

The Life and Death of Charles Williams

Charles Williams
January 23, 2020–August 2, 2020
Gallery 1, 2, and 3



“...one idea got another idea and so on down the line, each idea kept building into another idea.”

Beyond comics, Williams maintained an elaborate yard show, painting the trees around his house and embellishing them with cutouts of Mighty Mouse, Batman, and others. In his own words, “I got me this place here and decided to do something with it. I have always had art on my mind and wanted to do something out front there that I hadn’t heard of no other person doing. I fixed up the trees to give them some new life, some color, one idea got another idea and so on down the line, each idea kept building into another idea.” Williams also made hundreds of pencil holders, sculptures of all sizes and forms, with holes drilled to accommodate all sorts of writing instruments, mostly gleaned from the desk drawers of IBM employees after they had gone home for the day. Williams describes his pencil holders, “Plastic melts off the machine and it takes certain forms when it hits the floor. It becomes solid with weird shapes. I put them on a stand and paint it, keep it in its unique weird stage, and some of them forms looks like an animal’s brain. Makes you think of a brain.”

Williams worked avidly on paintings, drawings, assemblages, sculptures, and furniture until his untimely death in 1998, the result of AIDS-related complications and starvation. A few months later, an organization called A Moveable Feast was founded in his honor and tasked itself with providing hot meals to people living with HIV/AIDS in the region. In death, Williams had finally become a catalyst for the kind of change he had advocated for in his comics, drawings, and sculptures but his work remains almost completely unknown. *The Life and Death of Charles Williams* is the first major solo exhibition of his work and features over 100 objects made between the early 1960s – 1998.

Exhibition curated by Phillip March Jones,
Curator-at-Large, Institute 193.

A corresponding publication will be released in April 2020.

Charles Williams (1942-1998) was born in Blue Diamond, Kentucky, a place he described as a “little old country hick town in coal mining territory, eight miles from Hazard, Kentucky, back up in the hollow where the blacks lived.” As a child, Williams taught himself to draw by copying comic book figures like Superman, Dick Tracy, and Captain Marvel but never finished high school. In the early 1960s, he enrolled at the Breckinridge Job Corps Center in Morganfield to learn practical job skills. Williams seems to have thrived in the program where he honed his writing proficiency, made photographs, and even developed his first regular comic strip titled “*JC of the Job Corps*,” which appeared weekly on the back page of the Breckinridge Bugle—the camp newspaper. The comic recounts the adventures of teenagers enrolled in the program, led by JC, who face monsters, mummies, and the nefarious Dr. Killpatient, but also the more immediate problems of finding a job, voting rights, and economic opportunity. Williams graduated from the Job Corps program in 1967 “with flying colors” but was unable to find the kind of employment he wanted and ended up in the cleaning services of IBM in Lexington.

