

foreign & domestic

I used to be a tree

**John Fleischer
Yasue Maetake
Larry Mantello
Umico Niwa
Kristin Walsh**

curated by Greg Carideo

May 3 - June 30 , 2024

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24 Rutgers Street, New York, NY 10002

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opening reception Friday May 3, 6-8pm

Metal is forgiving. You may not see it that way, but it is. It feels alien to us, cold and stiff, inhuman. Metal, though, isn't static. It can be animated, and then reanimated. It breathes like wood, or us. It carries the touch of its handler, as well as the moisture in the air. Where is metal from? Where are you from?

I used to be a piece of cardboard. I am now covered in 11 years of glue. The shoemaker did this, dabbing me with his brush before hitting the heel. I was part of something larger, a box, a container for whatever. I wear my history, which is both my own and what's been imposed on me.

The desert is a resting place for a lot of things. Objects are allowed to be there and absorb the environment until they become it. Trees and fences perform this function too. They catch things, trapping them along their path. Art is like the desert or a fence, capturing material and objects, diverting them to a specialized existence.

I used to be a mattress. Now I am only my springs, rusted, the color of dirt, and along with others, I make up a fence. I am perfect for my job as a fence. To think of me young and horizontal, underneath a dreaming body, is as hard to imagine as passing through my interlocking springs.

This room is full of objects that possess histories. They carry the identities of their parts, yet, through assemblage, convey the hand of their maker. What they share, a feeling of mass, aggregation, performs differently throughout the room. Some objects propose a function, while others an escape. All have a sense of purpose.

- Greg Carideo

I used to be a tree is a group exhibition curated by the artist Greg Carideo, featuring the work of **John Fleischer, Yasue Maetake, Larry Mantello, Umico Niwa** and **Kristin Walsh**. Carideo extends his subjectivity as a maker to the selection and installation of the thirteen sculptures on view, with each artist represented by two or three recent works. A diverse range in the artists' age, geography and gender belies a deeper coherence in their use of matter, one marked by accumulation, accretion, and agglomeration. Their artworks express an intense degree of attention in their making, bordering on obsession, the transmutation of found materials through assemblage, and a suggestive instrumentality or purpose.

I used to be a tree tests the conditions under which matter becomes art. It frames artmaking as a particular case in a more general process of entropy and entanglement: the prosaic history of everyday objects and materials acquiring new uses and identities through the accumulation of haphazard encounters with the world. It grounds the process of *becoming* – an object, a tool, an artwork, an entity, a person – in this entropic unfolding of the material world. History and identity are thus fashioned through accumulation and happenstance, and can be read through a close engagement with matter.

I used to be a tree is an exhibition of voices. The curatorial text speaks with multiple voices. An old mattress-turned-fence speaks in the first person, as does an enigmatic object of cardboard and glue. Multiple subjectivities are at play. The subjectivities of the artists are joined by the subjectivity of the artist-as-curator, a license typically precluded from academic displays or commercial presentations. This license further draws out the subjectivity of the artworks and the materials that compose them.

In his own work, Carideo picks out found materials with specific material histories – shirts bleached by the sun, notably, or heels ground down by the mass of an absent body – before reconstituting them into reliquary-like constructions. In ***I used to be a tree***, Carideo executes a gesture that challenges the boundary between artist and curator, and between artwork and object: the amalgam of cardboard and glue, given voice in the text, is installed in the gallery, displayed under plexiglass in the bookshelf. Recovered from a now-defunct shoemaker's shop, it was once the siding of a cardboard box, cut out and used for

eleven years to gather excess glue and scraps. The sheer accumulation of marks and material, directed by the intentional gestures of a cobbler's hand, transforms the objective history of this thing into a subjective identity so dense and grounded that it precludes its denomination as an artwork. It is an anti-readymade. It speaks a language of matter, of glue and card, of tangle, layer, and sediment, of discarding and repurposing. It becomes entity. It wears its identity.

