

## **RIVER ON FIRE - ARTIST BIOS**

**Carolina Aranibar-Fernández (San Francisco, CA)** addresses concerns of displacement, privatization of land, exploitation of natural resources, environmental issues, and the invisible labor that supplies global trade. With installations and objects that interweave fabrics, oral storytelling, ceramics, and video, Carolina uses handmaking processes and materials that draw from ancestral and contemporary craft. She explores materials as a language—as non-verbal stories, allowing the language of soil, sugar, metals, crude oil, and others to be the storytellers. Her installations, objects, and performances are informed by research into the histories of resource extraction and the oppressive labor systems that have fueled the ideologies of colonization and capitalism. Aranibar-Fernández received an M.F.A from Virginia Commonwealth University and a B.F.A from the Kansas City Art Institute. She currently lives and works in San Francisco, CA.

**Brandon Ballengée (New Orleans, LA)** is a visual artist, biologist and environmental educator based in Arnaudville, Louisiana. Ballengée creates multimedia artworks inspired by his ecological field and laboratory research. His artwork has been exhibited in over 20 countries. Ballengée has received numerous awards and fellowships, including a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, the National Academies Keck Futures Initiative, a Creative Capital Award, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He holds a Ph.D. in Transdisciplinary Art and Biology from Plymouth University (UK) in association with the Hochschule für Gestaltung Zürich (Switzerland). Currently, he is an Adjunct Faculty member of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Tulane University, where he studies the impact of the 2010 oil spill on Gulf of Mexico fish species. In 2016, Ballengée, along with his wife, sustainable food educator Aurore Ballengée, began the Atelier de la Nature, an eco-educational campus and nature reserve in Arnaudville, Louisiana.

**Alana Bartol (Calgary, Alberta, Canada)** comes from a long line of water witches. Their site-responsive artworks explore divination, drawing, and dreaming as ways of understanding across places, species, and bodies, critically engaging with the impacts of extractive industries like oil, coal, and natural gas. Through collaborative and individual works, they examine our relationships with the Earth, the elements, and what are colonially known as natural resources. In 2019 and 2021, they were long-listed for Canada's Sobey Art Award. Their work spans drawing, experimental video, performance art, sculpture, socially engaged art, public art, installation, and curatorial practices. They hold a BFA from the University of Windsor (Canada) and an MFA from Wayne State University (USA). Alana's work has been presented in exhibitions and festivals across Canada and internationally.

**Christina Battle (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)** is an artist based in amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton), within the Aspen Parkland: the transition zone

where prairie and forest meet. Her practice focuses on thinking deeply about the concept of disaster, its complexity, and its intricacies. She has a BSc with a specialization in Environmental Biology from the University of Alberta, a certificate in Film Studies from Ryerson (now Toronto Metropolitan) University, an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, and a PhD in Art & Visual Culture from the University of Western Ontario. In her recent PhD dissertation (2020) Battle researched community responses to disasters— how they take shape and especially how artistic and online models might help to frame and strengthen such responses.

**Hannah Chalew (New Orleans, LA)** is an artist and educator from New Orleans. Her artwork explores what it means to live in a time of global warming with a collective uncertain future, and specifically what that means to live in Southern Louisiana. Her practice explores the historical legacies that got us here to help imagine new possibilities for a livable future. She received her BA from Brandeis University in 2009, and her MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2016. Chalew has exhibited her work widely in New Orleans and nationally. Her work is held in the collections of the City of New Orleans and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art. In 2018, she was an emerging artist-in-residence at the Joan Mitchell Center. Recently she received a Platforms Grant: a regranteeing effort of An-tenna Gallery, Ashe Cultural Arts Center, and Pelican Bomb supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation. She also received a production grant from the New Museum's Ideas City fellowship with support from the NEA to further develop her work.

**Lili Chin (New York, NY)** is a visual artist based in New York City. She has exhibited at Microscope Gallery, Island Gallery, the Abrazo Interno Gallery as well as several other art organizations in the US, Scotland, Latin America, Europe and China. She created commissioned installations for the He Xiangning Museum in Shenzhen and The Ely Center of Contemporary Art in New Haven. She has participated in several international residencies, including MacDowell, Galveston Artist Residency, the Swatch Art Peace Hotel in Shanghai, and Hospitalfield in Arbroath, Scotland. Chin has been awarded numerous fellowships and grants. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and received her MFA from the University of California, San Diego and BFA from Pratt Institute.

**Willow Naomi Curry (Houston, TX)** is a writer, researcher, and social practice artist based in Houston, Texas. Her writing, both literary and journalistic, has appeared in local, national, and international publications and she is the 2020 Writer-in-Residence for the Houston Museum of African American Culture. Willow's interest in communicating ideas across artistic disciplines and her commitment to preserving the heritage of historically Black communities led her to the field of social practice art.