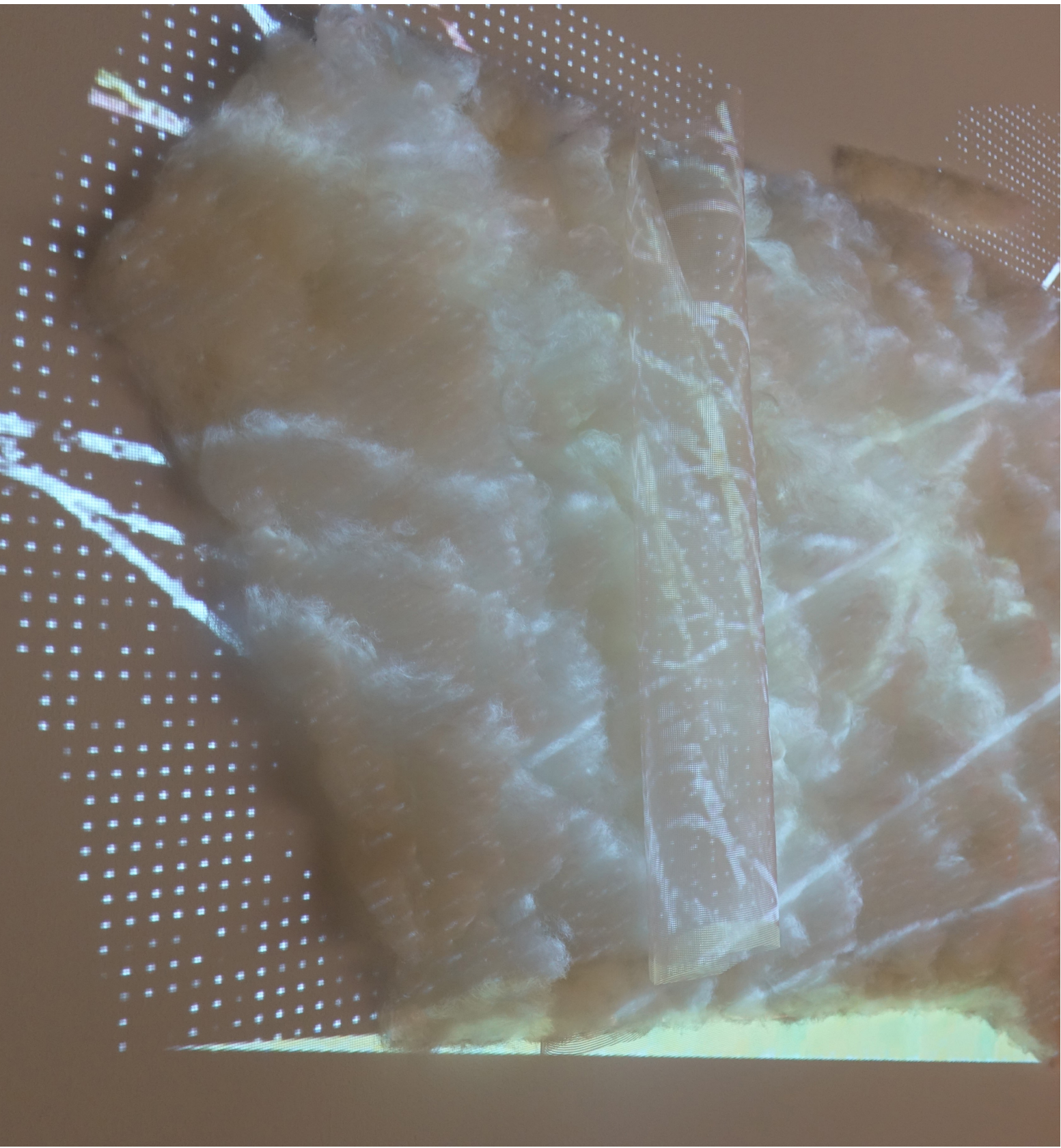
While working as a full-time janitor Williams continued to develop his artistic practice. He created comic narratives including the *Amazing Spectacular Captain Soul Superstar*, a caped superhero who fights against the perpetrators of the intergalactic slave trade and an entire mini-series called the *Cosmic Giggles* which recounts the experiences of aliens visiting Earth. During their interstellar travels, the aliens observe racism, venereal disease, economic inequality and other problems specific to our planet; they ultimately decide to leave because of “pollution problems, gas shortage, bad weather, and the rent going up.” Facing these circumstances, the Martians can’t afford to stay and go home avoiding a potential war of the worlds.



Every Line is Sentient, Every Dot is Alive.