This object, speaking mutely through matter, works as a curatorial device. It invites us to lend an ear to the artworks in this exhibition, to a close reading of their material history and identity, to perform a redemptive act that inscribes subjectivity – of people, place and artwork – within matter itself.

text by Alexander Meurice

John Fleischer (b. 1969, Youngstown, Ohio) lives and works in Minneapolis. Fleischer works on a spectrum ranging from images and objects to sound, actions, and environments. Solo exhibitions include *Fixing, Hair+Nails*, Minneapolis (2023); *Linkages, Fractures, and Stops, 2847*, Minneapolis (2019); *Together Against*, David Petersen, Minneapolis (2017). Group exhibitions and performances include *Hair+Nails*, Minneapolis; *Urban Institute for Contemporary Art* (Grand Rapids, MI); *Kunstverein Graftschaft Bentheim* (Neuenhaus, Germany); the *Rochester Art Center* (Rochester, MN), and *Walker Art Center*, Minneapolis.

Larry Mantello (b. 1964, Rockford, Illinois) lives and works in New York. Mantello works in collage, assemblage and room-sized installations, creating intensely dense and brightly colored art from craft materials and found imagery, seeking redemption through obsessive accumulation and assembly. Select solo exhibitions include *Together Again*, CB1 Gallery, Los Angeles (2011), *Tri-Sectional Ressurrectional*, Kustera Tilton Gallery, New York (2005), *Jose Freire Fine Art*, New York (1993), *Rhona Hoffman Gallery*, Chicago (1993). Recent group exhibitions include *100 Sculptures*, *No Gallery & Anonymous Gallery*, New York, *Burnt*, curated by Leo Fitzpatrick, Marlborough Contemporary, New York (2018), *Harlem Postcards: Wish You Were Here*, *The Studio Museum in Harlem*, New York (2018). Mantello graduated from SAIC, Chicago in 1986.

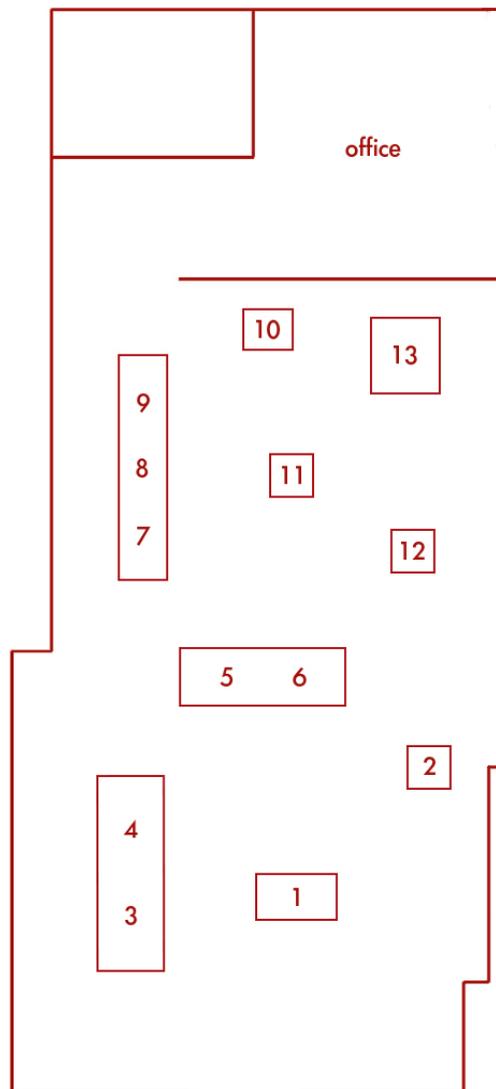
Yasue Maetake (b. 1973, Tokyo) lives and works in New York. Maetake's "three-legged idols" meld various materials including animal bones, seashells, coral, resin, metal, and glass to create abstract shapes that evoke both ancient archetypal elements and futuristic aesthetics. Recent solo exhibitions include *Three-legged idols*, *Nina Johnson*, Miami (2023); *Resilience in Decay*, NADA House (curated by Yulia Topchiy), *Governors Island*, New York (2023); *Transmutation*, *Microscope Gallery*, New York (2021). Group exhibitions include *Crafting Resistance*, ASU Art Museum, *Phoenix* (2023); *Perpetual Screw*, *International Objects*, New York (2023); *Persiana Americana*, curated by Amanda Millet-Sorsa, *Below Grand* (2023). Maetake was a recipient of a NYFA Fellowship in *Sculpture* and an artist residency in the studio of *El Anatsui* in Ghana with a research grant from the Agency for Japanese Cultural Affairs. Yasue Maetake earned her MFA from Columbia University in New York in 2006.

