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Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship Exhibition
Featuring Kajahl Benes-Trapp, Kristiana 莊礼恩 Chan,
Anna Friz, and Janette Gross
January 19–March 24, 2024



IMAGE CREDITS (FROM LEFT): Kajahl, *Tigress Guardian in Palmtree Oasis*, 2021; Anna Friz, *Mejillones*, 2022; Janette Gross, *Fire Sky* (detail); 2020; Kristiana 莊礼恩 Chan, *Future Artifact*.

SANTA CRUZ, CA (January 4, 2024) — The Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) in partnership with Community Foundation Santa Cruz County (CFSCC) is pleased to announce the return of the **Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship Exhibition** from **January 19–March 24, 2024**. The exhibition honors the legacy of Roy and Frances Rydell and features the 2022-2023 fellowship recipients, **Kajahl Benes-Trapp, Kristiana 莊礼恩 Chan, Anna Friz, and Janette Gross**.

“Santa Cruz County is defined by a rich creative culture that take its sustenance from the artists who call it home—those who live, work, and create in the shared space of our community,” said **Robb Woulfe**, MAH’s Executive Director. “We are thrilled to once again host this biennial exhibition at our museum and to celebrate the incredible talent found in our own backyard.”

Roy and Frances Rydell established the Roy and Frances Rydell Visual Arts Fund at the Community Foundation in 1985 to promote Santa Cruz County artists and arts organizations. Following their passing, their estate was bequeathed to the foundation. Their gift has generated more than \$1.7 million in fellowships for artists and support for Santa Cruz County visual arts organizations.

The Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship program was developed with input from the local arts community to honor the wishes and intent of the Rydells in establishing the fund. The fellowship program, now in its 18th year, has issued \$20,000 awards to 38 artists. (Complete list of current and past award recipients is available at www.cfsc.org/rydell). Gifts allow artists uninterrupted creative time to focus solely on their work and its impact on our local community and the larger world.

“We were entrusted by Roy and Frances to carry out their vision for enriching the vibrant visual arts legacy in Santa Cruz County by directly supporting artists in their work,” said **Susan True**, CFSCC’s Chief Executive Officer. “The fellowship gives artists uninterrupted creative time to focus solely on their work and its impact on our local community and the larger world. These four artists, and the immense and diverse talent they represent, are the latest realization of the Rydells’ love for the arts living on.”

In conjunction with the museum’s exhibition, the work of previous Rydell Fellows will be featured in a show entitled ***Selections: Rydell Visual Arts Fellows 2006-2021*** at **M.K. Contemporary Art** gallery, located next to the MAH in downtown Santa Cruz from **January 27–March 24, 2024**.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kajahl Benes-Trapp was born in Santa Cruz in 1985 and received his BFA in painting from San Francisco State University in 2008. He spent his final year studying at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, Tuscany, Italy. In 2012, Benes-Trapp received his MFA in painting from Hunter College in New York. In 2013, he was a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. He was also a 2016 Artist in Residence at the Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans. More recently, Benes-Trapp was awarded an Artist-in-Residence at Lower Eastside Printshop New York in 2019. His work is in the public collections of Collection Solo, The Dean Collection and 21c Museum Hotel: Art Museum.

Kristiana 莊礼恩 Chan is a first generation Malaysian-Chinese artist, writer, and educator from the American South. Her work examines the material memory of the landscape and the excluded histories of the displaced Chinese diaspora. Working across disciplines, she uses video installation, archival photography, and experimental alternative photographic processes. Chan’s solo exhibitions were at the START Gallery (Winston-Salem) and The Growler (San Francisco). Group exhibitions include SOMArts, ProArts, Root Division, Kearny Street Workshop and CTRL+SHFT Collective. Chan’s work was featured in Lenscratch Magazine, Seawitches Zine, and Thank You For Nothing Zine. She has a BA from Wake Forest University.

Anna Friz creates media art, sound, and transmission art, working across platforms to present installations, broadcasts, films and performances. Presentations of her work in the recent years include Ars Electronica Festival (Linz, Austria), the Museum of Arts and Design (New York), SITE Gallery (Houston), The New York Times Magazine, esc Media Kunst Labor (Graz, Austria), ReWire Festival (The Hague, Netherlands), Soundhouse at the Barbican (London), Espace Multimedia Gantner (Belfort France), and RE:SOUND Festival (Aalborg, Denmark). Friz has a PhD from York University in Toronto, and she is currently assistant professor in film and digital media at UC Santa Cruz.

Janette Gross is a tapestry weaver whose work primarily focuses on wedge weave, a technique developed by the Diné Nation (Navajo) in the late 19th century. She honors the Diné tradition but uses contemporary designs and techniques. Gross began studying weaving and tapestry techniques after retirement. Her current work addresses the devastating effects of climate change. Gross's work has been exhibited at the Richmond Arts Center, Textile Center Minneapolis, Santa Cruz Art League, Museum of Quilts & Textiles, and the American Tapestry Biennial 13.

ABOUT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Since 1982, Community Foundation Santa Cruz County has brought together people, ideas, and resources to inspire philanthropy and accomplish great things. The Community Foundation helps donors and their advisors invest wisely in causes they care about, to provide grants and resources to community organizations, and to offer leadership around key local issues. The Foundation manages over \$200 million in charitable assets and provides customized giving solutions that have resulted in more than \$25 million in grants, scholarships, and low-interest loans in 2023. Thanks to generous donors, over \$235 million in local grants and scholarships have been awarded locally since 1982. The Community Foundation seeks to make Santa Cruz County thrive for all who call it home, now and in the future. Learn more at www.cfsc.org.

ABOUT THE MAH

The MAH is a thriving community gathering place that serves more than 130,000 people annually through rotating art and history exhibitions, visual and performing artworks, public festivals, education and outreach programs, and cultural celebrations in collaboration with its many partners. It maintains a permanent collection of regionally significant art and artifacts, a research library, a historical archive, and historic sites including the Evergreen Cemetery, Octagon Building, and Davenport Jail. It is also home to Abbott Square, a vibrant public plaza on the museum's doorstep that offers food, social events, and year-round creative happenings.

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