For many, the ocean is a spiritual and emotional touchstone; it is also a place of fun and frolic. The three artists in this exhibit take markedly different approaches in representing the wonder of being at the ocean’s edge.

Graham Nickson renders the changing dynamics of the beach in all seasons. A master of observation, drawn form, and painted color, in each painting he deftly captures moments of solitude. In one painting a figure, seen from the back, stands upright and square-shouldered in chrome-yellow foul weather gear, contemplating the bracing blue-grays of a New England sea and sky. In another, a bikini-clad woman standing at the waterline is engulfed in mauve light from the setting sun, the sky above a symphony of indigo and coral. The exhibit’s largest canvas is a black and white composition in which a swimmer pulls off her t-shirt in preparation for a solitary swim. However, it is not the swimmer but the expanse of beach, rendered in the deep shadows of sharply raked early morning light that is the subject of this painting.

— Jacques Yves Cousteau

The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever.
Bathers at leisure under the hot sun of Mexico are the focus of David Kapp’s monumental collages. Sheets of paper covered in loose swirls of saturated color form the background settings in this series. Figures are fashioned by cutting or tearing paper painted with smaller, more finely articulated strokes. With their surprising juxtapositions of lush color, these compositions have a jazzy syncopation. They are as fresh and fun as a vacation recorded by an eye that carefully observes the dynamics of the scene—strolling figures, a palm tree, a sun-glassed dude on a cell phone.

Isca Greenfield-Sanders’ layered compositions, derived from found images, capture how time by the sea is remembered and the memories are burnished. Each painting is a composite of a single image recreated in several stages and different media, from ink line drawing to watercolor enhanced with colored pencil to oil. The depth of color and luminosity of the surface are created by the history of its making.

We go to the place where land, sky, and sea meet at all times of day, in all kinds of weather, alone or with companions, for contemplation and renewal. We go to the ocean’s edge to dive into the sea—a sublime moment when mind and body are in harmony. The artists in the exhibit have recorded those moments and given them back to us in the aesthetic realm. I invite you to take a deep dive into their work. It’s worth the plunge.

— Mara Williams, Chief Curator

We are grateful to the Betty Cuningham Gallery and Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY for their assistance with the production of this exhibit.

DONA ANN MCADAMS PERFORMATIVE ACTS

In the 1980s I often attended performances at P.S. 122, the seminal venue for avant-garde performance in New York. As an artist and curator, I found inspiration, talent, and a community of intense purpose. Identity-based politicized work found its home there.

Often times, I would notice a woman, unobtrusive, off to the side, seated on the floor, taking photographs with a Leica camera. Dona Ann McAdams was the house photographer. During her tenure of 23 years, she captured extraordinarily compelling images of the raw fierceness and passion of this performance scene. From chaotic to profound, everything was allowed in this experimental space. McAdams was revered by the artists as a collaborator who could illuminate their art beyond the stage.

McAdams also adroitly captured the queer liberation and AIDS activism of that time, documenting the urgency of ACT UP actions and LGBT military members marching in solidarity against “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” directives. Select photos of this work, along with photos of her anti-nuclear, pro-choice, war protest, and feminist rallies, are featured in this exhibition. McAdams’ agitprop sensibility is alive and well today, as evidenced by her photographs of an anti-Trump protest and transgender Vermont gubernatorial candidate Christine Hallquist marching in a Pride parade.

McAdams works not as a detached journalist but as a fully engaged social activist. She is an empathetic artist whose subjects are not the exotic “other” but rather participants and allies in her portraiture. She invites the viewer into the particularity of place and the innate humanity of the people she photographs.

I got to know McAdams personally when we both became ensnarled in the Culture Wars in the 1990s. I was the Curator of Performing Arts at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where I presented David Wojnarowicz, Karen Finley, Ron Athey, and other artists who became flashpoints over the “appropriateness” of their receiving support from the National Endowment for the Arts. The surrounding controversies became a lightning rod for malicious conservative outrage.

All these artists shared P.S. 122 as their New York home, so McAdams knew and photographed them all in their full-flung provocative explorations. Despite intense media pressure, McAdams worked with the artists to protect their images from being sensationalized and demonized in conservative media outlets.
Concurrent with her theater work, McAdams spent 14 years running an arts workshop in Coney Island for people living with mental illness. The resulting collaborative portraits demonstrate McAdams’ profound empathy with her subjects and illuminate the joy and dignity of people often feared and maligned by mainstream society. Subsequently, McAdams did in-depth residencies with farmers in rural West Virginia and with a group of cloistered nuns in rural upstate New York, capturing the vitality and resiliency of these “unseen” or overlooked communities.