Umico Niwa (b. 1991, Aichi, Japan) explores the way Western notions of personhood reduce human identity into constructs of sexuality and gender, overlooking various other modes of unbridled existence: plant, microbial, fungal, animal, celestial bodies. Recent solo exhibitions include *Becoming Feral*, *Towada Arts Center*, Japan (2024); *My Life Inside a Shoe (the Phantom Cricket)*, *Fig.*, Tokyo, (2023); *Neighborly Pest*, *Tillings*, Montreal (2023) and *The Quantified Elf (and how it came to love itself)*, *Someday Gallery*, New York (2022). Her work has been included in group presentations at *Et. al*, San Francisco; *Nino Mier Gallery*, Los Angeles; *Someday*, New York; *Kristina Kite*, Los Angeles and *Miriam*, New York. Niwa received her MFA in *Sculpture + Extended Media* from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond in 2020. She is a current resident at the *Museum of Fine Arts Houston*, with an upcoming solo exhibition there in 2024.

Kristin Walsh (b. 1989, Emerald Isle, NC) lives and works in New York. Walsh's intricately constructed aluminum machines employ magnets and motors in the invisible service of unsettling illusions. Solo and two-person exhibitions include: *Unworlding* (curated by Cédric Fauq), Helena Anrather at Frieze London (2021), Gregory Kalliche and Kristin Walsh, Helena Anrather, New York (2021); *NADA House*, Helena Anrather, New York (2019); *Fjord*, Philadelphia; Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD (2015) Selected group exhibitions include: *Local Objects, Internation Objects*, New York (2023); *Barbe à papa*, curated by Cédric Fauq, CAPC Bordeaux (2022); *The odds are good, the goods are odd*, Lisson Gallery, New York (2022); *Hysteresis*, Downs & Ross, New York (2019); *The Mark Inside*, Signal Gallery, New York (2017). Kristin Walsh received her MFA from Columbia University in 2017 and her BFA from University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2013.

Foreign & Domestic is a gallery located on the Lower East Side, opened by Alexander Meurice in July 2022. The opening group exhibition *SIGNS*, was co-curated with poet and performance artist Peter BD. The gallery has staged solo exhibitions by Ittah Yoda, Nicholas William Johnson, Egle Jauncems, Greg Carideo, Armando Nin and Joey Frank. The recent group exhibition *After Lives* included the work of the late Bob Smith and Lee Brozgol, obscure but prolific artists working in Lower Manhattan in the 1970s and 1980s. *Foreign & Domestic* takes its name from a group exhibition titled 'European, Foreign & Domestic' curated by Alexander Meurice at the Averard Hotel, an ostentatiously derelict west London townhouse turned exhibition space, which he ran from 2016 to 2018.

Greg Carideo (b. 1986, Minneapolis) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *Nave*, *In Lieu*, Los Angeles (2024), *Dog Eared Reverie*, *Foreign & Domestic*, New York (2023), *Storefront*, FR MoCA, Fall River, MA (2022), and *Framework*, GRIMM, New York (2021). Carideo's work has been included in several recent group exhibitions: *Supplement the fragment*, *Public* (London, 2024), *ENTER:*, ICA at Maine ECA&D (2024), *The apple stretching*, Helena Anrather, New York (2024), and *Local Objects, International Objects*, New York (2023). Carideo received a BFA from Minneapolis College of Art & Design, Minneapolis in 2008 and an MFA from New York University in 2015.



1. **John Fleischer**, *F33 (The one about the hyper agent and the fool)*, 2023, advertisements, magazine pages, cardboard, packaging, newspaper, string, rope, steel wire, copper wire, microcrystalline wax, used motor oil, steel wool, found wood, twist ties, dried latex paint, pine cone, jester's hat, found children's socks, candy wrappers, n95 mask, pudding box, frankincense, bandage wrappers, reclaimed pine, poplar, oak, 14 x 18 x 22 in.

2. **Yasue Maetake**, *Enkidu*, 2022, found tree branches, metallic oil & acrylic paint, alloys of silver and copper, epoxy resin coated shredded brass, brass, copper, seashells, and steel, 19 x 6 x 6½ in.

3. **Larry Mantello**, *Reserve*, 2018, craft wood, glitter, craft miniatures, 15½ x 11 x 12½ in.

4. **John Fleischer**, *LMLF 07*, 2021, painter's tarp, towels, nylon stocking, rope, string, steel wire, branches, found and reclaimed wood, springs, soil, oil and acrylic paint, used motor oil, frankincense, 16½ x 20 x 11½ in.

