**The Chess Club: 2018 MFA Thesis Exhibition**
Curated by Bruce W. Ferguson (accomplished curator & author, President at Otis College of Art & Design)

Leimin Space
On View April 28 - May 4, 2018
Reception: April 28, 2018, 6 to 9 p.m.

Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara
On View May 12 - June 3, 2018
Opening Reception: May 18, 2018, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

“Positioning of identity, in the artworld, is a multidimensional game of chess in which the object is to play simultaneously above, below, central, and to one side of the action, and to learn when to accentuate one position more than another.” – Dan Fox, Author & Coeditor of Frieze Magazine

“All this twaddle, the existence of God, atheism, determinism, liberation, societies, death, etc., are pieces of a chess game called language, and they are amusing only if one does not preoccupy oneself with 'winning or losing this game of chess.’” - Marcel Duchamp

Duchamp, following Wittgenstein, understood that the world as we know it is a language game. He used chess as a metaphor for “pure” art – a set of endlessly iterated and re-iterated “moves” which together constitute a language of sorts. Not language as a set of fixed or final rules or as a vehicle for predetermined meanings but as a succession of related speech acts.

What is a “move” in art?

Some examples:
1. Erasing a De Kooning drawing.
2. Making a bull’s head from the seat and handlebars of a bicycle.
3. Representing a barbaric execution (May 3\(^{rd}\), 1808) on canvas.
4. Using ephemeral and malleable materials e.g. gum, erasers, chocolate, play-doh, cookie dough, and
dryer lint to expose/explode stereotypes of female domesticity.

5. Using cut-out silhouette tableaux to re-enact in shadow play the catastrophe of racial-sexual violence in America.

This year’s graduating cohort of MFA Art students at UC Santa Barbara have titled their collective efforts, “The Chess Club” acknowledging the nature of the game as they position themselves for their next decisive “move”: from students and trainees to professional artists. They are about to apply the strategies vital to sustaining their practice in the larger world, absorbed through the intense iterative process of two years spent inside the program. Where they differ, perhaps, from many of their peers in other schools is that this group appears to have acquired its peculiar edge, and, in the process, a slightly tongue-in-cheek take on the value of what they’ve learned at UC Santa Barbara not just from their professors, instructors and the visiting artists with whom they’ve worked, but also, as importantly, from one another. What they value along with all the courses and the independent studies are the resilience and resourcefulness: the thinking, making, showing (and concealing) skills and tactics of fellow players- the other members of the club.

The 2018 UC Santa Barbara MFA Chess Club acknowledges, in other words, the unheralded, near hidden secret of higher learning everywhere, that is, that students teach each other. And that may be their most furtively productive pedagogical move to date: collectively checking in and checking out their peers, the other members of the club, as they grow from game to game, from one move to the next, adapting to new input, responding to critique. Because nothing after all is ever either won or lost for good- there’s always one more play.

**Participating Artists:**

**Lucy Holtsnider** combines monotype prints and found objects to create collages addressing the impacts of climate change. In 2016, she completed *Climate Odyssey*, a year-long sailing expedition and art and science collaboration with her partner, hydrologist Zion Klos. Her award winning artwork has been exhibited internationally. Collections of her work include University of California at Santa Barbara Library Special Research Collections, University of Denver Penrose Library Special Collections and University of Utah Marriot Library Special Collections.

**Daria Noor Izad** is an Iranian-American artist and horsewoman. Her work consists of drawings on raw canvas, ceramic sculpture, assemblage and performance. Daria references movement, the female body, ritual, labor and a sense of other worldliness where she shares a mutual non-verbal understanding with horses and other creatures. She is currently working with a young and spirited mustang where much time is shared exploring the unknown together. A series of “mappings” are being made as a response to their unspoken collaboration and daily practice.

**Robert Huerta** is a South LA artist working at the intersection of social practice and new-media. His research interests include storytelling across social networks, modifying the use of virtual and augmented reality to serve the needs of communities of color, and facilitating site-specific community organizing for those at the margins of the dominant culture in the US. His most recent projects include creating an archive of first person narratives and photographic documentation from young Latinx mothers, organizing cryptoparties and punk interventions as a part of his curatorial practice, as well as enabling new-media workshops for at-risk youth both in the gallery and at community outreach centers. His focus on participatory and collaborative efforts are aimed at expanding the notion of contemporary artistic practice to include, by design, a commitment to the people, places, and the stories they hold.
Jennifer Lugris is interested in how reality is constructed in the mind. Her work describes everyday, even mundane, scenes that are deliberately truncated or hacked to provide a peripheral vision as though seen through a moving vehicle. The ordinary appears extraordinary and her emphasis to show the simple world as vibrant and astonishing is the result of her deconstruction. Her paintings have been exhibited and published internationally and have won several awards. She was awarded a residency at New Pacific Studio in Vallejo, CA as an Ernest J. Gaines Fellow, provided to artists for creative work that engages with issues of contemporary education and social justice. To raise awareness on social issues she has curated three successful, fundraising exhibitions: *Compassion*, which aided Typhoon Haiyan victims in the Philippines, *Pacha Mama*, which supported the California redwoods, and *SWAN Day*, which raised funds for WomenArts a nonprofit organization in Berkeley.

