

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way you see art.

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



Atlanta Contemporary announces new artist Sergio Suarez to join Studio Artist Program and launches the Nexus Fund Studio with 3-month residencies: Ashton Bird, Daniel Gilstrap, Grace Kisa, Tracy Murrell, and Ana Meza

ATLANTA – March 29, 2021 – Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (Atlanta Contemporary) is pleased to announce Sergio Suarez joining the Studio Artist Program and the creation of the Nexus Fund Studio with 3-month residencies.

The Studio Artist Program supports local working artists by providing subsidized studio space and by fostering a collaborative environment supportive of the creative process. The studios range in size and amenities and have nurtured a wide-range of artists working in all career stages and media – including ceramics, film & video, installation, painting, photography, and sculpture.

Tue–Sat 11am–5pm  
Thu open late until 8pm  
Sun 12–4pm  
Mon Closed

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The Nexus Fund, launched in October 2021 as a part of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts' expansion of its Regional Regranting Program, gave \$1,000 to support 60 self-identifying visual artists. In continued response to artists and their need, it became clear that the creation of the Nexus Fund Studio would support artistic creation and experimentation – expanding on both the ethos of our founding as well as the purpose of the Nexus Fund itself.

Current Studio Artists and Tracy Murrell, the upcoming Nexus Fund Studio participant, will be a part of our upcoming Open Studios events which affords artists the opportunity to engage directly with you. For your continued safety, Atlanta Contemporary will present the event virtually on Zoom Saturday, May 22 and Sunday, May 23. Show your support for the artists working in our community by registering via Zoom – step inside their studios and see what consequential new works they've created during these last few months. Open Studios is free admission with registration required in advance.

In addition, select Studio Artists, alumni of the program, and Murrell will be included in the 1 for \$1K, a live-streamed art sale benefitting the artists. Each unique work of art costs \$1,000 with 80% going directly to the artist, 10% being donated to AAPI, and 10% used to cover the costs of the event. The sale will be the VIP and Member Opening Event for Open Studios.

On behalf of the board and staff of Atlanta Contemporary, we welcome the following artists to Atlanta Contemporary:

## **SERGIO SUAREZ**

Sergio Suárez (B.1995) is a Mexican-born, Atlanta-based visual artist and printmaker. He uses the mediums of printmaking, painting, and sculpture, to explore language and the structure of materiality in relation to narrative and contradiction. He often borrows small parts of systems of thought and production in an attempt to create a space balanced between past and present. His work has been shown around Atlanta, most recently at the Consulate General of Mexico in Atlanta, the Atlanta Contemporary, MoCA GA, Day&Night Projects, and THE END Project Space. Internationally he's shown at the Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair in London, the Haugesund Internasjonal Relief Festival in Norway, OPED space in Tokyo, and the Ionian Arts Center in Greece. Residencies include The Hambidge Arts

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Center (2021) and The Ionian Arts Center in Greece (2017-2018). His work is included in the SGCI archives of the Zuckerman Museum. He lives and works in Atlanta Georgia.

## ASHTON BIRD

Ashton Bird (born 1990) is an emerging sculptor and installation artist. His work participates in, reflects on, and is influenced by place. Through reclaiming materials pertinent to location, Bird explores the conditions we make to define our places. His current work focuses on the fragmentary effects of time on culture, habit and the constructed environment. Bird was raised on a farm in southeast South Dakota, received his BFA from Minnesota State University-Mankato, apprenticed at Dakota Pottery in South Dakota, studied at Korea University in South Korea while briefly apprenticing at local Itaewon ceramic shop, and received his MFA from Florida State University. From 2015 to 2019, Ashton founded the project space SOUP experimental where he curated 50+ on-site exhibitions, 24 video and written interviews, 3 public art crawls and several large-scale national collaborations between universities and private entities. Bird exhibits at traditional institutes, DIY projects, public art events and online venues. Notable locations include: MINT Atlanta, Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta Fringe Festival, Day & Night Projects Atlanta, Wiregrass Museum of Art, Delaware Contemporary, Psychic Jacuzzi, The Washington Pavilion of South Dakota, 410 Gallery Mankato, Metropolitan Gallery 250 Philadelphia, Manifest Creative Research Gallery & Drawing Center Cincinnati, and Cat Family Records Tallahassee. Currently, Ashton works in Atlanta Georgia, where he is a full-time lighting designer with The Johnson Studio at Cooper Carry.