When I moved to Vermont to run the Flynn Center in Burlington, I reconnected with McAdams and her husband, writer Brad Kessler, who now raise goats on their farm in Sandgate, Vermont. At the Flynn, I had the pleasure of hosting an exhibition mounted by the Vermont Folklife Center, *A View From The Backstretch*, which was the culmination of McAdams’ workshops for backstretch workers at the Saratoga Racetrack. The work is revelatory. Once again, McAdams did not merely observe. She participated as a fully engaged creative partner.

For another exhibition I curated at the Flynn, *Animal Power*, McAdams loaned a diptych of two oxen, Lou and Bill. Animal rights activists protested when Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont, decided to put one of the oxen down after he became injured. In the midst of this controversy, McAdams went into the pasture with these enormous creatures and produced an astoundingly beautiful depiction of elegance and power—another political act with a social conscience.

With her expansive range of working animal photographs, including cows, horses, and her beloved goats, McAdams continues to capture the relationship between subject and artist. In these action portraits, it became clear that the organizing conceit of this exhibition was indeed *Performative Acts*.

When the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center gave me the opportunity to curate this exhibition, I was thrilled to work with McAdams again, to visit her farm and studio and select a sampling of her resplendent black and white images. She continues to shoot film with her Leica and print her own work in an analog darkroom, work that is of its time but timeless. It is an honor to present her *Performative Acts* to you.

— John Killacky, Curator

John Killacky was Executive Director of the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts in Burlington, Vermont. He currently serves as a State Representative in the Vermont General Assembly.

This exhibit was made possible by a generous gift from Molly Davies and the James E. Robinson Foundation.

*Lori E. Seid assists Ethyl Eichelberger, PS122, NYC, 1987*
silver gelatin photograph, 9 x 6 inches
Looking at Blue is a full-body experience. Entering the gallery, we drop into a world of deeply saturated blue punctuated by shimmering, swirling shapes that radiate from multiple vanishing points. Metallic pigments atop the indigo ground heighten the visual and emotional effects of ebullient expansion or contraction created by the many small dots, lines, orbs, and spirals dancing across the surface.

The installation’s central feature comprises four large swaths of digitally printed wallpaper with hand-painted additions. The scale of this element in the confines of the small gallery intensifies the relationship between the viewer and the environment. We are enveloped by a sacred or cosmic, or simply mysterious, space—a space of awe and wonder, where the enormity of a universe with no edges or boundaries can be not just imagined but felt.

— Mara Williams, Chief Curator

In my paintings I depict possibilities that are both abstract and narrative—imagined landscapes, microscopic views, stylized architecture, mathematical diagrams, and “spacescapes.” I often use natural phenomena as metaphors for the cosmic, catastrophic, or comic. The paintings can be read simultaneously as, for example, close-up cross sections of minerals or aerial maps of land; shooting stars or falling missiles; snow/rain storms or big bang explosions.

Opening the painting process to chance, I begin the images with faux abstract-expressionist backgrounds of poured and dripped paint which determine the composition. I use a labor-intensive approach of applying a visual vocabulary of dots, tracings, outlining, and painting around splashes. There is a meditative aspect to this process, as well as unexpected shifts of image as concentric lines morph and change. While the finished painting is primary, this process of play and control is particularly important to me.

— Barbara Takenaga

We are grateful to DC Moore Gallery for their assistance with the production of this exhibit.

Outburst (2017), mixed media installation, 14 x 17 feet [detail]
TIMOTHY SEGAR
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Timothy Segar’s three-dimensional work is powerfully built and pulsing with vitality. His sculptures are formal and additive and, although abstract, are not without meaning. They may evoke metaphysical and cultural associations with their gestural nature and the dynamic interplay of open/closed, positive/negative, rooted/free; but these objects are nevertheless complete in themselves. Arranged in clusters they seem to assume individual and group characteristics.

Segar’s two-dimensional works on paper are not preparatory drawings for his sculptures; they are fully realized works in their own right. They reveal sculpture Segar’s artistic preoccupation with the massing of forms and his exploration of oppositional forces. The accumulating shapes develop organically and pulse across the paper surface as deeply satisfying abstract compositions, each retaining the energy of the artist’s hand in every mark and gesture.

— Mara Williams, Chief Curator

My practice as an artist has hinged on the dynamic between my two-dimensional works and my three-dimensional objects. The two represent parallel imaginations, linked in their references to forms and spaces but wholly separate in their dependence on gravity. In the drawings and paintings, I can loosen the bonds of physical weight and balance that the sculpture must respond to. In both, the metaphors revolve around the interaction of individuals in groups and conglomerations and the drama of active forms. In recent work, the role humor plays in these interactions has become more obvious.

