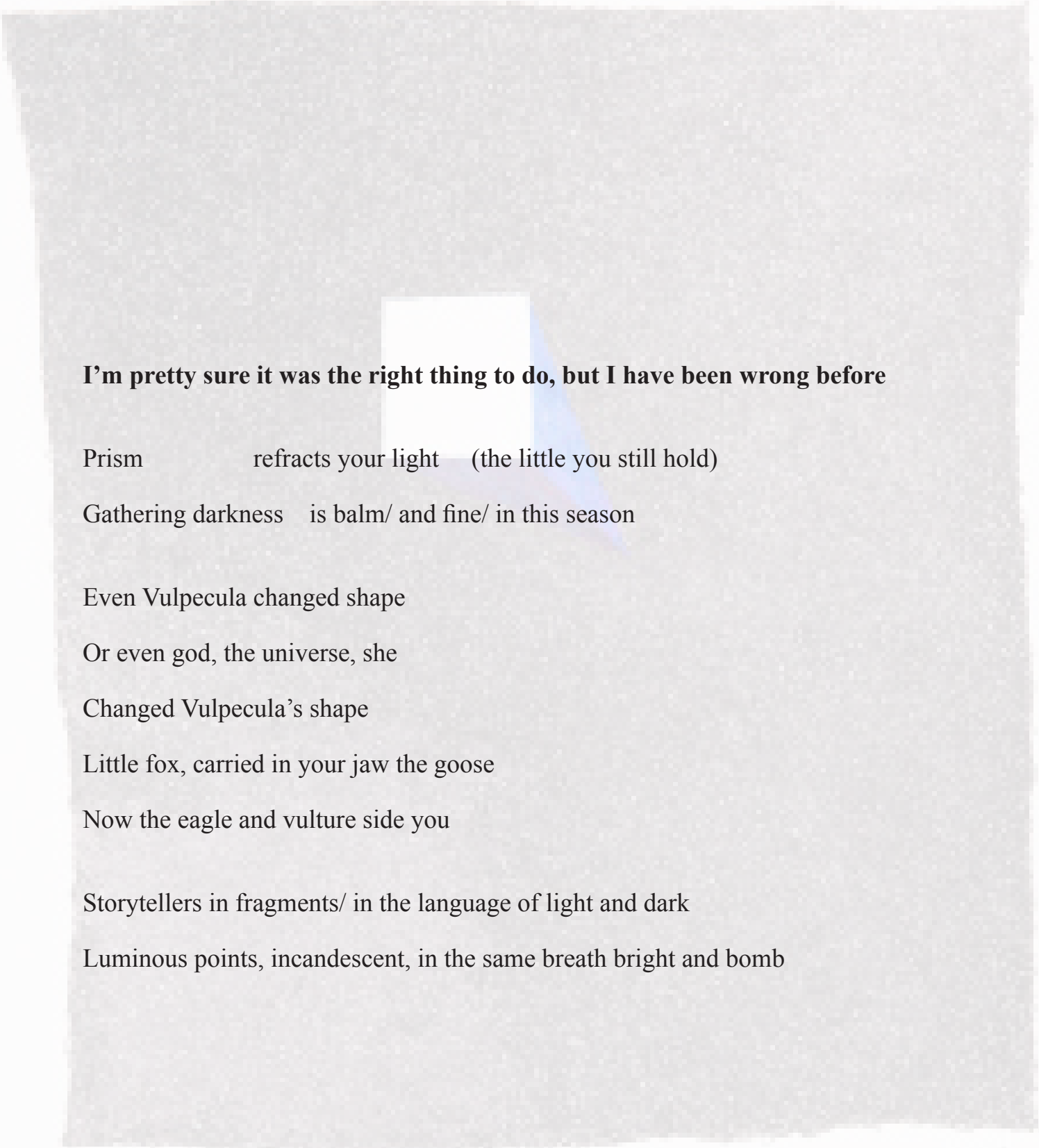
Little fox, carried in your jaw the goose