**Heather L. Johnson (Houston, TX)** is a Houston-based artist whose multidisciplinary practice spans drawing, embroidery, and interactive projects. Her work delves into the

systems we create, their purposes, and the questions posed by climate change. Johnson's work has been exhibited in galleries, museums, and public spaces worldwide, but she is perhaps best known for her transcontinental solo motorcycle project, "In Search of the Frightening and Beautiful". She has received artist residencies at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Grand Canyon National Park, and other institutions. Johnson is also a founding member of the Throughline Collective in Houston. She holds an MFA from California College of the Arts in San Francisco and a BA in Visual and Performing Arts from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

**Ayanna Jolivet Mccloud (Houston, TX)** works at the intersection of environment, advocacy, and art. Much of her art seeks to unearth forgotten histories of land/waterscapes that are connected to African American culture, labor, and liberation. A fourth-generation artist, she has participated in residencies and exhibitions throughout the Americas, including in the U.S., Haiti, the Bahamas, St. Maarten, Mexico, and Argentina. She is currently an artist-in-residence at Lawndale Art Center. Ayanna also leads environmental advocacy and is currently the Executive Director of Bayou City Waterkeeper, where she collaboratively advocates for urban water management, flood mitigation, wetland protection, and water quality, centering environmental justice and climate resilience.

**Laura Napier (Ann Arbor, MI)** is an artist researching the social cultures of oil and gas as we face massive global climate change. Her work explores behavior, sociology, and place through still and moving images, installation, and participatory and collaborative performance. Napier has presented solo projects with Public Space One (Iowa City, IA), Alabama Song and the Solar Studios at Rice University (both in Houston, TX), and PS122 Gallery (New York, NY). She has shown work nationally and internationally with the XVII Biennale d' Arte Citta di Penne in Italy, and the Contemporary Arts Center in Las Vegas, among many others. Napier earned a BFA from Cooper Union and an MFA in Photography from Bard College. Currently, she is a Public Engagement Faculty Mentor Fellow with the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, where she lectures in research-based art practice and environmental justice.

**Kristi Rangel (Houston, TX)** is a self-taught multi-disciplinary artist. Her multi-media artworks have been exhibited at the Jung Center, Rice University Moody Center, Houston Community College, The Climate Justice Museum, and the City of Houston City Hall. Kristi is currently the lead facilitator and curator of the *Witness Series*. The *Witness Series* is an interactive public art experience that explores the many profound experiences Communities of Color have in the Land of Southeast Texas. Kristi is a painter, who takes her work beyond the canvas through interactive public art experiences designed to bring communities together. These experiences incorporate dynamic, participatory talks, art, hikes, bird walks, and other experiences that create wonder and awe for their participants. She is currently in the planning phase for the 4th

year of the *Witness Series*, completing several paid private commissions and creating new work.

**Joe Robles IV (Pasadena, TX)** is an emerging documentary photographer and photojournalist from Pasadena, TX. Robles's work explores life living in Pasadena, honoring its culture, and celebrating its people despite living along industry fence lines. His body of work, *Still Growing Up Here*, honors the local individuals including his own family through joy, grief, and celebration while residing in North Pasadena. His photography has been exhibited in Pasadena at Strawberry Park and published in Houston Landing. Recently Robles was invited to work with AIA guest curators Susan Roger and Mario Lopez to develop life-size portraits of community leaders as part of the Architecture Center's exhibition *The Voices of People. The Stories of Place. The Politics of Power*.

**Manuel Alejandro Rodríguez-Delgado (Roswell, NM/Puerto Rico)** is an assemblage sculptor born in Bayamon, PR. He received his BFA from Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Diseño de Puerto Rico (2008) and his MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2014). His work has been exhibited at Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan, PR; Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL; and the Gallery of the University of Sagrado Corazón, San Juan, PR. He is the recipient of the Le Roy Neiman Foundation Fellowship, Chicago; Lexus Scholarship, Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico, San Juan, PR; Oriental Group Fellowship, Caguas, PR; and the Award for the Distinguished Development in Sculpture, Randy Barceló Foundation, San Juan, PR.

**Zuyva Sevilla (Albuquerque, NM)** is a semi-sentient collection of atoms feebly trying to understand everything around them. As a new-media sculpture artist, his work aims to compose, collect, and culminate in an interpretation of the inherent chaos of the universe, inspired by everything from the proto-scientific to the metaphysical, and mainly dealing with the transfer of energy as it constantly happens around us. Sevilla recently showed with AURORA in Dallas, Currents New Media in Santa Fe, and InterAccess in Toronto. He was named one of Southwest Contemporary's 12 New Mexico Artists to Know Now in 2023. Sevilla studied new media art at the University of North Texas, researching projects in intermedia performance, projection mapping, and virtual reality.