5. **Kristin Walsh**, *Engine no. 8*, 2023, aluminum, 11 x 9 x 12½ in.

6. **Umico Niwa**, *Baby Shoe Series: Auto-Heel*, 2023, foraged materials, horse hair, wax, copper, 19 ¼ x 35 ½ x 11 ½ in.

7. **Yasue Maetake**, *あじさい (ajisai)*, 2022, found tree branches, verdigris, copper, brass, steel, steel wire, plywood, found aluminum, polyester resin coated origami, animal bones, seashells, corals, burnt found plastics, and epoxy resin, 7½ x 5 x 4 in.

8. **John Fleischer**, *LMLF 07*, 2021, painter's tarp, towels, nylon stocking, rope, string, steel wire, branches, found and reclaimed wood, springs, soil, oil and acrylic paint, used motor oil, frankincense, 16½ x 20 x 11½ in.

9. **Umico Niwa**, *Baby Shoe Series: Vacant Lux*, 2023, foraged materials, horse hair, wax, copper, 6¼ x 11 x 16½ in.

10. **Larry Mantello**, *Teapot Camelot*, 2020, craft wood, glitter, acrylic paint, craft miniatures, 11 x 15 x 13 in.

11. **Yasue Maetake**, *Foundry Abyss*, 2022, metallic oil paint on found tree branches, casted aluminum, aluminum on steel wire, verdigris, brass, copper, and epoxy resin, 35½ x 11 x 11½ in.

12. **Umico Niwa**, *Baby Shoe Series: Phantom Home*, 2023, foraged materials, horse hair, wax, copper, 5 1/8 x 11 x 13 in.

13. **Kristin Walsh**, *Engine no. 11*, 2024, aluminum, wood, electromechanics, 32 x 22 x 14 in.



catalogue of works



John Fleischer

F33 (The one about the hyper agent and the fool)

2023

advertisements, magazine pages, cardboard, packaging, newspaper, string, rope, steel wire, copper wire, microcrystalline wax, used motor oil, steel wool, found wood, twist ties, dried latex paint, pine cone, jester's hat, found children's socks, candy wrappers, n95 mask, pudding box, frankincense, bandage wrappers, reclaimed pine, poplar, oak

14 x 18 x 22 in // 35.5 x 46 x 56 cm





Yasue Maetake

Enkidu

2022

found tree branches, metallic oil & acrylic paint, alloys of silver and copper, epoxy resin coated shredded brass, brass, copper, seashells, and steel

19 x 6 x 6 ½ in // 48 x 15 x 16.5 cm





Larry Mantello

Reserve

2018

craft wood, glitter, craft miniatures

15 ½ x 11 x 12 ½ in // 39.5 x 28 x 32 cm





John Fleischer

LMLF 07

2021

painter's tarp, towels, nylon stocking, rope, string, steel wire, branches, found and reclaimed wood, springs,
soil, oil and acrylic paint, used motor oil, frankincense

16 ½ x 20 x 11 ½ in // 42 x 51 x 29 cm



Kristin Walsh

Engine no. 8

2023

aluminum

11 x 9 x 12 ½ in // 28 x 23 x 32 cm





Umico Niwa

Baby Shoe Series: Auto-Heel

2023

foraged materials, horse hair

19 ¼ x 35 ½ x 11 ½ in.

Yasue Maetake

あじさい (*ajisai*)

2022

found tree branches, verdigris, copper, brass, steel, steel wire, plywood, found aluminum, polyester resin coated origami, animal bones, seashells, corals, burnt found plastics, and epoxy resin