Now the eagle and vulture side you

Storytellers in fragments/ in the language of light and dark

Luminous points, incandescent, in the same breath bright and bomb

I'm Pretty Sure it was the Right Thing To Do, But I Have Been Wrong Before
(Mason, 2016)



Spencer Dormitzer & Holly Mason

Conceptualization of Spencer Dormitzer’s work mostly comes from an instinctive, trusted place. The true endeavor is carrying out the idea. Scribbling seems so easy; a natural, even simple form of artistic gesture. To carry out an idea through a mere scribble can bring about a strange, and often difficult process, where many emotions rise and fall throughout the completion of a drawing.

He considers himself a broken storyteller, using abstract and inanimate forms to ambiguously unite with a title. This connection results to form an abstruse conversation between artist, the artwork and the audience.

Holly Mason’s poem responds to the aesthetic elements of Dormitzer’s art, as well as engaging the narrative(s) found in his titles.

These artworks are hand drawn with archival ink. They are not prints or mixed media. The numbers to the right of the title refer to the month and the year the drawing was completed, not the number of an edition.

Caller: Spencer Dormitzer attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1986 and has been a working artist for over 25 years. Spencer has also worked as studio manager for New York abstractionist David Reed and as an executive producer for the New York Cosmos.

Spencer has had over 50 solo and group shows in his career, from such places as Chicago, Illinois, Antwerp, Belgium, Santa Fe, New Mexico and New York City. He also belongs in over 100 private and museum collections. Spencer’s work has been featured in the New Art Examiner, Chicago Tribune, Philadelphia Enquirer, Chicago Reader and New City Chicago Magazine.

Currently, Spencer Dormitzer is Director of Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery, located on U Street NW, Washington, DC.

Responder: Holly Mason received her undergraduate degree from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is currently pursuing her MFA in Poetry at George Mason University. She is the blog editor of So to Speak, a Feminist Literature & Arts Journal. Holly has poems forthcoming in Outlook Springs and Rabbit Catastrophe.

Nahid Navad & Dani Badra

We have created a call-and-response that speaks to the balancing elements of fire and water, the destructive and regenerative properties of these elements, and the traditions associated with these elements in Iranian culture. The artwork is multilayered and complex using the methods of silkscreen, calligraphy, and painting. The poetry responds directly to the artwork, as well as, in response to an Iranian poet, Forugh Farrokhzad’s poem “Earthly Verses”.



Current
(Navab, 2016)
Mix media monoprint on
Watercolor archival photo
paper
27 ½” x 19 ¾” framed

Caller: Nahid Navab is an Iranian-American artist with BFA and MFA from George Mason University, School of Art. Her interest is in printmaking, book art and installation. Seasoned world traveler and profoundly influenced by Persian history and literature, Navab blends cultures from across the globe to create artwork infused with a synthesis of heritage and contemporary urban life. Navab works present her belief that art is a conduit for social change. Her works reflect her interest in global unity and women issues.

Responder: Danielle Badra is working on her MFA in Poetry at George Mason University. She is the poetry editor of So To Speak literary and arts journal. Her poems have appeared in Outlook Springs, 45th Parallel, and The California Journal of Poetics. Dialogue with the Dead (Finishing Line Press, 2015) is her first chapbook, a collection of contrapuntal poems in dialogue with her deceased sister.



Water
(Navab, 2016)
Mix media monoprint on
watercolor archival photo
paper
27 ½” x 19 ¾” framed



Poems right:
Fire (Badra, 2016)
Water (Badra, 2016)
In Conversation with
“Earthly Verses”
 (Badra, 2016)

Image left:
Fire
 (Navab, 2016)
 Mix media monoprint on
 BFK print paper
 27 ½” x 19 ¾” framed

Fire

My yellow is yours, your red is mine.

give me an ancient song,
 and I’ll give you a forbidden light

I’ll give you forbidden night
 syllables sliding from front teeth

out into an enigmatic space
 amidst eternal black drops

a backdrop for gods to grow colors
 from pin pricks into calligraphic prints
 of my mother

she is not the sun
 she is what comes after

you are made in her image
 you are dancing in her clothes

my wild hair waves like yours
 in the spring winds I glow

the ground at your feet
 I carve shadows.

