

## SCHOOL DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Congratulations to our graduate students in the 15th Annual Master of Fine Arts Graduation Exhibition! Since its inception, more than 100 students have been featured in this cooperative venture between the Contemporary Art Museum and the School of Art and Art History. Students begin planning their contributions to the exhibition a year prior to the opening. They fully realize the value of this opportunity to work with the CAM professional staff.

For at least three years, these exceptionally imaginative students have engaged our distinguished faculty and endured challenging critique sessions as well as sleepless nights preparing for semester reviews. They have stretched well beyond their initial perceptions of what art could be and its impact on an audience.

Of course, COVID-19 has been a significant and added hurdle for these 13 artists. Yet, studios have been generally active and I know our students have dedicated themselves to completion of signature artworks for this exhibition. The virus will pass—and our graduating students will have the legacy of their hard work.

Our MFA at USF is acknowledged as a premiere program among its peers nationally. Its uniqueness resides in a demanding curriculum of studio practice and inquiry coupled with critical studies seminars in the history of art and elective courses throughout the disciplines of a major research university.

Faculty welcome the prospect to connect with our students, responding to new concepts and working as collaborators as well as guides to uncover fresh dimensions in the forms, objects, performances and images that are created. Our valued staff provides resolve and ingenuity in solving formidable problems, from bureaucratic labyrinths to one-of-a-kind projects—especially so with this eclectic group of emerging artists.

The MFA program offers every graduate student the opportunity to work in any medium or materials and to select from among our eminent faculty for directed study contracts. Virtually unheard of at other institutions, this open invitation to explore, experiment and discover, leads to startling and innovative outcomes. The fruit of this philosophy toward graduate art studio practice, along with a varied student body from throughout the nation and beyond, endows this exhibition with the delightful and provocative staging of new art.

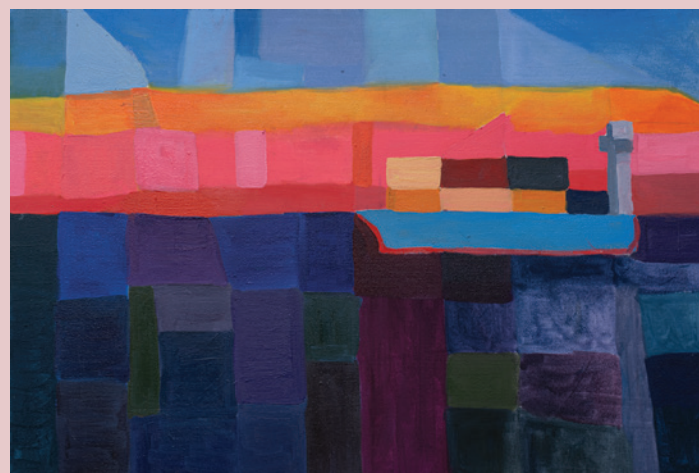
The unorthodox nature of many of the works has generated significant consultation and cooperation between the museum staff and our students. We offer our gratitude for assisting these artists in realizing their envisioned realities and developing this exhibition.

And, again, congratulations to our graduating MFA students! The graduate studio experience affords the time and community to expand ideas about art and oneself, and the relationship of the two to the larger world. The University has benefited from your presence and we extend our sincere best wishes.

Wallace Wilson, Director  
USF School of Art and Art History



Maxwell Parker, *The Rocket Ship*, 2020



Ian Wilson, *Maersk freighter off of Wilmington NC*, 2021

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The USF Contemporary Art Museum is proud to present *Out to Pasture*, the 15th MFA Graduation Exhibition to take place in its galleries. The thirteen artists in the 2021 class have brought fresh perspectives and ambitious horizons to their exhibition, the culmination of their research in the three-year Master of Fine Arts program of the USF School of Art and Art History.

It has been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic upended the normal course of our lives and activities. This happened just before the 2020 MFA show, and forced a radical change in the way that CAM could operate. The museum, along with the rest of the university, was shuttered, and staff and students scrambled to find a way to install and present their important exhibition. A year later, the pandemic is still with us but has somewhat abated, and while the university community is allowed into the museum on a limited basis, unfortunately many of the procedures adopted last year are still needed. Students have installed their works on a staggered schedule in order to maintain social distancing; instead of an opening reception there is a virtual gallery tour; and the moderated panel discussion also happens virtually. Happily, face to face oral defenses can be conducted in the galleries; and an online reservations system ensures that students and faculty can enter to see the show.

