

But the skin of the earth is seamless

December 5–15

Janine Antoni, Siah Armajani, Luis Cruz Azaceta,
Alighiero e Boetti, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Mona
Hatoum, Zhang Huan, On Kawara, Ana Mendieta, Yurie
Nagashima, Paulo Nazareth, Wura-Natasha Ogunji,
Giuseppe Penone, Kiki Smith, Lawrence Weiner, and
Krzysztof Wodiczko

Curatorial Statement

But the skin of the earth is seamless proposes an approach to global migration that focuses on its generative and creative potentials. The exhibition envisions migration—whether undertaken by force or by choice—as a powerful catalyst for the development of new, collective ethics in which migrants are seen as capable of presenting solutions for creating a more inclusive world.

Borrowing its title from writer Gloria Anzaldúa's 1987 book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, which proposes the embrace of cross-pollination over physical, psychic, and cultural borders, *But the skin of the earth is seamless* engages interconnected concerns including care, communication, and movement. The exhibition presents the works of sixteen artists from four continents, and most of them are produced out of the artists' own experiences of migration, immigration, or exile. Rather

than centering representations of the ongoing realities of xenophobia, racism, and violence against migrants, the exhibition draws attention to how migration can be a source of creative solutions to some of the most pressing issues of our time.

Two works, Giuseppe Penone's *Sentiero (Path)* (1986) and Lawrence Weiner's *BARD ENTER* (2004), are included in the exterior entrance and lobby of the Hessel Museum and Center for Curatorial Studies. Their placement conceptually merges these areas to propose an experience of more permeable limits between spaces.

Perspectives from members of the CCS community who have experienced migration, whether as migrants, immigrants, temporary visitors, or by displacement, are included below. They engage with the ideas brought to the fore by the exhibition and share personal reflections to form a dialogue that embraces difference and diversity.

But the skin of the earth is seamless is curated by Yihsuan Chiu, Bernardo Mosqueira, and Allie / A.L. Rickard.

Interview Statements

Studying at CCS has helped me to look at art as something that is not specific to geography, but more as a response to an urgent political time all over the world. This understanding was very helpful because I was able to take advantage of my displacement from the Indian art context by observing it from the outside. My displacement from India to CCS has been useful to my practice because it encourages me to think more carefully about the works of artists and practitioners I respect and, for the first time, to truly evaluate their role in society. – Sukanya Baskar, Class of 2020

In my experience of migration, I have this sense that I'm discovering new ways of finding connections and family and redefining my values as I move across time and space. This shift in perspective creates a sense of hope and belief in the future. To me, that's how it feels because my definition of family has become much bigger. I had to find new ways of defining what is family by being in a place where I didn't have a biological family. I feel as if I am living between different places. This middle place is one where you are in two different spaces at the same time or multiple spaces. There you have to also make your understandings of social structures more fluid. You create ways of being in between—with everything: family, connections, and landscapes. – Muheb Esmat, Class of 2020

My experience of immigration has made me consistently and acutely aware of bureaucratic systems. The process of immigration requires a repeated interaction with very particular systems which one consciously navigates through or actively runs up against. When I think about the malleability that is required of an immigrant, I locate it in relation to the rigidity of these systems. Even if we are always at the mercy of civic structures, moving between them forces a permanent change in my interface outside of them. To an increasingly significant degree, the requirements of a bureaucratic system—and the language that it speaks—ends up shaping my perception of place and, by extension, my position in that place. It's like the background music of every experience. – Julia Gardener, Class of 2020

I am technically a Canadian citizen residing in the US as a Resident Alien. Living in a foreign country without permanent status but with the privilege of a specific, artist visa allows you to see certain things about the society by virtue of being outside of it. This line from a

conversation with curator Cora Fisher in 2016, in which we discussed the role of regionalism in contemporary art, is particularly useful to exemplify my thinking about my relationship to landscape: “[According to literary theorist Douglas] Reichert Powell, a ‘region’ must refer to a relational network of sites, it is not a specific geography and it has no flag; it’s not a boundaried autonomous place—it is a cultural history. So why can’t the global artworld be thought of as a region?” It was at that moment that I started to understand myself as belonging to a region in this sense; not one that has to do with geography or landscapes, but with cultural histories and shared discourses. – Amy Zion, CCS Faculty and Class of 2012

Checklist

All works from the Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, unless otherwise noted.