Water

If you can remember the prayer
 I’ll listen for your praise

I’ll refill your fire-felled forests
 I’ll flourish your scorched fields

if it isn’t too late for faith to work my fingers
 if it isn’t too late to wash my face in blue gold

draped in lapis lazuli my silver hair
 still trails from my fastened chariot

four white clouds are empty overhead
 four white clouds are absent overhead

maybe your wisdom was wrong
 when you erased my elegy

the dark grey of rain
 the hard sting of sleet

on unexpectant skin
 on the earth as she cooled off

as she replenished me once

In Conversation with “Earthly Verses”

the grieved dove who had abandoned all hearts
 was faith. – Forugh Farrokhzad translated by Sholeh Wolpé

Perhaps,
something half-alive still stirred.
behind those crushed eyes,
in their hardened depths,
languidly struggling to believe
in the purity of the water’s song,

Perhaps
but what an endless emptiness.
The sun was dead and no one knew

we weren’t meant to survive,
 We weren’t meant to mold clay earth
 whose statues collapse under slow sand,
 whose hands sought to touch immortality
 where everything is not lost
 in the fire’s dense light.

we are full of sand and salt,
 There is always the ocean’s floor.
 where life once began.

Josh Whipkey & Doug Luman



Untitled #1, Untitled #2, Untitled #3, Untitled #4, Untitled #5, Untitled #6, Untitled #7
(Whipkey, 2016)
Acrylic and Spray Paint on plywood with copper
7 ¼” x 6 ¼” x 2 ¼”

Untitled
(Luman, 2016)
poem on board

The process of reading surrounds us, created by a broad experience of text: whether in books, traffic patterns, or a landscape, humans constantly engage in the process of making meaning from symbols. In the strictest sense, one reads a painting as one might read a text; there are rules for movement dictated by the orientation of shapes and progression of colors; defined boundaries constitute a kind of visual grammar. How do these processes of reading combine to form a system of meaning? Can we apply the rules we learn from one kind of reading to another? In this installation, we ask the question of what it means to illustrate different representations of reading (one experiential and the other computational) to investigate how different texts intersect to share a color grammar, influencing what symbols capture our focus or imagination and what vocabulary they provide.

Caller: Josh Whipkey was born in Connellsville, Pennsylvania in 1975. He received his BFA from Seton Hill College in 1997, and his MFA from The Pennsylvania State University in 2004, both in Painting and Drawing. Josh is also a carpenter, and a self-taught furniture, and cabinet maker.

Responder: Douglas Luman is the Book Reviews Editor for the Found Poetry Review, Head Researcher at appliedpoetics.org, Art Director at Stillhouse Press, Poetry Editor of Phoebe, a book designer, poet, and digital human.

The text of this work is derived from an algorithmic reading of:

Stegner, Wallace. *Beyond the 100th Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*. New York: Penguin. 1992.

After “reading” digital photographs of the paintings, the algorithm developed a list of the distinct digital colors in each image, searching the text for passages which cited a shade of a color contained in the list. The text which resulted is edited and compiled to co-create a narrative suggested by the color progression of the image series.



eried
ones, domed over
eathers—
at wave.
es higher,
nge &

The broken clods of fields, long, dark, & hollow, form furrows.
The ruts of wagon trails, edges like scimitars.



Undernourishment & exhaustion & strain & nights of rain



Even ambitious farm boys inured to the hardest kind of labor cannot do much better.
They burst out into open country, a shimmering, blistered desert, broken by circumeroded
buttes, buff & gray; brown & slaty blue.