Bojana Ginn
March 12, 2020 – August 2, 2020
Chute Space

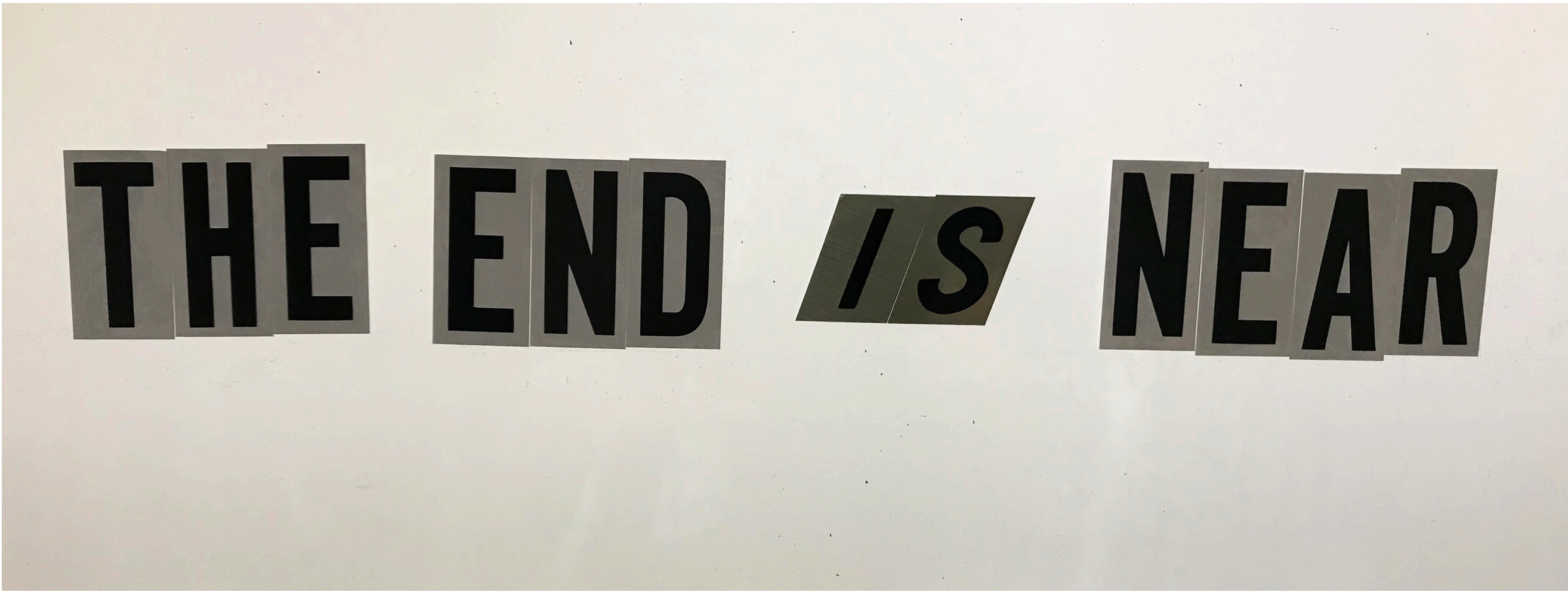
Bojana Ginn is an interdisciplinary artist and a former MD and scientist. Her work explores contemporary existence in the age of digital and biotech: interactions between body, nature and technology. Her large scale site-specific installations are built with organic fiber, digital video projections, and LEDs. “I see my works as microscopic places being magnified, both tactile and virtual. Reflective and speculative, they are playgrounds for questions about the now and future of body and environment, transhumanism, and biotechnology.” Born in Serbia, Yugoslavia in 1974, Ginn graduated from Medical School in Belgrade, Serbia in 2001, and completed a Masters in Fine Art in Sculpture at SCAD Atlanta in 2013. Bojana is the recipient of the 2018 Ellsworth Kelly Award and a finalist for the 2019 Burke Prize, at The Museum of Arts and Design, NY. She is a winner of a 2018 Working Artist Project at The Museum of Contemporary Art of GA, and her video work was exhibited at the 2016 Venice Architectural Biennale. Ginn has collaborated with NASA and Emory University. She was a speaker and a featured artist for BEINGS 2015: International Conference on Ethics in Bioengineering. Selected a finalist for a 2015 World Technology Award in Art, Ginn serves as a fellow at the organization. Her works are held in the collections of The MOCA GA, Cyber Center of Augusta University, and numerous private collections. She lives in Decatur, GA, with her son and husband, with whom she shares a 2014 Tanne Foundation Award.



THE END IS NEAR!

Curated by Craig Drennen
March 12, 2020 – August 2, 2020
On-Site

THE END is a non-profit exhibition project space committed to the presentation of new artwork by Atlanta artists, or artists associated with Atlanta. THE END is a 200 square foot space with an emphasis on solo exhibitions of new work unlikely to be shown at other Atlanta venues. The exhibition of new and challenging work is the primary goal of THE END.



