

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Winter 2021 Exhibitions

Los
Angeles
Municipal
Art
Gallery

The Show.

The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG) are pleased to present a series of four solo exhibitions featuring newly commissioned work by Los Angeles artists Panteha Abareshi, Alexandre Dorriz, Tristan Espinoza, and Maru Garcia. This series of exhibitions reimagine the role of the gallery experience for our current times by presenting research-based artists outside of the white box. Each respective exhibition engages a variety of interdisciplinary themes, with Tristan Espinoza's activation of machine learning; Panteha Abareshi's relationship to epidemiology; Maru Garcia's creative approach to experimentation, cellular evolution, and collaboration; and Alexandre Dorriz's investigative research into the mechanics of transactions, public policy, and water rights.

The titles and dates for these virtual exhibitions are:

Tristan Espinoza: *Index, Interiors* January 14 – April 22, 2021

Panteha Abareshi: *Tender Calamities* February 4 – April 22, 2021

Maru Garcia: *membrane tensions* March 4 – April 22, 2021

Alexandre Dorriz: *Public Sculpture 001-C* March 18 – April 22, 2021

Follow @lamagbarnsdall on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter for virtual programs with the exhibition artists, related art-making activities, and more.

The Artist.

Panteha Abareshi [b. 1999, Montreal, Canada (they/them)] lives and works in Los Angeles.

Panteha Abarashi works in different media, including: photographs, sculptures, performance-based works and film to examine the tensions between the impermanence of the human body and the biological and synthetic objects that our bodies leave behind when it is no longer functioning. Abareshi's artworks express the discomfort and discrimination that exists for the artist's own body. The medical condition that affects all aspects of Abarashi's life is a genetic blood disorder called *sickle cell zero beta thalassemia* causing debilitating pain and bodily deterioration that increases with age.

Through art, Abareshi finds ways to express their lived experience of enduring physical pain and to show the “complexities of living within a body that is highly monitored, constantly examined, and made to feel like a specimen”. The goal of Abareshi's work is to make the viewer aware of their own bodies and to help others understand what it is like to be disabled, live in pain, and what it feels like not be able to have equal access. Additionally, their work engages issues of Ableism. Ableism is the discrimination or prejudice against

individuals with disabilities in favor of able-bodied people. Abarashi feels that able-bodied people take their bodies for granted and do not realize how fortunate they are to have the privilege of trusting that their bodies function normally. Abarashi wants the viewer to see what daily reality is like and the many challenges faced when feeling powerless and living with disability.

Being in a hospital as far back as they can remember on a regular basis has shaped how Abarashi thinks of their body and self. Abareshi lives with uncertainty and constant consideration of these questions about life and identity: *“What are the implications of being told you are unhealthy, fragile, and defective from a young age? How does the early and reinforced knowledge of decreased lifespan, and a life of increasingly poor health, pain and bodily deterioration influence the relationship between one and their body?”* Abareshi remains creative in communicating about the issues surrounding disability, disabled bodies and equal access to everything that able-bodied people have.

Panteha Abareshi is currently completing their BFA at the University of Southern California’s Roski School of Art and Design. Abarishi has performed and exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles; Human Resources, Los Angeles; and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, among others.

The Artwork.



New Artifacts (detail)
dimensions variable
2020
courtesy of the artist

Questions for viewing

- What is the artist showing in these sculptures?
- Does it remind you of anything? What part of the body might it represent?
- What materials did they use to create these? Describe the texture?
- What title would you give this image and why?
- If you were to create an artwork about your body, what type of artwork would you create?
- How would it feel if you could not do all the things you want to do and could not go to places or buildings -that able-bodied people have access to? Imagine there is a room on a second floor and there is no elevator and you are not able to walk upstairs - how would this make you feel? How could you accomplish your goals?
- Why is it important to have empathy/compassion and to understand people who have disabilities, chronic illness or hidden disabilities?
- What could you do to help others who have physical challenges?

The Artist.

Alexandre Dorriz [b. 1990, Los Angeles, CA (he/him)] lives and works in Los Angeles

Alexandre Dorriz's research-based practice investigates power networks and what takes place that is often unnoticed surrounding how big businesses buy, sell and allocate essentials such as space, public land-use and water distribution. Some of these issues involve the deregulation of buying, trading and selling water entitlements by those in power, specifically the publicly-owned California water, which has been privatized, then sold back to the State of California at a high price. The works address the inconsistencies of water supply and allotments which exist in water facilities.