Prairie sloughs grow somewhere else. Badlands hide the river’s course, vermillion gleams
& rosy hues, green & gray tints; sombre brown above, black shadows below.



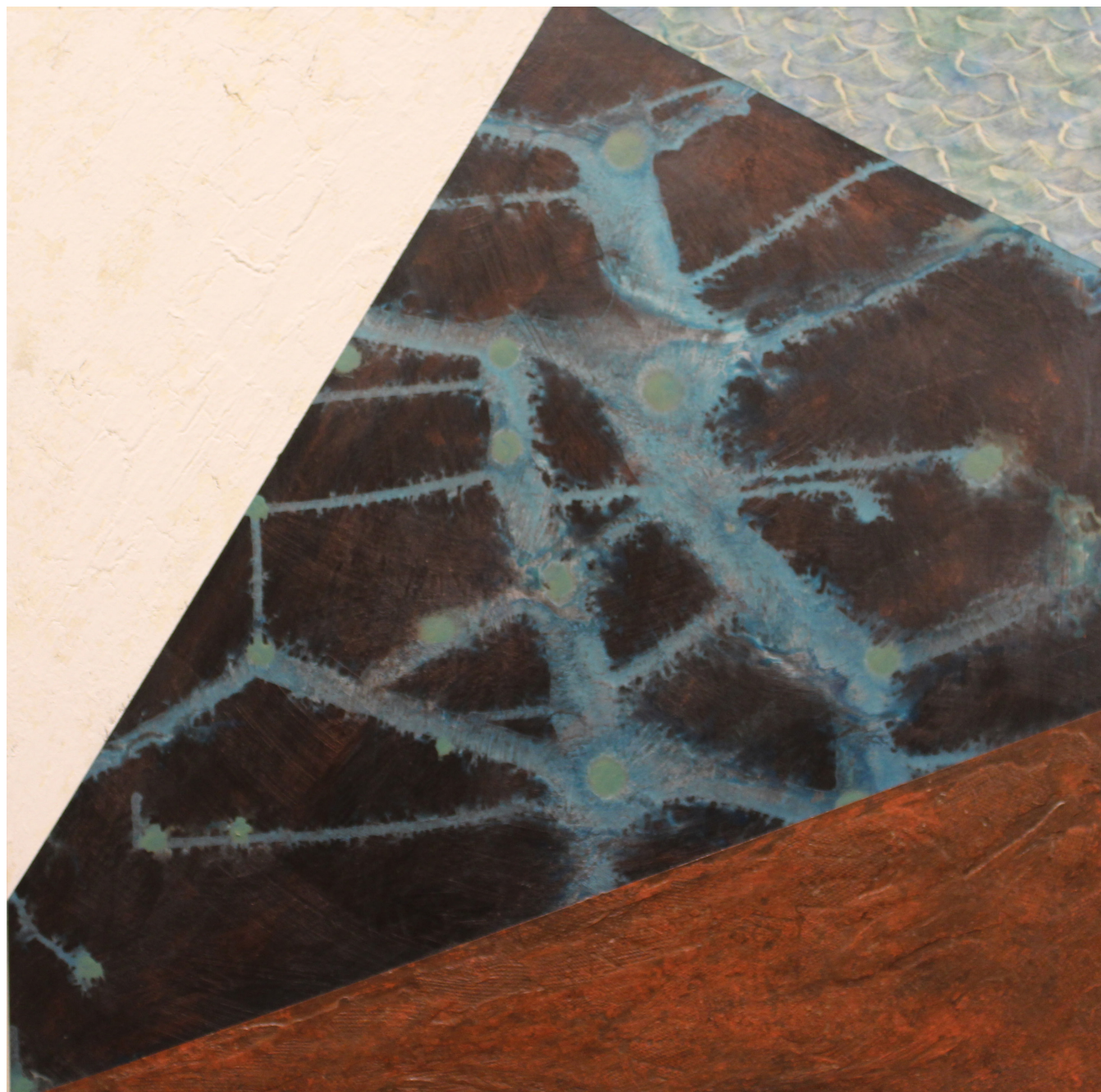
The cattle drift, & where the snow is deep find nothing to eat;
where brown grass is blown bare, they find the wind.