Janine Antoni (Freeport, Bahamas, 1964–), *Umbilical*, 2000. Cast sterling silver, ed. 9/35. 3 in. × 8 in. × 3 in. (7.62 cm × 20.32 cm × 7.62 cm).

Siah Armajani (Tehran, Iran, 1939–), *Dictionary for Building: Revolving Door Under Window*, 1985. Stained glass, painted wood, and steel. 109 in. × 60 in. × 60 in. (276.86 cm × 152.4 cm × 152.4 cm).

Luis Cruz Azaceta (Havana, Cuba, 1942–), *The Immigrant*, 1985. Acrylic on canvas. 103 in. × 84 in. (261.62 cm × 213.36 cm).

Alighiero e Boetti (Turin, Italy, 1940–1994), *Mappa (La natura e una faccenda ottusa)*, 1979. Embroidery on canvas. 44 7/8 in. × 68 7/8 in. (114 cm × 175 cm).

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (Guaimaro, Cuba, 1957–1996, Miami, FL), *“Untitled” (Passport)*, 1991. White paper

(endless copies). 4 in. x 23 5/8 in. x 23 5/8 in. (10.16 cm x 60.01 cm x 60.01 cm).

Mona Hatoum (Beirut, Lebanon, 1952–), *Performance Still*, 1985–1995. Black and white photograph on aluminum, ed. 7/15. 32 5/8 in. x 43 3/16 in. (82.8 cm x 109.73 cm).

Zhang Huan (An Yang City, China, 1965–), *To Add One Meter to an Unknown Mountain*, 1996. C-print, ed. 1/15. 30 1/2 in. x 40 1/2 in. (77.47 cm x 102.87 cm).

On Kawara (Aichi Prefecture, Japan, 1933–2014, New York, NY), *One Million Years (Past and Future)*, 2000. Boxed set of 10 compact discs; 5 Past compact discs; 5 Future compact discs, ed. 34/250.

Ana Mendieta (Havana, Cuba, 1948–1985, New York, NY), *Untitled (from the Silueta Series)*, 1976. C-prints, ed. 10/10. 20 5/8 in. x 26 3/8 in. (52.39 cm x 66.99 cm).

Yurie Nagashima (Tokyo, Japan, 1973–), *Untitled (Feet)*, 1995. C-print, ed. 1/5. 25 in. x 33 in. (63.5 cm x 83.82 cm).
Collection Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College,
Gift of Peter Norton.

Paulo Nazareth (Governador Valadares, Brazil, 1977–), *Untitled, from Notícias de América (News from the Americas) series*, 2011–2012. Photo printing on cotton paper, ed. 4/5 + 2AP. 7 1/16 in. x 9 7/16 in. (18 cm x 24 cm).

Paulo Nazareth (Governador Valadares, Brazil, 1977–), *Untitled, from Notícias de América (News from the Americas) series*, 2012. Photo printing on cotton paper, ed. 3/5 + 2AP. 17 11/16 in. x 23 5/8 in. (45 cm x 60 cm).

Paulo Nazareth (Governador Valadares, Brazil, 1977–), *Untitled, from Notícias de América (News from the Americas) series*, 2012. Photo printing on cotton paper, ed. 3/5 + 2AP. 17 11/16 in. x 23 5/8 in. (45 cm x 60 cm).

Wura-Natasha Ogunji (St. Louis, Missouri, 1970–),
A luminous cloud, a night swim, the desert. It is always

there for you, 2017. Thread, ink, and graphite on trace paper. 23 3/4 in. x 23 3/4 in. (60 cm x 60 cm).

Giuseppe Penone (Garessio, Italy, 1947–), *Sentiero (Path)*, 1986. Bronze. 121 5/8 in. x 28 in. x 132 in. (308.93 cm x 71.12 cm x 335.28 cm).

Kiki Smith (Nuremburg, Germany, 1954–), *Yolk*, 1999. Solid worked glass, ed. 75/150. 3/4 in. x 1 1/2 in. x 1 1/2 in. (1.91 cm x 3.81 cm x 3.81 cm).

Lawrence Weiner (South Bronx, NY, 1942–), *BARD ENTER*, 2004. Stainless steel and concrete. 4646 sq. ft. (431.63 sq. m). Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Gift of the Marieluise Hessel Foundation.

Krzysztof Wodiczko (Warsaw, Poland, 1943–), *Alien Staff (Steel)*, 1993. Steel, wood, rubber, plastic, speaker, videocassette recorder, and video monitor. 58 1/2 in. x 7 in. (148.59 cm x 17.78 cm).