In *Public Sculpture 001-C*, Dorriz takes viewers through a journey of research, tallying and mapping the many means and measures involved in advancing an artist's concept through production phases and public presentation. Dorriz discovers the internal exchanges that determinately shape and shift the materialization and value in building a commissioned public work. His research shows that there are many things taking place that are hidden from the

public regarding large monetary donations to gain land. His work explores labor, funding, and the structure behind transactions such as donations and public acquisitions and the politics behind these processes.

Alexandre Dorriz has previously exhibited at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Visitor Welcome Center, Human Resources, ltd los angeles, and the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles. Dorriz's writing has appeared in Temporary Art Review, and his work has been featured in the Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly and reviewed in Artforum. He is an artist-gallerist-organizer and co-founder of the Crenshaw Dairy Mart and inaugural professor for the Social and Environmental Arts Practice MFA at Prescott College, where he will teach courses on studio practice and critical museology. Dorriz received his MFA at the University of Southern California and his BA at the University of California, Berkeley.

The Artwork.

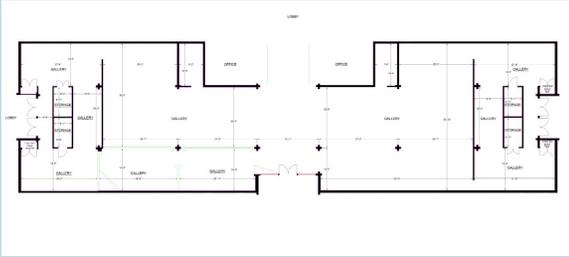


Image representing *Public Sculpture 001-C*, 2021.

courtesy of the Los Angeles
Municipal Art Gallery

Questions for viewing:

- What does this floorplan show and what do you think this building used for?
- How was technology used to draw this architectural floor plan?
- What is the profession that combines technology, math, science and design to create buildings and structures?
- By looking at this floorplan, what story could you tell about land use, water and elements necessary for a large building?
- How much water do you think is needed to keep this building functioning and the land that it is on watered?
- How can an idea or concept be an artwork? Why do you think that the artist used this image as his artwork in this exhibition?

The Artist.

Tristan Espinoza [b. 1995, Hagåtña, Guam (he/they)] lives and works in Los Angeles

Tristan Espinoza is a Filipinx American artist, programmer and community organizer. Their art practice inquires about the intersections of technology, family and evolving social values as he examines the displacement and “proximity in the context of networked life.”

The work *perennial* is a site-specific and web-based archive of Espinoza’s personal and cultural histories. The artwork in this exhibition combines computer coding, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology with the alternative hand-made photographic process of making cyanotypes. A cyanotype is an alternative process photograph that uses blue-toned chemicals that create different tones of blue. Objects are placed on top of light sensitive coated paper and an image develops in the sunlight. Wherever there was an object, a white or light blue shaped silhouette is left. Creating cyanotypes became a way for Espinoza to place and situate identity and memories. Artificial Intelligence is an area of computer science where computers are programmed to perform tasks that simulate

human intelligence and behavior. Some examples are: speech recognition, visual perception and decision-making.

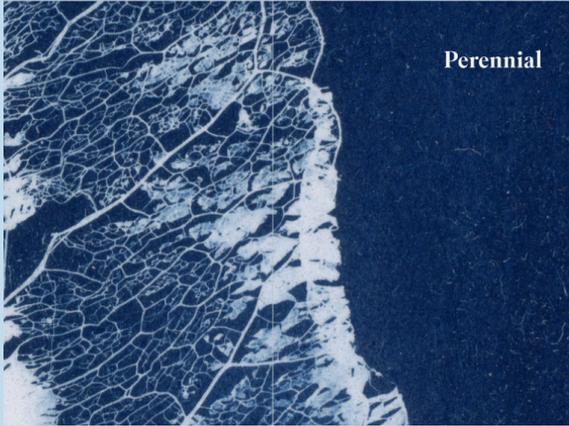
Espinoza created an online searchable archive comprised of cyanotypes of orange trees. Citrus growing is associated with the heritage of California. These images of the orange trees are used as his base material. The trees are from his Los Angeles home and his parent's home in San Bernardino, California where he grew up. The focus of orange trees not only honors Espinoza's personal sense of place, but also acts as a way for the artist to examine their individual and collective identity. The captions of each image are computer AI generated interpretations. The patterns are reinterpreted as text and new images that were reconstructed to create a 3-D version of a tree that exists online and in augmented reality. Espinoza has continued creating digital cyanotypes from his web-based archive in an unfolded accordion-style artist book.