Twenty feet of water surged over Johnstown—now deserted except
for coyotes, an occasional shanty, un-gathered bones, domed over
by a great bowl sky filled & overflowed with dramatic weathers—
& obliterated with cloudburst & cyclone, blizzard & heat wave.

Let us imagine a mighty stream as it digs into rock & rises higher,
climbing out over dunes of colored sand: maroon & orange &
creamy white, a crumbling talus of blue-green shale, gray cliffs
streaked with yellow, fierce outbreaks of red. At the western edge
the sun sets. It occasionally glows with
a bell-like purity

Piled in any one place, the effect bewilders. It is not deceptive.



Theory of Drifting
(Kallista, 2016)
Mixed Media on Wood
24" x 24"

How to Circumnavigate the Roundness of Existence

~Marcos L. Martinez

1. Revolution

Earth is not a sphere
not perfectly round
but warped midriff
its curvature squat and flattened
along the poles, weighed
down by ice caps
(and as glaciers melt,
ice sheets recede, calve
and cast off into the ocean,
will those poles spring
up, unencumbered?),
alighted and centrifuged
by the gravitational pull
of earth's rotation, all things
spinning and bobbing
through space, hurtling against
dark matter as the universe
spins, whirls, unfurls itself apart.

2. Drought

A scraggly brown pelt drove a shudder
through the plains as the final bison fell,
its shoulder pummeling the earth—a lone last
drum beat's fading echo in abeyance.
Against cracked dirt that glistened
parched as salt, the spasm
of the bison's brow twitched
(like a dreamer tapping into the ivory
pulse of piano keys triggering a stutter
of eyelids against the satin pillow),
the dream weighted with no waking.

3. Adaption

Forced to evolve, clans of polar bears
shouldered their emaciated weight further
towards either pole, driven by the crack and boom
of calving glaciers, like a mass of pianos
wrecked by the weight of the world on its strings;
ice sheets grown soft as pillows
by the steady drum of heat; an abeyance of ice
floes spasming blue and ivory above
the salt-diluted sea currents that slowed to a muted pulse;
the conveyor belt movements of currents
between cold and warmer water lacking
a trigger. Brow heavy with sweat, the cardinal bear
pelted his off-white fur along neck and ribs,
raked claws against coal-dark hide, bled open gills,
sutured skin into webbings—
then dove alone into the sea.

How to Circumnavigate the Roundness of Existence
(Martínez, 2016)

Marcos L. Martinez & Jessica Kallista

Jessica Kallista: Fascinated by sensual elements in “How to Circumnavigate the Roundness of Existence” by Marcos L. Martinez I visualized clearly the work I wanted to create in response. I was particularly taken by the color and texture imagery of earth/ice/ocean, brown/bison/dirt, and polar bears/ivory/fur. The result is a texture driven collage on wood using various papers, as well as latex and acrylic paint. Since the poem is divided into 3 stanzas, it resonated with my obsession with triangles. Inspired by colors in the poem, and also concepts of currents of water,



Installation View
CURRENTS, 2016

Caller: Marcos L. Martínez is a native of Brownsville, TX, and is completing his MFA in Fiction at George Mason University. As a Sally Merten Fellow, he has taught creative writing to high school students and adults throughout Northern Virginia. He currently serves as Editor for Stillhouse Press, a collaboration between GMU’s Creative Writing Program and Fall for the Book. Marcos is also a Lambda Literary Fellow. His work has appeared in The Washington Blade, RiverSedge, and Whiskey Island. Current projects include his novel, Embarkations (or, Boating for Beginners), and Cleave: The Journals of Caine Lance Calletano, a companion book of poetry told through the voice of his novel’s main character. Marcos lives in Alexandria, VA with his husband of 21 years, Wayne, and their cat Obi.

