

ENGAGE Projects

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THE LAND BETWEEN THE SEA

JUAN MOLINA HERNÁNDEZ, M_M<M, SARANOA MARK, FARAH SALEM
CURATED BY NOAH HANNA

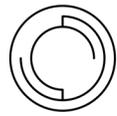
Saturday, July 23 - Friday, August 26, 2022



Juan Molina Hernández, *algo nuevo crece/muere (something new grows/dies)*, 2022, hair and thorns on shirt

ENGAGE Projects is pleased to present *The Land Between the Sea*, a group exhibition organized by guest curator Noah Hanna, featuring the work of Juan Molina Hernández, M_m<M, SaraNoa Mark, and Farah Salem. Taking inspiration from Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa, *The Land Between the Sea* references the experience of nepantla, a Nahuatl word for a space between two bodies of water or worlds, as well as a manifestation of personal, social, spiritual, and cultural 'in between-ness.' This exhibition explores the desert as a space in which history, geography, and identity exist in a state of perpetual transition.

Though the desert often evokes a particular geopolitical and environmental border zone, these artists instead consider how our personal labors within the landscape produce our roots, narratives, and identities, encouraging us to perceive the desert as a space that is both the product of human existence and in opposition to it.



Born in Guanajuato, México, Juan Molina Hernández is a Chicago-based visual artist who uses photography, objects, and installation to create narratives that address the complexities of the hybrid immigrant identity. By appropriating symbols from the environment, culture, and personal memory, they construct stories concerning place, family, and a culture that never speaks one language. Molina Hernández graduated from Northern Illinois University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography. They have exhibited at locations such as ACRE Projects, Aurora Public Art Commission, Chicago Artist Coalition, Evanston Art Center, Elmhurst Art Museum, Jack Olson Gallery, Roman Susan, and Tiger Strikes Asteroid in Chicago.

SaraNoa Mark pursues a drawing practice that investigates traces left by time, as they exist in landscapes and collective memory. Mark's work has been supported by a Fulbright research fellowship in Turkey, and they have received grants from the U.S. Embassy Grants Program in Turkey, The John Anson Kittredge Fund, Illinois Arts Council, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events Individual Artists Program (DCASE), and a SPARK grant. Mark was named a Visual Arts Fellow by the Luminarts Cultural Foundation. Recent exhibitions of their work have taken place at the Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL; Bridge Projects, Los Angeles, CA; Davis & Langdale Company, New York, NY; Goldfinch Gallery, Chicago, IL; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia, PA; Monaco, St. Louis, MO; Southern Utah Museum of Art, Cedar City, UT; Smithsonian Institution's S. Dillon Ripley Center, Washington, DC among others. SaraNoa is one of NewCity's 2021 breakout artists. They are a co-director at the 4th Ward Project Space in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood.

M_m<M (Pronounced 'Em' or any combination of sounds produced by vocalizing three M's) is a visual & performance artist based in Chicago, Illinois. They investigate oppressive human histories in the inception and "successes" of Space Flight. M_m<M creates work and research as an interdisciplinary alternative to current military investments and occupations in [outer]Space [e.g. NASA, SpaceX, Space Force, etc.]. M_m<M was an accomplished Photographer for NASA Glenn Research Center from 2004-to 2015 which informs their practice. They create art and open source {touchable} archives from NASA's Unclassified and discarded artifacts and they sing and speak truths of civil rights missteps in past Space Explorations and future colonization of MARS. M_m<M was born on Earth [as an American citizen] in 1981. They earned their MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as a New Artists' Society Fellow [Photography] in 2017.

Farah Salem is a Chicago-based artist and art therapist. Her multidisciplinary practice is rooted within photography and expands into video, performance, fiber, and installation. Farah finds subtle affinities among natural landscapes, the performing body, fiber-material structures, metaphors from her cultural upbringing, an understanding of the human psyche, geologic time, movement, music/dance traditions and rituals in The Arabian Peninsula. In her process, she is merging present experiences of human and geologic happenings, while looking at themes of access, agency, power, and the invisibly visible. She holds a BA in Visual Communications from Gulf University for Science and Technology and an MA in Art Therapy and Counseling from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Farah's work has been featured internationally in solo exhibitions at United Photo Industries (New York), Mana Contemporary (Chicago), Site Galleries (Chicago), La Galerie (Dubai), and Contemporary Art Platform (Kuwait).

Noah Hanna is a Chicago-based curator and writer. His research interests are focused on transnational identity, visibility, geopolitical displacement, and human rights, as well as alternative art practices and institutional critique. As the 2019-2020 Curatorial Fellow for the Hyde Park Art Center, he co-curated the second iteration of Artist-Run Chicago: the largest exhibition of independent art spaces in Chicago history. Recent and upcoming projects include *Rachel de Cuba & Hale Ekinci: When or if I was there* (Tiger Strikes Asteroid), an ongoing research project with artist Shabtai Pinchevsky and a 2023 exhibition with Huong Ngo. He has contributed writing to ArtAsiaPacific, ART PAPERS, MAP (Glasgow), Newcity, The SEEN: Chicago's International Journal of Contemporary and Modern Art. Noah holds a master's in Modern and Contemporary Art History, Curating, and Criticism from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

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