Espinoza's programming and his creativity involved in coding

stemmed from earlier interest in being able to understand the technology of video games, virtual environments and their relationship to each other. Other important areas of interest include organizing, activating and community building with the aim to move into cultural change.

Espinoza's work has been exhibited internationally and in the US, in places such as the Archer Beach Haus, Chicago, IL; the Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL; Supplyframe DesignLab, Pasadena, CA; 187 Augusta, Medford, NY; and Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA. Espinoza is a current MFA candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles' Design Media Arts program and holds a BFA from the School of Art Institute Chicago. He also co-organizes Tiny Tech Zines (TTZ), a tech zine fair that emphasizes care and community in our relationships with technology.

The Artwork.



perennial (detail)
web-based archive, Artificial
Intelligence (AI) generated
cyanotype
dimensions variable
2020
courtesy of the artist

Questions for viewing:

- What do you see in this image? How would you describe the lines; are they random or patterned?
- How do you think the artist created this - what equipment is needed to create digital artworks? What part of technology and subjects did the artist study and learn so he could make digital images?
- Why do you think the artist chose to create cyanotype images?
- The artworks are about a memory of the orange trees that grew at his and his parents' homes. What do you think the image of a leaf and a tree would look like in real life?
- How can technology help us archive and remember our families, friends and places? Describe a memory you have of your home and what you would use as the subject of your digital image.
- If you were to create a cyanotype or 3-D Artificial Intelligence based image, what location or element from nature would you use as your inspiration?
- What are some examples of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how does AI help us?

The Artist.

Maru Garcia (b.1982, Puebla, Mexico) lives and works in Los Angeles

Maru Garcia is an artist and researcher working across and at the intersection of the fields of art, science and the environment. In her transdisciplinary practice, she investigates and questions the ways in which science and technology affect the relationship between humans within the natural world. Garcia's approach to artmaking addresses environmental and social issues, with a focus on protecting the world's biodiversity and ecosystems. Her artworks emphasize the importance of eco-aesthetics "where relationships and community are proposed as a way of building a sustainable culture." Media used include: scientific research, installations, performance, sculpture and video.

Garcia's artworks usually include some form of organic matter to help the viewer understand the biological processes that take place in complex systems, such as within and outside of cells. Her works show that humans and their actions are not separate from the natural world, but are interconnected and are a part of it. Some of Garcia's installations explore what she calls "perceptual encounters with the non-human", where the public is invited to think about how

they can create better relationships with other living organisms such as plants, animals as well as microscopic creatures including bacteria and yeast.

membrane tensions is a site-specific installation created specifically for the LAMAG. This installation consists of three components. The first part uses glass containers holding live cultures of yeast and bacteria made from water, sugar and vinegar. The second section will show the organic “harvested” flat, soft, flexible cellulose pieces that are “harvested” and pulled out of the container using tongs and hands, and then carefully attached to the gallery’s windows to allow sunlight and the outdoor environment to dry each piece. The third section will display the dried cellulose pieces by suspending them to create sculptural forms in the gallery. Each week, the solution of water, sugar, vinegar that form the cellulose with cell membrane will be monitored and documented on a chart to discover how the substance changes each week regarding the pH values. The installation will be presented through online streaming from LAMAG’s website.

The installation shows the process of creating cell membranes from naturally occurring materials. The membrane is the outer limit of the cell and separates it from the external environment. The cell membrane is alive, active, responsive, and flexible. The surrounding outer membrane simultaneously protects the cell inside and is the “source of interaction with the outside”. The cell membrane remains permeable, meaning the cell has interaction with what exists outside of the cell in its environment. This condition allows “new worlds” and “new relationships.” She creates and grows cultures called, SCOBY. This is an acronym or abbreviation that means: the “Symbiotic Cultures/colony Of Bacteria and Yeast” that make sweet tea into kombucha. Kombucha is a fermented drink produced by this culture. Some of the bacteria present in the culture have the capacity to synthesize a slimy material called “the mother” which is made out of cellulose. This film of cellulose floats on top of the tank. As a reference, cellulose is a natural product also present in plants and used to make paper.

Garcia's background and methods include the social and hard sciences such as laboratory and fieldwork in plant chemistry and the chemical industry. She became involved in this field with the hopes to understand and as she says, to "better protect what I loved."

The natural world has always been a source of "amazement and inspiration" for Garcia. Some of her childhood memories include spending many hours outdoors in her front yard observing plants and insects. She refers to her activities during this time as her "experiments" when she collected organic materials such as stones, leaves and branches to create small houses for the organisms she found. Her early experiments led her to ask many questions about the environment. Her exploration of nature progressed and continued when she and her parents explored forests and other nearby ecosystems in her hometown of Puebla, Mexico. Through her early explorations of nature, she gained an awareness and became concerned with the environmental problems she observed, which led her to her goal of doing something to help the ecosystem.