## DANIEL GILSTRAP

Daniel James Gilstrap is an African-American visual artist with additional experience in film production and multimedia presentations. Daniel, an Atlanta native and resident, is a 21st century black man and his work helps to celebrate and challenge his own understanding of self and normalcy. Through illustrations, large sized expressive paintings, and graffiti like statement pieces his work helps to translate the zeitgeist of his life into unique entities with greater reverence. He hopes his work allows viewers to recognize they're free to take any actions needed to be ok with who they are and who they want to be.

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## GRACE KISA

Born in Nairobi, Kenya I spent my formative years in Kenya, Ethiopia, Botswana, Canada, then McLean, Virginia before settling in Atlanta, Georgia. I came to Atlanta to study at The Art Institute of Atlanta, after which I started the pursuit of a career in art. I work in a few mediums, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, printmaking, and photography. My art reflects the relationship between myself and the world around us. Through this work I am exploring the connections between personal, cultural, national, and global perspectives. In this way my work serves as both bridge and conduit. My process is a combination of creative play and problem solving while exploring concepts of identity and how it relates to notions of comfort and alienation. Migration and how one acculturates to a new environment, and the concept of home set against the context of time and space.

## TRACY MURELL

Tracy Murrell is an Atlanta-based visual artist. Murrell has shown in numerous group, solo, and juried exhibitions and her work have been featured in art publications including Create! Magazine, ArtVoices, Studio Visit Magazine Issue 29, 35, 38, 41, and New American Paintings Issue 142 and 154. Her painting “*Walk Alone / We Will Follow*” was selected for the cover of *Witnessing Girlhood Toward An Intersectional Tradition of Life Writing* by Fordham University Press. She has been awarded artist's residencies at The Hambidge Center for the Arts in Rabun Gap, Georgia, Atlanta Printmakers Studio in Atlanta, Georgia, and Green Olive Arts in Tetouan, Morocco.

In October 2020, Georgia Tech University unveiled two paintings by Murrell commissioned by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority for the Dorothy M. Crosland Tower library. Murrell is currently working on her first museum solo exhibition. Hammonds House Museum, with funding from the National Performance Network, has commissioned Murrell to explore contemporary Haitian migration and produce new artistic works with the intention of offering a counter-narrative to the immigration story and bring to light the universality of migration as a shared experience. The solo exhibition “*Dans l'espoir d'un Avenir Meilleur (In Hope for a Better Future) ... Exploring Haitian Migration*” opens at Hammonds House Museum in August 2021. Murrell's work is included in various private and municipal collections and has shown at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

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## ANA MEZA

Ana C. Meza is a sculpture artist from Colombia based in Atlanta, GA. In 2008 she immigrated from Colombia to the United States. She graduated in 2016 with a Bachelor of Interior Architecture and sculpture degree from Indiana University. She developed a series of sculptures inspired by design, patterns, and structures like buildings, bridges, stairs, and ladders. She received an MFA from Georgia State University in 2019, where she received a full-tuition scholarship. While studying at GSU, she developed an obsession with the science of stairs. She is also influenced by minimalism and abstract art made by immigrants such as Gertrud Goldschmidt and Do Ho Suh. Her artwork's common themes include Immigration, The in-between, Social identity, Political, and personal power structures. The use of delicate three-dimensional lines characterizes her work. Through interaction with a complex system of dots, these lines expand into space-defining volume. Her choice of material is PLA plastic which is commonly used in CNC 3D printing. Meza uses a 3D pen that allows her to make delicate sculptures by hand, achieving a balance between craft and technology.

She is currently an instructor at Georgia State University and Mercer University in Macon. She has exhibited work nationally and internationally. Some of her most notable exhibition venues include Atlanta Contemporary, Aqua Art Miami, and Kyoto International community House in Japan. Some other honorable mentions include selected participants in Michelle Grabner's master class at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and attended an art residency at Vermont studio center with a merit grant. Winner of the Alma Eikerman Memorial Award (Second place in the National Society of Arts and Letters) and honor award at the Georgia Artist: Juried exhibition.

For additional information contact:  
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