Responder: Jessica Kallista works as an artist and curator in Northern Virginia. She received her MFA in Creative Writing/Poetry from George Mason University in 2002. In November 2014 she founded Olly Olly, an alternative art space, in Fairfax, Virginia. She also serves as Business Representative for the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Possessed with a frenetic energy to constantly create both literary and visual art she combines the two in collages that employ elements of chance, repetition, and appropriation. Through her work as an artist and curator Jessica seeks to disrupt the isolation of those living in suburbia by creating situations of surprise and instigating dialogue about art, literature, film, decolonization, gender, sexuality, feminism, embodiment, commodity fetishism, creativity, and interconnectivity. Jessica participated as a poet in Call & Response 2014. Jessica’s work has been shown at a variety of venues including Target Gallery, GRACE, The Fridge, Tempus Projects, NoMüNoMü, and the Margaret W. and Joseph L. Fisher Art Gallery.



Arab Spring Quilt
(Zughaib, 2015)
gouache on board
30" x 40"

a silkworm spreading out
edward jesse capobianco

if you are hungry
swallow the wet moon:
a yogurt dollop
fizzing with fish.

you are thinking:
we see the same
slick stone at night.

yes, but also a silhouette:
the moon cracked
open, a black yolk.

now, under two wanings,
remember the dark
sea, your fresh feet
still tasting of womb salt.

the ocean become dry:
first mooses and a menses tide,
next a drawing in

to a child's ball,
dwarf star heavy,
left in its dust bed.

a silkworm spreading out
(Capobianco, 2016)

Helen Zughaib & Jesse Capobianco

Caller: Helen Zughaib was born in Beirut, Lebanon, living mostly in the Middle East and Europe before coming to the United States to study art at Syracuse University, earning her BFA from the College of Visual and Performing Arts .

Helen currently lives in Washington, DC, and works fulltime as an artist. She paints primarily in gouache and ink on board and canvas. More recently, she has worked with wood, shoes and cloth and mixed media installations.

Her work has been widely exhibited in galleries and museums in the United States, Europe and Lebanon. Her paintings are included in many private and public collections, including the White House, World Bank, Library of Congress, US Consulate General, Vancouver, Canada, American Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, the Arab American National Museum in, Michigan, and the DC Art Bank collection. She recently was awarded a grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and most recently included in the new Washingtonia Collection.



Images left & right
Installation View
CURRENTS, 2016

Responder: Edward Jesse Capobianco grew up in Rhode Island, attended Wheaton College in Illinois, and is working on his MFA in poetry at George Mason. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in Barrelhouse, Rabbit Catastrophe Review, The White Squirrel, Polaris, and other publications. He received the Joseph A. Lohman III Poetry Prize, was a featured poet in the Louisville Portland Poetry Series, and has been honored with a variety of other awards for his poetry and prose.



From Helen Zughaib: For the past five years, I have been focusing my work on the “Arab Spring” or “Arab Uprisings/Revolutions.” In 2010, I had my first trip back to the Middle East since having been evacuated from Beirut, Lebanon in late 1975. I went to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. I saw where my father was born in Damascus, Syria, visited the historical places such as Palmyra, now damaged from war. A few months after I returned to the US, the “Arab Spring” began, initially bringing hope, optimism and potential for change in the Arab world. As the days, months and years have dragged on since those early hopeful demonstrations, my work has also continued to try to visually record my feelings and emotions on the devolution of the Arab Spring. Using pattern, color, words and pop culture references, in my paintings, I try to keep a sense of optimism and beauty alive in spite of so much loss, sadness and upheaval. I am inspired by traditional embroidery patterns, carpets and old tiles from Damascus that used to grace many homes now destroyed. I focus on women and children, who are the most vulnerable of victims. I also address the more current anti-immigration sentiment that seems ever growing globally. The calls to build walls to keep them out, or to keep them imprisoned in refugee camps. I focus on the bias and negative stereotyping that this wave of refugees, mostly from Syria, seeking safety, has brought to many Western European countries and America. I try to bring attention to the plight of the children fleeing their war-torn countries. I focus on small intimate details of their lives to bring the viewer closer to these issues of immigration and forced evacuation that seem so impossibly large and overwhelming for us to grasp. In spite of all this tragedy and sadness, I remain hopeful that one day things will change, but I will continue creating work to bring attention to the people making these incredible sacrifices in the name of freedom and inviting the viewer to place themselves in another’s shoes, hoping for empathy and compassion.