*Out to Pasture* will have a robust presence on CAM's website thanks to the creative efforts of the museum team. The shuttering of the museum forced an expanded offering of myriad points of virtual access to its programming, and the exhibition, its content, and events will be accessible via various platforms including Instagram and other social media outlets. A virtual 3D walk-through of the exhibition has been recorded and will be posted on the CAM website, thanks to Dr. Laura K. Harrison, Director, and the staff of the Access 3D Lab of the USF College of Arts and Sciences. The zoom gallery tour and moderated panel discussion will be recorded and posted, and each installation is being photographed by a professional photographer as well; good documentation of this show is more urgent than ever.

We have to thank the artists for overcoming great odds in nevertheless creating stellar installations that showcase both their talent and learning, and the skill of the teaching faculty. CAM is a platform for the artist's voice, and we are honored to work diligently with the students to provide them with all of the assistance they require to best achieve their artistic visions, and to equip them with tools to navigate their futures. By conceptualizing, planning, mounting and interpreting their installations, the students acquire valuable practical skills and an introduction to museum best practices and standards, which will serve them well in their professional careers. Their work tends to be very energetic, highly experimental and risk-taking, and it is very rewarding to witness the exciting results of their three years of intensive artistic research and practice.

The opportunity to exhibit their work in an accredited art museum is just one of the many ways in which CAM contributes to the students' learning experience over the course of their studies. Our exhibition program brings outstanding contemporary artists, curators and works of art from all over the world to campus and to the Tampa Bay area. Along with lectures, symposia, talks, publications and other related educational events presented to illuminate and expand the meanings of the exhibitions, the museum provides opportunities for research in its permanent collection, graduate assistantships and internships.



Chase Palmer, *Flammable Jacuzzi Doozy*, 2020

Times such as these challenge relationships. I am pleased to say that the extraordinary collaboration between CAM and the School of Art and Art History in creating this exhibition, that is the key to its success, has proved strong and resilient. My thanks to the faculty and staff of the School of Art and Art History, particularly Noelle Mason, Associate Professor and Graduate Faculty Advisor; Julie Herrin, Office Manager; Maureen Slossen, Program Specialist and Graduate Advisor; and Wallace Wilson, Director.

The faculty and staff of the Contemporary Art Museum all contribute in vital ways to the exhibition. Tony Palms, Exhibitions Designer and Coordinator, collaborates with the students to create the overall design. Chief Preparator Vincent Kral and Curatorial Associate Eric Jonas work closely with each individual student to develop optimum installation strategies. Shannon Annis, Curator of the Collection and Exhibitions Manager, introduces and maintains best museum standards and practices. New Media Curator Don Fuller and Graphic Designer Marty De la Cruz guide the students in the publication process. Curator of Education Leslie Elsasser provides a forum for the artists' voices. Many thanks to Program Coordinator Amy Allison; Chief of Security par excellence David Waterman and security staff Gillian Olortegui. The CAM Club supported the MFA panel, moderated by Amanda Poss, Director of the HCC Art Galleries and MA Alumna, while SK West, also an MA alumna, moderated the MFA gallery talk. Members of the Institute for Research in Art have also contributed to the effort: Director Margaret Miller, Randall West, Sarah Howard; Kristin Soderqvist; and Mark Fredricks. Special thanks to Will Lytch for his meticulous photographic documentation of the exhibition.

Finally, I salute and thank the graduates, Bonnie Mae Carrow, Leonidas Dezes, JD Hardy, Laura Pérez Insua, Nadia Ivanova, Lisa McCarthy, Luke Myers, Erin Oliver, Chase Palmer, Maxwell Parker, Andrés Ramírez, Jonathan Talit, and Ian Wilson, for sharing their extraordinary research with us. We wish them every success in their surely bright futures.

Noel Smith, Deputy Director  
Institute for Research in Art



Luke Myers, *Reading With Ants: Annihilation*, 2019. Cover image: Andrés Ramirez, *Polar Grass*, from the August/September book of *Put Your Glasses Back On (Face The Facts)*, 2019

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Hours: M-F 10am-5pm  
CAM is closed Saturdays, Sundays, USF holidays, and between exhibitions.  
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MFA 2021

# OUT TO PASTURE

APRIL 2 - MAY 7, 2021 // USF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

Bonnie Mae Carrow, Leonidas Dezes, JD Hardy, Laura Pérez Insua, Nadia Ivanova, Lisa McCarthy, Luke Myers, Erin Oliver, Chase Palmer, Maxwell Parker, Andrés Ramírez, Jonathan Talit, and Ian Wilson