— Timothy Segar

This exhibit consists of steel sculptures on view in the Rubenstein-Freed Sculpture Garden (May 1 – November 5, 2019) and works on paper displayed in the South Gallery (June 22 – September 23, 2019).
At noon on November 18, 1883, the American and Canadian railroads implemented four continental time zones—Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific—as a means of synchronizing time. Previously each town and city had maintained its own individualized system of time based on the angle of the sun. Standardized Railway Time created a conformity of timekeeping across towns and regions in order to allow corporations greater control over the shipping of their goods.

Angus McCullough’s site-specific installation Coincidence Control invites viewers to reimagine their relationship with time, to unplug and reflect. Housed in the ticket office of Brattleboro’s former Union Station, Coincidence Control presents an alternative to standardized time through the mediums of video, sound art, artist books, drawings, and an interactive time capsule that visitors are welcome to enter.

— Jonathan Gitelson, Curator

“Time” is a word for movement we cannot understand, and is often used to disguise complicated structures that measure and control industrial trade. Coincidence Control transforms Union Station’s former ticket office into a place for reconnecting with our intuitive and embodied cycles of time. By actively investigating the methodologies of temporal control, we can better understand how our human clocks diverge from those rhythms, and by offering spaces for exploring stillness and sensitivity, perhaps we can enhance awareness of our unique patterns. With that hope in mind, the space will exhibit artwork and will also facilitate explorations away from the structures and institutions that measure and control us.

Because time synchronization is woven into so many parts of our lives, the exhibit uses a variety of modes to help with your escape and homecoming: dense and surprising books, communal sound-making, “departure schedules,” a small private space, historical and architectural discussion, and maps to guide voyages to inner landscapes. Consider it a platform from which to lose yourself—to “spend” time and thereby reclaim it.

— Angus McCullough

Departure Schedule (2018), mixed media/artist book, 8.27 x 11.69 inches
DAVID PLOWDEN  BRIDGES

David Plowden has spent over six decades photographing America’s disappearing landscapes and the vestiges of its industrial heyday. In his own words, he has “made a career of being one step ahead of the wrecking ball.”

It so happens that Plowden’s initial foray into what would become a lifelong journey in photography took place just north of here, at the old train station in Putney, Vermont. It was there that Plowden, at the age of 10, made his very first photograph, capturing a hissing, popping, southbound steam train with the new box Brownie camera his mother had given him.

Much of Plowden’s work has been done in the service of the 29 books he has authored or coauthored. The photographs in this exhibit represent a small fraction of those in Bridges: The Spans of North America, a visually magnificent history of American bridge design and construction, which the eminent historian David McCullough has described as “a work of imagination and scholarship that would qualify [Plowden] as someone of note had he done nothing else.”

Bridges intrigue and entrance us on so many levels. They extend our worlds by spanning voids or obstacles and connecting us to otherwise unreachable destinations. They do so in seeming defiance of the laws of gravity, creating magical, liminal spaces where we find ourselves no longer here, not yet there, but suddenly—thrillingly—aloft. The best of them embody a perfect blend of engineering and aesthetics, function and form. In character, they span the gamut from elegant to businesslike, delicate to muscular, commonplace to quirky.

Through his rigorously formal, deeply respectful, yet unsentimental photographs, David Plowden reveals the magic, beauty, and personality of his silent subjects. And although his pictures are nearly devoid of human presence, they are powerful tributes to the ingenuity, craftsmanship, and pride of the people who designed and built these bridges.

— Danny Lichtenfeld, Director

The Tunkhannock Viaduct, Nicholson, PA (1973), 9.5 x 17.375 inches
HOURS
Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.......................11-5
Tuesday .....................................................................................................Closed
Please call or check the website for holiday closures, changing of exhibits,
and special events. Administrative offices are open weekdays 10-6.

ADMISSION
Regular admission is $8 for adults, $6 for seniors, $4 for students, free to BMAC
members and youth 18 and under. Admission is free on Thursdays after 2 p.m.
Please check website for details.

LOCATION, PARKING, ACCESSIBILITY
BMAC is located in Union Station, at the foot of Main Street in downtown
Brattleboro, Vermont. Parking is available in front of the museum and next door
at Marlboro College Graduate School. BMAC is wheelchair-accessible.

GALLERIES
WOLF KAHN & EMILY MASON GALLERY
Ocean’s Edge

MARY SOMMER ROOM
Barbara Takenaga: Looking at Blue

EAST GALLERY
David Plowden: Bridges

TICKET GALLERY
Angus McCullough: Coincidence Control

CENTER GALLERY
Dona Ann McAdams: Performative Acts

SOUTH GALLERY
Timothy Segar: Character Development

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