“...*The Road to Life is
Narrow and Hard...*”

LYNX
March 12, 2020 – August 2, 2020
Sliver Space



LYNX was born in Dong Thap, Vietnam in 1985. LYNX and his family moved to the United States in 1993 to escape persecution from the communist regime. As a young boy growing up in the Communist Country of Vietnam, LYNX experienced fear and hardship, and one way to find mental comfort was to take refuge in the teaching of the Enlightened Saints. LYNX graduated from Georgia State University in 2011 with a BFA in Studio Art with an interest in Eastern philosophy and religion. In 2016, LYNX earned his MFA in Painting from Savannah College of Art and Design, which he focuses most of his effort on drawing, especially marks making, as a tool for self-discipline.

ANTI-HUMOR

Kirstin Mitchell
March 12, 2020 – August 2, 2020
Studio Artist Wall

Everybody Wants to Rule the World

Tears for Fears

Welcome to your life
There’s no turning back
Even while we sleep
We will find you
Acting on your best behavior
Turn your back on mother nature
Everybody wants to rule the world

It’s my own desire
It’s my own remorse
Help me to decide
Help me make the most
Of freedom and of pleasure
Nothing ever lasts forever
Everybody wants to rule the world

There’s a room where the light won’t find you
Holding hands while the walls come tumbling down
When they do, I’ll be right behind you
So glad we’ve almost made it
So sad they had to fade it
Everybody wants to rule the world

I can’t stand this indecision
Married with a lack of vision
Everybody wants to rule the world

Say that you’ll never, never, never, need it
One headline, why believe it?
Everybody wants to rule the world

All for freedom and for pleasure
Nothing ever lasts forever
Everybody wants to rule the world



Charles Williams (b. Blue Diamond, Kentucky, 1942 – 1998), described the place he grew up as a “little old country hick town in coal mining territory.” He taught himself to draw by copying comic book figures and though he never finished high school, learned practical job skills at the Breckinridge Job Corps Center before finding work as a janitor at IBM in Lexington. Williams maintained an elaborate yard show in addition to making hundreds of pencil holders, in varying sizes and forms, mostly gleaned from the desk drawers of IBM employees after they had gone home for the day. Williams worked avidly on comics, paintings, drawings, assemblages, sculptures, and furniture until his untimely death in 1998, the result of AIDS-related complications and starvation. A few months later, an organization called A Moveable Feast was founded in his honor and tasked itself with providing hot meals to people living with HIV/AIDS in the region.

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Artists in the exhibition: Joe Hadden, Courtney McClellan, Kojo Ayodele Griffin, Marissa Graziano, Avantika Bawa, Cayse Cheetham, Namwon Choi, Trey Rozell, Sergio Suarez, Evie Saleh, Emily Tomlinson

Bojana Ginn is an interdisciplinary artist and a former MD and scientist. Her work explores contemporary existence in the age of digital and biotech: interactions between body, nature and technology. Her large scale site-specific installations are built with organic fiber, digital video projections, and LEDs. “I see my works as microscopic places being magnified, both tactile and virtual. Reflective and speculative, they are playgrounds for questions about the now and future of body and environment, transhumanism, and biotechnology.” Born in Serbia, Yugoslavia in 1974, Ginn graduated from Medical School in Belgrade, Serbia in 2001, and completed a Masters in Fine Art in Sculpture at SCAD Atlanta in 2013. Bojana is the recipient of the 2018 Ellsworth Kelly Award and a finalist for the 2019 Burke Prize, at The Museum of Arts and Design, NY. She is a winner of a 2018 Working Artist Project at The Museum of Contemporary Art of GA, and her video work was exhibited at the 2016 Venice Architectural Biennale. Ginn has collaborated with NASA and Emory University. She was a speaker and a featured artist for BEINGS 2015: International Conference on Ethics in Bioengineering. Selected as a finalist for a 2015 World Technology Award in Art, Ginn serves as a fellow at the organization. Her works are held in the collections of The MOCA GA, Cyber Center of Augusta University, and numerous private collections. She lives in Decatur, GA, with her son and husband, with whom she shares a 2014 Tanne Foundation Award.

Related Programs:
A Conversation with Bojana Ginn
Saturday, March 21, 2020

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