Siah Armajani, *Dictionary for Building: Revolving Door Under Window*, Courtesy of the artist and RossiRossi, London and Hong Kong. Photo credit: Chris Kendall.



Luis Cruz Azaceta, *The Immigrant*, Courtesy of the artist and George Adams Gallery, New York.



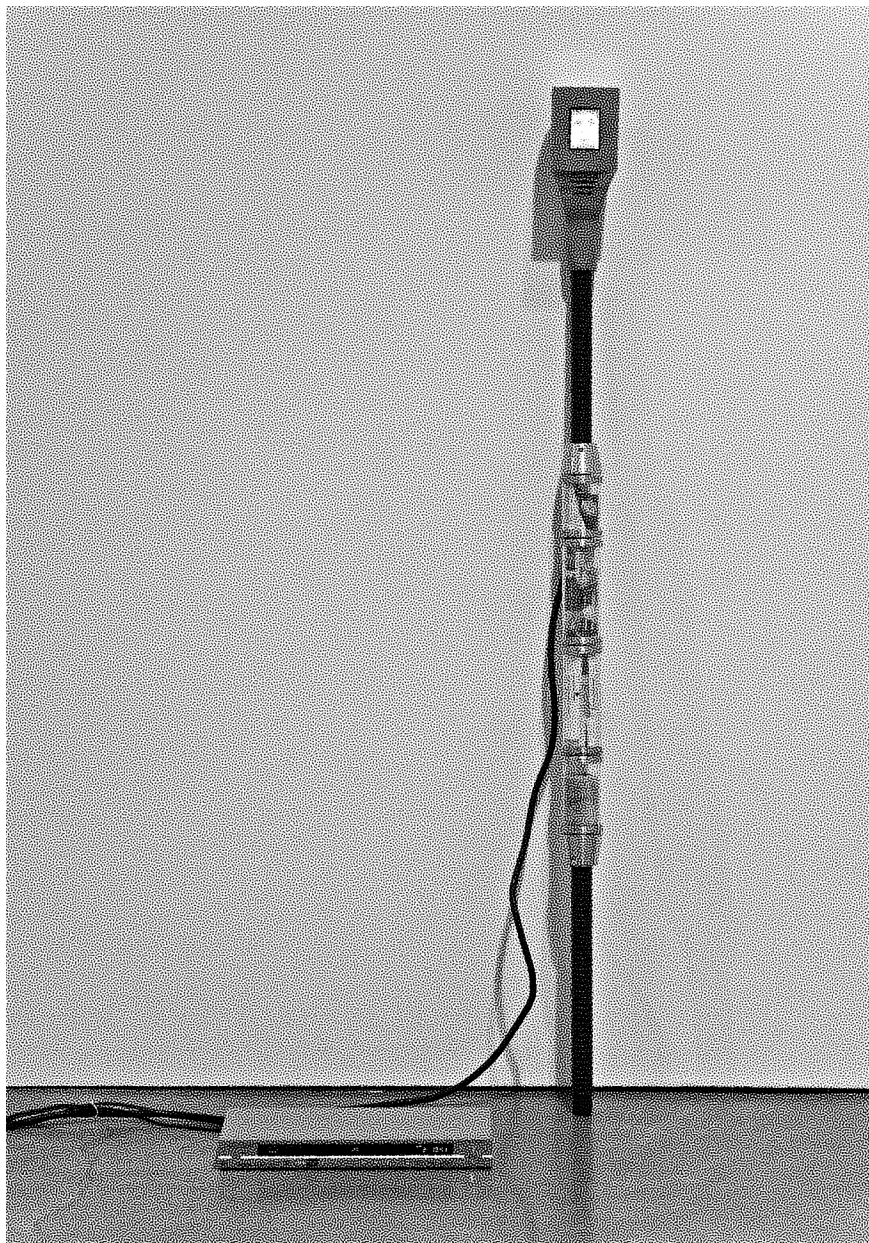
Mona Hatoum, *Performance Still*, Courtesy of the artist and Alexander and Bonin, New York.



Zhang Huan, *To Add One Meter to an Unknown Mountain*, Courtesy of the artist and Pace Gallery, New York.



Paulo Nazareth, *Untitled*, from *Notícias de América* (News from the Americas) series, Courtesy of Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo / New York / Brussels.



Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Alien Staff (Steel)*, Galerie Lelong & Co., New York © Krzysztof Wodiczko.