Plastic bags
 (Looksorn, 2016)
 Archival Inkjet Print
 16"x20"



Tributary
 (Laing, 2016)
 mixed media text

Sarah Laing & Looksorn

Sarah Laing: I created my piece, Tributary, to reflect through language and form the ways in which currents work in our lives, both interiorly and exteriorly. In our bodies and in our environment, ideas, resources, and nutrients are constantly in relation with each other, one part feeding into another and traveling far beyond the initial spring to introduce meanings and rhythms much greater than ourselves. We may often feel at the mercy of the larger environmental currents, because the energies that shape our world through wind, water, and fuel also shape our bodies, but likewise, we are responsible for the energies we return to the world. We are part of the source, and what we feed in will be fed back to us.



Image above:
Bath
(Looksorn, 2016)
Archival Inkjet Print
Nine 5"x7"



Looksorn: As human beings, we are the closest to the nature. We consume natural resources, we live on the land, we build houses from wood, we drink water, we need fire from wood, we generate electricity from coal and oil we travel using gasoline. Nature gives us life as we move forward into the future. However we have caused deforestation to get fuel and to build houses. We have created plastic bags for our own convenience without thinking about how it will affect nature. This photographic series, Manufactured Nature, represents what it would be like if nature were to treat us like we are treating her, to call attention to the current environmental situation the earth is facing, caused by humans.

Image Left:
Cups
(Looksorn, 2016)
Archival Inkjet Print
16"x20"

Image Right:
Installation View
CURRENTS, 2016

Looksorn was born in Bangkok Thailand; she graduated from George Mason University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts concentration in Photography. She is now based in Washington metropolis area and in Thailand during summer. She was learning new culture when she first got to the United States as a street photographer. Her interest in snapshot has evolved into documentary photography and portrait later. Looksorn is now working on a long term project observing bribe culture in Thailand.



Sarah Laing is a second-year MFA poetry student at George Mason University, and has always regarded writing, particularly the writing of poetry, as her true vocation and passion, in spite of various other interests and responsibilities, including her full time position as a mother to a beautiful little boy named Cayden, and a second child due in March 2017. Sarah is excited to have been asked to participate in Currents, as most of her work centers around the relationship between self and environment, and the ways in which consciousness is manifested in both the rhythms of language and of nature.

About Fenwick Gallery



A SPACE FOR INQUIRY

George Mason University Libraries provides a hybrid, walk-through exhibition space in Fenwick Library to enhance and enrich teaching, learning and culture at the University. This space highlights Mason Libraries' resources together with original visual and multi-media work.

Exhibit themes emphasize facets of the Libraries' collections, research interests of Mason faculty, students and staff, Mason's curriculum and local cultural initiatives. Fenwick Gallery is dedicated to exhibiting high quality works by students, faculty, staff and other emerging and experienced artists that highlight aspects of the Libraries' collections.

For more information, visit: fenwickgallery.gmu.edu

OUR GOALS

- Promote the Libraries' collections and encourage scholarly and cultural inquiry at George Mason University
- Focus on research and scholarship at/of George Mason University
- Collaborate and engage with relevant Mason faculty to incorporate and/or embed gallery exhibitions into course instruction
- Stimulate intellectual and creative reflection through visual and multi-media exhibitions, discussions, etc.
- Promote the Libraries' academic and cultural mission
- Support the Libraries' development program and goals