

***Reclamation: of time, of agency, of narrative***

**Amanda Assaley, Fidencio Fifield-Perez, and Mandy Messina  
Curated by Adia Sykes**

**Dates: August 2nd-30th**

**Opening Reception: August 2nd, 6-9pm**

**Open hours: Sundays Noon-4pm and by appointment**

The word “reclamation” implies taking back or seizing—a repositioning of where control lies. Representative Maxine Waters was acutely aware of this when she famously “reclaimed her time” during a 2017 House Financial Services Committee meeting. Yet the reigning queen of memes’ reclamation of speaking time points to a much larger need for an active repossession of space, time and power, especially on the part of people of color grappling with the precarity rampant in so many facets of everyday life. *Reclamation: of time, of agency, of narrative* explores the acts of taking back or repositioning various forms of control. In the respective practices of artists Amanda Assaley, Mandy Messina, and Fidencio Fifield-Perez this theme is apparent.

Assaley manipulates domestic objects, in this case a sofa, and pulls in Rococo and Arabic Christian motifs. There’s a certain desperation in these mashups. Her work orchestrating a dialogue that pushes the aesthetic forms from the realm of object or tool into that of an emotional regulator. Assaley temporarily removes the onus of emotional control from the individual and places upon the physical object.

For Fifield-Perez, anxiousness and restlessness have become commonplace as he moves through the immigration process. These feelings manifest in the fastidiousness of hand drawing and monoprinting offset an omnipresent looming sensation. His hands are never idle, becoming a unique measure of time all based on creative practice and output. Making has become not only a source of comfort, but also a new way in which time can be perceived and experienced.

Through five short stories Messina illustrates the rehabilitation of their native language, Afrikaans, by millennials. Ninety six tiles made in the Dutch style (the colonizer’s style) subvert the narrative of South African monuments and the co-opting of a “Brown language” into a tool of oppression. This piece, an intimate monument, is a retelling of history and a contemporary recording of the effort to reclaim a language.

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**Amanda Assaley** is a Syrian-American artist living and working in Chicago, IL. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2018. Assaley is the founder and co-director of the project space Zakaib(زرغيب) and is the Education Coordinator at Syrian Community Network. In 2017, she was a recipient of the Ellen Battell Stoeckel Fellowship to attend the Yale School of Art at Norfolk Residency. Her work is included in the collection of

the Textile Resource Center at SAIC. Assaley has exhibited at 6018North, IL; Michigan State University Union Art Gallery, MI; Sullivan Galleries, IL; DFBRL8R Gallery, IL; and Gallery X, IL. Her work with collaborator Qais Assali will be on view at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts in Michigan City, IN with Living Architecture in October 2019

**Fidencio Fifield-Perez** was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, but raised in the U.S. after his family migrated. His current work examines the debate over borders, edges, and the people who must traverse them. In his work, Fifield-Perez manipulates paper surfaces and maps to refer to the crafts and customs used to celebrate festivals and mourn the dead, which he learned as a child in Oaxaca. For Fifield-Perez, these techniques are a way to reconnect with a time and place no longer present.

Fifield-Perez received his MA & MFA from The University of Iowa (2015). He is the recipient of the Galveston Artist Residency from (2016 to 2017), ACRE (2015 and 2018), Ox-Bow Faculty Residency (2019) and The Studios at MASS MoCA (2019). Selected awards include the Alice C. Cole Fellowship Nominee (2017); Hyde Park Art Center: The Center Program (2016), Philip G. Hubbard Human Rights Award (2015); and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, Fund for the Arts: Artist/Ensemble Grant in (2014).

Notable group exhibitions include Somewheres & Nowheres: New Prints 2014 at the International Print Center New York; Fresh Prints: The Nineties to Now at the Cleveland Museum of Art (2015); DUMA Biennial (2017); Fronteras/Frontiers at the Beach Museum of Art (2017/2018); and Stateless: Views On Global Migration at the Museum of Contemporary Photography (2019).

**Mandy Messina** is a non-binary, South African artist and educator living in Oklahoma.

**Adia Sykes** is a Chicago-based curator, arts administrator, and a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) with a Masters of Arts from the Department of Arts Administration and Policy (2018). She has a BA in Anthropology from the University of Chicago (2016) with a focus on material culture and museums. Her current research interests include examining the history and potential of curatorial practice as an advocacy tool for racial equity in the arts and racial and gendered identities explored in the visual and performative practices of emerging artists. Her Masters thesis focused on formations of self-organized networks of support that exist to sustain the practices of historically marginalized artist communities and maps this contemporary ecosystem of support. Her curatorial work has been exhibited at The Sullivan Galleries, Woman Made Gallery, the Chicago Mayor's Office, and ACRE Projects.