Jimmy Miracle was born in Ohio in 1983 and received a B.A. in painting from Belhaven College in 2004 in Jackson, MS. The past 10 years he has lived and worked in New York City, Washington DC, Germany, and now he currently resides in Santa Barbara, CA where he is completing an MFA in studio art. He has had solo and group shows in New York, Berlin, London, and Washington DC exhibiting at Ziehersmith, Outlet Fine Art, HKJB, the Islip Art Museum, Castle Gallery, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, and Flashpoint Gallery among others. He also worked as a studio assistant for Jeff Koons, and studied drawing at the Art Student’s League of New York under Michael Grimaldi and Brandon Soloff. He has received the Cultural DC Creative Communities Fund grant, the Maryland State Art Council Individual Artist grant, and has lectured at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art. Jimmy’s “move” is to rigorously utilize eminently traditional skills in drawing and painting as a kind of contemporary radical act.

Carlos Ochoa makes spaces that immerse your vision and auditory senses that expand an understanding of the human condition. These spaces consist of rhythmic and ambient sounds that coincide with three-dimensional forms that are animated and abstract by nature. These worlds are effectively both future spaces that we will inhabit one day and virtual realities which might become a common place within human interaction. Carlos received his BFA from Otis College of Art and Design where he learned to experiment beyond the conventional means of art making. Raised by immigrant parents in South Central Los Angeles, he pushed himself to get away from the negative patterns of life that were presented to him and instead occupied a creative world that eventually became his art practice.

Toni Scott’s exhibitions and installations weave together artistically powerful stories presented through installations, multi-media, photography, painting, sculpture and digital ingenuity, often referencing fraught histories. Scott’s work has been awarded and celebrated internationally. In 2012, she created a solo mixed media installation, *Bloodlines*, for the California African American Museum. In 2015, she was selected as the solo artist for the Dame Jillian Sackler International Artists Exhibition Program, a prestigious invitation to install and exhibit her work in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology at Peking University, in Beijing China. In 2016 she was featured as the First International Artist to exhibit a solo exhibition at the Changzhou Museum in Jiangsu Province of China. Scott currently has a solo exhibit, "Aswarm with the Spirits of All Ages Here....", at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Sonja Haynes Stone Center. She is featured in the recently published book "Creative Souls: African American Artists in Greater Los Angeles," by UCLA Professor Paul Von Blum and will exhibit at the Watt's Towers Art Center on the same theme this summer in Los Angeles. Fall 2018, she will be featured as Artist in Residence at the Squire Foundation in Santa Barbara, CA.
Location 1:
Leimin Space, 443 Lei Min Way, Los Angeles, CA
Reception: April 28, 2018, 6 to 9 p.m.
Dates: April 28 to May 4, 2018
Gallery Hours: Thursday through Sunday, 1 to 6 p.m. and by appointment

Location 2:
Art, Design, & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-7130
Reception: May 18, 2018, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Dates: May 12 to June 3, 2018
Museum Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 12 to 5 p.m., Thursday 12 to 8 p.m.

About Leimin Space
Leimin Space is an artist-run space which welcomes all types of art, ranging from ethereal works to traditional objects. Lei Min Space is motivated by the desire to provide a platform upon which artists may share their work with the world. In an effort to preserve authenticity, the space takes on an artist-centric approach, allowing artists to have full control of the way their work is presented and experienced. In addition to the exhibition of visual art, Lei Min Space will host events such as artist talks, poetry open-mics, and life-drawing sessions. The aim of Lei Min Space is to provide a spot in Los Angeles which promotes cultural and visual literacy.

About Art, Design & Architecture Museum
Through rotating installations of its permanent collections along with special exhibitions and programs, the AD&A Museum is both a teaching museum, committed to the development of critical thinking and visual literacy in support of UC Santa Barbara’s goals of education, research, and service, and a resource for the wider Santa Barbara community.

High resolution images available upon request. Please contact Jennifer Lugris at jlugris@live.com or (201) 214-1477.

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