Currently, Garcia is an artist in residence at the Pando Populus Campus in Monrovia, California, an accelerator for environmental initiatives. Garcia is a 2020 Sci-Art Ambassador for Supercollider. Since 2017, she has collaborated with the Art-Sci Center and Counterforce Lab at UCLA. She has participated in conferences, solo and group exhibitions in North America, Europe, and Asia. She was an artist in residence in the National Center of Genetic Resources in Mexico and received awards from Los Angeles Sustainability Collaborative, Clifton Webb Scholarship for the Arts, and Fundación Jumex. She worked at the Getty Research Institute in the 2019-2020 Scholar program titled “Art and Ecology”. Garcia received an MFA in Design & Media Arts from UCLA as well as an M.S. in Biotechnology and a B.S. in Chemistry, both from Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico.

Art Activity.



membrane tensions (details)
installation with glass containers
with SCOBY culture, bacterial
cellulose sculptures, IP camera,
overhead projectors, drawings
2020
courtesy of the artist

Artist's Book: Observations of nature
Grades: 6 - 12

Imagine you are a scientist observing and researching elements from nature. Use your imagination or natural materials that you have seen outdoors to draw an element from nature such as a tree, a leaf, a plant, flowers or even the cells with the membrane surrounding them inside a container of liquid. You can draw an entire ecosystem, different items from nature or create a drawing and story about climate change. You can look at photographs of nature to use as your inspiration.

Why is it important to respect the environment and what can you learn from studying and researching nature?

Create a miniature artist's book to sketch your observations of nature. You can draw several items on a page, or just one item per page. These can be small simple sketches to document what you see.

What you will need*

- Objects that you have at home
- Paper (any type)
- Drawing utensils
- Eraser
- Scissors
- Safe organic objects from nature such as a leaf, stone or stick*
- *Optional:* magnifying glass, stapler, extra paper

*Please check with a parent or guardian before using or cutting any items.

Questions for viewing:

- What element of nature do you think the artist is showing in this artwork? Describe how you think the artist created this.
- If you were a scientist or researcher, what would you study in nature? Where would you like to travel to study about nature?
- What is the smallest structure you can imagine that is seen under a microscope? How do cells and their outer membranes look and move?
- Why is it important to be concerned about the world's ecosystems and what can you do to help the environment?
- What are some examples of how humans harm and disrespect nature and the environment?
- What is your favorite element in nature or the natural world?
- How does nature help and benefit humans and animals?
- If you could use anything from nature, what would you use to create a sculpture?
- Describe the texture of what a leaf, stick or stone might look like under a microscope.
- How do objects look different under a magnifying glass and how can this help scientists to learn and research natural organisms?



Cell membrane: A cell membrane is the thin outer thin layer of tissue that acts as a wall of protection. This membrane keeps outside fluids, such as water from permeating or entering into the center of the cell.

Step 1: Fold one piece of paper in half lengthwise.

Step 2: Cut it horizontally so you will have two pieces of paper.

Step 3: Fold both pieces of paper in half. Place one piece of paper inside the other. This will look like a miniature book.

Step 4: Find a safe small item from nature such as a leaf, a stone or twig. You can also look outside your window, or use your imagination to think of something from nature that you would like to draw inside your book. Imagine you are a scientist or researcher that wants to learn about this item. Take time to look closely and carefully at the object or nature outside your window or door. You can also draw an element or organic object from nature by using your imagination.

Step 5: Open your book. On the first page inside, sketch the object. A sketch is a quick drawing and does not have to be exact. Draw your observations of the element from nature. You can draw a different object on each page of the book, including the cover.

Step 6: Use a pencil or other drawing utensils to add shading or color to your drawings.

Optional writing and drawing component: Write about your observations of nature. Add more drawings and text to your book to document what you have learned.

Optional style of book: Staple the left edge to hold the pages together like a book.

*Ask permission from your parent or guardian to share your artwork by tagging us @lamagbarnsdall using and #LAMAGplay

Resources.

Alexandre Dorriz alexandredorriz.com

Tristan Espinoza tespin.github.io/perennial

Maru Garcia marugfierro.com

Panteha Abareshi panteha.com

Cover image credit: Tristan Espinoza, *perennial* (detail), 2020. courtesy of the artist.

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