7 ½ x 5 x 4 in // 19 x 13 x 10 cm



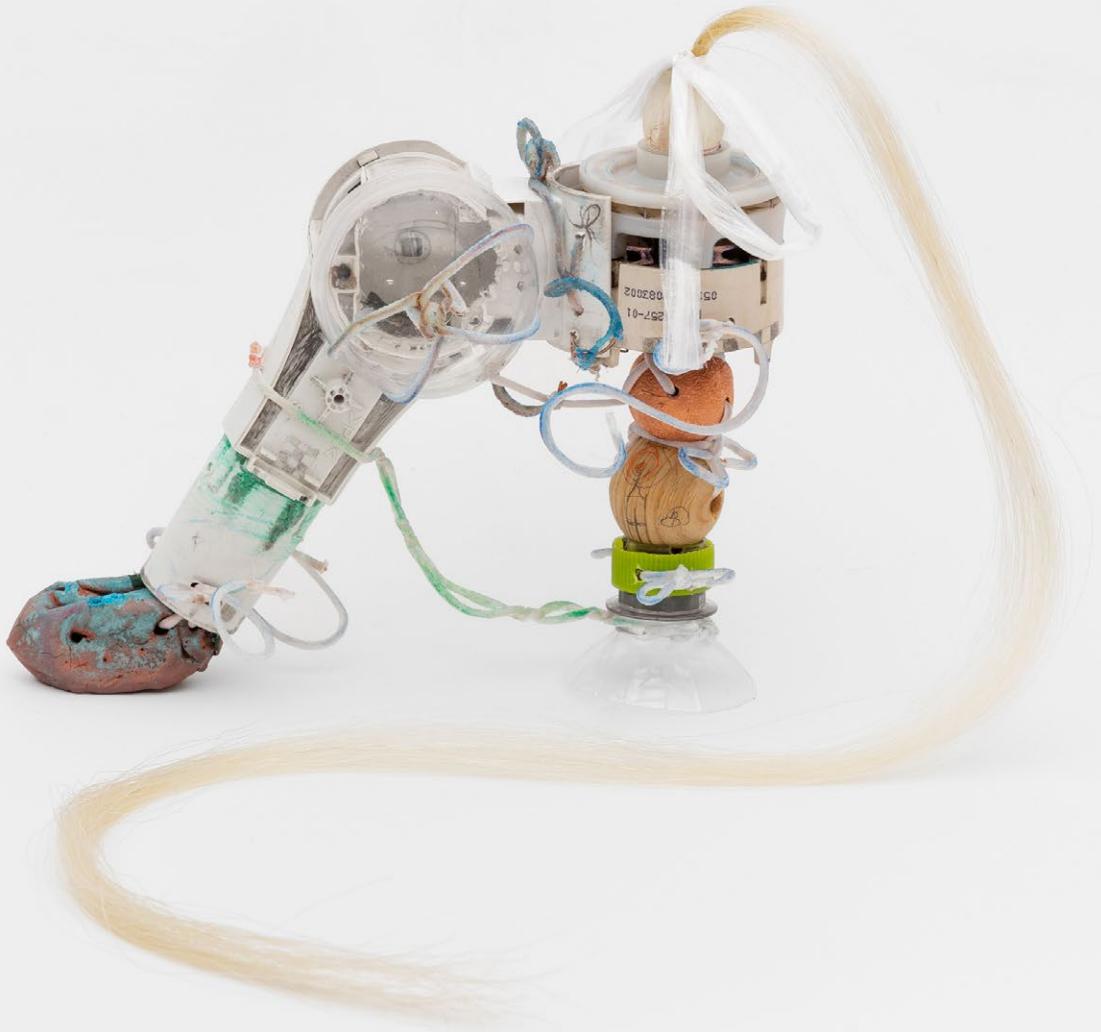
John Fleischer

Janus

2023

cardboard, spray paint, rope, found wood

13 x 10 ½ x 10 ½ in // 33 x 27 x 27 cm



Umico Niwa

Baby Shoe Series: Vacant Lux

2023

foraged materials, horse hair, wax, copper

6 ¼ x 11 x 16 ½ in // 16 x 28 x 42 cm

Larry Mantello

Teapot Camelot

2020

craft wood, glitter, acrylic paint, craft miniatures

11 x 15 x 13 in // 28 x 38 x 33 cm



LOVE

HOPE

PEACE

HARMONY

BALANCE

BOOM
Light
Grow
FALL

The Story
of the
Garden

of the
Garden



Yasue Maetake

Foundry Abyss

2022

metallic oil paint on found tree branches, casted aluminum, aluminum on steel wire, verdigris, brass,
copper, and epoxy resin

35 ½ x 11 x 11 ½ in // 90 x 28 x 29 cm





Umico Niwa

Baby Shoe Series: Phantom Home

2023

foraged materials, horse hair, wax, copper

5 1/8 x 11 x 13 in // 13 x 28 x 33 cm



Kristin Walsh

Engine no. 11

2024

aluminum, wood, electromechanics

32 x 22 x 14 in // 81 x 56 x 35.5 cm









foreign & domestic

installation photography by Greg Carideo

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